

Russian Domestic Policy: A Chronology

April-June 2003

April

1 April 2003 First Deputy Economic Development and Trade Minister Mikhail Dmitriyev says his ministry is proposing that the number of ministries be reduced to 15-17 from the current 23 within the framework of the administrative reform. On 31 March the ministry submitted its proposals to the government for its consideration. The ministry is proposing the establishment of a three-tier hierarchy of executive bodies. The government and the ministries should draw up legislation which should then be implemented by the bodies on the lowest tier.

1 April 2003 The constitution of Chechnya, adopted at the March 23 referendum, comes into force.

1 April 2003 Gen Andrey Nikolayev, chairman of the Duma defence committee, claims that mercenaries from Bosnia and Hercegovina are fighting as members of illegal armed groups in Chechnya.

Nikolayev says increasing military spending to 3.5% of GDP would make it possible to fundamentally alter the quality of Russia's armed forces. "We have submitted this proposal to the Russian president for examination. If such a decision is taken, defence spending in 2004 will come to about R600bn."

He says that raising national defence spending to 3.5% would make it possible to provide 100-per-cent combat training for troops, increase funding for scientific research, testing and design work by 150%, increase purchases of military equipment and arms by 200% and increase social provision for service personnel by 100%. Spending on national defence from the federal budget came to 2.64% of GDP in 2003.

2 April 2003 The Moscow Meshchanskiy Court rejects a complaint filed by Duma Deputy Sergey Kovalev against the actions of FSB chief Nikolay Patrushev. The court ruled that Patrushev's refusal to provide Kovalev with the plan for the antiterrorist military exercise conducted in Ryazan on 22 September 1999 was legal.

2 April 2003 The Ministry of Energy says Russia produced 99.45m tonnes of oil in January-March 2003, 9% or 9.87m tonnes more than in the same period of 2002. The energy ministry said Russia produced 34.54m tonnes in March alone.

Vertically-integrated oil companies produced 90.067m tonnes in the quarter and 31.28m tonnes in March. Yukos was the biggest producer, with 19.2m tonnes in the three months (6.65m tonnes in March), followed by LUKoil (19m tonnes and 6.5m tonnes), Surgutneftegaz (12.87m tonnes and 4.45m tonnes), Tyumen Oil Company (9.89m tonnes and 3.4m tonnes), Sibneft (7.2m tonnes and 2.56m tonnes) and Tatneft (6.07m tonnes and 2.09m tonnes).

Russian and partly foreign-owned joint ventures produced 6.479m tonnes (2.2m tonnes in March alone). Gazprom produced 2.79m tonnes (973,500 tonnes in March).

Russian oil exports to outside the CIS in January-March 2003 amounted to 35.15m tonnes (over 2.85m barrels per day), up by 1.8m or 5.6% from the same period in 2002.

A total of 34.43m tonnes of oil was exported through the Transneft system in the first three months of the year, with 719,000m tonnes being exported outside of the Transneft system.

Transneft transported 12.69m tonnes of Russian oil outside the CIS in March, with 205,700 tonnes being exported outside of the Transneft system. In the reporting period, Yukos exported 7.13m tonnes to outside the CIS (2.559m tonnes in March); LUKoil - 6.63m tonnes (2.13m tonnes), Surgutneftegaz - 4.23m tonnes (1.44m tonnes), Tyumen Oil Company (TNK) - 4.4m tonnes (1.68m tonnes) and Sibneft - 2.75m tonnes (990,000 tonnes). Companies that are not part of vertically integrated structures exported 2.228m tonnes to outside the CIS through the Transneft system in the first three months (873,700 tonnes in March), while production sharing agreement operators exported 159,700 tonnes (55,000 tonnes).

Transit of Kazakh oil in January-March amounted to 3.74m tonnes (1.17m tonnes in March); transit of oil from Azerbaijan amounted to 702,000 tonnes (289,400 tonnes) and Turkmenistan - 63,800 tonnes.

Russia produced 162.96bn cubic metres (bcm) of gas in January-March 2003, 2.5% or 3.9 bcm more than in the same period of 2002. Gazprom produced 143.07 bcm.

3 April 2003 Chief of the Russian General Staff, Anatoliy Kvashnin, is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda* on the command-staff exercise held at the North Caucasus Military District at the end of March.

3 April 2003 Supreme Mufti of Russia Talgat Tadzhuiddin says the Islamic Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of Holy Russia (formerly the Central Spiritual Board of Muslims of Russia and the European countries of the CIS) has adopted a decision declaring jihad (holy war) on the USA. The head of Russia's Council of Muftis Ravil Gaynutdin has stated that his organization will not declare jihad against the USA.

3 April 2003 Viktor Ozerov, head of the Federation Council committee for defence and security, says the war in Iraq has brought to the limelight the need for speeding up the reform of the Russian armed forces.

4 April 2003 Chechen Interior Minister Ruslan Tsakayev resigns.

4 April 2003 St Petersburg governor Vladimir Yakovlev says he will not stand for a third term. Irkutsk Region governor Boris Govorin is not to stand for a third term.

4 April 2003 Prosecutor-General's Office spokesman Leonid Troshin says Russian Supreme Mufti Talgat Tadzhuddin has been given an official prosecutor's warning concerning his statement on declaring jihad on the USA.

Tatarstan President Mintimer Shaymiyev condemns Talgat Tadzhuddin's call for a jihad against the USA.

Chief mufti Ravil Gaynutdin says that Supreme Mufti Talgat Tadzhuddin's declaration of holy war on the USA is a manifestation of political extremism and that Tadzhuddin had contacts with the bin-Laden family in early 1990s.

4 April 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says the MOD will ask the Duma to pass a law permitting citizens from other CIS countries to serve in the Russian army.

An article in *Vedomosti* discusses the costs of transition to a contract army.

5 April 2003 Lt-Gen Andrey Maslov is appointed as the new chief of staff for the North Caucasus Military District.

5 April 2003 Vladimir Putin visits the HQ of Space Troops.

9 April 2003 Col-Gen Viktor Shemetov takes the office of chief-of-staff and first deputy commander of the Moscow Military District.

11 April 2003 Vladimir Putin says the division of power between the federal and regional authorities must be finalized. A pertinent three-year plan will be drafted by 29 April. The Duma will probably debate the relevant bill in the second reading this term.

11 April 2003 Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev says the Russian army is weaker than the US army and Russia's defence budget should be increased.

An article in *Kommersant* discusses conscription and military reform.

Air force Chief of Staff Col-Gen Boris Cheltsov is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*. He discusses the decision in 1998 to integrate the air defence troops into the air force.

Dr Mark A Smith

13 April 2003 Sergey Borisov, president of the Russian public organization for small and medium entrepreneur Russia's Support, says that "annual corruption in Russia totals 33bn dollars". He estimates about 60% (66,000) of the 110,000 government officials in Russia "take bribes".

14 April 2003 Dmitriy Kozak, deputy head of the presidential administration, says local government reform will not force regions to merge to create larger entities. Kozak says "the creation of larger regions cannot be initiated at the federal level".

14 April 2003 The Council of Muftis of Russia declares illegal a call to jihad against the US made by the head of the Central Spiritual Board of the country's Muslims, Talgat Tadzhuiddin. It also strips Tadzhuiddin of the right to lead Islamic organizations.

15 April 2003 The Russian president's human rights envoy in Chechnya, Abdul-Khakim Sultygov, rejects reports from Western media and human rights activists about mass killings in Chechnya. He says a national commission in charge of investigating crimes in Chechnya will be established after presidential elections in the republic.

15 April 2003 Large-scale scheduled manoeuvres of Russia's Pacific Fleet begin in the Petra Velikogo Bay off the Maritime Territory coast.

15 April 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has said that permanent readiness units of the armed forces will be transferred to contract service over 2004-07. Leader of the Fatherland-All Russia faction Vyacheslav Volodin says the first phase of the Russian armed forces' transfer to service by contract before 2007 will be valid only for 15% of servicemen.

16 April 2003 A survey conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation on 12-13 April shows that if presidential elections were held today, Putin would win 50% of the vote. CPRF leader Gennadiy Zyuganov would gain 14% and Liberal Democratic Party leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy 5%.

They are followed by Kemerovo Region governor Aman Tuleyev (3%), Emergency Situations Minister Sergey Shoygu (2%), Yabloko party leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy (2%), Chamber of Commerce and Trade chief Yevgeniy Primakov (2%), Moscow mayor Yuriy Luzhkov (1%), and URF leader Boris Nemtsov (1%).

Another poll conducted by the Public Opinion Foundation on 12-13 April, showed that 22% of Russians would vote for Yedinaya Rossiya in the parliamentary elections in December, while the Communist Party would obtain 20% of the vote.

The Liberal Democratic Party of Russia (LDPR) and Yabloko could count on 5% each. All other parties and movements would not overcome the 5-per-cent threshold for being elected to the Duma.

According to the poll, 5% of Russians would vote against all parties, 12% would not vote at all and 25% have not decided who they will vote for.

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16 April 2003 Lt-Gen Valeriy Astanin, head of the manning department in the General Staff mobilization directorate says MOD leaders have generally approved a package of documents related to the transition to professional service in permanent-readiness units of the armed forces from April 2004 to January 2007.

16 April 2003 The management of Russia's leading papers and television and radio companies draft a text which they would like to see passed as the new law on the media. The Industrial Committee - which consists of managers of leading media outlets - urges Vladimir Putin to submit the draft for the Duma's consideration.

16 April 2003 An article in *Severnyy Kavkaz* states that representatives of the joint grouping of troops in the North Caucasus report that funding of Chechen insurgents from Arab countries has practically stopped. This is confirmed by radio interceptions and intelligence information.

17 April 2003 Duma member Sergey Yushenkov of Liberal Russia Party is shot and killed in Moscow.

17 April 2003 Mikhail Fedotov, secretary of the Union of Journalists of Russia, says the new draft law on mass media could destroy editorial independence.

17 April 2003 Vladimir Putin has a working meeting with Transneft chief Semen Vaynshtok. They discuss prospects for the Murmansk pipeline, the Baltic pipeline system, and transit via Kazakhstan with an extension to Iran.

17 April 2003 Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, presidential aide, says the human rights question in Chechnya is being overly politicized by those who oppose the settlement and want negotiations between the federal authorities and Aslan Maskhadov. He says certain forces in the West are not interested in Chechnya's political settlement, which the 23 March constitutional referendum has promoted.

17 April 2003 The Ministry of Economic Development and Trade adjusts the GDP growth rate forecast in the socioeconomic development programme for several years to come - for 2004, from 3.6-4.8% to 3.8-5%; for 2005, from 4.3-5.3% to 4.8-5.9%, and for 2008, from 4.7-5.8% to 4.8-5.9%. The 2003 GDP growth rate forecast remains unchanged at 4.5%. The adjusted medium-term programme is submitted to the government.

Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says Russia's GDP grew by 6.5% and the country's industrial production was up 6% in the first quarter of 2003 compared to the same period last year. Kasyanov recalls that GDP grew 4.2% in 2002.

17 April 2003 Col-Gen Yuriy Rodionov, deputy chairman of the Duma defence committee says over 38,000 people, some 19% of all eligible persons, have dodged the draft in Russia in 2003.

17 April 2003 The Interior Ministry (MVD) sets up a headquarters for investigating high-profile crimes which will be headed by the First Deputy Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev.

18 April 2003 Ethnic Policy Minister Vladimir Zorin says the situation in the sphere he supervises has considerably improved since the adoption in 1996 of a state nationalities policy concept. 80 ethnic languages are taught at schools across Russia, compared with just 40 a decade ago.

18 April 2003 The Politkom.ru website assesses the main candidates for the Chechen presidential election.

Alu Alkhanov takes over as interior minister in the pro-Moscow Chechen government.

The head of the MVD's Internal Affairs Directorate for Chechnya, Said Peshkhoyev, is appointed deputy presidential envoy in the Southern Federal District.

The all-Russia movement For Human Rights has filed a lawsuit with the Supreme Court over the illegitimacy of the referendum on the Chechen constitution.

The Audit Chamber uncovers misuse of funds totalling R366m in Chechnya. At the same time, only R21m of that amount has been misappropriated. The remaining violations are linked to shortcomings in budget legislation and poor financial discipline.

Viktor Kazantsev, the presidential envoy to the Southern Federal District, says combating terrorism is one of the priorities in the district. Of the 360 major terrorist attacks committed in Russia in 2002, 297 were carried out in South Federal District regions, with 272 of those in Chechnya.

18 April 2003 Goskomstat says production and services output in the five key Russian sectors (industry, agriculture, construction, transport and retail) increased 6.7% year-on-year in the first quarter of 2003. Foreign trade turnover increased 37.2% to 28.7bn dollars. Exports were up 44.4% to 19.1bn dollars and imports grew 24.6% to 9.6bn dollars.

18 April 2003 MinAtom states that there have been 176 radiation-related incidents in the USSR and Russia over the last 50 years. Of the total 588 people involved in the incidents, 71 died, including victims of the Chernobyl disaster. 38 violations were registered at Russia's nuclear and radiation sites in 2002, compared with about 100 per year in the 1990s.

18 April 2003 The Duma defence committee states that a total of 332,400 young men were called up for military service in 2002, and 98.9% of the manpower acquisition task for troops was carried out in the spring and 98.8% in the autumn.

An article in *Kommersant* assesses the results of the army's spring draft.

18 April 2003 The Pacific Fleet completes its manoeuvres in the Sea of Japan. The manoeuvres started on 15 April.

Chief of navy staff Admiral Viktor Kravchenko says a long-distance cruise by the ships of the Black Sea and Pacific fleets for a joint exercise with Indian naval forces is the first step towards the resumption of Russia's permanent naval presence in the world ocean.

19 April 2003 Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov is elected chairman of the Party of Life, and chairman of the presidium of the party's national council. Mironov says he backs Putin in the 2004 presidential elections and says Yedinaya Rossiya is the Party of Life's strategic ally.

19 April 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a decree appointing Aleksandr Burutin to the post of adviser to the Russian president. Burutin will be in charge of the issues of the military-industrial complex and state defence orders.

21 April 2003 An article in *Kommersant* discusses Vladimir Putin's appointment of Major-General Aleksandr Burutin as presidential adviser on military technology.

Col-Gen Viktor Kholstov, 56, is appointed new Director-General of the Russian Munitions Agency (Rosboyepripasy). He had been commander of the country's radiation, chemical and bacteriological defence department at the MOD.

21 April 2003 At a congress "Trust and security in the information society", it is stated that the number of permanent Internet users in Russia has reached 6m or 4% of the country's population.

21 April 2003 The regional operational headquarters for the antiterrorist operation in the North Caucasus starts drawing up documents for transferring the command of the antiterrorist operation in Chechnya from the Federal Security Service (FSB) to the MVD.

Lt-Gen Sergey Babkin, the former head of the Chechen department of the FSB, is interviewed in *Izvestiya*. He says it is too early to say when the antiterrorist campaign will end.

21 April 2003 The retrial of Colonel Yuriy Budanov, who has been charged with murdering Chechen girl Elza Kungayeva, begins at the North Caucasus Military District Court.

21 April 2003 Police have arrested a person who was involved in the 9 May 2002 terrorist act in Kaspiysk. His name is Akhmed Magomadov.

21 April 2003 The chief of the General Staff mobilization directorate's manning department, Lt-Gen Valeriy Astanin, says that nearly 50% of people that showed up

at medical commissions of military commissioner's offices have health restrictions and cannot be sent to units where advanced requirements for servicemen's physical training are in force. 25% of draftees only have elementary or incomplete secondary education. Over 175,000 people are to be drafted for active duty service with the army and other law-enforcement agencies from April to July.

21 April 2003 Lt-Gen Vasilii Smirnov, head of the General Staff main mobilization directorate, says units of the Interior Ministry troops, border guard troops and armed forces stationed in the North Caucasus and adjacent regions will be transferred to professional service in 2004-05.

22 April 2003 The Press Ministry cancels its order suspending the licence of the Moscow Independent Broadcasting Corporation (MNVK), which owns the TV6 channel.

22 April 2003 Igor Golembiovskiy's team issues the first issue of the *Russkiy Kur'yer* newspaper on 22 April. Golembiovskiy was dismissed from the post of editor-in-chief of the *Novyye Izvestiya* newspaper in February 2003.

22 April 2003 Ivan Materov, a first deputy minister of economic development and trade, says the Russian economy grew 6.9% year on year in March. GDP growth was 6.4% in the first quarter of 2003.

22 April 2003 The Yukos and Sibneft oil companies have announced they will merge. The new company YukosSibneft will become the world's fourth largest for the volume of production. Yukos board chairman Mikhail Khodorkovskiy will head the new company. Sibneft president Yevgeniy Shvidler will be the chairman of the board of directors.

22 April 2003 Ground Troops Commander-in-Chief and Deputy Defence Minister Nikolay Kormiltsev says the financing of combat training has improved considerably in the past two years.

22 April 2003 First deputy head of the MVD's Federal Migration Service Igor Yunash says more than 200,000 citizens of Russia have left Chechnya forever since 1994-1995.

23 April 2003 A report by the FLB.Ru Agentstvo Federalnykh Rassledovaniy web site sums up information about the sponsors and donors of Russia's main political parties - the Union of Right Forces, the Communist Party, and the Agrarian Party.

23 April 2003 Vladimir Putin says the task of bringing regional legislation in line with the federal ones should be completed by 14 July.

23 April 2003 FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev says that later in 2003, the counter-terrorist operation in Chechnya will be handed over from the FSB to the Interior Ministry.

23 April 2003 Goskomstat releases data on the preliminary results of the 2002 census. Between 1989 and 2002, Russia's population fell by 1.84m or 1.3%. Russia ranks seventh in terms of population size, behind China, India, the USA, Indonesia, Brazil and Pakistan.

Natural population loss (the difference between the birth and death rates) was 7.4m people. At the same time, between 1989 and 2002, population growth owing to migration into Russia totalled 5.56m people.

According to preliminary results, the urban population accounted for 73.3% of the total population (73.27% in 1989). 64% of the country's population live in cities populated by more than 100,000 people. 40% of residents in major towns live in the 13 cities with populations of more than 1m.

According to Goskomstat data prepared for the Russian government meeting scheduled to take place on Thursday, 145,537,000 people were accounted for in the course of the Russian population census. Russian Federation citizens accounted for 145,287,400 people out of this total. 249,800 people are citizens of other countries who have been resident in Russia for an extended period.

Russia's male population totals 67.62m, while the female population totals 77.66m.

Goskomstat states that the population of the Chechen Republic is 1,100,300 people.

24 April 2003 Vladimir Putin says he believes that the Justice Ministry should cooperate with human rights supporters more closely. He meets Justice Minister Yuriy Chayka.

24 April 2003 Vladimir Putin appoints Galina Karelova as deputy prime minister. She is in charge of social programmes.

24 April 2003 Participants in the closed-door parliamentary hearings "Russia's national security: state and problems of legislative support" in the Federation Council suggest setting up an interdepartmental working group under the Security Council to prepare a new edition of the plan for Russia's national security.

24 April 2003 The Duma turns down amendments which would have prohibited any alteration of Russia's borders save by agreement with constituent parts of the federation whose own borders would be affected by such changes.

24 April 2003 The cabinet of ministers meets to discuss military reform. The government adopts the basic terms of the Defence Ministry's programme, which

lays out the process for transfer of a substantial part of the Russian armed forces to contract service by the end of 2007.

24 April 2003 Vladimir Putin says in 2002 the combined volume of arms exports was 4.82bn dollars. This is 500m dollars more that was planned.

The MOD makes a final decision against accepting the Antonov An-70 as the medium-range transport plane for the Russian air force.

General Andrey Nikolayev, head of the Duma Defence Committee, outlines in *Pravda* the lessons for Russia of the US military operation in Iraq.

25 April 2003 The Duma approves in the third, final reading the presidential version of the Russian government service bill, drafted under a plan for reforming the system of civil service in Russia.

25 April 2003 The director of the FSB, Nikolay Patrushev, says it is necessary "to work out a single approach to the strategy and tactics of guaranteeing security in the borderlands of the North Caucasus".

The Prosecutor-General's Office records increased activity on the part of a number of religious organizations in southern Russia.

25 April 2003 An article on the Politkom.ru web site says the FSB has asked the biggest Russian Internet companies to install software enabling more effective monitoring of e-mail.

Grani.ru website discusses the passing of a bill in its first reading in the Duma, called "On amending, supplementing and declaring invalid certain Russian Federation legislative acts". Grani argues that if passed into law, the bill would make the Russian president the sole controller of the security services.

26 April 2003 The Yabloko party intends to present a no-confidence motion in the Duma.

27 April 2003 Vladimir Putin issues his Easter message. He sends a message to Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Aleksiy II.

27 April 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev is interviewed on the state of the Russian nuclear industry.

28 April 2003 Gazprom plans to invest 20bn US dollars by 2010 in natural gas extraction.

28 April 2003 A MOD source tells Interfax that the MOD is demanding royalties from arms exports. The MOD is planning to receive 200-300m dollars from defence industry enterprises annually. The money will be allocated for the implementation of the state defence order.

29 April 2003 The CPRF says it will back the Yabloko no confidence motion in the Duma. Yedinaya Rossiya attacks the Yabloko/CPRF move.

Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev criticizes CPRF leader Gennadiy Zyuganov for the CPRF loss of positions on Duma committees.

29 April 2003 Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov says the Federation Council must become an elected chamber.

29 April 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov signs a document that newly distributes duties in the cabinet. New duties are given to Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin, who will now also be in charge of economic and social forecasting, tax policy and lending and monetary policy. Kudrin has been put in charge of financial planning, currency regulation and currency control as well as efforts to expand the use of the Russian rouble as international tender. He is also responsible for customs and tariff policy, the federal budget, relations between budgets of different levels, the collection of federal budget revenues, fiscal governance and streamlining of budget spending. Kudrin is in charge of the turnover of precious metals and stones, the system of state reserves, the reform in accounting and financial reporting as well as resistance to money-laundering.

Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko will be in charge of the fuel and energy sector, including nuclear power engineering, federal relations and local self-government, the regulation of the operations of natural monopolies and the rates and prices of the output and services of natural monopolies. He will also supervise the reform in power engineering and energy saving, transport policy, structural reform of the railway system and advancements in communications. He will deal with matters of cooperation with the European Union and integration policy in the CIS. He will also monitor questions regarding the use of natural resources (except for water biological resources), environmental protection, housing policy, reform of the municipal economy, the advancement of the housing mortgage system and the construction sector.

Boris Aleshin, a recently-appointed deputy prime minister, will oversee Russia's industry, science and technology and innovations policy. Aleshin will also be responsible for trade and business contacts, export control, state support for industrial exports and issues of standardization, metrology, certification, patents and technical regulation. Various economic issues, reduction of administrative barriers in the economy, support for entrepreneurship, small and medium businesses, anti-monopoly policy, the government's investment strategy and ways to encourage private investments will also be in his jurisdiction.

29 April 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov Russia's economy will remain stable no matter what oil prices will be. He says budget spending for 2004 is based

on oil prices at 20 dollars per barrel. He is optimistic about the state of the economy.

Energy Minister Igor Yusufov states at the International Energy Agency in Paris that Russia plans to increase oil production to 450m-520m tonnes by 2020, with gas production of about 700bn cubic metres per annum. Yusufov says Russia produced in 2002 about 380m tonnes of oil and gas condensate in 2002, in addition to 595.3bn cubic metres of gas. He outlines Russia's energy strategy until 2020. The Russian energy strategy involves Russia's integration into the world energy space. Russia is faced with the task of changing from being primarily a supplier of energy raw materials to becoming an independent participant in the sale of energy products.

29 April 2003 Deputy Prime Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russia plans to increase its budget allocations on national defence and law-enforcement in 2004 by R100bn. The Cabinet is expected to consider the main parameters of next year's draft budget at its 5 June session.

29 April 2003 The press service of Sergey Kiriyeenko, chairman of the state chemical disarmament commission, says the total volume of expenses that Russia will handle in the framework of the chemical disarmament programme up to 2012 will amount to R90.2bn (2.9bn dollars). Out of this sum, R1.27bn (41.16m dollars) will be spent on maintaining security during the storage and destruction of chemical weapons, R582.7m (18.74m dollars) on medical and sanitary inspection of territories around the weapons' storehouses and destruction installations, and R1.95bn (63.03m dollars) on state environmental control and monitoring.

29 April 2003 The Security Council discusses the principles for compiling a list of companies that are of strategic importance for the country's security. Security Council Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo says the state must have an opportunity to regulate the processes that are essential for national security. The head of the defence and industrial security directorate of the Security Council, Vyacheslav Bezborodov, is interviewed on TV on this issue.

29 April 2003 Aleksandr Nozdrachev, director-general of the Russian Conventional Weapons Agency, says Russia's arms export structure is likely to change in the near future. He says aircraft supplies account for most of Russian arms exports, but the Russian Conventional Weapons Agency expects the structure to change in favour of navy and air defence supplies. Foreign currency proceeds from arms exports amounted to R4.8bn (154.32m dollars) in 2002.

30 April 2003 Yevgeniy Nazdratenko is appointed a deputy secretary of the Security Council.

30 April 2003 A VTsIOM poll states that 48% trust President Vladimir Putin in April, down from 51% in March. The poll surveyed 1,600 citizens.

A VTsIOM poll asks who would you vote for if Duma elections were held on 4 May. The ratings were:

CPRF	28%
Yedinaya Rossiya	21%
LDPR	7%
URF	6%
Yabloko	6%

Over half of Russians - 53% - would go to polling stations if Duma elections were held next Sunday. Another 28% would not vote, and 17% have not yet decided whether to vote or not.

30 April 2003 *Severnyy Kavkaz* reports that the Supreme Court of Karachay-Cherkessia has endorsed a request by a group of voters and the republic's prosecutor to postpone the presidential elections scheduled for 15 June. The court made a decision to hold the elections on 17 August 2003.

May

4 May 2003 Duma speaker Gennadiy Seleznev calls for a coalition government after the Duma elections in December. He says: "Russia should have a new government. It would be good if the president proposed that the future majority in the Duma name the new cabinet of ministers."

5 May 2003 The Energy Ministry says Russia produced 132.9m tonnes of oil in January-April 2003, 11% or 13.19m tonnes more than in the same period of 2002. Russia produced 33.5m tonnes in April 2003 alone. Yukos was the biggest producer, with 25.67m tonnes in the four months (6.46m tonnes in April), followed by LUKoil (25.34m tonnes and 6.34m tonnes), Surgutneftegaz (17.21m tonnes and 4.34m tonnes), Tyumen Oil Company (13.3m tonnes and 3.41m tonnes), Sibneft (9.76m tonnes and 2.5m tonnes) and Tatneft (8.09m tonnes and 2.02m tonnes).

Russia produced 214.95bn cubic metres (bcm) of gas in January-April 2003, 2.2% or 4.7 bcm more than in the same period of 2002. Gazprom produced 188.94 bcm (45.83 bcm in April). Vertically-integrated oil companies produced 13.57 bcm in the four months and 3.37 bcm in April. Surgutneftegaz produced 4.67 bcm (1.13 bcm in April), Rosneft 2.26 bcm (545.5m cubic metres, mcm) and LUKoil 1.67 bcm (416.5 mcm). Other producers turned out 12.43 bcm (2.97 bcm).

5 May 2003 An article in *Gazeta* discusses the government's decision to build an export oil pipeline in Eastern Siberia along the Angarsk-Daqing route and not on to Nakhodka.

6 May 2003 Vladimir Putin discusses interethnic problems with Nationalities Policy Minister Vladimir Zorin. Russia adopted the concept of a state ethnic and nationalities policy in 1996. This document is now being adjusted. Zorin says there are over 10,000 ethnic nongovernmental organizations and associations and

300 ethnic cultural associations. In addition, "the number of religious organizations is growing", reaching 12,500, which is four times as many as 12 years ago. These organizations represent 70 creeds, as compared to the 19 that were practised in Russia 12 years ago.

6 May 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says he plans to continue cutting forces in Chechnya. He says following the recent troop reduction in Chechnya, the armed forces now account for "about 40 to 45% of the entire number of troops". "I think it is quite realistic that in the not very distant future, the Defence Ministry will leave only the 42nd Motor Rifle Division in Chechnya, the commandant's office and special forces, which are continuing to successfully perform their duties." He says the MVD and Chechen MVD will undertake the bulk of military operations.

Chechen administration chief Akhmad Kadyrov says the Chechen leadership is determined to insist on the transfer of powers over conducting antiterrorist efforts from federal forces to the local Interior Ministry.

6 May 2003 Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says the Russian agroindustrial sector is pulling out of a system crisis, although the excessively high dependence of the Russian food market on imports is "unnatural".

6 May 2003 An article on the Grani.ru website discusses the state of the officer corps in the armed forces. Official statistics show that the number of officers in the Russian armed forces decreased by 416,500 men in 1995-2002, or well above target.

7 May 2003 Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov states that "Chechnya has not been cleared of terrorism. Rebels operating in the North Caucasus receive money, weapons and ideological support from abroad."

7 May 2003 The Republic of Altay condemns Altay Territory governor Aleksandr Surikov for suggesting the unification of the two areas.

7 May 2003 Deputy Interior Minister and Commander-in-Chief of the Internal Troops Col-Gen (sic) Vyacheslav Tikhomirov says six special-purpose units of the Internal Troops have been formed and trained in Chechnya. He says money for moving MVD forces to contract service will probably be earmarked in next year's budget.

Col-Gen Valeriy Baranov, the first deputy MVD troops commander says the MVD is expected to take control of the counter-terrorism operation in the North Caucasus by 1 September 2003. These functions are currently being performed by the FSB.

7 May 2003 Mikhail Dmitriyev, head of the committee for arms trade with foreign countries, is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*. He says Russian arms exports amounted to 4.8bn dollars in 2002, 1bn dollars more than in 2001, while foreign currency earnings reached 4.5bn dollars.

7 May 2003 A report on the Gazeta.ru website assesses the impact of Vladimir Putin's first three years as president.

8 May 2003 The C-in-C of the Internal Troops, Army Gen (sic) Vyacheslav Tikhomirov says the counter-terrorist operation in Chechnya will be transferred from the FSB to the MVD by autumn 2003.

9 May 2003 A large bomb explodes at Dynamo stadium in Groznyy.

11 May 2003 Liberal Russia leader Viktor Pokhmelkin is expelled from the party at a meeting of the party's central council. Boris Berezovskiy attends the conference. He says: "Our goal, the main goal, boils down to the following. First, to overcome the split inside Liberal Russia. Second, to attempt to unite all democratic forces of Russia and, first of all, to attempt to unite with the Union of Right Forces. And third, based on what the above results in, to decide on a tactical union with the Left." Viktor Pokhmelkin and Boris Zolotukhin, co-chairmen of the Liberal Russia party, have said the so-called Central Council of this party, which met on 11 May, is not legitimate.

11 May 2003 The IMF says Russia must step up efforts to curb inflation and speed up structural reform to retain a growth rate of over 4% a year.

12 May 2003 The State Customs Committee says that Russia's oil exports to non-CIS countries rose 10% on the year in the first quarter to 39.1m tonnes. Oil exports were worth 7,672m dollars. No comparative figures were provided. Russia's total oil exports were at 44m tonnes in January-March, which in monetary terms amounted to 8,286m dollars.

12 May 2003 A major terrorist bombing takes place in Znamenskoye in Nadterechnyy District in Chechnya.

Vladimir Putin instructs that a working group be formed to prepare a draft treaty on the delimitation of powers between the Russian state authorities and Chechen bodies. The working group has been instructed to present proposals on a draft treaty to the Russian president by 1 October 2003.

13 May 2003 Vladimir Putin has a meeting with Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov to discuss integrating the tax police authorities within the MVD. In March 2003 a presidential decree was issued disbanding the tax police and transferring its functions to the Interior Ministry.

13 May 2003 Irina Khakamada, co-chair of the URF and a Duma deputy, is sceptical about businessman Boris Berezovskiy's statement on a possible alliance between the URF and the Liberal Russia party in the run-up to the parliamentary elections.

Dr Mark A Smith

13 May 2003 The Emergencies Ministry says the death toll from the 12 May terrorist act in Znamenskoye has reached 54.

13 May 2003 Maj-Gen Viktor Kozhushko says the MOD insists that the law on alternative civilian service, signed by President Vladimir Putin and to become effective from 1 January 2004, be left unamended. Kozhushko represented the MOD at the relevant Duma hearings.

14 May 2003 Chechnya's Emergency Situations Minister Ruslan Avtayev says 14 people were killed in today's terrorist attack in Gudermesskiy District.

14 May 2003 The head of the Defence Ministry's department for military economic analysis and expert examinations, Lt-Gen Viktor Storonin, says allocations for the first stage of the transition to professional service in the Russian armed forces and other law-enforcement agencies have been reduced from R138bn (4.45bn dollars) to R122bn (3.94bn dollars).

14 May 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov appoints the deputy prime minister for industrial policy, Boris Aleshin, deputy chairman of the Russian Federation government commission on military-industrial issues.

15 May 2003 Viktor Cherkesov, head of the new state anti-drugs committee, is interviewed in *Parlamentskaya Gazeta*.

15 May 2003 Vladimir Putin submits a draft resolution to the Duma on proclaiming amnesty in connection with the adoption of the Chechen constitution, in line with Articles 84 and 104 of the Russian constitution.

The Chechen interior ministry says the Chechen separatist forces may have a unit of over 30 female suicide bombers.

Russian MOD sources state that the airborne operations force within the combined federal forces in Chechnya will be reinforced by a paratrooper regiment in summer.

Minister for Chechen Affairs Stanislav Ilyasov attends a conference in Paris on Chechnya. He says outrageous actions by extremists in Chechnya are elements of international terrorism, and it is necessary to pool interstate efforts to stop them.

15 May 2003 Lt-Gen Pavel Shilov, head of the Navy's Coastal Troops Directorate, says the 77th separate marine brigade of the Caspian Flotilla will be the first marine unit of the Russian navy to switch to professional military service.

16 May 2003 Vladimir Putin gives his annual state of the nation address to the Federal Assembly.

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16 May 2003 First Deputy Chairman of the Russian Central Bank Oleg Vyugin says it is quite realistic to make the rouble a fully convertible currency. This objective was set by Vladimir Putin in his state of the nation address.

16 May 2003 Deputy Prime Minister Boris Aleshin says Russia should develop a new system of armaments relying on information technologies.

16 May 2003 Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov says the MVD will adopt a number of measures to make the financial aspect of the activities of parties transparent.

17 May 2003 Prosecutor-General Vladimir Ustinov is interviewed on TV on suicide bombings in Chechnya. He says the money to fund these operations is coming from abroad.

18 May 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov is interviewed on TV. He confirms plans to have professional armed forces in Russia by 2008. "It is utterly realistic to suppose this programme can be implemented by the end of 2007, that we can effectively create the backbone of a new Russian army."

19 May 2003 Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref says industrial growth amounted to 6.3% in January-April 2003.

Goskomstat reports an increase in foreign investment in the Russian economy. In the first quarter of 2003, 6.3bn dollars has come in investment, up 70% from the same period of 2002. The total amount of foreign investment had reached 43bn dollars. Over 51% of it is repayable investment, in particular loans from international financial institutions and trade loans. The proportion of direct investment is 45.5% and of portfolio investment, or stocks, interest and securities, 2.7%. Major investors in Russia are Germany, Cyprus, the US, Britain, France, the Netherlands and Italy.

20 May 2003 A ROMIR poll shows that if the presidential election was held now, 58% of Russians would vote for Vladimir Putin.

Gennady Zuganov would get	13% of the vote.
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	3%
Grigoriy Yavlinskiy	2%

The poll was conducted among 1,600 residents of Russia.

20 May 2003 The MVD Press service says the rate of terrorist attacks in Russia has been up 20% since the beginning of 2003 as compared to the same period in 2002. In the Southern Federal District, terrorist attacks are up by 80%. According to police statistics, a total of 360 terrorist attacks were committed in Russia in 2002. Eighty-six such crimes were solved. The rate of solution of terrorist crimes has doubled.

Dr Mark A Smith

20 May 2003 The Justice Ministry cancels registration of the National State Party of Russia.

21 May 2003 Secretary of the Security Council, Vladimir Rushaylo, visits the Siberian Military District.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that the 42nd Motor Rifle Division, which is currently stationed in Chechnya on a permanent basis, will be manned with contract servicemen starting in 2004.

22 May 2003 The URF says it will not ally with Yabloko in the December 2003 Duma elections.

22 May 2003 The government approves the national energy strategy for the period to 2020.

Energy Minister Igor Yusufov says according to the optimistic version of the energy strategy for the period until 2020, it is planned to increase oil production to 520m tonnes, and according to the pessimistic version to 480m tonnes.

22 May 2003 Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov delivers an address to Chechen separatist forces calling for a united front.

23 May 2003 The Duma adopts a law on private farming in its third reading. The Agriculture Ministry says Russia has 264,000 private farms employing about one million workers. These farms take up a total area of 17m hectares - 7% more than in 2001.

27 May 2003 The press service of the Liberal Russia party says that the Prosecutor-General's Office is searching the party's head office in central Moscow. However, the Prosecutor-General's Office says the search is being conducted at the Logovaz company, not at Liberal Russia's head office. Logovaz shares the same address. These actions are connected with the murder of MP Sergey Yushenkov.

Law-enforcement agencies search the building registered as an office of the Liberal Russia political party to seize financial documentation and a large sum of foreign cash.

27 May 2003 A report in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* criticises safety in the Russian nuclear power complex.

28 May 2003 Vladimir Putin appoints Igor Shuvalov as presidential aide. Before his new appointment, the president relieved Shuvalov from his duties as head of Russian government staff, a position that gave him the rank of minister. Putin replaces Shuvalov with Konstantin Merzlikin. Merzlikin also receives ministerial rank.

28 May 2003 The World Bank forecasts 5.5% economic growth in Russia in 2003.

28 May 2003 Vladimir Putin meets pro-Moscow Chechen leaders. They discuss the restoration process in Chechnya and delimitation of powers between the federal centre and local authorities.

Amnesty International issues a report on human rights throughout the world. It says there has been a decline in the observance of human rights in Chechnya.

28 May 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov visits the 76th airborne division in Pskov to review the contract experiment. Ivanov says the transition to professional armed forces is inevitable but will take a long time. Ivanov says the airborne forces will remain a separate force.

29 May 2003 Deputy minister of economic development and trade, Mukhamed Tsikanov, says from 200,000 to 600,000 people need to be moved from the extreme north. Some R900m have been assigned from the 2003 federal budget for the extreme north resettlement project. Money will also come from regional budgets and borrowing. The World Bank has issued a 50m-dollar loan for the purpose. Tsikanov says the Russian government has managed to narrow the socio-economic development gap among different regions of Russia. A special federal programme carried out in 2002 reduced the gap from a factor of 50 to a factor of 38 in gross regional product terms.

30 May 2003 Gennady Zyuganov says the CPRF has established one bloc with several other parties and movements for participation in the December 2003 Duma elections.

30 May 2003 Mikhail Sinelin is appointed head of Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov's secretariat. Oleg Buklemishev is appointed deputy head of the Government staff.

30 May 2003 The Kavkaz-Tsentr website says sources in the Chechen command have told it that clashes with the occupation troops are taking place in western districts of Dzhokhar (Groznyy) and in the south of Ichkeria, in Vedeno and Shatoy Districts.

30 May 2003 An article in *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* criticises the decision taken in March for the FSB to take over the Federal Border Guard Service.

Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye publishes statistics on suicides in the armed forces.

June

2 June 2003 Leaders of the Liberal Russia Party and the Republican Party announce the creation of a political coalition.

2 June 2003 Lt-Gen Stanislav Kavun has been removed from the position of deputy commander of the MVD's Internal Troops and released from military service due to poor health. Maj-General Sergey Topchiy has been appointed deputy commander in his place.

2 June 2003 Units of the FSB, the MVD and the Emergencies Ministry launch tactical exercises in Budennovsk, Stavropol Territory.

3 June 2003 The CPRF and Yabloko factions in the Duma plan to launch formal procedures of putting the issue of no confidence in the government to the vote. The two factions will submit all documents necessary for the beginning of a no-confidence debate to the Duma Council on 10 June.

3 June 2003 Leader of the CPRF and of the National Patriotic Union of Russia Gennady Zyuganov claims that his party can "rally behind itself all the national patriotic forces", which will go to the Duma elections in one united political bloc and under the Communist Party's flag. 20 leaders of all the segments of the patriotic movement issue a joint statement.

3 June 2003 Chechen administration chief Akhmad Kadyrov dismisses the Chechen cabinet. He reappoints Anatoly Popov as prime minister.

3 June 2003 Chief of Staff Gen Anatoliy Kvashnin say "there will be no further structural changes" in the armed forces. Kvashnin says that "the changes to the staffing levels of the armed forces have been completed". The next stage will involve "renewing the weaponry".

4 June 2003 Vladimir Putin orders changes in the national nature conservation programme. This follows a State Council session on the environment. He says "up to 15% of Russia's regions are in a critical or nearly critical condition".

4 June 2003 Gazprom head Aleksey Miller outlines Gazprom's strategy at the 22nd World Gas Congress in Tokyo.

4 June 2003 The Legislative Assembly of the Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area has finally passed a resolution on holding a referendum on merger with Perm Region.

5 June 2003 Vladimir Putin says the Russian presidency should have a time limit of two terms. He says he is opposed to amending the constitution.

5 June 2003 The government endorses the main characteristics of the draft federal budget for 2004 and for the period up to 2006. Expenditure of R716bn is envisaged in the draft federal budget for 2004 on national defence and the activities of law-enforcement agencies.

5 June 2003 A bus carrying Russian airmen in Mozdok is blown up by a woman suicide terrorist. Seventeen are killed. The Chechen rebel leadership of Aslan Maskhadov denies responsibility for the bombing.

Human rights commissioner Oleg Mironov says in his 2002 report that human rights violations show no sign of abatement in Chechnya.

5 June 2003 Vladimir Putin does not think Russia will be able to fully drop conscription to its armed forces, for at least economic reasons, in the near future. He says the army must be smaller in size.

The Duma holds hearings on military reform. First Deputy Defence Minister Col-Gen Igor Puzanov speaks at the hearings. Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, first deputy chief of the General Staff, says 115 combined units and units of the country's armed forces will soon go over to the contract manning principle. This will affect 155,000 servicemen. The new recruitment principle will cost the budget R94.6bn, of which R75.7bn will be spent on welfare guarantees for contract servicemen. Army Gen Anatoliy Kulikov, a member of the Duma's Security Committee, says Russia's armed forces should be adapted to fight terrorism.

6 June 2003 The Duma decides to reschedule the parliamentary elections from 14 December to 7 December.

6 June 2003 TVS *Yest' Mneniye* programme reports that the National Strategy Council think tank has produced a report on the oligarchs in Russia. It says they are intending to limit Vladimir Putin's powers.

6 June 2003 Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembskiy says the Russian authorities have been engaged in recent talks with certain Chechen rebel commanders in an attempt to persuade them to take advantage of Moscow's latest offer of an amnesty.

The Duma approves in a third reading an amnesty in connection with the approval of the constitution of Chechnya. The proposal, submitted by Vladimir Putin, was supported by 352 votes against 25, with one abstention. The amnesty applies to rebels who committed offences between 12 December 1993 and the day of enforcement of the Duma resolution, who leave rebel formations or surrender their arms by midnight on 31 August 2003. The amnesty comes into force on 7 June.

6 June 2003 An article in *Vedomosti* analyses the 2004 defence budget.

Dr Mark A Smith

Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, first deputy chief of the General Staff, says the withdrawal of excess troops from Chechnya will continue, "despite rebels' attempts to intimidate the population by staging terrorist attacks".

The Duma approves a new design for the banner of the Russian armed forces, with a gold, double-headed eagle against a red background.

7 June 2003 The regional headquarters of the antiterrorist operation in the North Caucasus says Russian forces have been carrying out a special operation in Argun.

The Chechenpress website says major clashes have taken place in southern Chechnya on 4, 6 June.

8 June 2003 Sergey Smirnov, chief of the FSB directorate for St Petersburg and Leningrad Region, is appointed first deputy director of the FSB.

9 June 2003 First Deputy Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev is interviewed in *Argumenty i Fakty*. He heads the Criminal Police Service.

9 June 2003 The FSB states that arms and ammunition have been confiscated from the activists of the Hizb al-Tahrir al-Islami terrorist organization detained in Moscow on 6 June.

9 June 2003 Arkadiy Zlochevskiy, president of the Russian Grain Union, says Russia will be able to export no more than 6m tonnes of grain from this year's crops. Zlochevskiy says that Russia managed to export 16m tonnes of grain from crops in 2002 and rose to third position in the world for grain export volumes.

9 June 2003 The formation of the Chechen State Council is completed. The State Council is expected to perform legislative and executive functions until the parliamentary elections.

10 June 2003 The URF calls for the abolition of the post of prime minister.

10 June 2003 CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov says the leaders of 20 patriotic organizations have signed a joint statement on concerted action with the CPRF in the forthcoming election campaign.

10 June 2003 The FSB says the Islamic Liberation Party has cells throughout the Russian Federation.

FSB director Nikolay Patrushev says the suicide bombers who committed terrorist acts in Chechnya recently were trained outside Russia.

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10 June 2003 The deputy head of the Russian presidential administration Dmitriy Kozak says the enlargement of Russian regions can only happen on their own initiative. He says the federal authorities cannot in principle influence this process.

10 June 2003 Nikolay Bezborodov, member of the State Commission for Chemical Weapons Disarmament and deputy chairman of the Duma defence committee, says Russia is planning to destroy 8,000 tonnes of chemical weapons, or about 20% of their stockpiles, by 2007.

11 June 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov addresses the Duma on the economy. He also speaks against the idea of making the president the prime minister.

13 June 2003 *Ekho Moskvy* Radio claims that Chechen separatist leader Aslan Maskhadov and Chechen field commander Shamil Basayev have resolved their differences.

16 June 2003 Chechen military commandant Lt-Gen Yevgeniy Abrashin says from 1 September 2003, the command of the Combined Force in the North Caucasus is being transferred from the FSB to the Interior Ministry.

A PACE delegation visits Chechnya.

An article in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* reports on the growth of Islam in Russia.

Deputy Prosecutor-General Vladimir Kolesnikov says Al-Qa'idah is one of the extremist organizations funding terrorism in Chechnya. He is speaking at an international round-table discussion held at the Duma to discuss legislative measures against terrorism, such as pre-emption, penalties and legal assistance. Kolesnikov says a number of Muslim states including Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Turkey also send significant amounts of money to Chechen rebels. He says federal troops have carried out 1,997 special operations in Chechnya since the beginning of 2002, and 1,834 rebels were killed in the operations, including several field commanders.

17 June 2003 Vladimir Putin presents new deputy prime minister Vladimir Yakovlev to the cabinet.

17 June 2003 Goskomstat says Russia increased its GDP by 6.8% year-on-year in constant comparable prices in the first quarter of 2003. GDP growth totalled 3.7% in the first quarter of 2002, so there was a considerable rise in the pace of growth in the first three months of 2003. GDP rose by 4.3% year-on-year in 2002.

The Economic Development and Trade Ministry forecasts GDP growth of 4.6% in 2003.

17 June 2003 The MVD confirms that it will take command of the antiterrorist operation in Chechnya from 1 July.

Seventy-eight rebels have laid down their arms and surrendered to the authorities in Chechnya after the Russian parliament declared an amnesty on 7 June. Another 200 have apparently sent word that they were ready to give up fighting.

Acting Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov says he believes that no compromise with Chechen rebel leader Aslan Maskhadov apart from him putting down his arms and handing over constitutional authority is "possible in principle".

17 June 2003 Valentina Matviyenko, the president's plenipotentiary representative, says talk of amalgamating constituent parts of the federation in the Northwest Federal District is premature.

18 June 2003 The Duma votes against passing a vote of no confidence in the Russian government headed by Mikhail Kasyanov. The initiative was initiated by the CPRF and Yabloko factions. Only 172 deputies voted in favour, 163 voted against and six abstained. A simple majority of 226 votes was needed for the decision to be passed in line with State Duma rules.

18 June 2003 The chairman of the Duma Committee on Nationalities, Valentin Nikitin, says there are three real candidates in Chechnya for the post of the republic's president. They are the current the acting head of Chechnya, Akhmad Kadyrov, and Moscow businessmen Abubakar Arsamakov and Malik Saydullayev.

18 June 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia's Space Troops will carry out 35 launches of spacecraft in 2003 to replenish the Russian orbital group. Ivanov says that the "the Russian orbital grouping now consists of about 100 military and dual-purpose spacecraft". "In line with a control target set for the Space Troops, the orbital grouping should have approximately 50 dual-purpose spacecraft by 2006-2008."

19 June 2003 The Justice Ministry states there are 51 political parties with official registration, including 41 that have regional offices in more than half of Russia's constituent territories and are eligible to participate in the forthcoming parliamentary election. Russia currently has 250 public organizations having the right to participate in the forthcoming Duma elections as members of election blocs and alliances.

19 June 2003 First Deputy Chief of the General Staff Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy says the reduction of the Russian armed forces will end in 2003. "We have nearly minimized them to some 1m servicemen. The military command thinks this is the size the Russian armed forces should have for the near, medium-term and long-term prospect ... the structure of the armed forces will be updated nonstop, but the reduction will end in 2003 ... it is most important to decide what kind of nation we would like to be ... if we want to be a regional country of the CIS, we should probably orient the armed forces at such countries as Georgia and Moldova, and

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abolish the Strategic Missile Troops, the Space Troops, the ocean-going fleet and heavy bombers ... but if we want Russia to be a world power, than we should define the military reform as global, with all the attributes of modern armies, such as the army of the United States."

Baluyevskiy says the nation will maintain all components of its nuclear triad (ground, naval and air) after 2012, the deadline for fulfilling the Russian-US Strategic Offensive Reductions Treaty.

19 June 2003 Sergey Shoygu, emergency situations minister and co-chairman of Yedinaya Rossiya's Supreme Council, says Yedinaya Rossiya's membership exceeds 500,000.

19 June 2003 Yabloko party leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy expresses concern over the future of the TVS channel. He believes that the situation around TVS is a continuation of the policy to eliminate independent media outlets in Russia.

20 June 2003 Ten Turkish citizens are expelled from Bashkortostan for illegal activities of religious and nationalist nature.

20 June 2003 A powerful explosion takes place in Staropromyslovskiy district of Grozny near governmental buildings. The blast destroys the building of the Justice Ministry territorial directorate for the Chechen Republic.

21 June 2003 The Security Council meets to discuss the economic situation in the Siberian Federal District.

21 June 2003 Khuseyn Isayev is elected chairman of the State Council of the Chechen Republic.

21 June 2003 Chief of the General Staff Anatoliy Kvashnin warns of the danger of external powers interfering in the country's domestic affairs under the guise of eradicating international terrorism. He says the armed forces should be prepared to counter such interference. He is speaking at a graduation ceremony at the General Staff Academy.

21 June 2003 The Press, Television, Radio and Mass Media Ministry takes TVS off the air.

25 June 2003 The Federation Council approves a bill designed to improve the work of state power bodies in the territories and regions within Russia.

25 June 2003 It is reported that two people have been detained on suspicion of murdering Duma deputy Sergey Yushenkov.

25 June 2003 Presidential economics adviser Andrey Illarionov says Russia may fully repay its foreign debt by 2010, 20 years earlier than originally expected.

25 June 2003 The secretariat of the Russian minister for Chechen affairs, Stanislav Ilyasov states at a meeting of the governmental committee for republican restoration that aggregate expenditure of R4.1bn (135m dollars) to restore the economy and social sphere of Chechnya is specified in a draft federal budget for 2004.

The Chechen State Council proposes holding the election for the first Chechen president in October 2003.

The head of the Chechen government, Anatoliy Popov, says a draft document on the division of powers between the federal centre and the Chechen republic "will by no means run counter to the federal legislation".

25 June 2003 Vladimir Putin says that he does not intend to stand for a third term as president or to conduct Soviet-style centralization in the country.

26 June 2003 Co-chairman of the Liberal Russia party Mikhail Kodanov has been arrested for the murder of Duma deputy Sergey Yushenkov on 17 April in Moscow. Kodanov is an ally of Boris Berezovskiy.

26 June 2003 A poll held by the National Public Opinion Centre at the end of June gives Vladimir Putin an approval rating of 77%. In May it was 70%. The poll involved 1,600 respondents.

28 June 2003 The Chechen State Council elects its governing bodies - the presidium and eight standing commissions.

28 June 2003 Vladimir Putin has endorsed a plan of military exercises in the Russian Far East scheduled for 18-27 August 2003.

29 June 2003 The Pacific Fleet's naval unit comprising the Admiral Panteleyev and Marshal Shaposhnikov large antisubmarine ships and the Vladimir Kolechitskiy military tanker return from the Indra-2003 joint exercises with the Indian navy together with a naval unit representing the Black Sea Fleet.

29 June 2003 Yedinaya Rossiya leader Boris Gрызлов discusses the development of the party's programme in a TV interview.

30 June 2003 Duma chairman Gennadiy Seleznev says he will run in the 2008 presidential election.

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30 June 2003 The leader of the National-Bolshevik Party, Eduard Limonov, is released from prison. He says he will continue to be engaged in politics.

30 June 2003 The head of the Mining Industrialists' supreme council, Yuriy Shafranik, says annual investments in the Russian oil and gas industry must be no smaller than 30bn dollars a year.

30 June 2003 The head of the presidential administration, Aleksandr Voloshin, chairs a meeting of the working group on Chechnya at the Kremlin to discuss ways to promote public consensus in the republic and delimit powers between the federal and Chechen authorities. Chechen leader Akhmad Kadyrov said he will insist on the broadest possible powers and economic benefits for Chechnya.

30 June 2003 First Deputy Chief of the General Staff Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy says the General Staff has begun refining the state armament programme for 2006-2015. Baluyevskiy says the five primary conditions for the fulfilment of the defence policy goals up to 2010, are to create armed forces complying with the modern military threats, to improve the armed forces' quality, to provide proportionate development of various armed services, to eliminate duplicating structures, and to reasonably tailor the command and control of the army with due account for contingency threats. He says Russia has the potential for quick reaction forces. "Ten divisions and six brigades are capable of fulfilling any task at any time without an additional coordination." He says the strength of the Russian armed forces in 2006 will depend on the international geopolitical situation. The Russian armed forces had 1,262,000 servicemen as of 1 January 2003. It is planned to have approximately 1.1m servicemen by 1 January 2005.

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