

Russian Domestic Policy: A Chronology

October-December 2003

October

1 October 2003 Southern Siberia is hit by an earthquake.

1 October 2003 Chechen Prime Minister and acting President Anatoliy Popov returns to Chechnya.

1 October 2003 The Volga radar station is put on combat duty. It is installed near the town of Baranavichi (in Belarus), and is designed for spotting the launches of ballistic missiles and tracking space objects in western and northwestern directions.

1 October 2003 The Defence Ministry (MOD) says "this year only 10.3% of Russian citizens eligible for the draft may be conscripted for military service, while the rest of them will be exempted from military service or entitled to a postponement on a legal basis". The percentage of citizens available for military service is still decreasing: in 2002 it was 11.2%; in 1994 it was 27%. Conscripts account for about 80% of the total organic strength of privates and sergeants. A total of 175,806 people will be conscripted for military service in Russia in October and November, while the overall figure of those enlisted in 2003 will equal just over 10% of the total number of potential draftees. Whilst in excess of 1.2m boys were born in 1987, 1995 saw the birth of only 700,000. If the legislative power does not take this fact into consideration, the strength of other ranks will have decreased by 50-55% by 2010. The MOD says that starting from 2004, an additional reduction in potential draftee numbers (3,000 to 20,000 men per year) will be caused by introducing the law on alternative civilian service.

The head of the main organization and mobilization directorate and deputy chief of the General Staff, Col-Gen Vasiliy Smirnov, says up to 20,000 youths dodge conscription in Russia during the call-up campaign. Smirnov complains that the quality of military conscripts is steadily declining. "The proportion of citizens with minor health problems but fit for military service who have been sent to the armed forces has been 53.4% in 2003. In 2002 the proportion was 51.2%." Over 21% of people conscripted in the army in 2003 had only primary or general secondary education and could not have been sent to training units or schools for junior commanders and specialists. This year 5% of conscripts have a criminal record, over 2% are on a police register and 21% were brought up without parents or in single-parent families.

Kommersant publishes an article on the new military medical examination for conscripts.

1 October 2003 The Sukhoy Aviation Holding Company is registered. Its equity portfolio, 100% federal property, will include 74.5% of shares of the KnAAPO company (Komsomolsk-na-Amure) and NAPO company (Novosibirsk), 14.7% of shares of the IAPO company (Irkutsk), 38% of the Beriyev aircraft research and production corporation (Taganrog) and 50% plus one share of the Sukhoy Design Bureau.

1 October 2003 An article on the politkom.ru website says Vladimir Putin is using Deputy Prime Minister Boris Aleshin as a counterweight against Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov.

2 October 2003 Colonel Yuriy Budanov appeals against his sentence for murdering and raping a Chechen girl.

2 October 2003 Russia's oil output rises to 311,055,000 tonnes in January-September 2003 from 279,537,000 t in the same period in 2002. In 2002, Russia's oil output rose 9% on the year to 379,631,000 t.

2 October 2003 The head of administration of the town of Shali and his son are killed in Chechnya.

The head of the human rights commission under the Russian president, Ella Pamfilova, states that there has been no substantial improvement in solving human rights problems in Chechnya.

2 October 2003 Viktor Ozerov, chairman of the Federation Council Defence and Security Committee, says about one-fifth of Russia's state border is not properly equipped. He says the length of poorly-equipped sections amounts to 13,500 km, which is about 20% of Russia's total border length.

2 October 2003 The Russian Ammunition Agency claims Russia will need over 5 bn dollars to fulfil a special federal programme on chemical weapons destruction.

Vladislav Reznik, deputy chairman of the Duma budget and taxation committee, says the state budget for 2004 will not meet all the requirements of the state armament programme. He says the 22% surplus planned in the budget for 2004 will fund only 70% of the programme, and that, in the future, it would be rather difficult to provide funds simultaneously for military reform and for rearmament.

A conference on military reform and modernisation takes place at the MOD. Vladimir Putin and defence minister Sergey Ivanov speak. Ivanov presents a doctrine for modernising the armed forces.

3 October 2003 The physicist Valentin Danilov, who is charged with committing treason on behalf of China and with fraud, goes on trial in Krasnoyarsk.

3 October 2003 The Office of the Prosecutor-General confirms that searches are being carried out at organizations run by the Yukos oil company.

Yukos chief Mikhail Khodorkovskiy denies rumours of a deal to sell shares in his company to ExxonMobil.

Khodorkovskiy says a deal between shareholders in Yukos and Sibneft to set up the company YukosSibneft is completed.

3 October 2003 The Central Electoral Commission refuses to certify the federal list of the Liberal Russia party for the Duma election.

3 October 2003 Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission Aleksandr Veshnyakov says fifteen international observers have been accredited to observe the elections for Chechen president on 5 October, representing such organizations as the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab League. CIS observers will also be present.

4 October 2003 Chairman of the Chechen government Anatoliy Popov says practically all displaced persons have returned from tent camps to Chechnya.

5 October 2003 The second round of the St Petersburg gubernatorial election takes place. The presidential special representative in the Northwest Federal District, Valentina Matviyenko, wins.

5 October 2003 The presidential election takes place in Chechnya. Akhmad Kadyrov is the winner.

6 October 2003 Head of Yukos oil company Mikhail Khodorkovskiy describes searches which were carried out by the Prosecutor-General's Office on 3 October as "an attempt at intimidation".

Vladimir Putin says that Yukos needs to hold preliminary talks with the Russian government before taking a decision on the sale of part of its shares to US company Exxon.

6 October 2003 Vladimir Putin signs the law on local government. The law comes into effect on 1 January 2006.

6 October 2003 Deputy prime minister and finance minister, Aleksey Kudrin says the government is ready to declassify some further items of defence spending, including the breakdown by types of spending, such as the purchase of armaments, means of communication, ships and vessels. The possibility of further declassification - on individual items and the number of purchases - will be studied.

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6 October 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says the 2003 grain harvest will be about 70m tonnes.

7 October 2003 The Duma begins its autumn session.

Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov calls for the Federation Council to be elected.

7 October 2003 Police Col-Gen Sergey Shchadrin is appointed deputy interior minister and head of the Public Security Service. Shchadrin, 54, was head of the Interior Ministry (MVD)'s Main Directorate for the Central Federal District.

7 October 2003 The Chechnya electoral commission officially declares Akhmat Kadyrov president of the Chechen Republic. 499,325 votes were cast, representing 87.7% of the registered electorate. Kadyrov received 403,490 votes, or 80.84% of the total. His nearest rival was Abdullah Bugayev with 5.77% of the vote.

7 October 2003 Economist Irina Yasina says capital flight from Russia amounted to 7.7 bn dollars in July-September 2003.

Businessman Konstantin Borovoy warns that Russia could face increasing capital flight if the government's attitude towards business does not change.

8 October 2003 The Finance Ministry says Russia's foreign debt amounts to R3,666 bn, or 120.8 bn US dollars.

8 October 2003 Lt-Gen Viktor Denisov, commander of the 61st Air Army of the supreme command is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*. He says the Russian government has decided to scrap strategic military air transport.

8 October 2003 The Duma introduces changes to the law concerning venues of alternative civilian service.

9 October 2003 Vladimir Putin says Russia reserves the right to use preventive strikes: "If the practice of preventive strikes continues to expand and strengthen in the world, then de facto Russia reserves the right to such actions ... We are against this, but we reserve the right to inflict preventive strikes." He says Russia will continue research into missile defence systems.

10 October 2003 The president of the Moscow chamber of lawyers, Genri Reznik, protests against the actions of the Prosecutor-General's Office in searching the office of Yukos lawyer Anton Drel.

10 October 2003 The Duma passes amendments to the current law "On education" in their first reading. As a result, compulsory basic military training may be introduced in all Russian's standard and vocational schools in the near future.

10 October 2003 Deputy Economic Development and Trade Minister Yuriy Isayev says the total amount of accumulated foreign investments in Russia's economy stands at 50 bn dollars. In the first half of 2003, they amounted to 12.7 bn dollars, up 51% on the year. Foreign direct investments (FDIs) in Russia rose 35.5% on the year in the first half. FDIs account for 20% of total foreign investments in Russia, while the remaining 80% is made up of loans and other attracted corporate funds. About 50% of all investments are concentrated in Moscow and Moscow Region.

The IMF says an IMF mission which visited Moscow from 2 to 10 October to assess the development of the Russian economy notes a considerable improvement in the macro-economic situation and believes that in 2003 Russia's real growth in GDP should total 6.25%.

10 October 2003 Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov comes to Moscow to meet Vladimir Putin.

10 October 2003 Col-Gen Vasiliy Smirnov, chief of the General Staff mobilization directorate and deputy chief of the General Staff says the General Staff does not support the initiative of the Ground Troops' staff to tailor a permanent peacekeeping brigade or formation. He says no such units will be established in the Russian Ground Troops in the near future.

10 October 2003 An article in Dagestan newspaper *Novoye Delo* by Ruslan Kurbanov says Dagestan is heading towards war.

11 October 2003 The new draft military policy paper is published in *Krasnaya Zvezda*.

13 October 2003 Yedinaya Rossiya and the Social Democratic Party of Russia sign a cooperation agreement for the Duma elections in one-seat constituencies.

13 October 2003 The MVD begins a probe into Sibneft.

13 October 2003 Energy Ministry sources give the following figures for Gazprom production January to August 2003. Domestic natural gas supplies increased 5.6% on the year in January-August to 235.333bn cubic metres. Gazprom supplied 18.588bn cubic metres of gas to Ukraine in the period, up 3.2% on the year; 1.869bn cubic metres to Lithuania, up 31.5% on the year; 1.038bn cubic metres to Latvia, up 61.5% on the year; and 483.5m cubic metres to Estonia, up 26.6% on the year. Gas exports to Moldova dropped 38.8% on the year to 854.2m cubic metres, and those to Belarus fell 4% on the year to 7.344bn cubic metres. Gas exports outside the CIS rose 3.3% on the year, reaching 88.023bn cubic metres.

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13 October 2003 President of Ingushetia Murat Zyazikov says about 12,000 Chechen refugees who currently live in Ingushetia wish to return to Chechnya. He speaks against the idea of Chechen-Ingush reunification. Zyazikov says 54,000 refugees live in rented accommodation and in private houses in Ingushetia. He says there are over 12,000 refugees from North Osetia in Ingushetia.

13 October 2003 Andrey Nikolayev, chairman of the Duma defence committee, says the armed forces will need about R600bn for operational expenses in 2004. The draft budget for 2004 allocates about R412bn (13.6bn dollars) for the operational expenses of the armed forces.

14 October 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a decree relieving Interior Minister of Ingushetia Police Col Akhmet Pogorov of his post.

14 October 2003 A group of Duma deputies sends a letter to Vladimir Putin questioning the legitimacy of the actions by the Office of the Prosecutor-General with regard to Yukos. The letter has been signed by Sergey Mitrokhin, Aleksey Arbatov, Valeriy Ostanin, Pavel Krasheninnikov, Boris Nadezhdin, Aleksandr Barannikov, Yuliy Rybakov and Nikolay Gonchar.

14 October 2003 Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov says Russia should become the initiator in uniting the world community in the fight against international terrorism. "This fight will not be fully effective so long as a network of recruitment centres exists practically openly in many countries, and terrorists undergo training and receive medical treatment and take breaks in states adjoining Russia, and so long as money goes on pouring in to feed and arm them and the bandit emissaries are received by statesmen in developed countries ... an international anti-terror regime, the mechanism for which should be proposed by Russia, means that a universal barrier will come down on the terrorist international."

Boris Gryzlov says Russia is planning to carry out a reform of foreign travel passports. "We also discussed the question of the forthcoming reform of foreign travel passports. Over the course of this year both the countries of the European Union and the countries of G8 have discussed at interior minister level the problems of the level of protection of foreign passports...according to the plan of the countries of the EU and G8, at the end of next year it will be possible for citizens of other states to cross borders only if they are in possession of passports with the new protection measures." About 8m Russian citizens currently hold foreign travel passports.

14 October 2003 Col Aleksey Vasilyev, the head of the engineering service with the Interior Ministry (MVD)'s 46th Brigade, says there are almost no minefields left in Chechnya.

14 October 2003 An Institute for New Information Technologies is to be established in Moscow as part of the Federal Security Service (FSB) under an order signed by Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov.

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14 October 2003 Viktor Ozerov, chairman of the Federation Council Security and Defence Committee, claims the federal programme for disposing of chemical weapons will be underfunded by 50% in 2004.

15 October 2003 The Duma passes a draft law declassifying the mineral reserves of platinum and platinum group metals, and the volumes of extraction and use of platinum, platinum group metals and uncut diamonds. Information on the reserves of precious metals and gems in Russia's state repository Gokhran and the Russian Central Bank will remain a state secret.

15 October 2003 A VTsIOM-A poll reports that if the Duma election was held next Sunday, Yedinaya Rossiya and the CPRF would win 26% of the vote each. Other parties would be as follows:

Liberal Democratic Party	5%
Yabloko	5%
URF	4%
Rodina	3%

15 October 2003 The Duma passes the 2004 draft budget in its second reading. The budget was voted for by 236 Duma members, with 157 MPs voting against and one abstaining from the vote.

15 October 2003 Maj-Gen Viktor Kozhushko, chief of the draft section in the General Staff mobilization directorate, says military recruitment offices need to recruit another 28,000 people to fulfil the autumn 2003 conscription plan.

16 October 2003 Raf Shakirov, 45, is appointed editor-in-chief of *Izvestiya*.

17 October 2003 The Duma passes presidential amendments to the federal law "On citizenship of the Russian Federation" in its first reading. The amendments provide above all for simplifying the procedure for former citizens of the USSR seeking to obtain Russian citizenship.

The Duma at its plenary session adopts in the first and third, final, reading presidential amendments to a string of laws aimed at creating a legal basis for accepting foreign citizens for military service on a contract basis in the Russian Federation.

17 October 2003 The Council of Muftis of Russia holds a conference in Moscow on Islamic unity.

17 October 2003 The Prosecutor-General's Office has charged Vasiliy Shakhnovskiy, the head of the Yukos-Moskva company, with tax evasion.

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17 October 2003 Vladimir Putin says that the federal centre is willing to sign with the Chechen Republic a treaty on division of powers with broad autonomous rights for Chechnya, and also to assist in the election of a Chechen parliament.

19 October 2003 Akhmat Kadyrov is inaugurated as Chechen president.

20 October 2003 The Agriculture Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says Russian farmers have harvested almost 73m tonnes of grain.

20 October 2003 Yukos chief Mikhail Khodorkovskiy says the joint YukosSibneft oil company will start operations as of 1 January 2004.

20 October 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Moscow has no plans at present to rule out pre-emptive military strikes.

20 October 2003 Various Chechen NGOs issue an appeal to the international community to protect human rights in Chechnya.

21 October 2003 Minister for Nationalities Policy Vladimir Zorin discusses migration policy. He says between 1989 and October 2002, 11 million people arrived in Russia and 5 million left it.

22 October 2003 Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov says in 2003 Russian banks have used fake contracts to move 9bn dollars out of the country.

22 October 2003 The Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs, small and medium businesses and the Opora Rossii and Delovaya Rossiya organizations send a letter to Vladimir Putin in connection with deteriorating relations between the authorities and business.

22 October 2003 The Moscow prosecutor's office states that within the framework of the criminal case on the hostage seizure at Moscow's Dubrovka theatre (October 2002)], charges have been lodged in absentia against Shamil Basayev, Khasan Zakayev and Gerikhan Dudayev. The office states that the investigation into five of those accused of the Dubrovka hostage-seizure was complete. A Khaskhanov, Alikhan Mezhiyev, Akhyad Mezhiyev, A Murdalov and Kh Sobraliyev are accused under five articles of the Russian Criminal Code, including terrorism and murder.

Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov says the illegal trade in oil products still remains one of the sources of funding for illegal armed militants in the Chechen Republic.

Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov appoints Ziyad Sabsabi, 39, the head of the presidential and government administration of the republic.

23 October 2003 Yabloko states that during a search of the Strategic Communications Agency by the Prosecutor-General's Office and the FSB a number of documents and electronic media owned by the party were confiscated. The Strategic Communications Agency carries out political consultative work for the Yabloko election campaign. Grigory Yavlinskiy says FSB staff and prosecutors were preventing deputies from Yabloko's Duma faction, Sergey Mitrokhin and Aleksey Melnikov, from leaving the building.

23 October 2003 Head of the Moscow Helsinki Group Lyudmila Alekseyeva says disappearances of people remain the main problem in Chechnya. This organization has just made a report on human rights in Chechnya.

24 October 2003 Minister of Economic Development and Trade German Gref says Russia's GDP growth in the first nine months of 2003 was 6.5%.

24 October 2003 Aleksey Arbatov, deputy chairman of the Duma's Defence Committee, says a modernization of the Russian armed forces should start with scrapping existing military districts and shifting to unified structures and commands. He also says that it is of paramount importance to establish rapid-reaction forces based on the Airborne Troops with corresponding command and control and airlift assets, as well as to make special purpose forces an independent combat arm. He says the size of the armed forces should not exceed 600,000-800,000 people.

24 October 2003 The UN Human Rights Committee completes its consideration of Russia's fifth periodic report on its fulfilment of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

25 October 2003 Head of Yukos oil company Mikhail Khodorkovskiy is arrested. He is remanded in custody for two months, charged with tax evasion and other financial crimes.

The URF appeals to party leaders to meet Vladimir Putin to discuss the Khodorkovskiy case. URF leader Boris Nemtsov says that uncontrolled special services present a real threat to Russia's future and its prosperity.

United Energy Systems (UES) head Anatoliy Chubays says that the Russian business community is extremely concerned at the Yukos situation. The board of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs has an emergency session. They, Delovaya Rossiya and Opora Rossii issue a statement criticising the law enforcement agencies' activities against Russian business.

26 October 2003 The first course in Russia to train conscripts for alternative service has opened in Perm.

27 October 2003 Vladimir Putin comments on the arrest of the head of Yukos, Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, at a meeting of the Cabinet of Ministers. He says he will

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have no special meeting with business leaders to discuss the arrest. "I ask the government not to be drawn into this discussion."

27 October 2003 Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov says that he is ready to create in Chechnya "a special coordinating body for cooperation with human rights organizations, including nongovernmental ones". He has just returned from Geneva, where he took part in the 79th session of the UN Human Rights Committee.

27 October 2003 Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoygu says he is not ruling out the possibility of introducing external financial management from Moscow in Kamchatka.

27 October 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov briefs Vladimir Putin on the armed forces' preparation for the winter period.

Colonel Vyacheslav Sedov is appointed chief of the MOD's press service and press secretary of the defence minister. Sedov's predecessor, Col Nikolay Deryabin, was fired on 8 September.

28 October 2003 Preliminary data on the 2002 census is made available. Russia's population stands at 145.2m and is the world's seventh largest. 80% of the population are Russian (116 million), followed by Tatars, with Ukrainians in third place. The average age of Russia's inhabitants is 37.7 years. The number of able-bodied citizens between 16 and 60 years of age is 89m, or 61% of the population.

28 October 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On approving the statute of the State Border Commission and its composition".

28 October 2003 *Ekho Moskvy* says that some 3,500 people have gone missing in Chechnya since the launch of the second Chechen campaign.

28 October 2003 A poll by the Agency of Regional Political Studies (an affiliate of the ROMIR Monitoring) asks who would you vote for if there were a presidential election on Sunday.

Vladimir Putin	68%
Gennady Zyuganov	5%
Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	3%
Grigoriy Yavlinskiy	1%
Boris Nemtsov	1%
Undecided	20%

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Support for parties is:

Yedinaya Rossiya	28%
CPRF	12%
URF	6%
Yabloko	5%
LDPR	5%
Agrarian Party	2%

13% of those questioned have still not decided whom to vote for. 15% of Russian citizens will not turn out for the Duma elections, while 8% will vote against all. 1,500 inhabitants of 40 regions were polled.

29 October 2003 Interior Minister Boris Gryzlov saysd there was nothing illegal in the treatment of the Yukos oil company. He says revising privatization is inadmissible.

29 October 2003 FSB director Nikolay Patrushev says the special services of CIS members must step up cooperation in order to cut off terrorist funding.

29 October 2003 The Federation Council approves a law which lays down the legal foundations for non-Russian citizens to serve in the Russian armed forces on a contract basis.

29 October 2003 Defence Minsister Sergey Ivanov visits the Plesetsk cosmodrome. He says Russia may leave the Baykonur cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

30 October 2003 Aleksandr Voloshin resigns as head of the presidential administration. Vladimir Putin signs a decree to appoint Dmitriy Medvedev head of the presidential administration and Dmitriy Kozak first deputy head of the presidential administration.

30 October 2003 The Prosecutor-General's office sequesters 44% of Yukos shares.

Vladimir Putin meets leading Russian and foreign investment bankers to reassure them over the Yukos affair.

31 October 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov does not see any connection between the reshuffle in the leadership of the president's administration and the possibility of any reshuffle occurring in the government.

31 October 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov expresses concern over the Yukos affair. "As regards arrests of businessmen, my position is known. I have expressed it more than once and I have not changed this position. As regards the freezing of shares, especially those of an open joint-stock company traded on exchanges, this is a new phenomenon. I am telling you that I am very deeply

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concerned about this phenomenon. It is difficult to say at the moment what the implications of this might be. I would rather not give my evaluation right now because this is a completely new way of taking action. My concern about this is deep."

The Prosecutor-General's Office unfreezes part of the Yukos shares impounded on 30 October.

The Office of the Prosecutor-General completes its investigation into the criminal case of the head of the Yukos-Moskva company, Vasiliy Shakhnovskiy. He is accused of large scale tax invasion.

31 October 2003 Vladimir Putin meets the leaders of Perm Region and the Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area and welcomes their decision to merge. A referendum on the merger of the region will be held in December 2003.

November

1 November 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a decree appointing Ilya Klebanov as his plenipotentiary representative in the Northwestern Federal District and releasing him from the post of minister of industry, science and technology.

2 November 2003 A delegation of the Siberian Military District signs a plan of joint operations during its visit to Mongolia.

3 November 2003 Mikhail Khodorkovskiy resigns as Yukos boss.

3 November 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a decree on the social and economic development of Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area and Perm Region.

4 November 2003 The new Yukos head is Simon Kukes, who has US citizenship. He says he will not change the company's strategy and will continue the merger process with Sibneft.

4 November 2003 Vladimir Putin says Chechnya will have broad autonomy.

President of Chechnya Akhmat Kadyrov appoints the key deputy prime ministers and ministers to the new government. Anatoliy Popov remains as prime minister.

Severnyy Kavkaz reports Mukhamed Tsikanov, deputy minister of the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, as saying that R3.5bn (117m dollars) have been earmarked for the restoration of Chechnya in 2004.

4 November 2003 Rosoboroneksport states that the plan for military exports in the first half of 2003 has been overachieved by more than 30%. Rosoboroneksport's

portfolio of contracts amounts to about 12bn US dollars. Rosoboroneksport achieved a record in 2002, exporting arms and military equipment worth over 4bn dollars.

Vladimir Putin heads a meeting of the commission on military-technical cooperation. He says in the first seven months of 2003 Russia supplied more than 3bn-dollars' worth of military products abroad, meeting 70% of the year's target. He says it is "extremely important to develop a single strategy for protecting Russia's intellectual property in the realm of military and technical cooperation".

4 November 2003 The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons gives Russia two more years to destroy 20% of its combat toxic substances. The quantity has to be eliminated by 29 April 2007.

4 November 2003 Dmitriy Rogozin, the chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee, says in an interview with *Kaliningradskaya Pravda* that Kaliningrad Region should be an independent federal territory.

4 November 2003 Press minister Mikhail Lesin is interviewed in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* on press freedom.

5 November 2003 Co-chairman of the URF Anatoliy Chubays appeals to the chairman of Yabloko, Grigory Yavlinskiy, to start the process of convergence with the aim of subsequent unification of the two parties.

Yabloko deputy chairman Sergey Mitrokhin says the leaders of the Yabloko party do not think it is possible to unite with the URF.

5 November 2003 Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov tasks the law-enforcement agencies with neutralizing illegal armed formations by spring 2004.

5 November 2003 Chief of the General Staff Army Gen Anatoliy Kvashnin says the General Staff has completed reform of its main directorates and other management structures.

6 November 2003 Vladimir Putin says there will not be a review of the results of privatization in Russia. He says the case against Yukos is a fight against corruption.

6 November 2003 The Krasnoyarsk Territory court upholds a legal challenge mounted by the Prosecutor-General's Office against the election of the former head of the Yukos-Moscow management company, Vasiliy Shakhnovskiy, as a senator representing Evenkia. The Federation Council will not endorse Shakhnovskiy as a senator.

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6 November 2003 The president of the Chechen Republic, Akhmat Kadyrov, holds his first cabinet meeting since becoming president.

6 November 2003 Ground Troops C-in-C and Deputy Defence Minister Nikolay Kormiltsev is interviewed in *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kuryer*. He says Russian military experts have developed so-called nontraditional tactics on the basis of the experience of two Chechen campaigns.

6 November 2003 A police raid takes place on the office of the Soros Foundation in Moscow.

6 November 2003 Aslan Maskhadov calls for a third party (either other countries or organisations) to take part in negotiations between Moscow and the Chechen separatist leadership.

10 November 2003 Vladimir Putin says everyone must be equal before the law. He says the state will continue its anticorruption drive.

10 November 2003 Vladimir Zorin, the minister in charge of nationality issues gives information on the 2002 census. Most of the people within Russia regard themselves as ethnic Russians (80% or 116m), and also as before the second most numerous nationality are the Tatars (5,560,000). Other nationalities exceeding 1m are the Ukrainians (2,940,000), Bashkirs (1,670,000) and Chuvash, Chechens and Armenians. A further 23 nationalities have a numerical strength of over 400,000, including Mordovians, Belarusians, Kazakhs, Udmurts, Russian Germans and Osetians.

10 November 2003 Dmitriy Medvedev, head of the Russian president's administration, signs the directive "On distributing commitments between deputy heads of the Russian Federation president's administration and other high-ranking officials in the Russian Federation president's administration".

11 November 2003 Vladimir Putin sets out the priorities for local government reform.

11 November 2003 The Moscow city court turns down an appeal against the Moscow Basmannyy court's decision on the restraining measure against Mikhail Khodorkovskiy.

11 November 2003 Perm Region governor Yuriy Trutnev and head of administration of the Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area Gennadiy Savelev sign an agreement on the legal position of the Area in a single Russian Federation constituent part. The document envisages the special status of the Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area within the future Perm Region. The residents of Perm Region

and the Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area will take the final decision on a merger on 7 December in a referendum.

11 November 2003 Lt-Gen Vyacheslav Dadonov, the deputy Commander-in-Chief of the MVD troops, says the total numerical strength of the Combined Force in the North Caucasus is currently 80,000 men, of whom 25,000 are MVD troops. Dadonov says the MVD troops carry out 70% of the combat operations in Chechnya. He says the Combined Force will be reduced in size as the security situation in Chechnya returns to normal, with surplus units and subunits being withdrawn. Most of the work in Chechnya is being carried out by professionals - special forces and reconnaissance subunits.

Dadonov says a total of 78 servicemen of Interior Ministry (MVD) forces have been killed in Chechnya in 2003. In 2003 units of the Interior Ministry (MVD) forces in the North Caucasus have killed and neutralized in excess of 1,000 guerrillas, destroyed over 1,000 arms caches, and confiscated more than 1,400 illegal arms and in excess of 60,000 munitions.

11 November 2003 Aleksandr Nozdrachev, director general of the Russian Conventional Weapons Agency says: "If the trends in the Russian defence industry, which have held true for the past 3.5 years, are maintained, the Russian Conventional Weapons Agency will increase its production output fourfold by 2010".

11 November 2003 Vyacheslav Kulebyakin, state secretary and deputy director-general of the Russian Agency for Munitions, says implementation of the agreements reached at the G8 summit in Kananaskis in the global partnership framework is slow and does not ensure the level of work that is necessary for meeting tough deadlines imposed by the chemical weapons prohibition convention.

11 November 2003 Maj-Gen Viktor Kozhushko, head of the conscription department of the General Staff's mobilization directorate, says the General Staff has defined a temporary procedure for alternative military service.

11 November 2003 Anatoly Chubays is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* about the Yukos affair.

Deputy Prosecutor-General Vladimir Kolesnikov is reported in *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* as expressing regret that former Yukos chief Mikhail Khodorkovskiy faces a maximum prison sentence of no more than 10 years.

12 November 2003 Vladimir Putin appoints the new head of the president's administration Dmitriy Medvedev and the newly-appointed presidential representative in the Northwestern Federal District Ilya Klebanov members of the Security Council.

12 November 2003 Deputy Prosecutor-General Vladimir Kolesnikov says a court decision to keep tycoon Mikhail Khodorkovskiy in custody was "the best decision at the moment" and added that he might stay there for anything from two months to two years depending on how the investigations proceeded.

The Prosecutor's Office of Tomsk Region opens a criminal investigation into the case of joint stock company Tomsneft, which is owned by Yukos.

12 November 2003 The Russian government agrees to reveal some of the items of the 2004 military budget. Duma defence committee deputy chairman Aleksey Arbatov says the government has agreed amendments which reveal the financing of the item "Reprocessing and destruction of armaments, including the implementation of international agreements".

12 November 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a raft of law amendments which set out legal grounds for foreigners willing to serve in the Russian army on a contract basis.

12 November 2003 The press service of the industry, science and technology ministry says about 60 integrated companies will be created in the Russian defence industry. Russia's defence industry includes over 1,600 firms of eight specialities (atomic energy ministry organizations not included) in 70 Russian regions. Defence companies produce 100% of Russia's aircraft and spacecraft, optical instruments, electronics and industrial explosives; 90% of ships and radio electronics, 70% of communication assets, 60% of hi-tech medical equipment, and 30% of hi-tech equipment for fuel and energy industry. About half the products are exported.

13 November 2003 Boris Nemtsov is interviewed in *Novaya Gazeta* about the Yukos affair.

13 November 2003 Vladimir Putin chairs a joint session of the State Council presidium and of the Security Council. He announces the need to create a single security system in Russia. "At present there is a need for a clear and comprehensive state policy in the sphere of protecting population and potentially dangerous facilities from man-made, natural and terrorist threats. Such a policy has to meet modern requirements ... all components of the security system should be developed in detail and linked into a single system. And the main thing in this sphere is to divide powers and corresponding responsibilities between the structures responsible for security of people and installations."

13 November 2003 The former head of the FSB and now deputy chairman of the Duma committee on security, Nikolay Kovalev, accuses the leadership of the CPRF of preparing "a conspiracy against Russia" together with businessman Boris Berezovskiy.

13 November 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a law on introducing amendments and additions to the federal law "On Russian citizenship" passed by the Duma on 17 October and approved by the Federation Council on 29 October.

13 November 2003 Anatoliy Chubays, says that the URF has received a refusal from Grigory Yavlinskiy to merge with Yabloko.

13 November 2003 Deputy Minister of Natural Resources Ivan Glumov says Russia plans to increase the production of oil by nearly 50% by 2020. He says the development of deposits in Russia's continental shelf will play a significant role in this. "The potential capabilities of Russia's continental shelf are immense ... no less than 4m square kilometres out of the total shelf area of 6m square kilometres are promising as far as the deposits of oil and natural gas are concerned. According to preliminary estimates, the total potential of the hydrocarbon geological resources in Russia's shelf is equivalent to more than 130bn tonnes of fuel. It is about 25% of the world's hydrocarbon resources. Largely thanks to these reserves, we plan to increase the production of oil in our country from 380m tonnes in 2003 to 520m tonnes in 2020 and increase the recovery of natural gas from 595bn cubic metres in 2003 to 730bn cubic metres in 2020."

13 November 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says the slow implementation of the federal targeted programme for reform of the defence industry is hampering the creation of large vertically integrated structures. The government is meeting to examine progress in implementing the federal programme for reform of the defence industry over the five-year period of 2002-06. So far only four large vertically integrated structures have been created in Russia's defence industry, while the government had planned to create 40 such structures.

Valeriy Toryanin has been appointed general director and general designer of the Russian aircraft-building corporation, MiG.

13 November 2003 Maj-Gen Vladimir Filippov, chief of Russia's NBC (nuclear, biological and chemical) forces is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*. He says NBC terror attacks are something that cannot be ruled out.

13 November 2003 A poll by the Public Opinion foundation reports that Vladimir Putin's work as president was considered successful by 57% and unsuccessful by 12%.

Putin's most significant achievement was increases in pensions and benefits and prompt payment of wages (12%). Judging from the opinion poll, his "successful domestic policy" also received approval, including "the fight against corruption, and the social policy and the reform of the army" (11%). There were positive assessments of the president's foreign policy, his achievements in "stabilizing the situation in the country and in ensuring its economic growth" (6% each). Some of those polled expressed a negative attitude to the counterterrorist operation in Chechnya (8%), living standards which remain low (7%), "the sinking of the Kursk submarine", ongoing terrorism, inadequate fight against corruption and "a soft attitude to oligarchs" (2% each). A total of 1,500 people from 44 regions took part in the poll which was carried out at the beginning of November 2003.

14 November 2003 Vladimir Putin addresses the 13th congress of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs.

14 November 2003 President Akhmat Kadyrov says the legitimate authorities of Chechnya may hold talks with the former leader of the republic, Aslan Maskhadov, only after he appears in court. He refuses to have any talks with Shamil Basayev. Kadyrov says he supports the idea of unifying Chechnya with Ingushetia, but he insists the peoples of the two republics should resolve this issue through referendums.

The commander of the North Caucasus Military District, Vladimir Boldyrev, says the grouping of forces in Chechnya has reached the optimum numerical strength.

Akhmed Zakayev is interviewed in *Kommersant*.

An official representative of the Office of the Russian Prosecutor-General, Nataliya Vishnyakova, says Chechen separatist envoy Akhmed Zakayev is still on the international wanted list and the charges against him have not been dropped.

Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov meets Vladimir Putin in Moscow. This is his first meeting with the Russian president since his election as leader of Chechnya.

14 November 2003 In an article in *Kommersant*, Boris Berezovskiy denies claims made by Nikolay Kovalev, former head of the FSB and deputy chairman of the State Duma security committee, that he is plotting with the CPRF against Russia.

17 November 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says: "The state, I believe, should not lose control over all strategic branches of the economy. This does not mean it should interfere in their operations but it should control them, know the situation and understand in which direction these branches are developing." He says the state must "advocate the interests of Russian companies in the foreign policy arena".

17 November 2003 Leonid Nevzlin, the rector of the Russian State Humanitarian University, resigns. He says it is because he is part owner of Yukos and he does not want government pressure on the university.

The Justice Ministry's main directorate for the city of Moscow begins an investigation into whether the actions of Mikhail Khodorkovskiy's lawyer, Olga Artyukhova, are in line with the federal law "On the activity of lawyers" and with the lawyer's status.

17 November 2003 *Profil* publishes a profile of the new head of the presidential administration, Dmitriy Medvedev.

17 November 2003 CPRF Duma deputy Leonid Mayevskiy says Boris Berezovskiy and the leadership of the CPRF have held talks on funding the CPRF's election campaign.

CPRF deputy Leonid Mayevskiy says does not understand why the Communist leaders think it necessary to deny they held talks with Berezovskiy, in which he,

too, took part in October 2002 in London. They discussed Berezovskiy possibly backing the CPRF.

17 November 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin reports to Vladimir Putin on the forming of the country's strategic financial reserve - the stabilization fund. According to Kudrin, the fund will get revenue surplus to the federal budget generated when oil prices exceed the level of 20 dollars per barrel and will also receive remainders of federal budget funds.

18 November 2003 Vyacheslav Smirnov, head of the Audit Chamber's directorate for cooperation with state authorities, says the Audit Chamber has found irregularities in the economic activities of the Sibneft oil company.

18 November 2003 The Duma adopts an appeal to Prosecutor-General Vladimir Ustinov, asking him to carry out a check to see whether the Rosagropromstroy corporation and its subsidiary enterprises and companies observed Russian laws in their use of federal budget funds in view of evidence that these funds had not been used for their designated purpose. Rosagropromstroy corporation is headed by Viktor Vidmanov, one of the financial sponsors of the CPRF.

18 November 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says that "if we add up all the companies in which the government has over 50% stakes, such as Russian Railways, Aeroflot, Gazprom and some other companies, we will see that the state owns or controls over 50% of the economy." He says railways, oil and gas production, the defence sector and the economic infrastructure should remain under government control.

Investment in the Russian economy in 2003 is seen at 68bn dollars or 20-22% of the nation's GDP, up from 57bn dollars or 17% GDP in 2002.

Vladimir Putin has signed a decree on the Rosoboroneksport federal state unitary enterprise. Under the decree, the ownership rights to Rosoboroneksport will be exercised by the Russian Federation committee on military-technical cooperation with foreign countries.

18 November 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov signs a government ruling to lower crude oil export duty to 31.2 dollars per tonne effective 1 December 2003, from the current 33.8 dollars per tonne.

18 November 2003 Vladimir Putin opens a conference of senior officers of the Russian armed forces. Putin talks of the need to create incentives to attract people into contract service. Defence minister Sergey Ivanov also discusses military reform. He says reforms have reduced armed forces manpower by 30,000 in 2003 so that by 1 January 2004 it will amount to 1,132,000. A federal programme for the transition to manning a number of units and combined units with soldiers under contract in 2004 to 2007 has been endorsed by the government. This will lead to 147,000 soldiers and NCOs being switched to contractual service in the next four years, he says, and as a result the Russian armed forces will have 244,000

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professional servicemen by 2008. "On the whole, the armed forces are only 70-85% equipped with working items of basic armament and military hardware. The share of modern weaponry is below 20%."

19 November 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev say the grain harvest for 2003 is 71.5 million tonnes. He says Russia has enough grain reserves to last through till harvest 2004-2005. Russia can afford to sell 5m tonnes of grain. The government has already exported 3m tonnes.

20 November 2003 The State Statistics Committee states that Russia's grain harvest to 1 November 2003 amounted to 71.5m tonnes in bunker weight, that is, prior to cleaning and drying, or 23% less than a year earlier when output stood at 92.6m tonnes.

Grains, excluding corn (maize), had been taken by that date from 87% of the planted area, the committee said. Corn crops were taken from 55% of the area. Big farms accounted for 84.6% of the output, while small farms accounted for 14.2% and the remainder was produced by individual farmers.

20 November 2003 Interfax reports that Russia is losing about R25bn (838.64m dollars) a year because of inefficient functioning of the MOD's higher educational establishments. About 20% of cadets are expelled from military academies and up to 10,000 graduates of colleges and academies retire soon after graduation. The MOD maintains 57 higher educational establishments and 22 affiliates that train a total of about 15,000 servicemen in 400 professions.

20 November 2003 The Public Opinion fund has carried out a poll among 3,000 people in 63 regions on their voting intentions in the forthcoming Duma elections. The results are:

Yedinaya Rossiya	20%
CPRF	15%
LDPR	6%
URF	5%
Yabloko	4%
Rodina	3%

12% of Russians have no intention of voting in the election, while 6% are going to vote against all the candidates. However, 24 respondents in the poll have not yet decided which way to vote.

20 November 2003 Goskomstat states that Russia's permanent resident population fell in January-September 2003 by 623,000, or by 0.4%, and stood at 144.3m people at 1 October. Over the period 1,122,400 people were born in Russia and 1,774,000 people died, which was 75,000 and 43,800 more respectively than the figures for the same period of 2002. There was an increase in the number of births in 83 constituent parts of the Russian Federation, and the growth in the number of deaths continued in 76 regions. Overall, deaths exceeded births by a factor of 1.6, although in some regions this factor was between 2.0 and 2.8.

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The number of internal migrants within Russia increased by 8,500 or 0.6% compared to the same period of 2002. A slowing in the growth of migration was observed between Russia and practically all the member states of the CIS, with the exception of Turkmenistan. The only state with fewer people leaving for Russia than arriving from Russia was Belarus.

20 November 2003 Army Gen Nikolay Kormiltsev, commander-in-chief of the Ground Troops and deputy minister of defence, is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*. He discusses training exercises in 2003.

An article in the *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* discusses the idea proposed by defence minister Sergey Ivanov of incorporating the Russian Federal Special Construction Service (Spetsstroy) and the Railway Troops into the MOD.

20 November 2003 The Dagestani newspaper *Chernovik* discusses the nature of Russian federalism.

21 November 2003 MVD troops in Sverdlovsk Region are conducting a military training exercise to tackle a terrorist attack on a nuclear plant.

Lt-Gen Yevgeniy Lazebin, head of the MVD troops' combat training directorate says the development of the new combat training regulations is being completed in the MVD Troops. He says "the new combat training regulations are expected to be published next year, so that in 2005 the Interior Ministry Troops may start training in compliance with this document."

21 November 2003 The Constitutional Assembly of Buryatia introduces amendments to the fundamental chapters of the republic's constitution.

21 November 2003 Sergey Ignatyev, chairman of the Central Bank, says at the Duma that in January-September 2003, foreign investments in Russia's private business amounted to 18.4bn dollars, which is twice as much as in 2002. GDP increased by 7% in the first six months of the year as compared with January-June 2002. GDP growth in 2003 is expected to reach 5.9% (3.5-4.4% growth was forecast). Industrial production growth is estimated at 5.9%. Real earnings of the population are expected to go up by 9.2%.

22 November 2003 Boris Gрызlov states that there are currently 700,000 members and 2 million supporters in the ranks of the Yedinaya Rossiya party.

22 November 2003 An unsuccessful assassination attempt is made on Col Sultan Satuyev, the Chechen deputy interior minister and the chief of the public security police in Groznyy.

24 November 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a decree establishing a council on combating corruption under the president of the Russian Federation

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24 November 2003 The Moscow bar association adopts a resolution condemning what it regards as illegal actions of the Prosecutor-General's Office against defence lawyers acting for Yukos.

24 November 2003 Russia's first holding centre for foreign citizens being deported opens in Kazan.

24 November 2003 The Economic Development and Trade Ministry reports that GDP increased by 6.6% on the year in January-October 2003.

24 November 2003 Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov says that a substantial reward will be paid to anybody who helps neutralize Aslan Maskhadov and Shamil Basayev.

24 November 2003 The Supreme Court of Bashkortostan quashes a ruling by Ufa's Leninskiy District Court which suspended the issue of presidential candidate credentials to Sergey Veremeyenko, thereby restoring his status as a candidate.

24 November 2003 The deputy chief of the General Staff of the Russian armed forces, Lt-Gen Vasiliy Smirnov, says in the course of 2004 "between 1,000 and 1,500 foreign citizens may enter service in the Russian army".

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that the MOD plans to build 23,000 flats in 2004.

25 November 2003 Boris Gryzlov, chairman of the supreme council of Yedinaya Rossiya describes the programme to double Russia's GDP as "ambitious, but necessary". He says Yedinaya Rossiya will nominate Vladimir Putin at the forthcoming presidential elections in 2004.

25 November 2003 The Office of the Prosecutor-General of the Russian Federation has completed its preliminary investigation as part of the criminal case against Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, former head of the Yukos oil company.

25 November 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says the Russian government intends to draw up a federal target programme for developing state border infrastructure. He attends the first meeting of the State Border Commission. He says the programme will be for four to five years, and will help give a new appearance to state borders.

25 November 2003 The MOD Board approves the MOD's proposals on the formation of the state defence order for 2004.

Lt-Gen Vladimir Chesnokov, chief of the ministry's capital construction planning directorate and deputy chief of the armed forces construction service says "as of 1

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July 2003, a total of 169,800 servicemen with the Russian MOD had no housing of their own. The figure included 95,700 servicemen who had no flat at all, 44,200 people who lived in temporary service apartments and 29,900 people who needed improvement of their housing conditions."

Interfax-Military News Agency reports an MOD source as saying that 21% of privates, sailors and sergeants with the Russian armed forces are professionals.

Col-Gen Vasiliy Smirnov, head of the General Staff mobilization directorate and deputy chief of the General Staff says about 70% of Russian servicemen, including commissioned and non-commissioned officers, will have signed military contracts by 2007. He says "at the present time a total of 130,000 enlisted volunteers serve in the Russian armed forces, which equals almost 50% of the total strength, should commissioned and noncommissioned officers be taken into consideration." In 2004-2007, 80 military units will embrace the all-volunteer force concept, with 72 of them in the armed forces, five in the MVD troops, and three in the Border Guard Troops of the FSB. He says the MOD is ready to predominantly recruit contract servicemen from 1 January 2004. Only 10% of the total number of men subject to conscription are called up, with 53% of conscripts obtaining deferments on health grounds.

26 November 2003 First Deputy Chief of the General Staff Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy says Russia allows for preventive use of force, but not of nuclear weapons. He states that the Russian military leadership considers preventive use of force mostly in close connection with new cross-border threats, and above all the threat of terrorism. He says Russia does not plan to destroy its tactical nuclear weapons and that Moscow will adjust the development of its strategic nuclear forces depending on Washington's plans regarding the use of nuclear weapons.

26 November 2003 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says the Russian rouble will be practically fully convertible from the year 2007. This is connected with the adoption of a new law on currency regulation and currency control, which will be considered on the third reading by the State Duma on 28 November. The draft law "envisages the abolition in 2007 of all restrictions on the movement of capital beyond the borders of Russia".

27 November 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov makes changes to the personnel of the commission that supervises the implementation of the federal defence industry reform and development programme for 2002-2006. Kasyanov appoints Deputy Prime Minister Boris Aleshin chairman of the commission, and presidential adviser Aleksandr Burutin as a member. Minister of Industry, Science and Technology Ilya Klebanov was excluded from the commission.

27 November 2003 An article in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta* gives detailed figures on HIV positive and AIDs sufferers in the Russian Federation.

28 November 2003 The Duma adopts the federal budget for 2004 in its fourth and final reading. The budget was passed with 245 votes for and 151 against, with two abstentions.

Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says that R330bn will be allocated from the budget in 2004 for state defence procurement. With the inclusion of non-budgetary sources the defence procurement budget will exceed R340bn. Kasyanov is speaking at the opening of a session of the government commission on military and industrial issues. He says "this is 20% higher than the figure for 2003". The draft state defence procurement programme for 2004 was discussed at the session.

28 November 2003 The chairman of the board of directors of Yukos, Simon Kukes, has said that the statement made today by the Sibneft oil company on suspending the merger deal between Yukos and Sibneft came as a surprise to him.

28 November 2003 Col-Gen Valeriy Baranov, commander of the combined federal force and deputy C-in-C of the Interior Ministry Troops, says at the present time combat-hardened mercenaries are the main enemy of the combined federal force in Chechnya. Ilya Shabalkin, representative of the regional HQ for antiterrorist operations in the North Caucasus, states that German and Turkish citizens took part in fighting near the Chechen village of Serzhen-Yurt on the side of Chechen militants. A total of 17 people were killed in fighting on 23 November there; another five fighters tried to escape and were detained later.

Deputy interior minister, commander-in-chief of the MVD troops Army Gen Vyacheslav Tikhomirov states that the MVD have destroyed 1,100 militants' caches and seized about 1,500 units of arms and military hardware, and about 600,000 munitions in Chechnya in 2003.

29 November 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov rules out nationalizing the Yukos oil company.

December

1 December 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a decree "On measures to develop federative relations and local government in the Russian Federation". Under the decree, the commission under the president for drawing up proposals for delimitation of areas of responsibility and powers between the federal authorities, the authorities of the constituent parts of the Russian Federation and the bodies of local government is being transformed into the commission under the president for federative relations and local government. The commission will be headed by first deputy head of the presidential administration Dmitriy Kozak.

1 December 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says he does not rule out the possibility that grain harvest in Russia in 2003 could be lower than forecast. He says that the net weight of the grain harvest (after drying and cleaning) would be 68-70m tonnes. Earlier forecasts put the net weight at over 70m tonnes.

1 December 2003 Press secretary of the Russian minister for Chechnya Aleksandr Arapov states that in total, R20bn was allocated for the restoration of Chechnya in

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2003. He says the federal budget had allocated R3.5bn, the local budget over R8.5bn and the rest had come from other sources. The money from extra-budgetary sources was mainly used to develop railways, the social structure and power industry.

1 December 2003 Chief of the central military medical commission Maj-Gen Valeriy Kulikov says that conscription medical commissions reveal over 5,000 HIV-infected draftees annually.

1 December 2003 Chechen rebel envoy Akhmed Zakayev is interviewed in *Gazeta*.

1 December 2003 *Ekho Mosky* gives the results of a VTsIOM poll on support for political parties asking who will you vote for in the Duma elections. Of the votes cast by Russian citizens who take part in the election:

Yedinaya Rossiya	34%
CPRF	22%
LDPR	8%
URF	7%
Yabloko	5%
Rodina	4%
Agrarian Party of Russia	4%

2 December 2003 The Tax Ministry estimates that Yukos and its affiliates owe the budget about R150bn.

2 December 2003 Deputy Chairman of the State Statistics Committee Sergey Kolesnikov says there are currently 145.2m people living in the Russian Federation, according to the figures of the 2002 all-Russian population census which have been processed to date. This is 1.85m more than had been expected. He is speaking at a "round-table" meeting in the State Duma devoted to demographic and migration problems. He says that the committee would publish the results of the census, held in October 2002, by March 2004. Kolesnikov says that in terms of population size the Russian Federation is seventh in the world but in comparison with the census carried out in 1989, Russia's population had declined by nearly 2m.

2 December 2003 It is reported that the chairman of the Chechen government, Anatoliy Popov, is currently in a Moscow clinic and after convalescing he plans to return to work.

2 December 2003 FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev says the FSB and MVD have sent members of their central agencies to Bashkiria following reports about possible terrorist acts in the republic.

2 December 2003 Col-Gen Yuriy Rodionov, deputy chairman of the Duma's defence committee and former deputy Russian defence minister, says the MOD's

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requested expenditures for combat training will not be footed to the full extent in 2004.

2 December 2003 CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov is interviewed in *Vedomosti* and says the CPRF may seek cooperation with the Kremlin.

3 December 2003 Vladimir Putin says Russia needs to renew its efforts to meet the threat posed by the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. He says it is vital "to re-identify priorities in the existing conceptual documents - first and foremost the Concept of National Security". He is speaking at a meeting of the Security Council.

3 December 2003 Ministry of Labour and Social Development says the term of alternative service is to be 42 months for individuals without higher education and 21 months for graduates of institutions of higher education.

3 December 2003 Combat training chief of the armed forces Col-Gen Aleksandr Skorodumov says combat training and infrastructure in the new training year will be worth R95m (3.2m dollars). The main combat training level in 2004 will be the battalion task force, playing the main part in local and border armed conflicts. Tactical exercises in 2004 will focus on the mobility of various forces, liaison between them in raids and redeployment, and on night-time and special environment operations.

4 December 2003 Vladimir Putin's economic adviser Andrey Illarionov is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. He says that the Yukos affair marks the beginning of a new relationship between business and politics in Russia.

5 December 2003 A suicide bomber blows up a train in Stavropol Territory, killing around 40 people.

5 December 2003 Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov says it is planned to create a regiment of special forces under the Chechen Interior Ministry permanently manned by up to 6,000 troops.

6 December 2003 Akhmed Zakayev is interviewed on the *Kavkazskiy Vestnik* website.

7 December 2003 Duma elections take place.

CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov describes the Duma vote as a farce.

URF leader Anatoly Chubays warns of the danger of Nazism in Russia following the Duma election.

The presidential election takes place in Bashkortostan.

The gubernatorial election takes place in Sakhalin.

7 December 2003 The Central Electoral Commission states that a referendum on the merger of the Komi-Permyak Autonomous Area and Perm Region can be deemed valid. Of voters in the autonomous area, 90.45% voted in favour of the merger, while just under 7% voted against. In Perm Region, 84% supported the merger, while 13% were against. Voter turnout reached 66% in the autonomous area and 64% in the region.

8 December 2003 Chairman of the Central Electoral Commission of the Russian Federation Aleksandr Veshnyakov states that: "As of 1000 Moscow time (0700 GMT), 90.58% of the votes have been counted. Yedinaya Rossiya has won 36.8% of the votes, Communist Party of the Russian Federation 12.7%, Liberal Democratic Party of Russia 11.8% and the Motherland bloc 9%." The Yabloko party mustered 4.3% of the votes, the Union of Right Forces 3.9%, the Agrarian Party 3.8% and the Russian Party of Pensioners - Social Justice Party bloc 3.2%. The official results of the Duma elections will be finalized on 17-18 December.

An OSCE reports states that the State Duma elections did not meet many of the obligations undertaken by member countries of the OSCE and the Council of Europe regarding democratic elections, thereby casting doubt on Russia's intention to move in the direction of meeting European criteria of democratic elections.

The co-chairman of Russia's Union of Right Forces, Boris Nemtsov, is interviewed in *Novaya Gazeta* on the Duma elections. He likens the outcome to "a third coup attempt", staged by the special services who wish to control all power in the country. He says the most dangerous aspect of the situation is that Putin supports these forces.

CIS observers assess the Duma elections as being free, open and democratic.

8 December 2003 A VTsIOM poll shows that 62% support the idea of having fewer but larger constituent parts of the Russian Federation. The poll was conducted in 100 settlements in 39 regions. A total of 1,600 people were polled.

8 December 2003 The MOD states that by 1 January 2004, the strength of the Russian armed forces will be 1,132,000.

9 December 2003 *The Chechen Times* website publishes an open letter from Chechen NGOs about the plight of Chechen refugees in Azerbaijan.

9 December 2003 Vladimir Putin meets President of Bashkortostan Murtaza Rakhimov in the Kremlin. They discuss Russia's cooperation with the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

9 December 2003 Vladimir Putin says he is categorically opposed to changing the existing 1993 constitution. "It is time to stop talking about the need to change the constitution. I absolutely agree that the existing constitution has become the foundation of stability in society, and I believe that it has absolutely not exhausted all its positive potential."

Putin says that regional governments' powers will be enhanced in 2005. He is speaking at a meeting of the Council of Legislators. He calls for the emergence of an orderly party system in Russia. He says that "a permanently-operating mechanism for bringing the regional laws into line with the federal laws has now been worked out in Russia". He also says that it is essential for regional lawmakers to cooperate closely with the new State Duma. This is the only basis for the effective formation of a single legal system.

The Federation Council committee for constitutional legislation advises the house to set the date for the election of the president of the Russian Federation for 14 March 2004.

9 December 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov appoints Andrey Fursenko acting minister of industry, science and technology. The previous minister, Ilya Klebanov, is now the presidential envoy to the Northwest Federal District.

9 December 2003 The chairman of the State Committee for Controlling the Trade in Drugs and Psychotropic Substances, Viktor Cherkesov, is conferred a special rank of police general.

9 December 2003 The newspaper *Severnnyy Kavkaz* reports a group of young men have been detained for planning "terrorist attacks" in Dagestan in the run-up to the elections to the republic's parliament in March 2003.

9 December 2003 Sergey Ivanenko, the chairman of the Yabloko pre-election headquarters, says the Yabloko party is holding talks about setting up a coalition of democratic forces in Russia.

9 December 2003 A suicide bomber blows herself up near the Natsional Hotel near the Duma building. Six people are killed.

9 December 2003 The Tax Police search the Moscow office of the Menatep-St Petersburg bank which has links to the Yukos oil company.

The Yukos oil company refuses the terms of the merger with the Sibneft company suggested by the latter. Yukos and Sibneft will remain independent companies.

10 December 2003 The Federation Council confirms 14 March 2004 as the date for the presidential election. The presidential election campaign starts officially on 11 December 2003.

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The leader of the LDPR Vladimir Zhirinovskiy announces his intention to take part in the presidential elections.

Vladimir Zhirinovskiy is interviewed in *Izvestiya*. He says the LDPR will cooperate in the Duma with Yedinaya Rossiya.

10 December 2003 CPRF leader Gennady Zyuganov states that the Duma election count was false.

10 December 2003 Col Sergey Ignatchenko, head of the FSB public relations centre says the terrorist acts in Moscow and Yessentuki in December 2003 were carried out by terrorists from a group of female suicide bombers trained by Islamic fundamentalists outside Russia. He says virtually all of the terrorist acts carried out by suicide bombers in Russia in recent years were paid for abroad and organized by the head of Arab agents of Al-Qa'idah in Chechnya, Abu Al-Valid, and the manager of the financial flows of international terrorists, Abu Omar As-Seyf.

10 December 2003 Investigators of the Tomsk Region prosecutor's office are carrying out a search of the Moscow office of Yukos. The investigators are interested in documents relating to the payment of tax by Yukos's 100% daughter company, Tomskneft VNK, in 1998-1999.

The investigation Committee of the Ministry of Internal Affairs brings a criminal case against the AKB Menatep-St Petersburg company.

10 December 2003 Vladimir Putin thinks that the state and the public have to do much more for the real guarantee of human rights. He meets the presidential commission for human rights.

10 December 2003 The Federation Council approves the law on the federal budget for 2004. The 2004 budget has been calculated on the basis of the price of Russian oil at 22 dollars per barrel. The growth of gross domestic product next year is forecast at 5.2%, and inflation within the 8-10% range. The volume of gross domestic product in 2004 is planned at R15,300 bn.

10 December 2003 The federal minister for Chechen affairs, Stanislav Ilyasov, says the prime minister of the Chechen Republic, Anatoliy Popov is ill and may have to be replaced.

10 December 2003 Igor Ivanov says he does not regard the terrorist act at the Natsional hotel in Moscow as a manifestation of "Chechen terrorism". He says it is a manifestation of international terrorism.

10 December 2003 The head of the Rodina bloc Dmitriy Rogozin is interviewed in *Izvestiya*. He discusses Rodina's success and its plans.

11 December 2003 The Central Bank of Russia says gold and hard currency reserves have reached their highest level in history. On 5 December 2003 they amounted to 70.6bn dollars.

11 December 2003 Goskomstat states that Russia's GDP has risen by 6.2% in the third quarter of 2003 compared with the same period in 2002. In the first quarter, Russia's GDP rose by 6.8% compared with the first quarter of 2002, and in the second quarter, it rose by 7.2% compared with the second quarter of 2002.

11 December 2003 The committee chairman, Viktor Ozerov, tells foreign military attaches that the Federation Council committee on security and defence issues wants a clearer wording in articles relating to defence, law enforcement and security in next year's budget.

11 December 2003 The DOSAAF (voluntary society for assistance to the Russian army, air force and navy) organisation is re-established. Justice Minister Yuriy Chayka hands over documents on the registration to the chairman of the new association, Hero of the Soviet Union Aleksandr Vatagin.

11 December 2003 Pavel Krasheninnikov of the URF says he supports the idea of setting up a single group of liberal deputies in the new Duma.

12 December 2003 Vladimir Putin says he sees no need to change the Russian constitution "at the moment".

13 December 2003 The commander of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, Vladimir Masorin, is given the rank of admiral.

15 December 2003 The MFA says it regards the preliminary appraisal by the OSCE and Council of Europe (PACE) observer mission of the Duma elections as "highly debatable".

15 December 2003 The head of the Tsuntinskiy District administration, Basyr Magomedov, says up to 50 rebels with four hostages are trying to break through from Dagestan to Chechnya.

15 December 2003 Gen Valeriy Baranov, commander of the Combined Force in the North Caucasus, arrives from Chechnya in the area of the Dagestani village of Shaury to oversee a counterinsurgency operation.

15 December 2003 *Kommersant Vlast* profiles leaders of the Rodina bloc.

16 December 2003 Boris Nemtsov says the URF is holding consultation with Yabloko about putting forward a single candidate for the March 2004 presidential elections.

The URF leaders Irina Khakamada, Boris Nemtsov and Anatoliy Chubays, send the party their letters of resignation. They will carry on until the URF Congress on 23 January 2004.

16 December 2003 Sibneft and Yukos shareholders reject any continuation with the merger deal and the two companies will remain separate entities.

16 December 2003 the head of the environment prosecutor's office of the Yamal-Nenets Autonomous Area, Aleksandr Kaliberda, says that violations have been identified in the activities of Yukos's oil production companies and their licence may be revoked.

16 December 2003 An article in Severnyy Kavkaz quotes the Russian minister for the restoration of Chechnya, Stanislav Ilyasov, as saying that Grozny will be restored in five years.

17 December 2003 The CPRF, the URF and Yabloko are considering boycotting the presidential elections in March 2004.

17 December 2003 A VTsIOM poll says that should the presidential election take place next Sunday (21 December 2003), Vladimir Putin would get 71.7% of the votes. Other results would be

LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy	5.4%
CPRF leader Gennadiy Zyuganov	5.2%

17 December 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov states that a new structure for the Russian government will be set out by May 2004.

Kasyanov says he believes that forming the government on the basis of the parliamentary majority will not bring any major changes to the creation of a new cabinet.

17 December 2003 The CPRF demands a manual recount of votes for the Duma elections in several Russian regions. They include: Bashkortostan, Tatarstan, Dagestan, Kabarda-Balkar, Mordovia, Saratov, Amur, Orel, Rostov, Samara and Penza Regions.

17 December 2003 The head of the "T" antiterrorism centre of the MVD Yuriy Demidov says since the beginning of 2003 Russian law-enforcement bodies have solved 79 terrorism-related crimes.

17 December 2003 Chechen President Akhmat Kadyrov says the treaty between the Chechen authorities and the federal centre in Moscow will be signed by the end of the first quarter of 2004. Kadyrov says: "I have never raised and do not intend to raise in future the question of some sort of broad autonomy or special political status. We've been through all that, and we know where it led."

17 December 2003 An official representative of Dagestan's Interior Ministry says the militants pursued by Russian forces in the mountains of Dagestan have been encircled tightly.

17 December 2003 Chief of the General Staff Anatoliy Kvashnin heads a joint working group tasked with working out proposals on attaching the Railway Troops to the MOD.

18 December 2003 Vladimir Putin states that he will not be putting forward his candidacy in the 2004 presidential election on behalf of any political party. He criticises politicians who call for boycotting the presidential election. The CPRF, Yabloko and the CPRF are all considering a boycott.

18 December 2003 Prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov says that GDP growth in Russia in 2003 will exceed 6.8%.

18 December 2003 A report from Interfax-AVN reports Russian intelligence as claiming that a Baku-based Islamic foundation called Assalam is funding several bandit groups that operate in Nozhay-Yurtovskiy and Vedenskiy districts of Chechnya. This is denied by the Azeri National Security Minister Namiq Abbasov.

18 December 2003 Andrey Malyshev, the chief of the state nuclear inspectorate (Gosatomnadzor) says four cases of stealing radioactive sources have been registered in Russia in 2003. The years 2000 and 2001 saw six thefts of radioactive sources each, and 2002 saw four such cases.

18 December 2003 The FSB directorate for St Petersburg and Leningrad Region sends an inquiry to European law-enforcement bodies for the handover of one of the people suspected of involvement in the murder in 1998 of Duma deputy Galina Starovoytova.

19 December 2003 The Central Electoral Commission issues final Duma election results. Three parties and one electoral bloc were elected to the Duma of the fourth convocation. One Russia received 37.57% of the votes, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation 12.61%, the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia 11.45% and the Motherland bloc 9.02%. State Duma deputies were also elected in 222 single-mandate constituencies. In three other constituencies the election was found invalid because the "against all" votes were more than the votes for any other candidate. In these three constituencies, there will be fresh elections combined

with the election of the president of Russia on 14 March 2004. In total, 60.7m people or 55.75% of registered voters took part in the election.

It rejects the CPRF's claims about the Duma election results.

19 December 2003 Oleg Kovalev of Yedinaya Rossiya says the party will choose between the options of "pro-rata distribution of posts of heads of Duma committees" or its own personal leadership of all committees.

19 December 2003 URF leader Boris Nemtsov rejects calls for boycotting the presidential elections.

19 December 2003 The FSB members of a radical Islamic organization have been detained in Ulyanovsk. The regional directorate of the FSB says it is called Jamaat.

FSB head Nikolay Patrushev says Shamil Basayev is the main organizer of acts of terrorism in Russia involving suicide bombers. Basayev heads an Islamic terrorist organisation called Riyad al-Salihin (the Garden of the Virtuous Ones).

Nikolay Patrushev says Russian security forces have conducted over 1,000 special operations in the North Caucasus in 2003. "Together with other law-enforcement agencies, the FSB has confiscated over 1,000 pieces of small arms, 300,000 pieces of various ammunition, about 3,000 explosive devices and some 600 kilos of toxic substances. It has also freed eight hostages."

19 December 2003 Col Igor Konashenkov, assistant commander of the North Caucasus Military District, says about 60,000 soldiers and sergeants in units and detachments of the District are expected to have signed contracts by the end of 2007. It currently numbers 100,000 people.

19 December 2003 Vladimir Putin meets Russia's chief rabbi Berl Lazar. He congratulates Russia's Jewish community on the coming Hanukkah holiday.

19 December 2003 The commander of the Supreme C-in-C's Air Army, Lt-Gen Igor Khvorov, and Maj-Gen (Aviation) Valentin Rog, academician of the Academy of Military Science, write an article in *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* on the organizational structure of Long-Range Aviation. They state periodic reorganisation of Long Range Aviation is significantly reducing its combat potential and the country's security as a whole.

21 December 2003 Yabloko leader Grigoriy Yavlinskiy says the party's congress has decided not to nominate a candidate for the March 2004 presidential elections. Yabloko backs the idea of a united democratic council proposed by the URF.

Dr Mark A Smith

21 December 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says only nuclear weapons can ensure Russia's sovereignty and national security. He is talking about placing Topol-M ICBMs on alert duty.

21 December 2003 Bashkortostan's incumbent President Murtaza Rakhimov wins the presidential runoff election.

21 December 2003 The Sakhalin Region's acting governor Ivan Malakhov received over 53% of the vote in the second ballot of the governor elections.

22 December 2003 Vladimir Putin requests the Central Electoral Commission to register the group of voters who has nominated him as a candidate for the Russian presidency.

22 December 2003 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref is interviewed in *Vremya Novostey*. He says Russia cannot secure stable economic growth without reforming its gas giant Gazprom.

22 December 2003 It is reported that the Russian army has encircled a group of militants in the Tsuntinskiy District of Dagestan.

22 December 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia's strategic nuclear forces will be further developed. He says the Topol-M systems will be upgraded. Ivanov says he will inform Vladimir Putin about measures to develop nuclear forces in early 2004.

Strategic Aviation Commander Lt-Gen Igor Khvorov says Russia is developing a future strategic bomber. He says the R&D will begin in 2006, and in 2014-2016 the aircraft will become operational.

Yuriy Solomonov, general designer for the Topol-M missile (NATO designation Sickle), is interviewed in *Izvestiya*.

23 December 2003 Vladimir Putin addresses the Russian Chamber of Trade and Industry. He discusses government-business relations.

23 December 2003 Former Security Council secretary Ivan Rybkin, who now heads the unrecognized pro-Berezovskiy wing of the Liberal Russia party, says he will run in the presidential election in March 2004.

The URF decides not to put forward a candidate for the presidential election in March 2004.

23 December 2003 Moscow's Basmannyy Court extends former Yukos chief Mikhail Khodorkovskiy's stay in a detention centre until 25 March 2004.

23 December 2003 Irina Khakamada is interviewed in *Gazeta*. She warns that liberals could end up in prison. She says the URF must unite with Yabloko.

23 December 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says the 42nd Division of the MOD and the 46th MVD Brigade, which are both based in Chechnya, are to go over to manning on contractual basis in 2004.

23 December 2003 The chief of the Combat Training Directorate of the Strategic Missiles Troops, Maj-Gen Vasiliy Shcherbovich, is interviewed in *Pravda*.

24 December 2003 Vladimir Putin releases Boris Gryzlov from the duties of minister of internal affairs in connection with Gryzlov being elected a Duma deputy. Gryzlov will head the Yedinaya Rossiya faction in the Duma.

24 December 2003 The Central Electoral Commission adopts a resolution to register the group of electors that has been set up to support the self-nomination of Vladimir Putin as a candidate in the March 2004 presidential election.

The fourth congress of Yedinaya Rossiya unanimously adopts a resolution to support the candidacy of the current head of state, Vladimir Putin, in the presidential election on 14 March 2004.

24 December 2003 Gazprom, Rosneft and Surgutneftegaz establish a joint consortium for operations in Eastern Siberia and Russia's constituent republic of Sakha (Yakutia).

24 December 2003 Units of the Combined Force in the North Caucasus and the MVD of the Chechen Republic seal off the administrative border between Chechnya and Dagestan.

Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, aide to the Russian president, says it is possible that Al-Qa'idah is involved in training militants in Chechnya.

Yastrzhembskiy, the Russian presidential aide says all of the Chechen militants killed near Serzhen-Yurt in late November had Georgian passports.

24 December 2003 The Tatarstan constitutional court rules that Russia cannot impose blanket use of Cyrillic as ruled by Vladimir Putin when he approved an amendment to the law "On languages of the peoples of the Russian Federation", which stated that Cyrillic was the only graphical basis for any alphabet in the country.

25 December 2003 Gennadiy Zyuganov is elected the leader CPRF faction in the fourth Duma. Sergey Rishulskiy will act as Zyuganov's deputy.

Dr Mark A Smith

25 December 2003 The commander of the Combined Troops in the North Caucasus, Col-Gen Valeriy Baranov, says among the mercenaries in Chechnya there are former employees of special services of a number of countries, who work for international terrorist organizations. Baranov claims that the leaders of illegal armed formations in Chechnya maintain close ties in addition to Al-Qa'idah and its double Tariq al-Tanzim, also with the Muslim Brotherhood and Al-Haramayn.

25 December 2003 Gazprom, Rosneft and Surgutneftegaz decide to create a consortium to exploit oilfields in East Siberia.

26 December 2003 LDPR leader Vladimir Zhirinovskiy says at the LDPR 15th congress he will not run in the presidential election in March 2004. He says Putin cannot be challenged as he is perfect. However, he says that the LDPR will be in opposition to Putin and Yedinaya Rossiya. He says that he will run in the 2008 presidential election. Oleg Malyshekin will be the LDPR presidential candidate.

26 December 2003 Central Electoral Commission chairman Aleksandr Veshnyakov says that the number of people who took part in the parliamentary election in Ingushetia and Chechnya was 11% higher than those actually registered to vote.

26 December 2003 An article in *Kommersant* analyses the state defence order for 2004.

An article in *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* assesses the state of the Russian defence industry.

26 December 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says "the most complex and large-scale transformations" in the army and navy are over and this now enables the military command "to concentrate on day-to-day combat training and raising of the forces' combat readiness". He is speaking on Channel One TV's "I Serve the Fatherland" programme, in a review of the results of the outgoing year 2003.

27 December 2003 The CPRF Central Committee holds a closed plenum. Gennadiy Zyuganov asks not to be put forward as a candidate in the March 2004 presidential elections. Zyuganov manages to avoid a move to remove him as leader.

27 December 2003 Federation Council chairman Sergey Mironov says he wants to stand in the presidential poll against Vladimir Putin.

27 December 2003 Vladimir Putin signs the federal law "On the ratification of the Framework Agreement for the Multilateral Nuclear Environmental Programme in the Russian Federation (MNEPR) and the Protocol on Claims, Legal Proceedings and Indemnification to the MNEPR Framework Agreement in the Russian Federation".

A Russian Chronology: October-December 2003

28 December 2003 A CPRF congress nominates Nikolay Kharitonov as the its candidate for the forthcoming presidential elections.

28 December 2003 Lt-Col Apti Khakiyev, deputy Ingush interior minister, is assassinated killed in Ingushetia.

29 December 2003 The new Duma opens. Vladimir Putin addresses it. Leader of Yedinaya Rossiya Boris Gryzlov is elected Duma chairman. Lyubov Sliska and Aleksandr Zhukov are elected first deputies of the chairman. There are eight deputy speakers: they are Georgiy Boos, Vyacheslav Volodin, Oleg Morozov, Vladimir Pekhtin, Artur Chilingarov (all five from Yedinaya Rossiya), Valentin Kuptsov (CPRF), Dmitriy Rogozin (Rodina) and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy (LDPR).

Seats in the Duma:

	Party List	Constituencies	Total
Yedinaya Rossiya	120	103	223
CPRF	40	12	52
Rodina	29	8	37
LDPR	36	0	36
Narodnaya Party	0	17	17
Independents	0	67	67

There will be run off elections in three constituencies on 14 March 2004. Turnout was 60,712,000 = 55.75% of the electorate.

29 December 2003 Police and FSB confiscate almost 4,500 copies of Aleksandr Litvinenko's book "FSB blows up Russia". This book argues that the FSB was behind the 1999 Moscow apartment bombings.

29 December 2003 The Ministry of Taxes and Levies officially presents Yukos with claims totalling about R100bn. This claim reflects unpaid taxes for 2000.

29 December 2003 Russian forces kill ten guerrillas in Dagestan.

The FSB says that the group of terrorists who are surrounded by Russian federal forces in Dagestan are heading towards Georgia.

29 December 2003 Valentin Danilov is acquitted by a jury of spying for China.

29 December 2003 The trial of those accused of murdering Duma deputy Galina Starovoytova in 1997 begins in St Petersburg.

29 December 2003 The president of the Republic of Ingushetia, Murat Zyazikov, rules out unification with Chechnya, in an interview to *Politika* magazine carried by the Respublika Ingushetia website.

30 December 2003 Rodina decides to nominate former chief of the Central Bank Viktor Gerashchenko as a candidate for the presidential elections. The leader of the Rodina faction in the Duma, Sergey Glazyev, decides to stand independently. URF leader Irina Khakamada also decides to run for president.

30 December 2003 The command of the North Caucasus Military District says that the gang which infiltrated into the territory of Dagestan over two weeks ago has been completely destroyed. More than 30 militants have been killed and three taken prisoner as a result of a special operation.

30 December 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov meets Vladimir Putin to discuss the state of the armed forces in 2003. As of 1 January 2004, the planned strength of the MOD is to be 1,132,000 service personnel and 867,000 civilian personnel. Ivanov says "defence ministry units are staffed at 88% of full strength, which is optimal, while the figure is 100% in permanent readiness units".

Col Yakov Firsov, chief of the Ground Troops' press service, states that over R100m (3.42m US dollars) will be assigned for combat training and development and maintenance of training facilities in professional units of the Ground Troops in 2004. Ground Troops' units stationed in the North Caucasus will be the first to switch over to professional service. Seven units of the 42nd Motor Rifle Division stationed permanently in Chechnya will become professional before the end of 2004.

The Perm Strategic Missile Troops Institute is disbanded.

30 December 2003 Lt-Gen Petr Rovinskiy, deputy commander-in-chief of the MVD troops states that the 2004 budget allocated for developing the MVD troops totals R2.5bn (85.5m dollars), which will allow the forces to increase military hardware procurements almost 100%. He says that divisions and regiments will be gradually organized into brigades and battalions in 2004.

31 December 2003 The Bank of Russia states that Russia's gold and foreign currency reserves reached their highest level in history in 2003 - as of 26 December, they totalled 77.8bn dollars.

31 December 2003 The commander of Russia's long-range aviation, Lt-Gen Igor Khvorov, is interviewed in *Voyenno-Promyshlennyy Kur'yer* on the role of bombers in Russia's strategic nuclear forces.

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