

Russian Foreign Policy: A Chronology

October-December 2003

October

1 October 2003 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref says the customs union of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan can only be set up after all those countries enter the World Trade Organisation (WTO).

1 October 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says Belarus' position has made it impossible for the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Russia and Belarus to approve an agreement on introducing the Russian rouble as the only monetary unit in Belarus. He says, "if the agreement on the single currency is not signed and ratified by the end of the year, we can forget about 1 January 2005 as the date for introducing it".

1 October 2003 The Russian government dismisses attempts by the Belarusian authorities to cast doubt on Russia's ownership rights to the Transnefteprodukt oil pipeline running across Belarus.

1 October 2003 The secretary of the Security Council, Vladimir Rushaylo, meets Ukrainian Interior Minister Mykola Bilokon in the Kremlin.

1 October 2003 Officers from the US Homeland Security Department arrive at the US Embassy to help handle visa applications.

1 October 2003 A visiting delegation of the Russian Federation State Committee for Control Over the Illegal Trafficking of Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances, headed by the committee's deputy chairman Aleksandr Fedorov, signs a cooperation protocol in Iran.

1 October 2003 A delegation from Maritime Territory headed by governor Sergey Darkin leaves for an official visit to North Korea.

1 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov attends an international conference on aid in Tokyo. He says over the past four or five years, Russia has written off over 11bn dollars of the debt which African countries owe it.

Saltanov says Iraq's debt to Russia exceeds 8bn dollars.

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1 October 2003 Poland introduces a visa regime with Russia. This is due to Poland's obligations to the EU.

1 October 2003 The LIMA-2003 arms show takes place in Malaysia. A Russian delegation attends headed by chairman of the committee on military-technical cooperation with foreign states.

2 October 2003 Igor Ivanov and French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin discuss Iraq and Iran's nuclear programme by telephone.

2 October 2003 The director of the Institute of Global Climate and Ecology under the Hydrometeorology and Environmental Monitoring Committee, Yuriy Israel, says Russia should not be in a hurry to ratify the Kyoto protocol, as it may become an obstacle to her economic and social development.

2 October 2003 Russian ambassador to Malaysia Vladimir Morozov says Russia will profit by about 1.5bn dollars from supplying a large shipment of Su-30MKM multifunctional fighter jets to Malaysia.

3 October 2003 Igor Ivanov attends the 9th session of the Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC). He speaks in favour of developing the Barents Sea's hydrocarbon and biological resources.

3 October 2003 Vladimir Putin says he believes that the Kyoto Protocol on the restriction of harmful emissions into the atmosphere is "a move in the right direction".

Presidential aide for economic issues Andrey Illarionov says implementation of the Kyoto protocol could have a negative effect on meeting the strategic objective of doubling Russia's GDP.

3 October 2003 Vladimir Putin says he is not yet happy with the US draft resolution in Iraq which it has presented to the UN Security Council on Iraq.

3 October 2003 Sergey Peskov, the Russian Federation's representative at the Palestinian National Authority (PNA), passes on a message from Vladimir Putin to the leader of the PNA, Yasser Arafat.

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. The observers represent such international organizations as the Organization of the Islamic Conference and the Arab League. CIS observers will also be present.

3 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Russia would like Iran to regard the IAEA resolution as an invitation to work together.

3 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says the Russian side is not yet ready to discuss either with China or Japan specific routes for the transport of oil from Eastern Siberia. He says Russia is continuing her study of routes. This work is based on the strategy endorsed by the government earlier this year which establishes that an oil pipeline has to be planned in an easterly direction, in the direction of Nakhodka, with a branch to Daqing.

4 October 2003 The MFA condemns the terrorist attack in Haifa, Israel.

5 October 2003 Moscow is concerned about the Israeli air strike against a terrorist training camp in Syria.

5 October 2003 Vladimir Putin is interviewed in the *New York Times* (continued 6 October).

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 Maritime Territory governor Sergey Darkin says Russia is considering renting the North Korean port of Najin.

6 October 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Moscow will not supply nuclear fuel to Tehran for the Bushehr nuclear power station until Iran signs a protocol on the return of spent nuclear fuel from the plant to the Russian Federation. He says Russia is abiding by IAEA rules. Ivanov accuses several European countries of having delivered to Iran gas centrifuges which are banned by international nonproliferation regimes.

6 October 2003 French Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin visits Russia. Putin says Russia may make extra payments to the Paris Club this year. Russo-French trade turnover should reach 6bn dollars by the end of the year.

6 October 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov, who is on an official visit to Canada, blames the Transdnestr authorities for failing to adhere to the schedule for the pullout of Russian military hardware from the Dnester region in Moldova.

6 October 2003 Ukrainian foreign minister Konstyantyn Hryshchenko visits Russia.

6 October 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov visits Canada.

6 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia believes that the draft resolution which was presented at the UN Security Council in connection with Israel's attack on a target in Syria requires some further work but does not object to discussing the need to observe international law. He says the draft should mention the need to put an end to terrorist acts in the region.

7 October 2003 The Foreign Ministry (MFA) expresses surprise at statements by US Department of State spokesman Richard Boucher to the effect that "the presidential elections in Chechnya supposedly did not meet international standards of the expression of free will".

7 October 2003 Lebanese foreign minister Jean Ubayd visits Moscow for talks with Igor Ivanov. Ivanov confirms Moscow's desire to develop relations with the Organization of the Islamic Conference.

Igor Ivanov says that Russia is in favour of holding an international conference to discuss all aspects of the Middle East settlement. He says it is necessary "for the road map developed by the international mediators for a Middle East settlement to be approved by the UN Security Council, thus making it binding on all sides in the conflict".

Igor Ivanov says the new draft UN resolution on Iraq "does not reflect Russia's expectations". "Moscow's view of the new resolution will depend on whether it is found to reflect the principles of restoring Iraq's sovereignty."

7 October 2003 Britain grants political asylum to Boris Berezovskiy's business partner, businessman Yuliy Dubov.

7 October 2003 Russia, North Korea and South Korea agree to build an electrical power line from Vladivostok to South Korea.

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

8 October 2003 *Ekho Moskvy* reports that the French oil firm Total SA has unveiled plans to create a joint venture in association with Rosneft to develop and exploit an oilfield in the Black Sea.

8 October 2003 Vladimir Putin and German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder hold a summit in Yekaterinburg. The volume of bilateral trade in the first half of 2003 amounted to 12bn euros and in the whole of 2002 to 24.3bn euros; German

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investment in Russia exceeded 17% of the total volume of accumulated investment. Six documents are signed. In 2002, the two countries' trade turnover was over 24bn euros.

8 October 2003 A deputy Pakistani commerce minister, Tariq Ikram, opens an economic symposium in Moscow to boost trade. Trade turnover in 2002 between the two countries was 60m US dollars.

8 October 2003 The deputy director of the Federal Security Service, Viktor Komogorov, visits Afghanistan to discuss anti-terrorist cooperation.

8 October 2003 Iranian ambassador to the Russian Federation Gholamreza Shafe'i says Iran will "soon" put its signature to the protocol on the return of spent nuclear fuel to Russia.

9 October 2003 Vladimir Putin describes as unreasonable the European Commission's demands on the use of the Russian gas pipeline system as a condition of Russia's joining of the WTO. Putin says Moscow views as "unfounded and unfair" European Union attempts to connect Russia's WTO accession to the issue of domestic energy prices. Putin says that the Russian economy would collapse if Russia switched overnight to having international energy price levels on the domestic market.

9 October 2003 The European Court of Human Rights has announced its ruling on the case of the Russian Slivenko family against Latvia. The Court voted by 11 votes against six, ruling that the Latvian authorities have deprived the Slivenko family of the opportunity of being in that country, where they lived for some 20 years, infringed their right to the inviolability of private and family life and also their right to housing, under Article 8 of the European Convention on Human Rights. The Court ruled that this right was violated by the Latvian authorities and also ordered compensation of 10,000 euros to be paid to the Slivenko family.

9 October 2003 Vladimir Putin says he is in favour of a UN resolution on Iraq being adopted as soon as possible, but "certain principles" must be observed. Putin thinks it would be optimal for a UN Security Council resolution on Iraq to be adopted before the conference of donor countries for Iraq is held in Spain.

9 October 2003 The heads of the Russian company Gazexport, Aleksandr Medvedev, and the Bulgarian Bulgargaz company, Kirill Gegov, sign an agreement whereby Russia is to supply Bulgaria with 16m cubic metres of gas before the end of 2004.

9 October 2003 Deputy foreign minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia's diplomatic efforts are directed at continuing six-sided talks on North Korea's nuclear programme.

9 October 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov attends a meeting of the NATO defence ministers at the NATO-Russia Council in Colorado Springs.

10 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says one should not expect the US-proposed new UN Security Council resolution on Iraq to be adopted by consensus unless Russia's proposals are properly taken into account.

10 October 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says Russia's talks on its entry into the WTO have not reached a "dead end" and a "compromise could still be found". On 6-7 October Russia and the EU failed to agree on a number of issues relating to Russia's entry into the WTO, including Russian gas sector liberalization and raising domestic energy prices to world level.

10 October 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov visits Brazil. He says Russia will seek to develop economic relations with Iran in various fields, including civilian nuclear cooperation.

10 October 2003 Gazeta.ru reports that Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov wants NATO to withdraw from military bases in Central Asia.

11 October 2003 First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov says Russia welcomes "Iran's serious intentions to continue negotiations with the IAEA on signing an additional protocol to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty". He is visiting Iran.

12 October 2003 The MFA's former Middle East envoy, Andrey Vdovin, in Egypt meets the secretary-general of the Arab League, Amr Musa, and a political adviser to the Egyptian president, Usamah al-Baz. The new MFA envoy Aleksandr Kalugin also attends. Vdovin recommends adopting the road map as a UN Security Council resolution. "We are open to discussion of this option and do not rule out the possibility of calling an international conference to deal both with the conflict between the Palestinians and the Israelis and with the comprehensive Middle East settlement which covers the Syrian-Israeli and Lebanese-Israeli tracks."

They also discuss Iraq.

13 October 2003 Aleksandr Yakovenko says broad support for the US draft resolution on Iraq at the UN Security Council is unlikely unless Russia's proposals are taken into account.

13 October 2003 The MFA says Russia "is interested in legitimate bodies of power being formed in Palestine as soon as possible".

13 October 2003 Deputy foreign ministers of Russia and China Aleksandr Losyukov and Wang Yi have talks in Moscow. They discuss North Korea, the Asian-Pacific region, problems of South and Central Asia and Afghanistan, the

Shanghai Cooperation Organization and the Asian-Pacific economic cooperation forum.

13 October 2003 Duma Chairman Gennadiy Seleznev criticises Estonia for persecuting Soviet war veterans.

13 October 2003 Col-Gen Vladimir Mikhaylov, Russian air force commander-in-chief, and Indian Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Srinivasapuram Krishnaswamy met in Moscow to discuss the development of military and technical cooperation between Russia and India.

14 October 2003 Belarusian president Alyaksandr Lukashenka visits Moscow for a regular session of the High State Council of the Union of Russia and Belarus.

14 October 2003 The Duma adopts a statement on violations of human rights and rights of national minorities in Latvia.

14 October 2003 Deputy chairman of the State Duma Committee on CIS Affairs Vyacheslav Igrunov says Russia is ignoring violation of human rights in Central Asia and Transcaucasus. He says the MFA is providing him with no information about Russian citizens jailed in Turkmenistan, such as Turkmen opposition leader Boris Syhmyradov.

14 October 2003 A three-way telephone conversation is held between Vladimir Putin, Gerhard Schroeder and Jacques Chirac at the initiative of the German and French leaders. They discuss Iraq.

Igor Ivanov and Colin Powell discuss a new UN resolution on Iraq by telephone.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia has tabled amendments to the new US draft resolution on Iraq to be presented to the UNSC.

Igor Ivanov has talks in Moscow with IAEA director-general Muhammad al-Baradi'i. He says Moscow is in favour of the continuation of the work of international inspectors in Iraq. He says Iran's nuclear programmes must be transparent.

14 October 2003 The judicial council of the Court of Appeal in Athens refuses to extradite Vladimir Gusinskiy to Russia. The Russian Prosecutor-General's Office says the case will continue.

14 October 2003 The Swiss authorities agree to pay compensation out of court to the relatives of the Russian citizens who died in the Tu-154 air crash over Lake Constance in 2002. Igor Ivanov has talks with Swiss foreign minister in Moscow.

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14 October 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says Moscow "welcomes direct dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina", which begins in Vienna today with the assistance of the Contact Group.

14 October 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia hopes for the swift resumption of the six-sided talks on the issue of North Korea's nuclear programmes.

14 October 2003 Commander of the Pacific Fleet, Adm Viktor Fedorov, pays an official visit to South Korea on 14-18 October.

14 October 2003 First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov visits India.

14 October 2003 Deputy foreign minister Vladimir Chizhov meets Yakov Pliner, the chairman of the For Human Rights in a United Latvia faction in the Latvian Saeima and the co-chairman of the organization Tatyana Zhdanok. Chizhov says Russia confirms its readiness "to seek to ensure that the rights of the Russian-speaking part of the Latvian population are guaranteed on the basis of European standards, including the Council of Europe Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities".

15 October 2003 Russian and Georgian deputy foreign ministers meet in Moscow to discuss economic cooperation.

15 October 2003 The MFA condemns the terrorist attack in Gaza which killed three US citizens.

The MFA expresses regret that the resolution condemning Israel's unilateral actions on Palestinian territories, including the construction of the security barrier, was not passed by the UN Security Council because of a veto imposed by the USA.

15 October 2003 Vladimir Putin embarks on a long tour of Asia. Putin will go first to Malaysia where he will speak as a guest at the Organization of the Islamic Conference; after that he will attend the APEC summit (19-21 October) in Bangkok, where he will also meet a number of leaders, including US President George W Bush and the Chinese leader, Hu Jintao; this will be followed by an official visit to Thailand (21-22 October). Putin will end his trip with a visit on 23 October to Kyrgyzstan.

15 October 2003 A Macedonian government-business delegation led by Prime Minister Branko Crvenkovski arrives in Moscow for a four-day official visit to Russia.

16 October 2003 Vladimir Putin attends the Organization of the Islamic Conference summit in Malaysia. Chechen President Akhmad Kadyrov is also part of the Russian delegation.

16 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says there are no real conditions for Russia's participation in the multinational forces in Iraq and this issue has not been examined.

The UNSC adopts a new resolution on Iraq (1511). Russia votes in favour.

16 October 2003 The MFA says that Russia is in favour of continuing talks on the Korean problem in the six-party format. It rejects North Korea's desire that Japan be excluded from the talks. Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Russia will try to achieve that the second round of the six-party talks on Korean issue will be held as soon as possible.

16 October 2003 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref has talks with EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy about Russia's desire to join the WTO.

17 October 2003 Vladimir Putin says the latest UN Security Council resolution on Iraq is a move in the right direction, but adds that it does not create the right conditions for the presence of Russian military contingents or for despatching material resources for the restoration of Iraq.

Putin says he believes that the tactics of the Middle East settlement should be altered and solutions should be sought jointly.

Putin says Iran must disclose all its nuclear programmes. Then he sees no "no grounds to restrict" Iran's access to modern nuclear technology for peaceful means.

17 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says that Russia "has no new information" about the presence of nuclear weapons in North Korea. He says the six-sided talks on North Korea should be continued. Losyukov says North Korea should receive security guarantees.

17 October 2003 Lukoil head Vagit Alekperov is interviewed in Kazakh newspaper *Novoye Pokoleniye*. He says LUKoil will invest 3bn dollars in a new Kazakh-Russian joint project in the Caspian Sea shelf if industrial reserves of oil are discovered there.

18 October 2003 Igor Ivanov and US Secretary of State Colin Powell meet in Bangkok to discuss the desirability of adopting a separate document on the North Korean nuclear programme at the conference of leaders of APEC forum scheduled for 20-21 October.

19 October 2003 Vladimir Putin gives an interview on Russian policy in Asia to STAR TV.

Putin also speaks at an APEC business summit in Bangkok.

20 October 2003 Vladimir Putin has a meeting with US President George Bush at the APEC summit in Bangkok at which they discuss the North Korean problem, Iran's nuclear programme, the future development of the situation around Iraq. Putin also meets Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi, who insists that a tough statement about North Korea should be adopted.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia thinks that security guarantees for North Korea should be one of a package of measures for settling the North Korean nuclear problem. Deputy foreign minister Aleksandr Losyukov says, "We will be satisfied with any guarantees that satisfy North Korea ... we are ready to be a party to multilateral guarantees. The Americans don't want to be the only ones giving guarantees, they want them to be multilateral. This fully tallies with our position, since we ourselves earlier proposed such an approach."

20 October 2003 Igor Ivanov says the adoption of a UN Security Council resolution on Iraq is only the first step towards settlement

20 October 2003 The Russian foreign minister's special envoy for the Middle East, Aleksandr Kalugin, is in Syria. He says Russia supports the adoption of a Security Council resolution, which would give the road map a binding character. He also discusses the idea of holding a new international conference on the Middle East.

20 October 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov has talks in Moscow with his Italian counterpart Antonio Martino.

20 October 2003 The Russian-Korean atomic energy coordination committee meets to discuss Russo-South Korean nuclear cooperation.

20 October 2003 First Deputy Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliyev meets the president of the German federal police, Klaus Ulrich Kersten, to discuss crime fighting cooperation.

20 October 2003 Lithuanian Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas says Lithuania's concerns about the Russian plan to extract oil from the Baltic shelf have been removed.

20 October 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia is interested in cooperation with Iran on the peaceful use of nuclear technology under IAEA control and will not withdraw from this.

20 October 2003 *Novyye Izvestiya* gives a detailed report on the military build up by the Caspian littoral states.

21 October 2003 Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov and his Lithuanian counterpart Algirdas Brazauskas have talks on access to Kaliningrad.

21 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov has talks at the APEC summit with US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James Kelly in Bangkok. They discuss the North Korean nuclear issue.

The APEC summit in Bangkok ends.

21 October 2003 Vladimir Putin says Russia is ready to continue its efforts of mediation to settle North Korea's nuclear problems.

21 October 2003 Russia and Thailand sign a defence cooperation agreement.

21 October 2003 Duma deputy speaker Vladimir Lukin calls on Ukraine to solve the problem of the Kerch Strait by diplomatic means and taking into account the strategic interests of both sides. He says: "Ukraine must understand that Russia will in any case secure its right to sail freely through the Kerch Strait from the Sea of Azov to the Black Sea." (Russia is unilaterally building a causeway in the Sea of Azov towards Ukraine's Tuzla Island.)

Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich states it is necessary to resolve the conflict surrounding the situation in the Kerch Strait at the negotiating table and not to let it escalate into "an armed confrontation".

21 October 2003 Deputy official spokesman for the MFA Nikolay Trutsuk says that the disproportionate use of weapons by Israel, just like relying exclusively on force, will not bring peace to the Middle East. This follows recent Israeli air strikes on the Gaza strip.

21 October 2003 Deputy foreign minister Sergey Kislyak attends in the Hague the annual meeting of the organization for the banning of chemical weapons.

21 October 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says after the talks with his Finnish counterpart, Seppo Kaasinen, that Russia is ready to cooperate with the European Union in the sphere of a single defence and security policy. He says Russia is concerned at the process of ratification of the abridged CFE Treaty.

21 October 2003 MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia has no intention of undertaking any financial commitments with regard to rebuilding Iraq. He also says: "Russia intends to reaffirm its willingness to contribute significantly to the economic reconstruction of Iraq, on the basis of experience gained in previous decades and the traditions of bilateral cooperation with that country ... the most productive way, in our view, would be for Russian organizations to continue their work in top-priority areas, such as oil production, power engineering, water supplies, irrigation, transport and a number of others." He says that if the Iraqi side confirms the agreements signed earlier, Russian companies are willing to invest substantial sums in large-scale projects in Iraq.

22 October 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov instructs the administration of Krasnodar Region and Temryuk District to put on hold for several days the work to restore the Tuzla Spit in view of Ukraine's readiness to immediately start full-scale negotiations on the problem of the Azov-Kerch water area.

Dmitriy Rogozin criticises Ukraine's actions over the construction by Russia of a causeway in Kerch Strait. He says Ukraine may allow US warships into the Azov Sea. Dmitriy Rogozin is interviewed the Ukrainian newspaper *Den*.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov calls on Kiev not to whip up passions over the building of the causeway.

22 October 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov calls on the EU to create the conditions needed to move to a visa-free regime with Russia.

22 October 2003 The MFA welcomes the adoption of a UN Security Council resolution on the Middle East.

22 October 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that "the Russian-Belarusian regional military force is a common defence area of both states".

22 October 2003 YeES head Anatoliy Chubays visits Armenia for talks with President Robert Kocharyan. Chubays also has a meeting with the chairman of the Armenian-Russian intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation and defence minister Serzh Sarkisyan.

23 October 2003 Vladimir Putin visits Kyrgyzstan for the opening of the Kant airbase. Economic agreements are also signed.

Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov also visits Kyrgyzstan. He says Russia will deploy a large group of servicemen to Kyrgyzstan to participate in exercises scheduled for 2004. Russia and Kyrgyzstan sign a military aid agreement.

Col-Gen Vladimir Mikhaylov, commander-in-chief of the Russian air force, is interviewed in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets* on the opening of the Russian air base.

23 October 2003 The MFA says Moscow believes that "it would be untimely to hold a meeting of the Russian-Latvian intergovernmental commission on cooperation". The statement was issued in connection with the cancellation of the meeting in Latvia between Latvian Deputy Prime Minister Ainars Slesers and Russian Labour Minister Aleksandr Pochinok, scheduled for 27 October.

23 October 2003 Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin. They express satisfaction with Iran's statement of readiness to sign an additional protocol to the agreement on guarantees with the IAEA.

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24 October 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov and Ukrainian Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovych meet in Moscow. They discuss the dispute over the construction of a causeway in the Kerch Strait.

24 October 2003 Deputy foreign minister Yuriy Fedotov attends the Madrid conference on donations to Iraq. Fedotov says Russian companies can invest up to 4bn dollars in Iraq's economy.

24 October 2003 Pacific Fleet warships arrive at the US Navy base in Pearl Harbour (Hawaii) to participate in joint Russian-US exercises.

25 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak meets in Moscow his Iranian counterpart Gholam Ali Khoshru. He welcomes the readiness of Tehran to cooperate with the IAEA.

26 October 2003 The US ambassador in Russia, Alexander Vershbow, says that the arrest of the head of the Yukos oil company, Mikhail Khodorkovskiy, could have a negative effect on the investment climate in Russia.

27 October 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin attends a conference of the G20 finance ministers. He discusses aid to Iraq.

The MFA expresses concern over the terrorist bombings in Baghdad.

27 October 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov is interviewed in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*. He says believes that Russia and the USA are "certainly not enemies. But they are not allies, that's for sure."

27 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov says Russia maintains a critical approach to the expansion of NATO. He is responding to a question from journalists concerning Georgia's plans to join the alliance.

27 October 2003 Igor Ivanov has talks in Moscow with EU Commissioner for Enlargement Gunter Verheugen. Chairman of the Duma Committee for International Affairs Dmitriy Rogozin also has talks with Verheugen. He says the EU should pressurise Latvia over its treatment of the Russian community.

28 October 2003 Igor Ivanov meets the EU troika in Moscow. They discuss Iraq.

28 October 2003 George Robertson, the secretary-general of NATO, says certain clauses of Russia's open military doctrine of modernization of the armed forces, which was published recently by the Russian MOD (the White Book), raise questions at NATO. The White Book still describes NATO as a potential threat. NATO also has questions about how certain statements about the need to protect

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the interests of Russians living outside Russia can be interpreted. He is interviewed in *Kommersant* on 29 October.

28 October 2003 The MFA welcomes North Korea's readiness to study the USA's proposal to provide the DPRK with "written guarantees of nonaggression".

28 October 2003 An article in *Krasnaya Zvezda* argues that the US presence in Central Asia is a threat to Russia.

29 October 2003 *Nezavisimaya Gazeta* publishes a summary of a new doctrine on strategic relations with the USA proposed by leading Russian foreign policy experts. A previous article on the subject was published on 29 September.

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 Krasnodar Territory governor Aleksandr Tkachev asks Vladimir Putin for help with works at the Tuzla Spit (in the Crimea/southern Russia area).

29 October 2003 NATO Secretary-General George Robertson visits Moscow. MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says "there remain areas where our positions diverge". He mentions NATO widening as an example.

The Russian MOD expresses surprise at NATO Secretary-General George Robertson's comments about the MOD White Book.

29 October 2003 The MFA says it favours the most rapid ratification of the adapted conventional armed forces treaty. It says the Baltic states and Slovenia must sign this treaty.

29 October 2003 Energy minister Igor Yusufov invites his Iraqi counterpart to Moscow for consultations on bilateral energy cooperation.

29 October 2003 Talks between Russia and Iran on equipping the first generating set of the Bushehr nuclear power station begin at MinAtom. MinAtom says that Russia and Iran have agreed to sign a protocol on return to Russia of spent nuclear fuel from the Bushehr nuclear power plant "in the near future".

29 October 2003 Igor Ivanov says the UN should act as ideologist and coordinator in the fight against the drug threat from Afghanistan. Ivanov is speaking at the presentation of the UN Office on Drugs and Crime's annual report on the monitoring of illicit crops of opium poppies in Afghanistan in 2003.

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29 October 2003 Director-general of the Russian Agency for Munitions, Viktor Kholstov, visits the USA for talks on Russian chemical weapon disarmament.

30 October 2003 The heads of the security services of CIS members meets in Cholpon-Ata (Kyrgyzstan). They discuss drug trafficking from Afghanistan and money laundering.

30 October 2003 Igor Ivanov and French foreign minister Dominique de Villepin discuss Iraq by telephone.

30 October 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia and the EU are discussing the possibility of unifying their satellite navigation systems, Glonass and Galileo.

30 October 2003 The Russian Aviation and Space Agency denies speculation that Russia plans to leave the Baykonur launch site in Kazakhstan.

30 October 2003 State Secretary and Deputy Atomic Energy Minister Valeriy Govorukhin says the Atomic Energy Ministry is satisfied with the fact that Iran took its decision to sign the protocol on guarantees with the IAEA in keeping with Russian recommendations. Russian-Iranian talks on cooperation on peaceful use of nuclear power took place in Moscow on 29 October.

31 October 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov hails a recent trip to China by Kalmyk President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov. He hopes it will help to normalize relations between the Dalai Lama and the Chinese authorities.

31 October 2003 Representatives of the Siberian Military District visit Mongolia.

31 October 2003 Col-Gen General Yuriy Baluyevskiy, first deputy chief of the General Staff of the armed forces, is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. He says that "it is not possible to fully rule out the possibility of a war with a NATO country, but a war with NATO would be Russia's death". He also says: "We, Russian military men, have many questions about the degree and purpose of NATO's improvement as a military mechanism. What do NATO and the USA need to develop high-precision weapons for? Why do they need to improve the protection system and the system for using weapons of mass destruction? And what about NATO's military development?"

November

1 November 2003 The MFA criticises a US State Department statement on the Yukos affair.

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1 November 2003 Czech President Vaclav Klaus visits Russia for talks with Vladimir Putin.

1 November 2003 Federation Council Speaker Sergey Mironov visits Armenia. He discusses economic ties and Nagornyy Karabakh.

2 November 2003 Igor Ivanov rejects US State Department criticisms of the Yukos affair.

2 November 2003 The Atomic Energy Ministry agrees with Iran's proposal to introduce stricter monitoring of the timetable for the construction of the first power unit of the nuclear power station (AES) in Bushehr. A timetable for the completion of the AES power unit in Bushehr is most likely to be agreed in January 2004.

2 November 2003 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon arrives in Russia.

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

3 November 2003 Valeriy Kurochkin, Atomstroyeksport general representative in China, says Russia is ready to take part in the construction of the third and fourth power units of the Tianwan nuclear power plant.

3 November 2003 A protocol "of intent between the Supreme Council of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the Krasnodar Territory Legislative Assembly" to sign an cooperation agreement between the two region's legislatures by the end of 2003 is signed in Simferopol.

Aleksandr Tkachev, the governor of Krasnodar Territory, proposes that a causeway in the Kerch Strait should be completed in order to build a transport passage, a road that could link Ukraine's Crimea with Russia's Kuban.

3 November 2003 Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visits Russia for talks with Vladimir Putin. Putin says "our relations with Israel at the beginning of the 1990s were at rock bottom ... trade was worth 12m dollars whereas today it is in excess of 1bn and that's not taking everything into account".

3 November 2003 Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov visits the USA. His main purpose is signing the first cooperation memorandum in history between the Federation Council and the US Senate. He calls for the abolition of the Jackson-Vanik amendment.

3 November 2003 The MFA welcomes the fourth regional meeting of foreign ministers from countries bordering Iraq, including Jordan, Iran, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Syria and Kuwait, as well as Egypt, which took place in Damascus on 1-2

November. At the end of the meeting a communiqué was adopted stressing that work to draw up a constitution and hold general elections in Iraq should take place under the auspices of the UN. The MFA expresses support for this position.

3 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says Russian-US consultations on settling the North Korean nuclear problem are planned for November in Washington.

3 November 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Iran signing and observing the Additional Protocol to the agreement on guarantees with the IAEA Agency will make it possible to ensure the peaceful nature of the Iranian nuclear programme. Rumyantsev is visiting the USA.

4 November 2003 Vladimir Putin gives an interview to the Italian media on the eve of his state visit to Italy. He says: "Europe is our major trade and economic partner and, naturally, it is our most important partner in the political sphere as well, the more so as Russia is situated not in the Americas but in Europe. Of course, a large part of our territory lies in Asia, but, nevertheless, Russia is above all a country of the European culture. We are interested to develop relations with our partners in the USA, in the Americas as a whole, in Asia, but Europe comes first, of course. Now we are really working a great deal on the main principles of a single economic space."

Vladimir Putin says he discussed the possibility of exporting Russian military equipment to Israel at his meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in Moscow.

4 November 2003 Deputy permanent representative of the Russian Federation at the UN Yuriy Isakov says Russia condemns the US blockade of Cuba, and advocates its abolition. He is speaking at a UN General Assembly debate on the US embargo.

4 November 2003 Security Council Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo visits Armenia. He discusses the handover to Russia of Armenian enterprises to reduce Armenia's debt to Russia. In the first half of 2003 Russo-Armenian trade turnover reached 117m dollars, up by 80.7% compared with the first six months of 2002.

5 November 2003 First Deputy Foreign Minister Valeriy Loshchinin condemns attempts to "sow doubts about Russia's respect for Ukraine's territorial integrity". Loshchinin calls on people to "proceed from the understanding that the Azov Sea and Kerch Strait have the status of internal waters of the two states". He says unilateral attempts to establish a border in the Azov-Kerch waters contradict the norms of international law. He says the Russian side had proposed that the Azov-Kerch region was treated as a single economic area used in the interests of both states and that it would continue to be used jointly for fishing and shipping.

5 November 2003 Vladimir Putin visits the Pope at the Vatican.

Putin says: "We do not rule out widening our participation. We have experience in taking part in UN peacekeeping operations, but in Iraq the necessary conditions have not been created yet."

The MFA says Moscow believes it is essential that IAEA inspectors return to Iraq. MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko says: "We believe that the issue of Iraqi weapons of mass destruction cannot be definitively closed until Unmovic and the IAEA report, as envisaged by the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, that there are no weapons of mass destruction or means of their delivery on the territory of Iraq."

5 November 2003 Igor Ivanov has a telephone conversation with Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi. They discuss energy relations and other economic times and North Korea.

5 November 2003 The chairman of the Federation Council, Sergey Mironov, and the leader of the Republican majority in the US Senate, Bill Frist, sign a memorandum on cooperation between the Federation Council and the Senate.

5 November 2003 Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Russia is building a nuclear power plant in Iran in strict compliance with international agreements and it will not allow a handover of any sensitive nuclear technologies during this project.

6 November 2003 Vladimir Putin attends the Russia-EU summit in Rome. He says that Russia and the EU must direct the process of a new world order. The Joint Declaration says the war on terror and the prevention of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction are "the keystone of Russia-EU security cooperation".

6 November 2003 The Moscow Patriarchate says it hopes that the meeting between Vladimir Putin and Pope John Paul II "will change for the better the Vatican's attitude to the Russian Orthodox Church".

7 November 2003 Vladimir Putin visits France.

Putin says that Russia may join the WTO in 2004.

8 November 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Russia and the USA "are starting to bring their positions closer" over the construction of the Bushehr atomic power station in Iran.

8 November 2003 Igor Ivanov is interviewed on TV. He says that Russian servicemen could possibly in the future go to Iraq as part of an international force or to render cooperation in mine clearing or in guarding the border against terrorists.

A Russian Chronology: October-December 2003

[Aleksey Pushkov] Here is something our viewers would like to hear. It is still unclear whether or not Russia could send its servicemen to Iraq as part of the international military force. They say that it may become possible under certain circumstances. Could you comment?

[Ivanov] At present the question does not arise. The international coalition force, which is in Iraq now, is an occupation force and it defined as such by UN resolutions. At the same time, the situation may take on a very dynamic development, various forms of participation and the presence [of Russian troops] is possible. If it is a Security Council resolution or a multinational force, or if it is necessary to render cooperation in mine clearing or in guarding the border against terrorists, there are other forms as well - it would hardly to be justified to rule out all options at present. We are prepared to take an active part in Iraq's restoration and in sustaining security and stability in Iraq. We can consider various options if they do not run counter to our national interests or our law.

[Pushkov] So you do not rule out the possibility of our servicemen appearing in Iraq?

[Ivanov] Hypothetically everything is possible. I would not rule it out completely.

9 November 2003 The MFA condemns the terrorist attack in the Saudi capital of Riyadh on the night of 8-9 November.

9 November 2003 The Russian ambassador in Georgia Vladimir Chkhikvishvili says Moscow is concerned about a possible destabilization of the situation in Georgia. This is following the Georgian parliamentary elections on 2 November.

10 November 2003 Vladimir Putin has consultations in Moscow with Hasan Rowhani, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of Iran. They discuss Iran's nuclear programme. Iran will amend its nuclear programme and suspend all work on uranium enrichment. Tehran is prepared to present this pledge to the leadership of IAEA. Hasan Rowhani conveys to Vladimir Putin an invitation by Iran President Khatami to visit Tehran for talks. Putin accepts the invitation. Iran intends in the near future to start talks with Moscow on Russian involvement in the construction of a second generating set at the Bushehr nuclear power station.

10 November 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov visits Armenia.

10 November 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia and NATO will hold a major military exercise in 2004.

11 November 2003 The State Customs Committee says Russia's foreign trade surplus rose to 55.6bn dollars in January-September, up 28.7% on the year. Foreign trade turnover rose 23.8% to 134.8bn dollars in this period. In January-

September, Russia's total exports rose 25.2% on the year to 95.2bn dollars, while total imports increased 20.5% on the year to 39.6bn dollars. Meanwhile, Russia's exports to non-CIS countries amounted to 80.8bn dollars, up 24.2% on the year, while exports to the CIS totalled 14.4bn dollars, up 31.1% on the year. Russia's imports from non-CIS countries stood at 30.3bn dollars, up 18.4% on the year, while imports from CIS countries were at 9.8bn dollars, up 28.1% on the year. Trade with the European Union accounted for 35.8% of Russia's trade turnover, down from 37.2% in the respective period in 2002, while trade with CIS countries accounted for 17.5%, up from 16.7% in 2002.

In October, the Economic Development and Trade Ministry estimated Russia's foreign trade surplus at 39bn dollars in January-September. According to the ministry's data, Russia's exports totalled 80.7bn dollars in the period, an increase of 23.3% on the year, while imports were at 41.7bn dollars, up 21.8% on the year. Russia's total foreign trade turnover rose 22.8% on the year in January-September to reach 122.4bn dollars.

11 November 2003 The Atomic Energy Ministry says "it is time to review the ban on cooperation with India in the area of nuclear technology, imposed in 1992 by the Nuclear Suppliers Group". Russia is currently participating in the construction of two VVER-1000 light-water reactors at the Indian nuclear power station Kudam Kulam and training specialists for its operation.

11 November 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Moscow is not going to impose its opinion in matters concerning the settlement of the situation around Nagorny Karabakh.

11 November 2003 The MFA says Moscow is hoping that the problems of people without citizenship in Latvia and Estonia will be resolved before these countries join the EU.

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 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia is to begin to rearm and re-equip its military base in Armenia. Russian forces in Armenia total 5,000.

11 November 2003 Russia and Serbia-Montenegro reach agreement over debts.

12 November 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a law which ratifies the "Protocol on the rules of monitoring the intended use of armaments which are supplied as part of the Agreement on basic principles of military and technical cooperation between member states of the CIS Collective Security Treaty signed on 15 May 1992".

12 November 2003 Russia and Ukraine agree on the level of compensation for the families of passengers on board the Tu-154 aircraft that was shot down two years ago over the Black Sea during exercises being conducted by Ukraine's anti-aircraft forces. Kiev is ready to pay the families of the dead 100,000 dollars each.

12 November 2003 Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee visits Russia for talks with Vladimir Putin. They discuss economic and security relations. They sign a Declaration on Global Challenges and Threats to International Security and Stability. In total they sign 10 accords. The Russian and Indian armed forces will hold joint training exercises.

12 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Moscow is concerned about the worsening situation in Iraq and does not rule out the possibility of sending international peacekeepers under the UN aegis to Iraq in future.

12 November 2003 The MFA says confirmation of the members of the new Palestinian government "provides a real chance to put an end to violence and terror, continue reforming the structure of the Palestinian national administration on a democratic footing and continue talks based on the Road Map".

12 November 2003 Konstantin Kosachev, deputy chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, criticises the US Senate's threat to impose sanctions on Syria.

12 November 2003 The Russian Military-Technical Cooperation Committee and Rosoboroneksport refuse to comment on an article in *Kommersant* that Iran sent an official note to Russia with a request that the military technical cooperation between the two states should be resumed.

12 November 2003 CGS Army Gen Anatoliy Kvashnin, attends a session of the Russia-NATO Council in Brussels at the level of chiefs of general staff. Kvashnin says Russia and NATO will be conducting a whole series of joint exercises over the next two years. The largest of these will be a sea rescue operation, where methods for assisting submarines and surface vessels in distress will be practised. Russia will allocate a special rescue vessel and a number of rescue vehicles to take part in these exercises. Joint exercises have also been scheduled for combined arms subunits, rear services forces and medical services. The chief of the General Staff said that these would take place on Russian territory and on the territory of NATO member states.

The council also worked through specific issues relating to the operational compatibility of military equipment and weaponry systems, military planning, rear services support and the deployment of forces. They also discussed collaboration in the creation of anti-missile defence in the theatre of military action.

12 November 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov has talks with visiting South African Foreign Minister Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma.

12 November 2003 An article in *Kommersant* discusses future possible Russo-Iranian military cooperation.

13 November 2003 Vladimir Putin meets IMF executive director Horst Koehler.

13 November 2003 The MFA criticises the decision of a magistrates court in London to refuse to extradite Chechen separatist envoy Akhmed Zakayev to Russia.

13 November 2003 State Secretary and Deputy Atomic Energy Minister Valeriy Govorukhin says there are no grounds for saying that Iran is secretly developing nuclear weapons.

13 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says so far Russia has not received any official notification of the possible date for the second round of the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear programme.

13 November 2003 Acting Interior Minister Col-Gen Rashid Nurgaliyev and Afghan Interior Minister Ali Ahmad Jalali discuss in Moscow the state of and prospects for Russian-Afghan cooperation in the law-enforcement field, as well as the campaign against terrorism and illegal drugs trade.

14 November 2003 Economic Development and Trade Minister German Gref attends the seventh Russian-US investment symposium in Boston.

14 November 2003 A conference called "Improvements in the CIS states' cooperation in the fight against international terrorism and its funding", takes place in St Petersburg. Representatives of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Ukraine and the CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre take part in the conference.

The meeting's final document proposes that the leading bodies of the CIS countries play a direct part in developing, examining and adopting model laws to regulate the various aspects of the fight against terrorism, support the activities of the consultative group on transport security, take an active part in preparing for and holding the third international conference on "Terrorism and security on transport" in Moscow in March 2004 and implement measures to monitor sales within the CIS states of Igla and Strela type surface-to-air missile systems. FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev speaks at the conference.

14 November 2003 Security Council Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo and head of the Armenian Foreign Ministry Vardan Oskanyan have talks in Moscow. They discuss Georgia.

14 November 2003 Members of the parliamentary foreign affairs commissions of the Republic of Estonia and the Russian Federation have met at Otepaa in southern Estonia.

15 November 2003 Igor Ivanov says relations between Russia and the USA are coming to a qualitatively new level of mutually advantageous partnership based on trust. Ivanov says "the priorities of Russian cooperation with the USA are the joint struggle against new threats, the strengthening of strategic stability, nonproliferation and the settlement of international conflicts". "The key task is to underpin political relations with a firm basis of trade, economic and investment cooperation. The task is also to ensure the functioning of mechanisms allowing differences to be overcome and solutions found without detriment to bilateral relations."

17 November 2003 Igor Ivanov says the settlement of the Korean crisis will depend on the political will of the USA. "There are examples in international law of resolving security problems both on a bilateral and multilateral basis. At present this is down to the political will of the USA, above all ... we will consider any proposals which meet the interests of preserving the nuclear-free status of the Korean peninsula...we have not so far received any official proposals from the USA."

17 November 2003 The director of the Russian Foreign Ministry's 1st Asia Department, Yevgeniy Afanasyev, and the director of the Chinese Foreign Ministry's Asian Affairs Department, Fu Jing, hold consultations in Beijing on preparations for the second round of the six-nation talks on the North Korean nuclear problem. Afanasyev says Russia "regards as positive" a statement by a North Korean representative on Pyongyang's readiness to give up its nuclear programme if the USA changes its hostile attitude towards North Korea.

Igor Ivanov has talks in Moscow with South Korean foreign minister, Yoon Young-kwan.

17 November 2003 An MFA spokesman expresses doubt about the effectiveness of the agreement between Paul Bremmer's coalition administration and the Iraq provisional governing council, which was signed in Baghdad on 15 November.

17 November 2003 Mikhail Kasyanov visits Finland. He says all the necessary prerequisites for the creation of a single visa-free area incorporating Russia and the European Union can be created in 5-7 years.

17 November 2003 Vladimir Putin says that the MFA has officially submitted a Russian plan for the settlement of the Transdnester region problem.

17 November 2003 Igor Ivanov says that responsibility for the war that arose in the Balkans in 1999 "falls largely on the then leadership of NATO", although he also says "that the Yugoslav leadership did not do everything possible".

17 November 2003 The MFA says Russia and Japan have agreed the terms of fishing for 2004, and also agreed to extend the intergovernmental accord on fishing of 1998 for another year.

17 November 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev is interviewed in *Vremya Novostey*. He says that Russia has no agreement for building the second block of the Iranian nuclear power plant but the construction of the first one needs to be accelerated. He also discusses Russian relations with India in the civilian nuclear sphere.

18 November 2003 The Russian government decides to write off part of Moldova's debt, a sum amounting to 100m dollars. This will write off the debt owed by the Dnester region for Russian gas as compensation for the Russian military assets being withdrawn from there. Russia is also supplying grain as humanitarian aid.

18 November 2003 Igor Ivanov, states that developments in Iraq have vindicated Russia's position on settling the Iraq crisis. Ivanov says this at a research conference devoted to the 70th anniversary of restoring diplomatic relations between Russia and the USA.

19 November 2003 Deputy Minister of Economic Development and Trade Maksim Medvedkov says the Russian government does not plan to eliminate the export monopoly of Gazprom. He is commenting on the course of negotiations on Russia's accession to the WTO.

19 November 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. He says Russia does not have the funds to remove spent nuclear fuel from storage facilities at Soviet-era research reactors and take it back to Russia for processing. He asks for financial assistance from the USA and IAEA.

Rumyantsev says Moscow and Tehran will not sign an agreement in the near future on returning spent nuclear fuel from Iran's Bushehr nuclear power plant to Russia. Rumyantsev says Iranian experts "just don't have time" to prepare this document as they "are concentrating on providing the IAEA with information" about their nuclear programmes.

19 November 2003 Security Council Secretary Vladimir Rushaylo meets Georgian ambassador Zurab Abashidz in the Kremlin. They discuss the situation in Georgia after parliamentary elections on 2 November.

19 November 2003 Vladimir Putin meets King Abdallah of Jordan in Moscow. They discuss economic and military cooperation, the Middle East peace process and Iraq.

19 November 2003 Igor Ivanov is interviewed on CNN. He says Russia proposes holding a conference on Iraq under UN aegis to work out a joint settlement plan which would subsequently be examined by the UN Security Council. International security forces could be deployed in Iraq with their mission defined by the UN Security Council. He rejects the idea of imposing sanctions against Iran.

19 November 2003 Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia has officially circulated a draft resolution at the UN Security Council on approval of the "road map", the Middle East settlement plan drawn up by the quartet of international mediators (the Russian Federation, the USA, the EU and the UN). It will be presented at the UN Security Council.

19 November 2003 The special envoy of the head of the Russian Foreign Ministry for the Middle East, Andrey Vdovin, is appointed Russian ambassador to Greece by presidential decree.

19 November 2003 The Russian Border Guard Service and the Chinese National Frontier Defence Committee sign in Beijing a protocol of cooperation to extend their cooperation in combating international terrorism, illegal trafficking in weapons, drugs and people as well as illegal migration.

20 November 2003 Vladimir Putin expresses his condolences to the prime ministers of Turkey and Britain, Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Tony Blair, in connection with the terrorist acts in Istanbul. Putin holds a telephone conversation with Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

Putin calls for combining efforts in the fight against international terrorism.

The recent tragic events in Turkey have once more confirmed that international terrorism is not reducing its activities. Therefore, we will be able to give a real response to this threat only by creating an effective mechanism of practical coordination. I want to confirm once more what I said many times: we need unity in the fight against such threats as proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, organized crime and drugs trafficking. The solution of other global problems, such as overcoming starvation, mass epidemics and ecological threats also needs closest possible cooperation.

20 November 2003 Vladimir Putin has signed a decree to lift sanctions against Libya following the adoption by the UN Security Council of a resolution on Libya.

20 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov says the road map plan is now "the only realistic programme for a Palestinian-Israeli settlement, based on the concept of Israel and Palestine coexisting in peace and security". Saltanov also notes that this document "does not explain in detail the possible outcomes of cardinal problems of the final status, such as Jerusalem, refugees and borders".

20 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says Russia "backs efforts by the transitional administration in Afghanistan under UN auspices to revive the peaceful and independent Afghan state, free from terrorism and the threat of drugs". He is meeting Afghan Education Minister Yunos Qanuni who is in Moscow on a working visit at the invitation of the Russian Education Ministry. The

Dr Mark A Smith

two sides discussed specific ways of improving Russian-Afghan cooperation in various areas.

20 November 2003 The first deputy director of the Russian Federal Security Service and the head of Federal Border Guard Service, Col-Gen Vladimir Pronichev, meets Chinese Defence Minister Cao Gangchuan in Beijing.

20 November 2003 The State Statistics Committee states that Russia's foreign trade turnover in January-September 2003, calculated by the balance of payments method, was 148,476m dollars, or 24% higher than the same period of 2002.

Russia increased its exports by 25% over the period to 86,172m dollars, and imports by 22.1% to 52,304m dollars. Russia recorded a positive foreign trade balance in the first nine months, at 43,868m dollars, as against 34,071m dollars in the same period in 2002. In exports from Russia in the first nine months, countries outside the CIS made up 81.08bn dollars, and CIS countries 15,092m dollars. In imports, non-CIS states made up 41,619m dollars and CIS countries 10,685m dollars. Russia increased its exports to countries outside the CIS by 23.8% and to CIS countries by 31.9%. Imports from non-CIS countries increased by 21.7%, and from CIS countries by 23.8%.

21 November 2003 Deputy Finance Minister Sergey Kolotukhin states that Russia's total foreign debt now stands at 115bn dollars. In the last three years foreign debt fell by 40bn dollars. Kolotukhin says that currently Russia's foreign debt accounts for 35% of the country's GDP, while in 1999 it was 100% of GDP. Kolotukhin also says that foreign countries' debts to Russia currently amount to about 95bn dollars. The bulk of the debt is owed by the poorest countries in Asia and Africa, such as Mozambique, Angola, the Central African Republic.

21 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov is interviewed in *Vremya Novostey*. He says after the phasing out of the Oil for Food programme Russian companies will resume active operations in Iraq. The validity period of the UN humanitarian programme for Iraq ends on 22 November.

21 November 2003 The MFA says the crisis in Georgia should be resolved within the legal framework.

21 November 2003 The MFA expresses disappointment over the fact that "the delegations of the USA, most EU countries and some other countries voted against or abstained during the voting on the UN resolution "On human rights and terrorism".

21 November 2003 Russia's permanent representative at the OSCE, Aleksandr Alekseyev, expresses concern over human rights in Latvia and Estonia.

22 November 2003 Vladimir Putin consults with other CIS leaders about the situation in Georgia. Igor Ivanov flies to Georgia.

The MOD states that the Russian troops stationed in Georgia are not involved in the events in Tbilisi.

Chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Dmitriy Rogozin says Russian troops on the border with Georgia should be put on a heightened state of alert if confrontation intensifies in Georgia. He says if opposition leader Mikhail Saakashvili becomes the new leader of Georgia, then US bases will appear there.

22 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the Iraq disarmament dossier "is by no means closed, and the UN Security Council will have to return to the issue in line with Resolution 1483 and decide how the international arms inspectors will fulfil their mandate in this new environment. He attended on 21 November the College of Commissioners of UNMOVIC, which met to examine the draft of the latest UNMOVIC report to the UN Security Council.

23 November 2003 Igor Ivanov appears in the square in front of the parliament building in Georgia. He meets opposition leaders to discuss the political crisis following the parliamentary elections. He later meets Georgian President Eduard Shevardnadze.

Igor Ivanov has talks in Batumi with the leader of Ajaria, Aslan Abashidze.

The chairman of the Federation Council's International Affairs Committee, Mikhail Margelov, says Russia "is in no way interested in the break-up of our CIS partner, Georgia".

The Chairman of the Duma Committee for International Affairs, Dmitriy Rogozin, warns the leaders of the Georgian opposition not to balk the separatist claims of the country's breakaway republics.

24 November 2003 Igor Ivanov is interviewed on Al Jazeera. He says the Palestinian people should choose their leader by democratic mechanisms, that is, in elections. He says Russia will remain in dialogue with Yassir Arafat.

24 November 2003 Igor Ivanov meets in Moscow with Azeri foreign minister Vilayat Quliyev. He says the situation regarding Iran's nuclear programme must be resolved only under the auspices of the IAEA. They also discuss the Caspian Sea and Georgia.

24 November 2003 First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov and French Foreign Ministry Secretary-General Hubert Colin de Verdiere have talks in Moscow on the Middle East.

24 November 2003 Afghan Transport Minister Sayd Mohammad Ali Jawid says Kabul "is interested in Russia participating in the construction of the Afghan railway network, which will link major cities and provide means of communication with neighbouring countries, in particular, Iran and Pakistan".

24 November 2003 Igor Ivanov says that Russia wants the situation in Georgia to develop within the confines of legality and the constitution. Sergey Ivanov says Russian forces in Georgia are not involved in the political crisis there. Vladimir Rushaylo, secretary of the Security Council, says all political forces in Georgia should show restraint.

24 November 2003 Igor Ivanov writes an article in *Vremya Novostey* entitled "facing common threats". He discusses international terrorism and the Iraq situation.

24 November 2003 Igor Ivanov says the IAEA should adopt a balanced resolution on Iran so as to confirm the accords reached so far.

25 November 2003 The Ministry of Finance lists Russia's main debtors: Cuba 19.08bn dollars, Syria 13.23bn dollars plus 91.3m pounds sterling, Mongolia 11.52bn dollars, Afghanistan 9.60bn dollars, Iraq 8.38bn dollars, North Korea 6.63bn dollars, Libya 3.23bn dollars, Algeria 2.17bn dollars plus 1.07bn of special drawing rights (SDR) plus 0.356bn euros, Cambodia 1.39bn dollars, Laos 1.29bn dollars, Yemen 1.28bn dollars and Ethiopia 1.27bn dollars. The above figures do not include the debts of CIS countries, which amounted to 3.42bn dollars as of 1 January. The largest CIS debtors are Ukraine with 1.79bn dollars, Uzbekistan with 641m dollars and Tajikistan with 306m dollars.

25 November 2003 CIS foreign ministers meet for an emergency conference in Kiev to discuss the situation in Georgia.

The leaders of Georgian autonomous entities - Ajarian leader Aslan Abashidze and head of the unrecognized republic of South Osetia Eduard Kokoiti - arrive in Moscow for consultations. Eduard Kokoiti says Russia has an important role in settling the Georgian crisis. He also says South Osetia will do its best to "join Russia, despite the change of power in Georgia".

25 November 2003 Igor Ivanov says the signing of a memorandum on settling the Dnester region problem has been postponed because of the pressure exerted on the Moldovan leadership from outside.

25 November 2003 The deputy secretary-general of the Collective Security Treaty Council, Maj-Gen Toktasyn Buzubayev, says a large-scale anti-drug operation, codenamed Kanal, has been held on the territory of Eurasia for the first time. It involved special units and police forces of six countries.

25 November 2003 Aleksandr Brindikov, a deputy minister of industry, science and technology, says Russia and NATO are creating a working group for the exchange of experience in the sphere of the defence industry and antiterrorist technologies. A meeting takes place in the Ministry of Industry and Science between representatives of the Russian government and the defence-industrial complex and a NATO delegation on this topic. This group will begin its work in May 2004.

25 November 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says at the first session of the State Border Commission that the main issue of the border policy of the Russian Federation is creating the conditions for a single visa-free space between Russia and the European Union.

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 considered 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.

Baluyevskiy says the removal of Russian troops from Georgia will take at least 10 years. He expresses concern over Georgia's ability to deal with Chechen fighters. He says he believes that the North Korean leadership is bluffing when it maintains it possesses nuclear weapons.

26 November 2003 The head of Ajaria, Aslan Abashidze, says that if relations between Batumi and Tbilisi were to develop according to a negative scenario, he would count on the help of the servicemen of the 12th Russian military base stationed in Ajaria's capital.

Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov states that a decision has already been taken in principle on the withdrawal of Russian military bases from the territory of Georgia. The point of discussion is only the time-frame within which it is to be carried out. He thinks Russia needs 10 years to withdraw. Georgia says it must be done in 3 years.

Igor Ivanov affirms that Russia supports Georgia's independence and territorial integrity. "This is our fundamental position, there have been no changes to it, nor will there be any."

26 November 2003 Vladimir Putin makes a telephone call to Azerbaijani President Ilkham Aliyev.

26 November 2003 The first deputy presidential chief of staff, Dmitriy Kozak, says Moscow supports Moldova's request to broaden the representation of the peacekeeping mission in Dnester and include peacekeepers from the EU, OSCE and Ukraine.

26 November 2003 Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka meets the Gazprom board chairman, Aleksey Miller, on Russian gas deliveries in 2004.

26 November 2003 The MFA says it "regrets that Estonian politicians took part in the unveiling of a memorial to Nazi allies in Parnu".

26 November 2003 Igor Ivanov says the USA must consider Russia's national security interests when it moves its bases in Europe, including to places in Poland. Ivanov is visiting Warsaw.

26 November 2003 The Federation Council of the Russian Federation asks the US Senate to explain its position in connection with two senators' proposal to raise the issue of expelling Russia from the G8. The Federation Council has sent an official letter to the US Senate "asking for an explanation of the official position on the statement made by senators John McCain and Joseph Lieberman", who called for raising the issue of expelling Russia from the G8 for allegedly moving away from democratic standards.

26 November 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia is not pleased with all the provisions of a resolution on Iran adopted by the IAEA Board of Governors, but gives a positive assessment to it in general. He is opposed to the UN Security Council dealing with the issue.

27 November 2003 Commander-in-Chief of the Ground Troops and Deputy Russian Defence Minister Army-Gen Nikolay Kormiltsev says the Russian military leadership does not plan to cut the group of its forces in Georgia. There are about 9,000 Russian troops in Georgia.

27 November 2003 The Duma is holding preliminary hearings into the human rights of the Russian-speaking community in Turkmenistan. Chief of the Foreign Ministry Consulate Service Department Vladimir Kotenev says that more than 100,000 people received Russian citizenship in Turkmenistan from 1993 to 2002.

27 November 2003 The MFA says Russia supports in the UN General Assembly's Third Committee a draft resolution on human rights in Turkmenistan.

27 November 2003 MinAtom official Nikolay Shingarev says the IAEA resolution on Iran "gives the opportunity to step up Russian-Iranian cooperation in the sphere of nuclear energy". He says that Iran may be interested in building a second unit at Bushehr with Russian help. Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev is expected to visit Tehran in January 2004.

27 November 2003 The head of the International Cooperation Directorate of the Russian Interior Ministry, Maj-Gen Boris Shtokolov, says the law-enforcement agencies of Russia and China have agreed to expand cooperation and to share experience in combating terrorism, drug trafficking and illegal migration. He is having talks in Beijing with China's Ministry of Public Security for 2004-2005.

27 November 2003 Voice of Russia radio station reports that YeES is having talks with North Korea about supplying electricity.

28 November 2003 Igor Ivanov meets the Abkhaz prime minister, Raul Khajimba, in Moscow.

The head of South Osetia, Eduard Kokoiti, says he hopes South Osetia will soon become part of the Russian Federation. Kokoiti is currently holding consultations in Moscow with the leaders of Abkhazia and Ajaria and with the government of the Russian Federation and the Russian Foreign Ministry.

Vladimir Putin sends a letter to the chairman of the Federation Council, Sergey Mironov, in which he proposes that the Federation Council extend the mandate of the Russian military contingent deployed as part of the collective peacekeeping forces in the zone of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

28 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov has told a news conference in Moscow that in the course of one-and-a-half years of its work the Russia-NATO Council has become an effective mechanism for drawing up joint decisions and adopting joint activities. He says Russia and NATO have good experience in crisis regulation, fighting terrorism and nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction. The future area of work is the development of the antimissile defence system of the theatre of military operations. He also notes the need for the operational joint activity of the armies of the member states of the Russia-NATO Council - "holding of joint exercises and training". He says Russia-NATO cooperation should embrace new areas. He criticises NATO expansion. He says Russia will propose the setting up of the new European anti-missile defence system Triumpf at the sitting of the Russia-NATO Council.

28 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia supports the just cause of the Palestinian people. He was speaking at a ceremony marking the International Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People.

28 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Chizhov says Moscow is concerned about the policy of double standards in the OSCE. He refers to the slowdown of the process of ratifying the adapted Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty. He also thinks the decision to close the organization's missions in Estonia and Latvia was "incorrect".

Chizhov says the British authorities "demonstrate double standards in their approach to terrorism" following the decision by the UK government to grant asylum to the envoy of Chechen guerrillas, Akhmed Zakeyev.

29 November 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says Russia intends to continue rendering assistance to the population of the Georgian territories South Osetia, Abkhazia and Ajaria, including through supplies of humanitarian aid, gas and electricity. He says that Russia also intends to study the question of simplifying the visa regime with Ajaria.

Igor Ivanov says the preservation of the integrity of Georgia and, at the same time, good relations between Russia, on the one hand, and Ajaria, Abkhazia and South Osetia on the other are not mutually-exclusive tasks. "Russia's main objective is to help to stabilize the situation in Georgia on the basis of the constitution and the

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law ... we have friends not only in Abkhazia, Ajaria and Osetia, but also in other regions of the country." He says Georgia should not use force in Abkhazia.

Igor Ivanov says Moscow will scrutinize an opportunity to introduce a visa-free regime with Ajaria. He has talks with Ajarian leader Aslan Abashidze. He warns that use of force in Georgia "will only complicate the situation and in the current circumstances might lead to the disintegration of the country".

Georgian State Minister Zurab Zhvania talks to Igor Ivanov by telephone, and apparently asks for aid.

First Deputy Foreign Minister Eleonora Mitrofanova says Russia is in favour of Georgia's unity and does not intend to interfere in the internal affairs of that country. "We are for a united Georgia, and have never spoken out in favour of Georgia's disintegration into fragmented fiefdoms." Mitrofanova is responding to Georgia's interim leader Nino Burjanadze's statement that the Georgian authorities were unhappy about the Moscow consultations of the leaders of Ajaria, South Osetia and Abkhazia.

29 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia is conducting "the broadest possible dialogue with the USA on Iraq at the most senior level, at foreign minister level". He says "it's hard to say to what extent Washington heeds Moscow's opinion, but it has to be said that virtually all of Russia's amendments were accepted during the debate on UN Resolution 1511." He discusses the future economic relationship with Iraq and calls for a more rapid political settlement with a central role for the UN.

An MFA statement says Moscow welcomes the UN secretary-general's decision to set up a group on Iraq in the format "7 plus 5 plus 5", to incorporate Iraq's neighbours and Egypt, the five permanent and five non-permanent members of the Security Council. The MFA statement states that "We believe that this could help achieve the final return of the Iraq process to the international legal field, and prepare the necessary recommendations including for the transfer of power to Iraqis". The MFA sees the group's primary goal as "to determine the optimum way of including the UN into the political process in Iraq ... [the UN] can play an important role in implementing proposals to call, under its auspices, a representative pan-Iraqi conference with a major element of external participants, with the aim of developing comprehensive agreements on the content of the political process and the formation of an authoritative provisional government and, eventually, the full restoration of Iraq's sovereignty."

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the recent agreement between the coalition powers and Iraq's provisional governing council on the possible handover of power by 31 May is an "ambiguous event". He says: "On the one hand we can welcome the intent to expedite the handover of power to the Iraqi people. Russia has consistently called for it to happen as soon as possible ... on the other hand, the decision was taken without seeking the opinion of other countries in the region or UN Security Council members, who have been given no role in the process. We propose applying a collective approach, as happened for the Afghanistan issue." He speaks in favour of an international conference on Iraq.

29 November 2003 Vladimir Putin has talks with Hungarian Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy in St Petersburg. He expresses concern that EU membership could damage trade.

29 November 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov said says differences in Russia's and Israel's positions on UN Resolution 1515 "will not damage our bilateral relations". He says "as regards Resolution 1515 on the road map, the Israeli reaction could give rise to some concern ... this resolution was passed unanimously and was co-authored by the overwhelming majority of the UN Security Council."

30 November 2003 Deputy head of the presidential administration Sergey Prikhodko says Russia will cooperate with any Georgian leadership supported by the people of that country. "Time will tell which interests the new Georgian leadership will be guided by - American ones ... or the interests of the Georgian people." Prikhodko disagrees with the view expressed by some journalists that it was after the recent political events in Georgia that the leaders of Ajaria, Abkhazia and South Osetia paid their first visits to Moscow. "They come here quite often. We maintain constant contacts with the regions of Georgia which are adjacent to Russia."

30 November 2003 Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Armenian counterpart Robert Kocharyan have talks in St Petersburg. They discuss the settlement of the Nagorny Karabakh conflict, as well as economic cooperation programmes.

30 November 2003 It is reported that Boris Nemtsov, leader of the URF, has visited Belarus on a secret and private tourist trip.

December

1 December 2003 Sergey Ivanov attends a Russia-NATO Council meeting in Brussels at defence minister level. They discuss military-technical cooperation and exercises. Ivanov says that Russia and NATO are to carry out more than 100 joint events in the military sphere in 2004. Twenty of them will be conducted on the territory of Russia.

Sergey Ivanov says in a statement that the situation surrounding North Korea can only be settled by politico-diplomatic means. "I can see no particular role for Russia in the settlement of the North Korea problem ... the road toward a settlement of the situation has long been identified within the framework of the six states that are engaged in the negotiations ... I would be cautiously optimistic as regards the chances that this problem will be solved in that particular format."

Ivanov says that the future of the two military bases in Batumi and Akhalkalaki (in Georgia) will depend on the outcome of bilateral negotiations. He says Russian forces from the bases will not get involved in Georgia's internal affairs. "We need to see that no threat is posed the security of Russia from the territory of Georgia."

Unfortunately, such threats have not been eradicated yet ... last week, during a special operation in a mountainous area of Chechnya, a group of fighters was discovered and eliminated. There were foreigners among the dead, some of them were from NATO member states. However, all of them had Georgian visas." Ivanov says that Russia is honouring an agreement reached at the OSCE summit in Istanbul in 1999. "We made the commitment to remove two Russian military bases (on the territory of Georgia) as well as reducing our military equipment and ammunition in compliance with the Conventional Armed Forces in Europe Treaty. We have fulfilled our obligations. We have already joined the adapted treaty, although we have not signed the document yet."

He also discusses the Moldova situation.

1 December 2003 Igor Ivanov attends the meeting of OSCE foreign ministers in Maastricht. Russia is interested in discussing the memorandum on a Dnester region settlement, which was proposed by Moscow and blocked by Chisinau, and relations with the new Georgia. Acting Georgian President Nino Burjanadze is also in Maastricht. She meets Igor Ivanov. Ivanov is critical of the OSCE over Moldova and the Baltic states. He says the OSCE must step up its anti-terrorist activities. He expresses concern over the delay in the adaptation of the CFE.

1 December 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a decree giving the order to send Russian servicemen in the UN peacekeeping mission to Liberia. Up to 40 Russian servicemen will be in the UN mission, as communications officers, military observers and staff officers.

Putin talks with US President George W Bush by telephone. They discuss Georgia, Moldova and Iraq.

1 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the lack of stability in Iraq "cannot but affect the situation in the region". He calls for an international conference on Iraq.

1 December 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that a direct encoded telephone line has been established between himself and NATO Secretary-General George Robertson.

1 December 2003 Secretary of the Russian Security Council Vladimir Rushaylo and the secretary of the Security Council under the Armenian president and defence minister, Serzh Sarkisyan, have talks in Moscow. They discuss Georgia and Russo-Armenian cooperation.

1 December 2003 Russian Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Khristenko informs Vladimir Putin on the outcome of a session of the intergovernmental commission for developing trade and economic cooperation which was held in Baku last week. Trade between Russia and Azerbaijan will rise by 40% in 2003, while in 2002 it rose by 60%. Khristenko says the meeting discussed in particular the use of the Qabala radar station on the territory of Azerbaijan.

Khristenko says Russia may join the World Trade Organization in late 2004.

Khristenko speaks at a round table of Russian and EU industrialists. He says EU enlargement will have complex and contradictory consequences for the interests of Russia and countries of Central and Eastern Europe. He spoke about forecasts according to which Russia would incur substantial losses in exports of energy, metals and nuclear substances. Khristenko says that relations between Russia and Central and Eastern Europe would become more difficult because the legal basis of bilateral relations would become invalid as these countries go over to EU legislation. "In the near future a legal vacuum may bring about serious problems in our commercial and civil relations with candidate member countries." He says that the accession of 10 countries of Central and Eastern Europe to the EU would radically change the geopolitical and economic situation in Europe. Russia's share of foreign trade with the EU will rise from the current 35-38% to 51%.

2 December 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov meets US Secretary of Defence Donald Rumsfeld in Brussels. He says that Russia does not intend to participate in the military operation under way in Iraq. They discuss Afghanistan. They also discuss joint exercises planned for 2004, including air and naval exercises in the North Atlantic. He also has bilateral meetings with the defence ministers of Armenia and Sweden at the NATO headquarters.

2 December 2003 Igor Ivanov says Moscow is against the creation of any "triangles", and this applies to relations between Russia, Georgia and the USA. Ivanov says there is no need for mediators in the Russo-Georgian relationship.

Georgian presidential candidate Mikhail Saakashvili says he is planning to visit Moscow in the near future. He says "Georgia and Russia should strive to repeal the visa regime as well as to dismantle barriers to the export and import of agricultural produce. Also, we must have mutual security guarantees. We understand that Russia has its security interests in the Caucasus ... Eduard Shevardnadze's relations with Russia were wrong ... Russia played a major role during the crisis in Georgia." He says he hopes "Moscow will get over its worries with regard to the change of leadership in Georgia", and that he welcomes Igor Ivanov's role in helping to settle the crisis in Georgia.

2 December 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says Russia does not rule out the possibility of introducing a single currency with Belarus in January 2005. He is attending a meeting of the council of ministers of the union state in Moscow. They approve the union budget. The trade turnover between Russia and Belarus reached 10bn dollars in the first 10 months of 2003.

2 December 2003 Andrey Illarionov, a Russian presidential adviser, says Russia will not join the WTO on the wrong terms and will not ratify the Kyoto Protocol in its current form.

Vladimir Putin says the tough demands the EU is making on Russia for its accession to the WTO are effectively blocking the process. He is speaking at a meeting of the round table of Russian and EU industrialists in the Kremlin. He says the creation of a free trade zone is the main reference point in developing a new model of economic relations between Russia and the EU.

2 December 2003 The head of the General Staff's Main Intelligence Directorate (GRU), Army Gen Valentin Korabelnikov says Russia is exchanging intelligence information with NATO member countries not just on the situation in Afghanistan, but also on many other regions in order to combat international terrorism.

The MFA says "Russia and NATO still differ over some issues, above all the enlargement of the alliance."

2 December 2003 The MFA says Russia expresses regret at the OSCE conference that "because of the positions of a number of states it has not been possible to come up with an agreed text of a ministerial political declaration and regional statements on Georgia and Moldova". He also criticises the "refusal of a number of states, on groundless pretexts, to bring into force an agreement on adaptation of the CFE".

2 December 2003 A conference of the Caspian States takes place in Moscow. the Russian president's special representative for settling the status of the Caspian Sea, Deputy Foreign Minister Viktor Kalyuzhnyy, says the next summit of the five Caspian countries could be held in Tehran in the second half of 2004. He says the five states have managed to prepare a consolidated draft convention on the legal status of the Caspian and that about 60% of the text of the document has already been agreed. Kalyuzhnyy says that Russia "proposes establishing a 15-mile zone of national jurisdiction in the Caspian".

2 December 2003 Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the Iraqi disarmament dossier cannot be deemed to be closed until the UN Security Council resolution is fulfilled. Fedotov meets in Vienna with the director-general of the IAEA, Muhammad al-Baradi'i.

2 December 2003 Atomic energy minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev is interviewed in *Itogi*. He says Iran is not able to build nuclear weapons. He says Russia will continue to build two nuclear reactors in India.

3 December 2003 The MFA says Russia "shares the USA's concern over attempts to drag out the talks on the North Korea nuclear problem by putting issues of a bilateral nature on the agenda of the talks. Russia backs an uninterrupted and prioritized process in the six-party talks on the North Korea nuclear problem."

3 December 2003 Security Council Deputy Chairman Oleg Chernov says Russia will insist on sanctions being lifted against several Russian universities and research centres imposed by the US in connection with their alleged cooperation with Iran in the nuclear sphere.

3 December 2003 The MFA says that the unofficial "Geneva Agreement" will help to break the deadlock in the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. The MFA notes that this Agreement is an attempt to resolve the problem of the final status of the Palestinian territories, which could be of use in the final stages of the implementation of the "road map".

Russian envoy to the UN, Sergey Lavrov, says both Israel and the Palestinians must abide by the road map approved by the Security Council in its Resolution 1515.

3 December 2003 The UN General Assembly adopts a resolution on responding to global threats and challenges, which was initiated by Russia.

4 December 2003 Igor Ivanov states that talks on Russian military bases in Georgia will be continued as soon as legitimately elected authorities have been established there.

4 December 2003 First deputy chief of General Staff of the Russian armed forces, Col-Gen Yuriy Baluyevskiy, is interviewed in *Krasnaya Zvezda*. He discusses the Russian troop withdrawals from Moldova and Georgia. He says Russia should not hurry its withdrawal from Georgia.

4 December 2003 Igor Ivanov says that the situation in Georgia will not cause relations between Russia and the USA to deteriorate. "Both Russia and the USA are interested in stability in the Caucasus, in democratic values triumphing in Georgia, in Georgia being a stable and prosperous country, so that no threat comes from its territory."

Vladimir Lukin, Duma deputy speaker and Russia's former ambassador to the USA, says the orientation of Georgia's new leadership towards an alliance with the USA has no prospects.

4 December 2003 The Russian government approves a draft agreement between Russia and Germany on simplifying the visa regime between the two countries.

4 December 2003 Igor Ivanov arrives in Brussels, where he will take part in the work of the Russia-NATO Council at foreign minister level.

Chairman of the Federation Council's International Affairs Committee Mikhail Margelov says Russia "has better relations with NATO than with the European Union" as security issues are "a more solid platform for dialogue than problems of mutual economic interests".

5 December 2003 Igor Ivanov is interviewed in *Moskovskiy Komsomolets*. He says Russia has become stronger under Vladimir Putin and has managed to "rise above" NATO expansion. He welcomes the US decision to hasten transfer of power in Iraq to the locals. He says Russia is not interested in joining the EU but was concerned about growing visa restrictions in Europe, especially as ties with the EU were expanding. He says he is "dissatisfied" with the CIS, and calls on Ukraine to cooperate over the dam construction at Tuzla. He also discusses the change of leadership in Georgia and Moldova's rejection of a Russian plan for Dnester.

5 December 2003 Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs of the Federation Council Mikhail Margelov says the issue of the presence of Russian

peacekeepers in Georgia will be settled after a legitimate power is formed in the republic.

5 December 2003 The chief adviser of the Foreign Ministry's information and press department, Mikhail Troyanskiy, says the tightening of visa procedures by the USA may lead to new difficulties for Russian citizens. From 9 December onwards the US embassy in Moscow plans to take fingerprints from visa applicants.

5 December 2003 The Russian Embassy in Azerbaijan says guarding maritime borders in the Caspian Sea is the prerogative of the Caspian littoral states. He criticises plans to strengthen US-Azerbaijani cooperation in guarding the borders of the Caspian Sea's Azerbaijani section.

Some Azeri MPs criticise the Russian Ambassador to Azerbaijan Nikolay Ryabov for criticising US plans to set up bases in Azerbaijan.

First Deputy Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Trubnikov has talks in Baku with Azeri president Ilham Aliyev and OSCE Minsk Group cochairmen on Nagorny Karabakh.

5 December 2003 Igor Ivanov says instability in Georgia and Moldova is preventing Russia from withdrawing its military bases from those countries.

5 December 2003 Leonid Ivashov attacks NATO widening and US policy towards Eastern Europe in *Kommersant*.

6 December 2003 At the request of the Georgian side, a telephone conversation between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Georgian acting President Nino Burjanadze takes place.

Igor Ivanov expresses disagreement with the assertion by US Defence Secretary Donald Rumsfeld that under the 1999 Istanbul Agreements Russia should already have removed its military bases from Georgian territory.

Igor Ivanov is interviewed in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. He says "there are no grounds for saying that Georgia could become a bone of contention between Russia and the USA". He says the USA persuaded Eduard Shevardnadze to step down.

7 December 2003 The deputy director of the Russian Aerospace Agency, Valeriy Voskoboynikov, heads the Russian delegation to the 8th international air show in Dubai (United Arab Emirates).

8 December 2003 INTER RAO YeES, a subsidiary of YeES, officially takes control of Armenia's Razdan Thermal Power Station, the country's largest.

8 December 2003 The Kremlin rejects US White House criticisms of the Duma elections.

8 December 2003 The MFA states that it "has decided to introduce, on a temporary basis from 9 December, a streamlined procedure for the entry into and exit from Russia for Georgian citizens residing in Ajaria". The ministry says that the measure was taken "in line with the policy of the Russian Federation aimed at gradually easing the visa regime with the Republic of Georgia, and taking into account the humanitarian aspect of the problem".

8 December 2003 The Russian Federation's permanent representative to the UN, Sergey Lavrov, stated from the rostrum of the 10th extraordinary General Assembly session on Palestine that Russia abstained in today's UN General Assembly vote on a resolution about the construction by Israel of a wall on occupied Palestinian territory, because "politically, such an approach would signify that the world community had reconciled itself to the present situation". Lavrov says "that at this stage all efforts should be concentrated on stopping the construction of the wall and dismantling the sections that have already been built".

8 December 2003 Russian Deputy Emergencies Minister Yuriy Brazhnikov says the Emergencies Ministry and the UN World Food Programme intend to carry out several joint humanitarian operations including joint operations to provide humanitarian aid to Iraq, North Korea and Mongolia.

9 December 2003 The State Customs Committee says Russia's foreign trade surplus amounted to 62.9bn dollars in January-October, compared with 48.9bn dollars in the same period in 2002. The foreign trade surplus with non-CIS countries came to 57.1bn dollars, while foreign trade surplus with CIS countries amounted to 5.8bn. Exports from Russia stood at 107.6bn dollars in the period, up 25% on the year. This included 91.3bn dollars' worth of exports to non-CIS countries, up 24.2% on the year, and 16.3bn dollars to CIS countries, up 29.8% on the year.

Imports rose 20.1% on the year-earlier period, reaching 44.7bn dollars, of which imports from outside the CIS amounted to 17.7bn dollars, up 34.2%, and imports from the CIS were at 10.5bn dollars, up 28.5%. Russia's foreign trade turnover stood at 152.3bn dollars in January-October, up 23.5% on the year.

9 December 2003 Deputy Russian Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says the lack of security in Iraq is reducing the opportunities for Russian companies to take an active part in a consistent restoration programme. He says there should be an international conference to decide a post-war settlement of Iraq and that UN Security Council Resolution 1511 represents some movement - though not enough - towards a genuine settlement in Iraq.

9 December 2003 The MFA calls on the leaders of Israel and Palestine to engage in direct dialogue. The 10th emergency special session of the UN General Assembly reconvened on 8 December on the initiative of Arab states and the Non-Aligned Movement.

9 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia is "in favour of strengthening the military component of the UN ... we have repeatedly spoken

about the need to invigorate the work of the UN military staff committee, which is quite capable of coordinating peacekeeping activities ... one should think about enhancing the capabilities of rapid reaction forces". He says this means rapid deployment of UN peacekeepers, in particular, while using the existing system of reserve agreements, which has proved its worth in practice.

9 December 2003 The secretary-general of the Collective Security Council of the CSTO, Nikolay Bordyuzha says for the countries of the Organization (Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Russia) at present there is no military threat from Afghanistan, which existed only a year ago.

9 December 2003 Aleksey Gordeyev, deputy prime minister and minister of agriculture, and the prime minister of the Netherlands, Jan Peter Balkenende, sign a joint programme of action for the Russian Federation and the Netherlands for 2004-2005. The two men are attending the 5th session of the mixed commission on economic cooperation.

9 December 2003 The Eurasian Economic Community, which includes Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan, receives observer status at the UN General Assembly.

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 and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi speak by telephone.

9 December 2003 The Russian ambassador to Georgia, Vladimir Chkhikvishvili, says that the introduction of a simplified visa procedure for Georgian citizens living in Ajaria does not amount to an infringement of Georgia's sovereignty and may be extended eventually to the whole of Georgia.

10 December 2003 Vladimir Putin attends a meeting of CIS CSTO defence ministers in Moscow. The ministers discuss fighting terrorism, peacekeeping and cooperation in training the armed forces. CSTO secretary-general Nikolay Bordyuzha says the CSTO intends to develop ties with NATO.

10 December 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says Russia is ready to hold negotiations with Georgia on the withdrawal of the remaining two bases. Ivanov says Russia was fully complying with its obligations which it had undertaken during the OSCE's Istanbul summit in November 1999. At Istanbul Russia pledged to withdraw two out of four of its military bases in Georgia and has done that. Russia also pledged to withdraw surplus heavy armaments from the bases in keeping with the Adapted Treaty on CFE, and Russia has done that.

10 December 2003 The Council of CIS Defence Ministers extends the mandate of Lt-Gen Aleksandr Yevteyev, commander of the peacekeeping force in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone.

10 December 2003 Igor Ivanov visits Germany. He signs with German Internal Affairs Minister Otto Schily an intergovernmental agreement simplifying travel for their citizens. Ivanov says that Russia "plans to enter a visa-free regime with EU countries within a reasonable time frame".

10 December 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov expresses concern over possible plans for the relocation of NATO bases from Germany to Eastern Europe. US Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Mark Grossman visits Moscow, and plans to familiarize "the Foreign Ministry and the leadership of the Defence Ministry with the outline of the reconfiguration plans".

10 December 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Moscow has no intention of writing off Iraq's debt to Russia. Iraq owes Russia about 8 billion dollars.

Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says in Germany that Russia is in favour of the world community pooling efforts in restoring Iraq.

10 December 2003 US President George Bush congratulates Vladimir Putin on the results of the Russian parliamentary elections in a telephone conversation.

10 December 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia, China and Germany do not intend to create any sort of geopolitical "triangle".

10 December 2003 Gazprom and the Belarusian government sign an agreement to restructure a principle debt of 78.49m for gas supplied in 1999-2002.

10 December 2003 Igor Ivanov says in Germany that the results of the Duma elections will not affect Russia's foreign or domestic policy.

10 December 2003 Igor Ivanov says Russia is not abandoning its strategic course for accession to the WTO, but it will not do so on any terms. He says Russia will not join NATO in its present form.

11 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia backs the idea of convening a conference on Iraq and the creation of the 7+5+5 group (the seven adjacent to Iraq countries, the five permanent members and five temporary members of the UN Security Council) on Iraqi settlement.

Igor Ivanov criticises the US decision to bar countries which opposed the war in Iraq from obtaining Iraqi reconstruction contracts. He says: "As for the reconstruction of Iraq, I believe that this is a common cause for the international

community. All the countries that are prepared to aid the Iraqi people with post-war reconstruction of the country should have every possibility to do so". He warns the USA against attempts to split the international community over Iraq. "Unfortunately, the war in Iraq split the international community and weakened its potential to fight international terrorism. We must not allow steps to be taken now which would split the international community on Iraq ... we must pool international efforts under the aegis of the UN in order jointly to work out a plan for a political settlement in Iraq."

Russian companies which have contracts in Iraq state they have no intention of suspending their work in the country. Technopromeksport and Lukoil are active in Iraq.

11 December 2003 The head of the Russian Atomic Energy Ministry's information policy department, Nikolay Shingarev, says the signing of an additional protocol to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty by Iran "makes it possible to boost Russian-Iranian cooperation in the atomic power-engineering sphere". Iran has now decided to sign this document.

12 December 2003 Georgian State Security Minister Valeri Khaburdzania visits Moscow. He has talks with FSB Director Nikolay Patrushev.

13 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia has protested to Washington over the decision to bar non-coalition countries from bidding for Iraq reconstruction projects funded by the USA.

Dmitriy Rogozin, co-leader of the Motherland bloc, says Russia should not write off Iraq's debts. "Representatives of the Russian government have said more than once that Iraq's debt to Russia can only be restructured through the Paris club in coordination with Russia's foreign debt ... What Americans are doing can be described as impertinent, rather impudent behaviour. They suggest that the countries opposing the war should take part in compensation of losses and damages suffered by the USA, which started the aggression."

13 December 2003 Mikhail Margelov, head of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs, expresses regret over the breakdown of the EU constitution talks.

14 December 2003 Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov says he hopes that the arrest of Saddam Hussein will help the process of finding a political settlement in Iraq.

14 December 2003 Igor Ivanov stops off in Cuba on his way to Chile.

14 December 2003 A simplified visa regime begins for citizens of Ajaria (Georgia). Instead of visas, they will receive free entry stamps in the Russian capital.

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

15 December 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov visits Japan. He is accompanied by a delegation including the presidential special representative for the Far Eastern Federal District Konstantin Pulikovskiy, Maritime Territory governor Sergey Darkin, Irkutsk Region governor Boris Govorin, Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev.

15 December 2003 Igor Ivanov states that Russia desires to play a part in Iraq's post-war reconstruction.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia advocates settling Iraq's debt "through the Paris Club".

15 December 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Russia will start supplying nuclear fuel to the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran after Tehran signs an additional protocol to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty with the IAEA. Rumyantsev says that North Korea has the potential to develop nuclear weapons.

15 December 2003 Vladimir Putin arrives in Azerbaijan to attend the funeral of former president Geydar Aliyev.

15 December 2003 President Stjepan Mesic of Croatia visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. They discuss economic cooperation.

16 December 2003 Chinese National Defence Minister Cao Gangchuan visits Russia for talks with Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov.

16 December 2003 Rosenergoatom concern and the Chinese corporation for nuclear energy (Jiangsu Province) sign an agreement on cooperation in the construction and management of the VVER-1000 power unit of the Tianwan nuclear power plant and draw up a programme of joint activities for 2004.

16 December 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov says the pipeline from Angarsk to Nakhodka is a strategic project and to Daqing in China a tactical project. Kasyanov says that the plan to lay a pipeline to Nakhodka could be implemented within five to seven years and that following a situation report it could be separated from the Daqing plan. He says "the Angarsk and Daqing projects are not mutually exclusive but complementary".

16 December 2003 Mikhail Kasyanov says in Japan that Russia continues "to prepare to ratify the Kyoto Protocol", which limits emissions of greenhouse gases.

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16 December 2003 Defence Minister Sergey Ivanov says he hopes the capture of Saddam Hussein will contribute to the normalization of the situation in Iraq. He hopes that it will resolve the WMD issue.

16 December 2003 Russia and Slovakia sign a contract, to a total value of about 200m dollars, on supplying nuclear fuel for four generating sets at the Jaslovské Bohunice and Mochovce nuclear power stations in Slovakia.

16 December 2003 The MFA states that the adoption by the Estonian parliament of amendments to the law on foreign nationals "would undermine trust in the Estonian side, which has undertaken a number of commitments in connection with the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia".

16 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Saltanov criticises the USA for imposing sanctions on Syria.

16 December 2003 Igor Ivanov visits Uruguay for the South American Common Market (Mercosur) summit.

16 December 2003 Vladimir Putin's economics aide, Andrey Illarionov, says the Kyoto protocol imposes serious limitations on the rate of economic growth in Russia. He says Russia will go from being a potential seller to a buyer of greenhouse gas emissions in 2013-2014.

17 December 2003 Atomic Energy Minister Aleksandr Rumyantsev says Russia may build a storage facility for irradiated fuel near Krasnoyarsk, "in principle, for the whole world".

17 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia believes that "at some stage there should be a representative inter-Iraqi conference attended by a solid range of external participants, including all of Iraq's neighbours." He is speaking on the Iraq situation at the UN Security Council. He says "the nucleus of this process could be the consultative group on Iraq (7+5+5), which has been set up by the UN secretary-general". Fedotov says it is essential "to set up a broad political process with the aim of forming an interim government which would represent all segments of Iraqi society ... the 15 November agreement between the coalition authorities and Iraq's interim Governing Council does not answer the many specific questions involved in the transfer of power to Iraqis themselves."

17 December 2003 The defence ministers of the Russian Federation and China, Sergey Ivanov and Cao Gangchuan, in their capacity as the co-chairmen of the Russian-Chinese intergovernmental commission on military-technical cooperation, sign a working protocol on bilateral military-technical cooperation for 2004. The total value of new contracts and contracts continuing in 2004, stipulated in the document, exceeds 2bn dollars.

17 December 2003 The Russian president's special envoy for the Far Eastern Federal District, Konstantin Pulikovskiy, says he hopes that a second round of the six-party talks on Pyongyang's nuclear programme will be held "in the first quarter of next year". He says Russia may start delivering gas to North Korea.

17 December 2003 Mikhail Kasyanov says the planned gas transport venture between Gazprom and the Belarusian state gas pipeline monopoly Beltranshaz may be created before 31 December.

17 December 2003 Georgian Foreign Minister Tedo Japaridze visits Moscow for talks.

17 December 2003 Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov visits to Bulgaria. He says he hopes that the deployment of US military bases in that country will be aimed exclusively at averting threats of international terrorism.

17 December 2003 The navy's chief of staff, Admiral Viktor Kravchenko, says the Russian navy hopes that strengthening military cooperation with the USA and NATO will bring about an agreement on the limitation of the use of submarines in the world's oceans.

18 December 2003 A special envoy of the US president, James Baker, arrives in Moscow to discuss Iraq's debts.

Igor Ivanov says Russian companies will take part in the restoration of Iraq. Deputy foreign minister Yuriy Fedotov says the MFA will assist Russian companies in their involvement in the reconstruction programmes in Iraq.

18 December 2003 Mikhail Dmitriyev, deputy defence minister and chairman of the committee for military-technical cooperation with foreign states, says that Russia does not have any major problems with implementing arms delivery contracts with India, China or other countries. "If we speak of the geography of Russian arms exports, we could call this year a year of Asia, Southeast Asia and the Pacific Rim."

18 December 2003 Georgian Foreign Minister Tedo Japaridze is interviewed in *Izvestiya*. He is visiting Russia. He says there should be a framework agreement between Russia and Georgia.

The Russian ambassador to Georgia, Vladimir Chkhikvishvili, says Russia will not interfere in Ajaria.

18 December 2003 Igor Ivanov gives a speech in Argentina. He says contemporary international relations "are undergoing a profound systemic crisis, and the world is becoming more and more interdependent and less and less controllable". He says "traditional methods of reacting to crises have effectively been exhausted". He says

there should be a new world order based on "multilateralism, the central role of a reformed UN and international legality".

18 December 2003 The MFA welcomes the signing by Iran on 18 December of an additional protocol to the agreement on IAEA guarantees in connection with the nuclear nonproliferation treaty.

18 December 2003 The Foreign Ministry of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria (CRI) issues a press release in connection with reports saying that CRI Foreign Minister Ilyas Akhmadov could be granted political asylum in the USA. The CRI Foreign Ministry confirms that Akhmadov is seeking asylum. The Russian MFA says it hopes the USA will refuse the request.

19 December 2003 Vladimir Putin meets the deputy prime ministers of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and Kazakhstan to discuss the establishment of a single economic space. Putin says the main task at present is to implement the agreements reached earlier on the creation of a single economic space. These agreements cover such areas as customs regulations and free movement of goods, services, capital and labour.

19 December 2003 Deputy foreign minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia advocates convening an international conference on Iraq in which a large number of states should take part. He says that most countries which had attended the 58th session of the UN General Assembly had supported this proposal by Russia. "The group 7+5+5 can become a nucleus for preparing such a forum in which Iraqi representatives should definitely take place." He also says: "What is Russia doing? Russia has to understand very clearly its interests in the future, post-war Iraq, its political interests, economic interests, antiterrorist interests, and resolutely defend those interests, including by way of the broader involvement of the international community in the Iraq settlement and its transfer to the jurisdiction of the UN."

Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says that the progress at the talks on the Iraqi debt settlement will depend on taking into account Russia's economic interests in that country. Fedotov also says that a visit to Moscow by the president of Iraq's Interim Governing Council, Abd-al-Aziz al-Hakim, is being discussed. Fedotov says that he believes that oil contracts concluded by Russian companies in Iraq have not been revoked. Fedotov also says that Saddam Hussein should be tried by the Iraqi people and not by a tribunal set up by the US.

19 December 2003 Igor Ivanov says unilateral action which could further exacerbate the situation in the Middle East must be avoided. He is commenting on the statement by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that Israel could start implementing its own programme of unilateral moves "to disengage" from the Palestinians. Ivanov says the sides should follow the road map.

19 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says he believes that Tokyo's decision announced today to introduce a missile defence shield is unlikely "to have an immediate impact" on the prospects of the second round of talks on the North Korean nuclear programme, in which representatives of the two

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Koreas, China, Russia, the USA and Japan take part. He says the "creation of closed regional anti-missile systems does not contribute to the strengthening of trust and may cause concern on the part of some countries". Losyukov says that the deployment of the anti-missile defence system is "Japan's sovereign decision".

19 December 2003 Igor Ivanov is in Brazil. He says the future of the Kyoto protocol "should not be linked with just Russia's position". He says "Russia intends to double GDP in the next 10 ten years, and this will require high growth rates."

19 December 2003 Deputy Atomic Energy Minister Valeriy Govorukhin says Russia has agreed to pass nuclear technology to China for the future construction, with its help, of another four power sets at the Tianwan nuclear power station.

19 December 2003 The Russian Ground Troops commander-in-chief Army Gen Nikolay Kormiltsev and the commander of US Army Europe General B Bell meet in Moscow to discuss interaction in peacekeeping operations.

19 December 2003 An article *Nezavisimoye Voyennoye Obozreniye* analyses new trends in the Russian-Chinese arms trade.

20 December 2003 The MFA regrets Japan's decision to implement a missile-defence system in 2007.

20 December 2003 Igor Ivanov welcomes Libya's decision to renounce its plans to develop weapons of mass destruction.

21 December 2003 Igor Ivanov and his British counterpart Jack Straw discuss by telephone Libya's decision to abandon its programmes to develop weapons of mass destruction.

21 December 2003 Minister of Atomic Energy Aleksandr Rumyantsev says that Russia is pleased with the breakthrough Iran made with the IAEA by putting a signature on the Additional Protocol to Non-Proliferation Treaty. Rumyantsev says he thinks that Russia and Iran will soon sign a deal over the fuel supply for the Bushehr power plant. Rumyantsev says Russia has made an offer to build six nuclear power plants in Iran.

22 December 2003 The head of the interim Iraqi Governing Council Abd-al-Aziz al-Hakim visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. Al Hakim welcomes Russian participation in Iraq's reconstruction. He says Russia has pledged to write off part of Iraq's debts. Al Hakim also meets Lukoil head Vagit Alekperov. Energy Minister Igor Yusufov says "Russia will act in a civilized manner within internationally recognized laws to alleviate Iraq's economic burden".

22 December 2003 The president of the Russian Chamber of Commerce and Industry Yevgeniy Primakov says trade turnover between Russia and Iran in 2003 will total about 1bn dollars. He addresses a round table involving Russian and Iranian business circles. Trade turnover between the two countries was 803m dollars in 2002. The priority areas of cooperation between the two countries' business circles were the energy industry, including the nuclear energy industry, supplies of Russian metallurgy equipment and vehicles, joint development of oil and gas fields, and cooperation in the transport sphere, including within the agreement on creating the North-South international transport corridor.

22 December 2003 The speaker of the Russian Federation Council, Sergey Mironov, has talks with the speaker of the Ukrainian parliament, Volodymyr Lytvyn. They discuss the Tuzla territorial dispute.

22 December 2003 The MFA states that there should be a Russian consulate-general in Transdnestr.

23 December 2003 The MFA says it Russia will continue electricity supplies from Russia to Georgia. It says it hopes relations with Georgia can become normalised.

23 December 2003 Deputy Minister and State Secretary of the Russian Atomic Energy Ministry Valeriy Govorukhin says Russia is willing to continue and develop cooperation with Libya in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.

23 December 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says he thinks that so far Belarus and Russia have not lost the opportunity to introduce the Russian rouble as the single legal tender in the union state from 1 January 2005. He is attending a scheduled meeting of the Belarusian-Russian working group on drafting proposals to create a single emission centre and introduce the single currency.

24 December 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says a ban on US beef imports into Russia will be in force until the safety of Russian consumers is guaranteed.

24 December 2003 Acting Georgian President Nino Burjanadze visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. They discuss visas.

The Russian president's aide, Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, says Moscow states with regret that "Georgia was and remains a transit base for terrorists" who are trying to penetrate Chechnya from the Pankisi Gorge.

Igor Ivanov rejects Georgian criticisms of Russia's ties with Georgia's regions.

24 December 2003 Vladimir Putin arrives in Ukraine on a brief working visit. They discuss a single economic space and the Kerch strait dispute.

24 December 2003 Sergey Yastrzhembskiy, aide to the Russian president, says the Qatari authorities lack the political will to resolve the issue of the extradition to the Russian authorities of former president of Chechnya Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev.

24 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Losyukov says a new round of six-way talks on North Korea's nuclear problem "could take place in January 2004".

25 December 2003 Defence minister Sergey Ivanov says the idea of bringing force to bear in relation to Abkhazia "is unacceptable and can only result in an escalation of tension in a situation in that region". He says it will take at least 11 years to withdraw Russian bases from Georgia.

25 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says for Russia, ties with the Arab world "continue to be one of the priority directions of its foreign policy". He is being interviewed on Qatar TV.

Yuriy Fedotov says Russia "is calling for a broad involvement on the part of the international community in the processes for the reconstruction of Iraq and the political settlement in the country, with the most active participation of the UN ... the main question to which it is now vital to find an answer is when and how the Iraqi people will be able to regain their sovereignty and when the foreign military occupation will end ... so far it has proved impossible to solve the Iraq problem without the international community ... the situation in Iraq is not improving. The economic situation is very difficult and has hardly shown any improvement since before the start of the war ... from the formal point of view, it is difficult to dispute the USA's right to dispose of funds which come from its own budget ... however, from the political point of view, this position sends out a bad signal about how the USA still wants to decide everything itself ... the character of the new challenges and threats is such that even the most powerful state cannot cope with them alone. Collective efforts and a joint search for solutions are required."

25 December 2003 Prime Minister Mikhail Kasyanov has a meeting in Moscow with Belarusian Prime Minister Syarhey Sidorski.

26 December 2003 A Russian-Ukrainian intergovernmental agreement which settles the issue of paying compensation to the relatives of Russian citizens who died in October 2001 after a Ukrainian missile shot down a Tu-154 passenger aircraft is signed in Moscow.

26 December 2003 Andrey Rozhkov, deputy director of the 1st Asia department of the Russian Foreign Ministry, says a large new Russian-Chinese border agreement is expected to be signed at summit level in 2004. He took part in the 7th round of foreign ministry talks on amendments to the Russian-Chinese border agreement in Beijing. Rozhkov says "significant changes have occurred in the 10 years since the current agreement was signed in 1994. The new agreement should be comprehensive and cover all border issues which may arise."

26 December 2003 Azerbaijani newspaper Ekspress quotes Russian ambassador to Azerbaijan Nikolay Ryabov as warning Azerbaijan against foreign bases. Ryabov is speaking in the context of Azerbaijan seeking NATO membership.

27 December 2003 Igor Ivanov outlines the MFA's main guidelines for 2004.

MFA spokesman Aleksandr Yakovenko outlines the most important foreign policy events of 2003.

1. *We have managed, without sliding into confrontation, and in the most difficult international situation, to stand by our main principle of settling key world problems on the basis of multilateral cooperation and the rule of international law and with the UN's central role increased. It was with Russia's active assistance that UN Security Council Resolutions 1483 and 1511 were adopted, providing a way out of the very acute Iraqi crisis and at the same restoring the unity of the international community.*

2. *At the 58th session of the UN General Assembly, at Russia's initiative, a resolution on setting up a global system for confronting new threats and challenges was adopted. Russia is making a significant contribution to the search for answers to the new challenges of international security. Russia played a direct role in helping avoid the eroding of the nonproliferation regime and in reducing tension surrounding the issue of the transparency of Iran's and North Korea's nuclear programmes, channelling the issue into constructive dialogue. It was precisely in Moscow that a representative of the senior Iranian leadership announced that it was fulfilling the demands of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This removed the obstacles in the way of our continuing the mutually beneficial cooperation with Iran in the peaceful use of nuclear energy.*

3. *New steps were taken to develop CIS integration, an important aspect being the signing of the agreement on a single economic space incorporating Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and Kazakhstan. The military and political integration of the states in the Collective Security Treaty has strengthened. An international regional body, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, has been set up on the basis of the treaty.*

4. *The mediatory mission undertaken by Russia at the end of November 2003 on agreement with CIS partners helped produce a peaceful settlement of the acute political crisis in Georgia.*

5. *The adoption of UN Security Resolution 1815, which unanimously supported the "road map" to a Middle East settlement proposed by the four international mediators, was a big diplomatic success for Russia.*

6. *Participation in the Islamic Conference Organization summit significantly broadened Russia's opportunities for dialogue with Islamic countries in the interests of increasing international stability and preventing "a conflict of civilizations".*

7. *The decisions taken at the Russia-EU summits in St Petersburg and Rome enabled us to raise to a higher level our strategic partnership with the European Union. A joint concept for a common economic space was developed. The process of Russia's economic integration with the international community continues. Russia joined the international group - Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering (FATF). The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) raised Russia's credit rating to level 4.*

8. *We are seeing the first results of the gradual lifting of visa barriers between Russia and the EU. Agreements on simplifying travel procedure for a certain category of people have been reached with Germany, France and Italy. Consultations are also being held with other European countries.*

9. *A mechanism has been developed to simplify travel to and from Kaliningrad Region via Lithuania for Russian citizens. The Russian and Lithuanian governments have signed an agreement on the procedure for issuing a simplified rail travel document. The mechanism for Kaliningrad passenger transit has already demonstrated its effectiveness.*

10. *The setting up of a council of heads of entities of the [Russian] Federation under the Russian Foreign Ministry has made possible broader participation by Russian regions in developing and implementing an international strategy for Russia and helped increase its foreign economic activity.*

11. *At Russia's initiative, the "human rights and terrorism" resolution, containing clauses on protecting human rights from this threat, was adopted at the 58th session of the UN General Assembly.*

30 December 2003 Deputy Foreign Minister Yuriy Fedotov says Russia supports the idea of setting up in the Middle East a zone free of weapons of mass destruction but believes that the UN Security Council resolution which has been put forward by Syria needs to be amended so that the Security Council can reach consensus.

30 December 2003 Deputy Prime Minister and Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says that the "mad cow disease" case in the USA goes beyond the framework of Russian-US relations and presents an international problem.

30 December 2003 Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia Aleksiy II states that he categorically refuses to meet the Pope until the Vatican makes real steps toward improving relations with the Russian Orthodox Church.

30 December 2003 The Secretary-General of the CIS Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO) Nikolay Bordyuzha says the CSTO is registered with the UN as a regional international organization. Registration took place on 26 December. The CIS CSTO consists of Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Russia and Tajikistan.

Dr Mark A Smith

31 December 2003 Emergencies Ministry's Il-76 cargo aircraft will send humanitarian aid to the Iranian town of Bam hit by an earthquake.

31 December 2003 The head of the Far East railway, Viktor Popov, says there are plans to reconstruct a 65-km section of the North Korean railway as part of the Trans-Korean line in 2004.

31 December 2003 Vladimir Putin signs a directive attaching Russian internal affairs personnel to the UN mission in Georgia.

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