

Advanced Research and Assessment Group

Chronology Series

08/25A

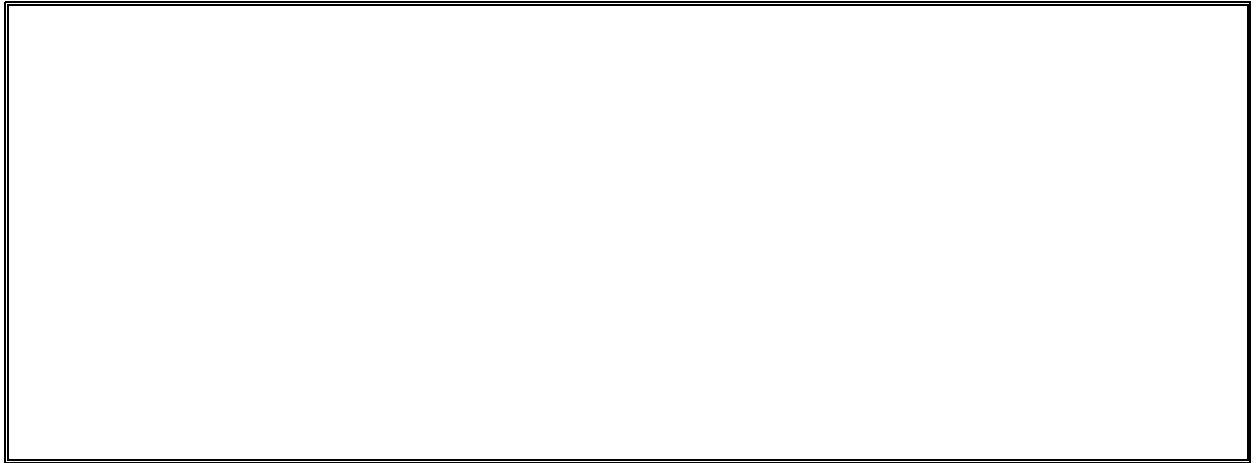


A Russian Chronology: April - June 2008 Foreign Policy

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RUSSIAN FOREIGN POLICY CHRONOLOGY APRIL - JUNE 2008

1 April 2008 The Foreign Ministry (MFA) states that there are "positive elements that can be seen" in the 28 March NATO statement on the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty.

1 April 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin says that Ukrainian accession to NATO would cause a serious crisis in relations between Moscow and Kiev.

Russia's permanent representative to NATO Dmitry Rogozin has said Russia "will not move a millimetre" on the question of opening up for Ukraine and Georgia the Membership Action Plan (MAP) to join NATO.

1 April 2008 Russia's permanent representative to the United Nations Vitaly Churkin says he believes that Iran's position regarding negotiations with the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany is not constructive.

1 April 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov says Russia will deliver to Belgrade 140 tonnes of food aid worth R40 million for Serb enclaves in Kosovo in the next few days.

2 April 2008 The CPRF faction in the Duma demands that the Russian authorities take more decisive actions aimed at recognizing self-proclaimed republics on the territory of the CIS and countering Ukraine's and Georgia's accession to NATO.

2 April 2008 The Investigations Committee under the Interior Ministry is seeking to extradite Mikhail Gutseriyev of the Russneft oil company from Britain.

2 April 2008 Presidential aide Sergey Yastrzhembsky says that Vladimir Putin has assured foreign businessmen that there will be "no restrictions for foreign capital in Russia".

Putin states that in 2007 foreign investment in the Russian economy exceeded \$120 billion.

2 April 2008 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov says to the Duma that the European Union (EU) should not have a monopoly regarding European security. He states regarding Kosovo that:

The European Union has to understand that it cannot have a monopoly in European matters; it cannot take unilateral decisions regarding issues that have fundamental significance for common European security, for the role of the UN and for the role of international law in the modern world.

He says the influence of USA has significantly diminished as a result of its actions in the former Yugoslavia and Iraq. He also states:

The Foreign Ministry has studied in the most thorough way the recent statement by the State Duma on the principles of the Russian Federation's policy towards Abkhazia, South Ossetia and the Dniester region. In cooperation with relevant ministries and departments and within the shortest possible timescale, we are planning to prepare specific ideas about reacting to the proposals that it contains.

Of course, the appeal to the president and the government, which the statement contains, to consider the question of the expediency of recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia raises specific interest. I can assure you that it will be considered in the most attentive manner taking into account all the factors. The unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence, which has created a precedent, is certainly among these factors.

Sergey Lavrov says Russia will respond pragmatically if Georgia and Ukraine join NATO:

This will not be left without an answer, I can assure you. But we will respond pragmatically, not like small boys in school who sulk at those who bully them, run out of the room, slam the door and start crying in the corner. We must concentrate on increasing our economic power and taking our defence capabilities to a higher technological level, something which the president and the government are doing now. I can assure you that we are prepared for all possible scenarios.

2 April 2008 The MFA issues a statement on NATO's 28 March statement on CFE.

2 April 2008 The MFA issues a statement commenting on Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili's interview with *Kommersant* on 31 March. The MFA rejects Saakashvili's claim that it has promised to "never recognize Abkhazia and South Ossetia".

2 April 2008 Vladimir Putin sends a message to Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka on the occasion of the Day of Unity of the Peoples of Russia and Belarus. He says he is convinced that Russia and Belarus will continue close integrative cooperation in the interests of the development of the two countries.

2 April 2008 Vladimir Putin offers Cuba to create joint ventures and carry out bilateral investment projects. The Russian-Cuban Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific, and Technical Cooperation meets in Havana.

2 April 2008 Iranian envoy to the Russian Federation Gholamreza Ansari meets Perm Region governor Oleg Chirkunov and says Iran is ready to develop economic ties with Perm.

2 April 2008 Aleksandr Kramarenko, director of the MFA Foreign Policy Planning Department, publishes an article on US-Russian relations in *Kommersant*.

3 April 2008 The Voice of Russia starts broadcasts in the languages of CIS states. There will be half-hour daily programmes in native languages broadcast to Yerevan (Armenia), Chisinau (Moldova), Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and Osh (Kyrgyzstan).

3 April 2008 Russia's permanent representative to the alliance, Dmitry Rogozin welcomes NATO's decision to deny MAP to Ukraine and Georgia.

First Deputy Chairman of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Leonid Slutsky says "the Russian position has played a role" in the fact that the issue of

Ukraine's and Georgia's accession to NATO has been postponed until December. He says that "the alliance is taking the Russian stance into account, all the more so since it was announced unambiguously and at the highest level".

Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Duma Committee for International Affairs, also welcomes the NATO decision. He states: "The fact that this decision was not taken today proves that there are healthy forces in NATO that are able to give sensible assessment to the contacts between Russia and the alliance."

Kosachev also says that "the fact that unlike the USA, Germany, France and several other European countries opposed any hurry in granting MAP to Ukraine and Georgia, proves their responsibility and readiness to confirm importance of maintaining normal contacts with Russia".

Mikhail Kasyanov, the former prime minister and the leader of the People's Democratic Union, says Ukraine's and Georgia's striving for NATO is the consequence of Russia's wrong policy on the post-Soviet area, and Moscow should consider membership in the alliance.

Sergey Mironov, chairman of the Council of the CIS Interparliamentary Assembly and Federation Council speaker says the possibility of Ukraine joining NATO is a dangerous trend for relations between CIS states. He says: "We are not pleased with the hypothetical possibility of Ukraine joining NATO; we think that this is a very dangerous trend. The question is not whether something threatens Russia, but if Ukraine becomes a member of the bloc, this will certainly affect the traditionally good-neighbourly relations between states."

3 April 2008 The MFA issues a statement on Vladimir Putin's response to letters from the president of Abkhazia, Sergey Bagapsh, and the president of South Ossetia, Eduard Kokoyty. Putin expresses support for their concern over Georgian policy in towards their regions and Georgia's desire to join NATO.

3 April 2008 Duma deputy Vladimir Gruzdev publishes an article on Russia's Arctic policy in *Moskovsky Komsomolets*.

3 April 2008 Viktor Zubkov visits Slovakia for talks with the Slovak leadership.

4 April 2008 Vladimir Putin arrives in Sochi after leaving the Russia-NATO Council meeting in Bucharest. Putin says he is satisfied with the outcome of the summit. He praises Russia-NATO cooperation over Afghanistan. He says NATO expansion is a "direct threat" to Russian security.

The appearance of a powerful military bloc on our borders, whose members' actions are regulated partly by Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, will be seen by Russia as a direct threat to the security of our country. Statements saying this process is not directed against Russia cannot satisfy us. National security is not built on promises, all the more so since we have heard such assurances before, on the eve of previous waves of the bloc's expansion.

The unclear future of NATO's transformation does not help to strengthen trust either. I mean the alliance's claim to play a global role in the sphere of security, expansion beyond the limits of its geographical responsibility and the expansion of its activity into such areas as energy security, cyber security and so on.

Russia's permanent representative to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin says Russia and NATO

08/25A

Dr Mark A Smith

have reached an agreement on the ground transit of non-military cargo through Russian territory to Afghanistan. He says that Russia and NATO decided not to issue a joint statement at a summit meeting of the Russia-NATO Council in Bucharest because of disagreements.

4 April 2008 Another aircraft of the Emergencies Ministry lands in Belgrade with a cargo of humanitarian aid for the Serbian enclaves in Kosovo.

Nashi and representatives of Serbian youth organizations agree to set up the international Russian-Serbian Youth Society.

4 April 2008 The Newsru.com website claims that a manager at TNK-BP passed secret information to Ukraine shortly before negotiations on 12 February on Russian gas supplies to Ukraine.

5 April 2008 Deputy Minister and State Secretary Grigory Karasin and president of the republic of Abkhazia Sergey Bagapsh have talks at the MFA.

6 April 2008 Vladimir Putin and US President George W Bush meet in Sochi. They discuss missile defence. Putin is "cautiously optimistic" that agreement on this issue can be reached. They also discuss NATO widening, CFE and the Iranian nuclear issue. George Bush also meets Dmitry Medvedev.

Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Duma international affairs committee, gives a positive assessment of the Putin-Bush summit in Sochi.

7 April 2008 Yedinaya Rossiya leader Boris Gryzlov says that Russia will take appropriate measures if any of the CIS member-states decide to join NATO:

The fact that a number of countries strive to join NATO, thinking they can enhance the level of their security, is their business. Our assessment of this is another matter. Naturally, we are not happy about the fact that somebody on the territory of the former Soviet Union, or even within the CIS, decides to join NATO. If such decisions are taken, relations with those countries will undergo considerable change. I believe you can guess the nature of the change.

7 April 2008 The MFA questions the impartiality of the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) following the acquittal of Ramush Haradinaj, former Kosovo prime minister and leader of Albanian separatists.

7 April 2008 Japan and Russia agree in deputy foreign ministerial talks to strengthen cooperation on economic development in Eastern Siberia and at the G8 summit to be held in Japan in July. Japanese Vice Foreign Minister Mitoji Yabunaka and First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Denisov participate in the talks in Tokyo.

7 April 2008 Chinese Defence Minister Liang Guanglie meets Viktor Zavarzin, chairman of the Duma Defence Committee in Beijing.

8 April 2008 Sergey Lavrov is interviewed on *Ekho Moskvy* on Russia-US relations, Iran, Middle East, Kosovo and the possibility of Ukraine and Georgia entering NATO. He says Russia will do everything in its power to prevent Ukraine joining NATO.

8 April 2008 Russo-Polish talks take place in Moscow over the deployment of US missile defence elements in Poland. Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak and Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski head the delegations. Kislyak

A Russian Chronology: April – June 2008 Foreign Policy says that disagreements exist between the two sides.

Sergey Lavrov is interviewed in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. He says that the USA has acknowledged Russian concerns over missile defence in Europe, but it has not acknowledged Russian concerns over NATO widening.

8 April 2008 An MFA commentary condemns plans to introduce a constitution for Kosovo.

The third aircraft of the Russian Emergencies Ministry with humanitarian aid for Kosovo Serbs leaves for Serbia.

8 April 2008 Dmitry Medvedev says Russia is ready to join the WTO in 2008, but on "normal, not restricted conditions".

8 April 2008 Permanent representative of the Russian president to the EU Vladimir Chizhov makes the following comments on Russia-EU relations:

I hope that talks will start soon. The partnership and cooperation agreement currently in force is in many ways outdated, in a substantial part - ie our relations have become a lot more extensive and multifaceted than one could have foreseen in 1994 with the best will in the world. Second, the mechanisms laid out in that agreement have also begun to hinder cooperation.

We see the future treaty or agreement (we'll see what it ends up being called) as a summary of the principles and rules for cooperation. We are not trying to capture all the details. That would be an almost impossible task. Relations between Russia and the EU are fairly broad in their sweep. There is the idea of making it a legally binding agreement, a framework in a sense, so that later the sides can use it as a basis for concluding sectoral cooperation agreements in various areas.

9 April 2008 Vladimir Putin has talks with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon in Moscow. Ban also has talks with Dmitry Medvedev.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko says Russia should increase its participation in UN peacekeeping operations.

9 April 2008 The chairman of the Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots, Aleksey Ostrovsky, says Russia may raise the issue of Crimea's belonging to Ukraine in the event of Ukraine's accelerated entry into NATO.

9 April 2008 Mongolian Prime Minister Sanjaa Bayar visits Moscow for talks on economic and military cooperation.

10 April 2008 The head (Konstantin Kosachev) and first deputy head (Leonid Slutsky) of the Duma International Affairs Committee state that the position of Polish President Lech Kaczynski regarding Russia-EU talks and the accession of Ukraine and Georgia to NATO is scandalous and senseless.

10 April 2008 The Duma Committee on CIS Affairs and Relations with Compatriots approves recommendations following parliamentary hearings on Russian-Ukrainian relations held on 1 April. The recommendations on the results of the hearings "On the state of Russian-Ukrainian relations and implementation of obligations under the agreement 'On friendship, cooperation and partnership'" are addressed to the president, government and Federal Assembly.

10 April 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov visits Greece for talks with Greek foreign minister Dora Bakoyianni. He says NATO enlargement is not a response to all international challenges. He thinks it is unlikely that Ukraine and Georgia will join NATO.

10 April 2008 The MFA issues a statement calling on EU and NATO missions in Kosovo to exercise caution, balanced approach and to stick to their mandate.

10 April 2008 The fourth and final flight of the Emergencies Ministry with a humanitarian aid cargo for Serbian enclaves in Kosovo on board lands in Belgrade.

10 April 2008 The MFA issues a statement on the situation in Gaza.

11 April 2008 The MFA spokesman Mikhail Kamynin says Moscow considers the military bloc NATO drawing near to Russia's borders a direct threat to the country's security.

11 April 2008 Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces Army General Yury Baluyevsky makes the following statement about NATO:

The population of Ukraine has not yet unequivocally declared itself in favour of joining NATO. Despite the referendum in Georgia, at which, so they say, about 70 per cent of the population supported NATO accession, I do not think it is certain yet. We shall wait and see how events unfold. But of course there is no doubt that Russia will take measures with the aim of securing its interests in the close vicinity of its state borders. These will not only be strictly military measures. They will be measures of a different nature.

Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Duma International Affairs Committee says:

I do not see any fundamental differences between modern NATO and the NATO of Cold War times. At the forefront are slogans about freedom and democracy, but in essence, in its organizational structures and in its military planning, NATO is a military and defence union, in which the principles of collective security for all members of the bloc apply.

If Ukraine joins NATO, this will end bilateral cooperation between Russia and Ukraine in the area of security, which developed in Soviet times through integration of certain structures and which continues to develop.

MFA spokesman Mikhail Kamyarin says Russia and Ukraine have a good dialogue over the Black Sea Fleet (BSF).

11 April 2008 Vladimir Putin has talks in Moscow with Mongolian Prime Minister Sanzhiin Bayar. Several bilateral agreements are signed, including cooperation in uranium production.

11 April 2008 Chief of the General Staff Army General Yury Baluyevsky meets Admiral Takashi Saito of Japan, the Chief of the Joint Staff of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces. He says he thinks Dmitry Medvedev will continue with the defence policies pursued by Vladimir Putin since 2000.

12 April 2008 Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) Secretary-General Nikolay Bordyuzha says if Georgia and Ukraine join NATO, the CSTO will react immediately because in this case the whole security structure in the post-Soviet

A Russian Chronology: April – June 2008 Foreign Policy zone will change fundamentally.

This means that completely different decisions must be made on these projects and naturally, there will be reaction if those countries join NATO. The reaction will take into account those countries' new status. The CSTO will take into account the fact that a new military and political bloc appears practically on the borders of the CSTO member states and naturally we will take measures, first of all political measures.

13 April 2008 Valery Yazev, deputy speaker of the Duma and president of the Russian Gas Society, says that a clause about long-term forecasts of the demand for oil and gas in Europe needs to be included in the new version of the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the European Union.

13 April 2008 Japanese Foreign Minister Masahiko Komura says Tokyo regrets the absence of progress in resolving the issue of a peace treaty between Russia and Japan.

14 April 2008 Sergey Lavrov says he favours a "truly collective system" of global missile defence:

I can only say that we, of course, understand the architecture of the American National Missile Defence system, the global antimissile defence system that is being created. In this sphere, it is of course important to engage in an open and honest dialogue. Therefore, we are pleased that the work of the joint group on military and political issues and issues of strategic stability has resumed. A meeting of the group at the level of deputy foreign ministers was held a few days ago in Tokyo. We accepted the Japanese side's explanations that there are no intentions and plans whatsoever to use Japan's participation in the creation of the missile defence system in this region, jointly with the United States, to the detriment of the Russian Federation's interests.

We have reached an agreement to continue a thematic and professional dialogue on these issues in order to clarify any arising issues and finalize issues over which an understanding is reached. We still believe - and we told this to our Japanese counterparts - that the best way of monitoring and, if necessary, neutralizing missile proliferation threats is to create a truly collective system. The president of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, has spoken in favour of such a system, as you know. This system would bring together the United States, Europe, Russia and all other interested countries, including Japan, of course.

14 April 2008 Sergey Lavrov says that Russia and Japan will continue their dialogue about the territorial issue (the Southern Kuriles) on the basis of existing agreements. He says bilateral trade has reached a record level that exceeds \$20 billion.

14 April 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko says that the UN Security Council should be reformed with the support of all of its members. He says that the policy pursued by Western countries and the founders of the UN as shown in the cases of Iraq and Kosovo did not add to the UN's authority.

14 April 2008 Retired General Vladimir Dvorkin says that "Iran has essentially come very close to possessing medium-range missiles". This means missiles with ranges up to 6,000 kilometres.

15 April 2008 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has talks in Moscow with Ukrainian foreign minister Volodymyr Ohryzko. They discuss Ukraine's desire to join NATO.

15 April 2008 Russia's permanent representative at the EU Vladimir Chizhov says Russia will not send its representatives to the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX Kosovo), because Moscow considers it illegitimate. He says Russia's policy towards the EU will not change under Dmitry Medvedev.

15 April 2008 Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov has talks with his Finnish counterpart Jyri Haakaemies.

16 April 2008 Vladimir Putin visits Libya. Gazprom reaches an agreement with Libya's national oil company on establishing a joint venture.

16 April 2008 Vladimir Putin orders the MFA's bodies in southern Russia to establish closer links with Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia. The MFA states:

The federal bodies of the executive power have been instructed to cooperate with Abkhazia and South Ossetia within the framework of legal assistance on civil, family and criminal matters.

The territorial bodies of the Russian Foreign Ministry in Krasnodar Region and in the republic of North Ossetia-Alania will, if necessary, fulfil separate consular functions in the interests of those who permanently live in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

We have envisaged drafting additional proposals on a range of concrete areas of cooperation with Abkhazia and South Ossetia in the interests of social and economic development of these republics, protection of their populations' rights including Russian citizens.

A UN Security Council resolution is passed on the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict. The US representative at the UN Zalmay Khalilzad criticises Russia for lifting sanctions against Abkhazia.

Chairman of the Duma's CIS Affairs Committee Aleksey Ostrovsky (LDPR) welcomes Vladimir Putin's instruction to the Russian government to provide specific support to the population of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The MFA says that Vladimir Putin's decision to establish closer ties with Georgia's breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia does not mean confrontation with Georgia.

16 April 2008 The head of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmud Abbas, arrives in Moscow on a working visit.

16 April 2008 Lt-Gen Vladimir Fedorov, chief of the MOD Main Directorate for International Military Cooperation, says in an interview in *Krasnaya Zvezda* that Russia regards as likely the resumption of its membership in the CFE treaty and is holding negotiations on this with Western countries.

16 April 2008 The MFA says that statements to the effect that consultation on the issues of withdrawal of the BSF from Ukrainian territory will begin in June "do not correspond to reality".

16 April 2008 Sergey Lavrov is interviewed by a Kuwaiti news agency on the Arab

A Russian Chronology: April – June 2008 Foreign Policy
League Summit in Damascus.

16 April 2008 Chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev says he hopes that the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) will launch a serious investigation into allegations about crimes committed by Kosovo Albanians against Serbs in the 1990s. He is leading the Russian delegation at the PACE session.

17 April 2008 Several Russian and foreign human rights organizations urge the EU to demand that the Russian authorities take measures to improve the state of civil society in the country, including a review of the law on non-commercial organizations. This appeal is published in the run-up to a new round of EU-Russia human rights consultations, which will take place in Slovenia.

17 April 2008 Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russia is to write off Libya's debt in exchange for contracts for Russian companies. The debt is \$4.6 billion.

A Russo-Libyan friendship declaration is signed.

Sergey Lavrov says that arms talks between Russia and Libya will continue. He says Libya is interested in buying new weapons systems.

17 April 2008 The first deputy chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee, Leonid Slutsky, describes as "hysterical" demands by Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili that Russia should revoke additional measures of support for South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Duma deputy speaker Yury Volkov says that Russia should recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia before spring 2009. He states: "Spring 2009, which is when NATO is due to hold its jubilee summit, should be seen as the deadline for the recognition by Russia of the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia".

17 April 2008 The MFA issues a statements on Russian-Ukrainian consultations on withdrawal of the BSF from the Ukrainian Territory.

Aleksey Miller, chairman of Gazprom Management Committee says the gas agreement for 2008 signed between Gazprom and Naftohaz Ukrayiny in mid-March is being implemented in full.

17 April 2008 The MFA issues a statement on the situation in Gaza.

Head of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmud Abbas says a Middle East peace conference is to take place in Moscow in June this year.

17 April 2008 Vladimir Putin and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi hold talks in Sardinia.

17 April 2008 Volga-Urals Military District Commander Gen Vladimir Boldyrev says the Russian military base in Tajikistan ensures the security not only of Russia, but also of other member countries of the CSTO.

18 April 2008 Vladimir Putin says that he is maintaining dialogue with President-Elect Dmitry Medvedev on the formation of a new government and that they have no particular differences.

18 April 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says that Russia must not share for free the information that was gathered about the Arctic shelf.

18 April 2008 The MFA issues a statement on Vladimir Putin's talks with Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi in Tripoli.

18 April 2008 The MFA states that Vladimir Putin has ordered further practical measures be taken for normalizing relations with Georgia. Postal services will be resumed. Federal executive bodies have also been instructed to take steps to cancel certain remaining visa restrictions regarding Georgian citizens.

Sergey Lavrov talks by phone to US State Secretary Condoleezza Rice on Georgia.

18 April 2008 Vladimir Putin has talks with head of the Palestinian National Authority, Mahmud Abbas, at Novo-Ogarevo.

19 April 2008 Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoygu and Serbian Minister of Trade and Services Predrag Bubalo have talks in Belgrade. Russia will clear mines at several facilities in Serbia, including at an aerodrome near the town of Nis.

20 April 2008 The Abkhaz air force shoots down a Georgian unmanned aircraft (UAV) on a spy mission over Abkhazia.

21 April 2008 Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov has talks with Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg. They discuss the issue of missing people in Chechnya.

21 April 2008 Vladimir Putin has a telephone conversation with Georgian President Mikheil Sakashvili. He expresses bewilderment over the fact that the Georgian side carries out flights for military purposes over Abkhazia.

Saakashvili says that a Russian fighter jet attacked an "unarmed, unmanned plane belonging to Georgian police".

Aleksandr Diordiyev, aide to the commander of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone says that Russian peacekeepers in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone have been left without electricity for five days, after the Georgian side cut off power supply allegedly due to electricity arrears.

Air Force Commander Colonel-General Aleksandr Zelin denies that the Russian Air Force was involved in the incident with the Georgian unmanned reconnaissance aircraft which was shot down on 20 April.

The MFA issues a statement on the Georgian UAV incident. It accuses Georgia of violating the ceasefire agreement of 1994.

Chairman of the Federation Council committee for CIS affairs Vadim Gustov says the Federation Council is not going to adopt a document recognizing the independence of South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

22 April 2008 The Russian and Azerbaijani governments are continuing their investigation into the holding of cargo intended for the Iranian nuclear plant at Bushehr on the Iranian-Azeri border.

Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov signs an order about opening a Russian information and cultural centre in Azerbaijan, as well as Russian centres of science and culture in Armenia, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Uzbekistan and Ukraine.

22 April 2008 Armenia and Russia sign an agreement on the establishment of a joint enterprise for the geological exploration of uranium in Armenia.

Andranik Manukyan, an advisor to the Armenian president and a former minister of transport and communications, says Armenian Railways will be transferred for concession management to Russian Railways on 1 June 2008. Armenian Railways will be managed by South Caucasus Railways, which was set up by Russian Railways on the basis of Armenian Railways.

22 April 2008 Sergey Lavrov says Russia is still concerned over US ABM plans in Eastern Europe.

22 April 2008 Sergey Lavrov attends an international conference on Iraq in Kuwait. He says that it is not yet appropriate for foreign troops to withdraw from Iraq, as Iraq's law-enforcement agencies are not ready to take on the full responsibility of ensuring security in the country and effectively counter terrorist groups.

Lavrov says Iraq is ready to consider the resumption of the Russian companies' old contracts in that country. He had talks with the Iraqi prime Nuri al-Maliki minister during the conference on Iraq in Kuwait.

22 April 2008 Channel One TV reports that Russian humanitarian aid for Serbs has arrived in Kosovo.

22 April 2008 Channel One TV shows a documentary entitled "The Kavkaz Plan" ("The Caucasus Plan") about alleged foreign support for Chechen separatists in the 1990s and foreign intelligence services' alleged plans to destabilize the situation in the North Caucasus "in order to weaken Russia".

23 April 2008 Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic visits Moscow.

23 April 2008 Gazprom signs a memorandum of understanding with Iran to develop oil and gas fields, and invest and engage in exploration of energy reserves. Gazprom and Iran have agreed on joint development of two or three blocs in the South Pars gas field as well as on the participation by GazpromNeft in an oil production project in Iran.

23 April 2008 Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg says that the reconstruction of the Republic of Chechnya "is real and not for show".

24 April 2008 Georgian Parliament Chairperson Nino Burjanadze has a telephone conversation with Federation Council Speaker Sergey Mironov. They discuss South Ossetia and Abkhazia.

Duma deputy and director of the Institute for CIS Countries Konstantin Zatulin says a statement by the NATO secretary-general representative for the South Caucasus and Central Asia, Robert Simmons, questioning Russia's peacekeeping role in conflicts in the Transcaucasus leads to the justification of possible military operations. Sergey Ryabkov, director of the MFA's Department for European Cooperation, says that Simmons' statement was irresponsible. Simmons was casting doubt on Russia's peacekeeping role in the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian conflicts.

The speaker of the Federation Council Sergey Mironov says the positions of the

08/25A

Dr Mark A Smith

USA, Germany, France and the United Kingdom will not influence Russia's decision on providing help to Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He says: "They all should have thought of the consequences when Kosovo's independence was proclaimed...We have heard the proposal, but Russia is building its relations independently and has a right to act in the way it considers appropriate."

Head of the Duma Committee for International Affairs Konstantin Kosachev says issues of Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-South Ossetian relations, as well as complications in Russian-Georgian relations cannot be resolved on the platform of the UN Security Council.

24 April 2008 Vladimir Putin meets Luxembourg Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker, who has arrived in Moscow on a working visit.

24 April 2008 The European Court of Human Rights forbids Russia to hand over Dilshod Kurbanov to the Uzbek authorities. He fled Uzbekistan in 2003, declaring that, after he had converted to Islam, the security services had begun to persecute him. The Uzbek authorities accuse Kurbanov of having connections with extremist organisations.

24 April 2008 Iranian Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance Mohammad Hoseyn Saffar-Harandi sign a Memorandum of Understanding on expansion of cultural and arts cooperation between Iran and Russia.

25 April 2008 Vladimir Putin meets the Council of Europe's Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg.

25 April 2008 Sergey Lavrov has talks with Finnish foreign minister Alexander Stubb in Moscow. He states:

Among international issues on the agenda, naturally, attention has been paid to the work in the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe which Finland is chairing. We proceed from the premise that strengthening the OSCE's role in European affairs, its adaptation to contemporary realities will make it possible to overcome the crisis that has recently affected this organization and turn it into a fully-fledged organization that occupies an important place in the European architecture of security.

We are interested in developing strategic partnership between Russia and the European Union. We have discussed the importance of further consistent implementation of road maps to form four common spaces. We also discussed the launch of a negotiating process to prepare a new basic agreement between Russia and the European Union; exchanged views on proactively using our Northern Dimension cooperation.

We hope that the first ministerial meeting within the framework of Northern Dimension will be held in St Petersburg in October 2008.

They also discuss the Nord Stream pipeline.

25 April 2008 MFA special envoy Valery Kenyaykin says that if Georgia starts a military operation in Abkhazia or South Ossetia, Russia will use force to defend its compatriots in these regions. Sergey Lavrov says there is no crisis in Russian-Georgian relations. He says there is a crisis in relations between the Georgian leadership, and Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

The president of Abkhazia, Sergey Bagapsh says Abkhazia is ready to sign a

A Russian Chronology: April – June 2008 Foreign Policy
military agreement with Russia, but it will not join NATO.

25 April 2008 Serbian Infrastructure Minister Velimir Ilic visits Moscow to discuss energy relations.

26 April 2008 Vladimir Putin has talks with Japanese Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda in Moscow. Since 2003 Russo-Japanese trade has grown five-fold.

26 April 2008 The head of the Duma Committee for International Affairs, Konstantin Kosachev, makes the following comment on Georgia:

All the latest statements by the Georgian leadership, starting with the story about the unmanned reconnaissance aerial vehicle and ending with the latest statements on the activities of Russian business structures in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, imply that Georgia's sovereignty cannot be put in doubt. This is not true. It's just wishful thinking. Citizens of Abkhazia have the right to do business, earn money and have a decent life after all. This is precisely the right Russia is returning to them now. We will do it consistently, no matter what the Georgian authorities think about it.

Konstantin Kosachev says that the Estonian authorities have failed to learn any lessons from the Bronze Soldier events in April 2007.

27 April 2008 A pro-Serb march takes place in Moscow.

28 April 2008 Federation Council speaker Sergey Mironov says he believes that the use of force by Russia will be justified if there is a threat to the lives of Russian citizens in Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Georgian Deputy Minister of Economic Development Vakhtang Lezhava says Georgian-Russian talks on Russia's accession to the WTO in Geneva have reached an impasse. Russian sources claim that Georgia has broken off the talks.

28 April 2008 Acting secretary of the Security Council Valentin Sobolev has talks with his Iranian colleague, secretary of the Supreme National Security Council of the Islamic Republic Saeed Jalili. Sobolev says that there have been no violations in the transit of Russian equipment for the Bushehr nuclear power plant through Azerbaijan.

28 April 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov visits Ukraine for talks on economic cooperation.

28 April 2008 The first deputy chairman of the State Duma International Affairs Committee, Leonid Slutsky, rejects the Latvian notion that the USSR occupied Latvia from 1940-1991. "There has been no occupation, we will not apologize every year, it is useless to bandy about this situation on the political level."

28 April 2008 The head of the Russian delegation at the World Trade Organization (WTO) talks and head of the trade negotiations department at the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, Maksim Medvedkov, says the latest round of consultations on Russia's accession to the WTO "is creating good prospects" for a completion of the talks.

28 April 2008 Government-owned Centre TV's "Moment of truth" says that foreign powers, including the USA, are behind the unrest in the southern Russian republic of Ingushetia. The programme was presented by Andrey Karaulov.

28 April 2008 Russia's permanent representative to the UN Vitaly Churkin says the latest report by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon on the situation in Iraq paints too positive a picture of the human rights situation in the country and should be "clearer and more objective". He makes the following points about the situation in Iraq:

First is the need for a more intensive and more effective internal Iraqi dialogue between the various confessions in that country.

Second is the need to pay greater attention to human rights. One should say that in the secretary-general's report - and we talked about this directly in our address - there are several serious omissions in the field of human rights, and the problems that remain there have been smoothed over.

Third is the need for more effective international participation in the Iraqi internal settlement process. The mechanism that has now been created for this is practically limited to preparations for ministerial meetings on Iraq, which, in our view, is insufficient, and the most direct attention should be paid to this.

The final point is the problem of the presence of foreign armed forces on the territory of Iraq. We start from the principle that, of course, now it is premature to talk about a total withdrawal, but nevertheless it is necessary to set a corresponding time frame, because many Iraqis consider the foreign forces to be in essence an occupation. This is a serious irritant for them and fuels the conflicts that continue to destabilize Iraq.

29 April 2008 First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov and US Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs Reuben Jeffery III discuss US-Russian economic cooperation in Washington. The dialogue was launched according to the agreements reached between Vladimir Putin and George Bush in Sochi on 6 April.

29 April 2008 Greek Prime Minister Konstandinos Karamanlis visits Moscow for talks with Vladimir Putin. They discuss energy cooperation. Putin states:

We held very productive talks today on a wide range of bilateral and international issues. The meeting was held in a very constructive and positive key; it confirmed once again that our countries are indeed interested in the successful development of mutually beneficial and efficient cooperation.

Further steps to implement joint energy projects were agreed in the course our conversation - the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline and the South Stream gas pipeline. Their aim is to significantly increase the energy security not just of the Balkans but also of the entire European continent.

A most important result was the signing of the agreement on the construction of the Greek section of the South Stream gas pipeline. This decision opens new horizons, new opportunities in Russian-Greek cooperation. I am convinced that the truly far-sighted and pragmatic approach of the Greek leadership will bring tangible dividends in the very near future to Greece, to the Balkans and to Europe as a whole.

Putin also states the Russia's competitors have tried to "torpedo" its pipeline plans:

Russia had several options for implementing infrastructure projects of this kind - both for transit of natural gas and transit of crude oil. We chose the one

A Russian Chronology: April – June 2008 Foreign Policy
which you named [the Burgas-Alexandroupolis oil pipeline] - one of those projects. We decided it would be correct to go straight to EU countries with additional supplies of Russian oil.

But we are not the only participants in the project. There are two other countries [Bulgaria and Greece]. We must and will respect their opinions and interests. It is a highly complicated negotiation process. I assure you that in the course of the process, companies and countries which are already our general competitors have made and will continue to make highly energetic attempts to torpedo these projects, or drag out their implementation.

Various methods come into play, from environmental to political. But we will insistently, calmly, and I repeat, respectfully work with our partners during the negotiations, and seek mutually acceptable decisions that are beneficial for all sides.

We believe that the process of preparing the technical and economic calculations should be completed in the very near future. From the moment that task and that stage is complete, it will be possible to say exactly when the whole project will be implemented.

Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko says the agreement signed between the Russian Federation and Greece sets the expected sales of the South Stream project in Greece at 10 billion cubic metres a year.

29 April 2008 Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov visits the Netherlands. He says Russia is prepared to cooperate with Dutch investors in many investment projects, including those in the Far East, on Sakhalin and the Yamal peninsula.

29 April 2008 The MOD issues a report "On the situation in the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-Ossetian conflict zones". It is published on the MOD website.

First Deputy Defence Minister Colonel-General Aleksandr Kolmakov says the MOD is not planning to set up a Russian military base in Abkhazia.

MFA acting official spokesman Boris Malakhov says Russia has decided to increase its peacekeeping forces in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict zone. He says this is because of measures by Georgia which are destabilising. The MFA says that Russian measures aimed at protecting the rights and interests of residents of Abkhazia and South Ossetia are not aimed at establishing control over the territories of these republics.

29 April 2008 Vladimir Putin makes the following comment on NATO widening.

Our attitude to NATO expansion is well known: we believe that today it is counterproductive; that present-day threats are not curbed by technical expansion of this military-political bloc. NATO expansion does not offer any new more efficient instruments in the fight against terrorism, the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, infectious diseases or organized crime. For this, multilateral cooperation of all the states of the world is required.

He also criticises the decision to recognise Kosovo:

Russia's position has not changed. We believe that unilateral recognition of the declaration of independence of Kosovo is both unjust and unlawful. We believe

that explanations to the effect that this was the way things developed cannot be accepted - because things did not develop of their own accord but with active support from some participants in the international dialogue. Had weapons not been coming to the conflict zone, had independence not been promised, it would not have materialized.

Nor can we understand why in some regions of the world the people who fight for independence are called fighters for this independence, while in another region of the world, under identical circumstances, they are called separatists, and calls are made to fight against them. We believe that common approaches are needed. One has to abide by the standards of international law, and only then will both small and big states feel secure.

29 April 2008 Mikhail Margelov, head of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee, says that the precedent of Kosovo could have seriously consequences for peace in the Middle East. "As for Kosovo, Europe will cope with its problem, but I am concerned over the precedent of Kosovo as applied to the Middle East, where around 200 peoples and nationalities are now ready to declare their independence following the example of Kosovo." Margelov holds talks with Murat Mercan, chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Turkish Grand National Assembly in Moscow.

29 April 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Russia and the USA are to work on the content of a legal document on strategic offensive forces. The present agreement expires in 2009.

29 April 2008 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has talks with his Luxembourg counterpart Minister of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade Jean Asselborn in Luxembourg. He says Russia is prepared to wait until the EU is ready for talks about a new Russia-EU partnership agreement.

29 April 2008 Sergey Lavrov attends in Luxembourg a meeting with the European troika as part of the Permanent Partnership Council. They discuss preparations for the Russia-EU summit in Khanty-Mansiysk and the new phase in negotiations on the framework agreement with the European Union. Lavrov calls for continuity in relations between Russia and the EU. They also discuss NATO widening, Kosovo and Abkhazia. He states: "Russia does not intend to wage war. We are giving numerous facts which, in our opinion, show that the Georgian leadership may harbour plans to use force to resolve the Abkhazia problem, and the South Ossetia problem as well."

29 April 2008 Aleksey Bekshokov, chairman of the Union of Abkhaz Volunteers of Kabarda-Balkaria, says the Union will not stand aside in case of the worsening of relations between Abkhazia and Georgia.

30 April 2008 The General Staff of the Ground Forces states that the regular joint peacekeeping manoeuvres Torgau involving Russian and US ground troops will be held in Russia in autumn 2009. It was initially planned to hold this exercise in 2008 but during the consultations of the two countries' military delegations in Moscow on 16-18 April it was decided to postpone the drill. It was preliminarily agreed that the next Torgau exercise will take place at the Gorokhovetsky training range near Nizhny Novgorod in September 2009.

30 April 2008 Acting secretary of the Security Council Valentin Sobolev visits Iran. He delivers to Iranian President Mahmud Ahmadinejad a message from Vladimir Putin on Russo-Iranian relations. It says that Russia confirms its principles of relations with Iran and that its policy does not depend on who is in office today.

Sobolev says that Russia is inviting Iran to resume dialogue with the six (the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany) on the nuclear issue and show more initiative at these talks. Sobolev says that Russia sticks to its international commitments and does not supply offensive weapons to Iran.

30 April 2008 An additional contingent of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone arrives in Abkhazia. The number of peacekeepers had been increased to the mark envisioned by the 14 May 1994 Moscow agreement on ceasefire and division of sides. Under this document, there should be 3,000 soldiers in the conflict zone, while only 2,000 Russian soldiers had served there for the whole 14 years.

30 April 2008 The permanent representative of the Russian Federation at NATO Dmitry Rogozin says the Georgian leadership "is pushing" the Georgian people towards a war. He states: "As a politician and a diplomat, I am strongly against war, and I am confident that it is now quite possible to call a halt to it all. If it is impossible to come to an agreement now, we should not try to do it and should instead try to do so later." Rogozin says that NATO's statement that the deployment of additional Russian peacekeepers in the zone of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict is likely to raise tensions completely contradicts logic.

30 April 2008 Russia's top WTO negotiator Maksim Medvedkov is interviewed in *Kommersant*. He says Russia is ready to hold talks with Georgia and other partners over all issues concerning the WTO.

30 April 2008 The boards of the Russian and Belarusian MODs meet in Minsk. The two defence ministers, Anatoly Serdyukov and Leanid Maltsev attend. Serdyukov calls for closer military ties.

30 April 2008 Yemeni Foreign Minister, Dr Abu-Bakr Abdallah al-Qirbi visits Moscow for talks with Sergey Lavrov. Lavrov says that Russia actively supports Yemen's initiative aimed at the restoration of Palestinian unity, at the normalisation of relations between Fatah and Hamas, at the restoration of unity in Palestinian politics and law.

May 2008

1 May 2008 Federation Council speaker and Spravedlivaya Rossiya party leader Sergey Mironov says that Russia will protect its compatriots living in Transdnestr, Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

Russian military hardware arrives in Abkhazia for the reinforced peacekeeping force.

1 May 2008 The Russian public youth movement Eurasian Youth Union says it is starting the implementation in Ukraine of a political project called Other Ukraine.

1 May 2008 Azerbaijan allows the cargo sent from Russia to Iran for the construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant pass through the Azerbaijani-Iranian border.

2 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov attends a meeting of the Quartet in London to discuss the Middle East peace process. He also discusses Russo-British relations with UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband. Lavrov makes the following comment after the meeting:

As to Palestinian unity, all aspects of the situation in and around the Gaza strip, without exception, cannot be settled without settling the problem of the restoration of Palestinian unity. The efforts which are currently being undertaken by our Egyptian colleagues, Yemen, and indeed the Russian Federation are aimed at coordinating the conditions for unity to be restored, under the leadership of the legally-elected Palestinian President Mahmud Abbas and agreeing as to how the Palestinian government will function.

In our dealing with Hamas, with Mahmud Abbas, with the Arab countries, we are actively seeking ways so that such an agreement was reached. At today's meeting, and at the meeting of the quartet, and at the meeting between the quartet and representatives of the League of Arab States, the topic came up. We are convinced, as are the majority of the other participants in this process, that without this, neither an agreement, which we all want Mahmud Abbas and Ehud Olmert to reach, nor the humanitarian situation in the Palestinian territories, are likely to be achieved.

He makes the following comment about the proposed Moscow conference:

We did discuss the Moscow conference. There is a great deal of keen interest in the forum from all Arab nations, and from the Palestinians themselves. The EU and the UN secretary-general are also increasingly actively in favour of it being convened as soon as possible. The US is also positive on this idea.

We are ready for this. Of course, for such a conference to take place, the agreement of all the main participants is necessary. Our Israeli partners are still having doubts that it needs to be done quickly. They are asking for a little more time to think about it, so as to decide what the best time for it to take place is. We are convinced that it needs to be done without much delay, and will continue with consultations.

Lavrov describes as positive the new package of incentives agreed at the meeting of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council and Germany that is to be offered to Iran in exchange for abandoning its uranium enrichment programme. Lavrov urges Iran to cooperate with the UN:

We are confident that we should fulfil the agreement of foreign ministers, which was voiced at the same time when the UN Security Council's latest resolution was passed and which stipulates that we will also develop the positive stimuli that previously we handed over to our Iranian partners in order to show them the advantage of the cooperation with the IAEA and the UN Security Council, the advantage of suspending the enrichment work and beginning negotiations.

Lavrov has talks with US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice in London. He says it is too early to say that Russia's concerns regarding the deployment of the US ABM system in Europe have been allayed.

Lavrov criticises the idea of creating armed forces in Kosovo.

2 May 2008 Maksim Medvedkov, head of the trade negotiations department at the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and chief negotiator in the WTO talks, says Russia is close to completing negotiations to join the WTO, and Georgia's recent move to suspend talks on membership in response to Russia's decision to step up cooperation with Georgia's breakaway republics is "ridiculous".

4 May 2008 The MOD describes the incident involving two Georgian unmanned drones allegedly shot down by Abkhaz separatist forces as provocative and says that it points to Tbilisi not considering a peaceful solution to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

4 May 2008 North Caucasian Military District Commander Army General Aleksandr Baranov says the additional contingent of Russian peacekeepers redeployed to the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone is embarking on its mission.

5 May 2008 The MFA distances itself from a statement by UK Foreign Secretary David Miliband on the Iranian nuclear issue purporting to be made on behalf of all the foreign ministers of the six countries who had taken part in the meeting on Iran in London on 2 May.

5 May 2008 The former Commander of the Northern Fleet, now member of the Federation Council, head of the commission for marine policy Vyacheslav Popov says that Russia in training its army will take into account the intensification of combat training of the US armed forces in northern latitudes. He is commenting on US armed forces' manoeuvres in Alaska - Northern Edge 2008.

5 May 2008 Vladimir Putin sends a message to Serbian Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica saying that Moscow's approach to the Kosovo problem remains unchanged: "We believe that the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence has delivered a serious blow to the foundations of international law...We are ready to oppose by joint efforts this dangerous tendency. You can firmly count on our solidarity and support."

5 May 2008 The Georgian MFA informs the Russian side that it has withdrawn from a treaty on cooperation with the Russian Federation in the sphere of anti-air defence. The treaty was signed by the Defence Ministries of Georgia and the Russian Federation on 19 April 1995.

Sergey Lavrov makes the following comment on Georgia's decision to withdraw from the treaty:

You know, I can't comment on the Georgian side's actions every time. It seems to me these actions confirm that there is a certain line. Regrettably, this line aims at undermining all the agreements, first of all, the agreements on settling the South Ossetian and Abkhaz conflicts. I have not heard that Georgia has abandoned any treaty with Russia. However, I'd like to state our extreme concern about a tendency, one which is directed at exacerbating confrontation and - as increasingly worrying facts are showing us - at an attempt to resolve these conflicts by force.

Russia's representative to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, states that it seems that Georgia is preparing for military action against Abkhazia:

It seems to me that Saakashvili took the course of not only pre-military hysteria but that of real military preparations as well. It is not for nothing that foreign military advisors worked in Georgia for so long. They methodically trained the army's special-purpose troops and mountain subunits. As a matter of fact, it is not a secret that they were coached by Americans and Turks. The recent trips of Georgian Foreign Ministry's official Bakradze to Brussels were in many respects linked to creating a necessary, well, a preliminary background, a political and propaganda background to start Georgia's military action against Abkhazia.

5 May 2008 The head of the main combat training and service department of Russian troops, Lt-General Vladimir Shamanov, says Russia's military leadership will react to the US large-scale exercise (Northern Edge 2008 in Alaska) in the northern latitudes by adjusting the plans of combat training of its army for the reliable protection of the country's national interests in the Arctic.

5 May 2008 A presidential decree states that Russia will join economic sanctions against Iran, as envisaged by the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1803 of 3 March.

6 May 2008 The permanent representative of Russia to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, says it is Georgia's own fault that it is close to a war. He is commenting on the statement made today by Georgian Reintegration Minister Temur Yakobashvili in the European Parliament in Brussels, according to which Georgia "is very close" to a war with Russia.

6 May 2008 Lt-General Vladimir Shamanov says the Russian military will not allow Georgian military aircraft to perform flights over the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone.

Sergey Shamba, Abkhaz minister of foreign affairs, is interviewed in *Izvestiya*. He says Abkhazia is prepared to place its territory under Russia's military control in exchange for security guarantees. Sergey Lavrov says that the Russian government has not received official proposals from Abkhazia which suggest this. Shamba later states that he had been misunderstood. Abkhazia has offered Russia the broadest military cooperation. He states:

I am saying that we could - taking into account new tendencies, a new strategy by Russia that is based on President Putin's order - establish not only economic and other projects but also a common military policy. This would now be in the interests of both Russia and Abkhazia and could guarantee security during the Olympics.

We could offer Russia military bases on Abkhazian territory, take into account its other military interests here in Abkhazia. In exchange we would receive security guarantees, just as the USA has an agreement with Taiwan.

Shamba states that Abkhazia shot down four Georgian UAVs.

Eduard Kokoyty, president of South Ossetia is interviewed in *Gazeta*. He says Georgia is preparing for a large-scale simultaneous attack on Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

6 May 2008 Russia and the USA sign an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the field of peaceful use of nuclear energy in Moscow. The agreement was signed by Sergey Kiriyenko, director-general of Rosatom, and US ambassador to Russia William Burns. This is the framework agreement establishing the main principles for cooperation between the two countries in peaceful use of nuclear energy.

Russia's permanent representative to NATO Dmitry Rogozin has said that the issue of creating a unified antimissile defence system in Europe can only be resolved by direct talks between Moscow and Washington.

6 May 2008 A war graves treaty with Latvia is sent to the Duma for ratification.

7 May 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says the six international

mediators in the settlement of the Iranian nuclear issue are to offer Iran new projects so that it abandons its nuclear programme.

7 May 2008 Distribution of Russian humanitarian aid for the Serbian enclaves in Kosovo begins in the town of Gracanica, the Serbian enclave nearest to Pristina.

7 May 2008 Industry and Energy Minister Viktor Khristenko and Kazakh Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Sauat Mynbayev draw up a common position on increasing the throughput capacity of the oil pipeline network of the Caspian Pipeline Consortium (CPC). The expansion of the CPC should take place in two stages in the period until 2012. As a result, the throughput capacity of the pipeline will increase from 32 million to 67 million tonnes of oil. It is envisaged as part of the expansion that an extra 17 million tonnes of Kazakh oil will be oriented to the Burgas-Alexandroupolis pipeline.

8 May 2008 The MOD says it may send more peacekeepers to Abkhazia.

8 May 2008 Head of the Duma Committee on International Affairs Konstantin Kosachev visits Belgrade in his role as Deputy Secretary of the General Council Presidium of Yedinaya Rossiya at the invitation of the leader of the Democratic Party of Serbia (DSS) Vojislav Kostunica. Kosachev has talks with President Boris Tadic and Prime Minister Vojislav Kostunica. He says Russia fully supports Serbia's signing of the stabilization and association agreement with the EU and Serbia's efforts to become a full EU member. He says the Serb people have been presented with a false choice between Europe and Russia.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko is interviewed in *Rossiyskaya Gazeta*. He says Russia will actively join UNESCO efforts to restore religious monuments in Kosovo.

8 May 2008 A VTsIOM poll asks who Russians which country they consider to be friendly. The results are:

China 23 per cent
Germany 17 per cent
Belarus 14 per cent
USA 9 per cent.

25 per cent class the United States among countries with which the tensest relations have developed for Russia. 21 per cent put Ukraine in this category.

The poll conducted by the VTsIOM in April comprised 1,600 people in 153 population centres in 46 regions, territories and republics of Russia. The statistical measure of inaccuracy does not exceed 3.4 per cent.

8 May 2008 The MFA states it will send humanitarian aid to Burma (Union of Myanmar). Two flights will leave on 9 and 11 May.

8 May 2008 The MFA calls on all forces in Lebanon to show restraint.

8 May 2008 The MFA accuses certain forces in Estonia of refusing to accept the verdict of history on Nazism in Estonia.

9 May 2008 The MFA condemns foreign interference in the Lebanese crisis.

Chairman of the Federation Council Committee on International Affairs Mikhail Margelov calls for the warring sides in Lebanon to end the violence and to sit down

at the negotiating table.

11 May 2008 Acting Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov attends the 225th anniversary of the BSF in Sevastopol. He says Russia and Ukraine must negotiate over the stationing of the BSF in Ukraine. Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov also attends the ceremony. Luzhkov says that Sevastopol was not part of the territories which Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev handed over to Ukraine and the issue of the city's territorial status remains unresolved.

11 May 2008 President Dmitry Medvedev and the leader of the Libyan revolution, Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi discuss by telephone issues of practical implementation of major agreements reached in the course of a recent Russian-Libyan summit.

12 May 2008 US President George Bush telephones to congratulate Dmitry Medvedev over on the occasion of his official inauguration to the post of Russian president.

12 May 2008 Duma deputy Konstantin Zatulin says Russia may once again raise the issue of Sevastopol' status if the Ukrainian authorities break the agreement according to which the city was officially recognized as belonging to Ukraine. He states: "I believe that if Ukraine continues to act this way, we will have a formal justification for refusing to renew the Agreement on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership which expires next year. It means that we will be able to revisit the issue of Sevastopol and start negotiations on it again."

12 May 2008 Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov is officially declared persona non grata in Ukraine.

12 May 2008 Konstantin Kosachev says that the early parliamentary election in Serbia passed off in accordance with democratic norms.

Aleksandr Torshin, the head of the Observer Mission of the CIS Inter-Parliamentary Assembly and Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council, says observers from the CIS, OSCE and PACE are of the opinion that the parliamentary election in Serbia was fair and open.

12 May 2008 Russian-Turkish consultations on military-political issues take place in Ankara. The Russian delegation is headed by Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak.

12 May 2008 Abkhaz authorities report that another Georgian UAV has been shot down.

The MFA issues a statement criticising comments made by US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Matthew Bryza during his recent visits to Tbilisi and Sukhumi.

13 May 2008 The chairman of the governmental committee for affairs of compatriots living abroad and the foreign minister, Sergey Lavrov says that along with federal authorities the Russian constituent territories intensify their support to compatriots living abroad. He is speaking at the 19th meeting of the advisory council of Russian constituent territories on international and foreign economic ties under the MFA.

13 May 2008 The MOD states that the additional peacekeeping units that arrived in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone have carried out a combat training and firing exercise.

Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov says Russia "is in no way escalating the conflict in Georgia, nor inflaming the situation". He is visiting Azerbaijan.

13 May 2008 Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov, repeats his claim that Sevastopol should belong to Russia. He states:

Sevastopol is a special city. This is about our special attitude to the history of our country. This is about our special memories. Sevastopol, as well as Crimea, but especially Sevastopol, has a special place in the heart of every Russian. But this is not the only reason. Russia cannot ensure its southern borders without Sevastopol. Catherine the Great, that wise, powerful and statesmanlike empress understood this. Everyone understood this, including the leadership of the Soviet Union in 1948. They singled out the naval base as a separate territory, a separate administrative entity of Sevastopol. Since that time, this administrative entity, according to all normative documents, exists as a Russian territory, a Russian naval base. Its existence should continue. If we lose it, something unimaginable will happen on our country's southern borders. The geo-strategic balance is absolutely necessary here, and for Russia it cannot be ensured without Sevastopol.

He denies that he is attacking Ukrainian sovereignty.

13 May 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko and deputy director-general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry Aharon Leshno Yaar hold talks on Russo-Israeli cooperation.

13 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov has a telephone conversation with Lebanese Prime Minister Fu'ad al-Sanyurah. Lavrov also has talks with Egyptian foreign minister Ahmad Abu-al-Ghayt by telephone.

13 May 2008 Russian permanent envoy to the EU Vladimir Chizhov makes the following comments on the talks between Russia and the EU on a new framework agreement: "It is in my interests as a future negotiator that my partners, representatives of the European Commission, shouldn't have their hands tied by various conditions and provisos and that they have the largest possible room for manoeuvre."

13 May 2008 Duma speaker Boris Gryzlov has talks in Azerbaijan with the speaker of the Azeri parliament, Oqtay Asadov. They discuss Nagorny Karabakh and economic ties. Trade between Azerbaijan and Russia currently stands at around 1.5bn US dollars.

14 May 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin says that Russia will continue to supply oil to Europe:

Russia intends to continue fulfilling all its obligations to consumers accurately and in full going forward, including to its European consumers. We also have to react adequately to situations when our partners step up demands, especially tariffs on transporting hydrocarbons, or when they appropriate energy resources without due authorization. Under these conditions we need to firmly defend our national interests and ensure unconditional fulfilment of the contracts and agreements which have been signed.

14 May 2008 Dmitry Medvedev relieves Sergey Yastrzhembsky of his temporary duties as aide to the president on the development of relations with the EU.

14 May 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin says that the second stage of the Baltic pipeline system (BTS-2) will be built to the Ust-Luga port on the southern coast of the Gulf of Finland in the Baltic Sea. He says that it is intended soon to redirect oil shipped through the Baltic states to be exported by Russian ports.

14 May 2008 Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier have talks in Yekaterinburg. They discuss NATO, Kosovo and Georgia. Dmitry Medvedev also has talks with Steinmeier. Trade turnover is currently more than \$50 billion dollars a year.

14 May 2008 The Russian Embassy in Iran claims that there were plans to bomb the Russian consulate in Rasht.

14 May 2008 Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council Aleksandr Torshin thinks that, if the Abkhaz government officially approaches the Russian side with a proposal to sign a military agreement, this issue should be considered within the framework of the MOD, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the political leadership.

The head of the Federation Council Defence and Security Committee Viktor Ozerov states:

Abkhazia has repeatedly announced its readiness to sign a military agreement and accommodate Russian bases on its territory with the aim of increasing its military security. This aspiration of Abkhazia's is fully understandable..It is perfectly obvious that in the event of an armed conflict beginning, if such a thing happens, the Russian government will not leave its citizens in distress. It will be an entirely different story.

14 May 2008 The first secretary of the central council of the Spravedlivaya Rossiya party and Duma deputy speaker Aleksandr Babakov says that statements by Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov about the status of Sevastopol do not reflect the official position of the Russian state.

14 May 2008 Roskosmos and the European Space Agency agree to carry out joint work to build a spaceship for flights to the earth orbit and expeditions to the Moon.

15 May 2008 A meeting of the Russia-NATO Council takes place at level of chiefs of general staffs. The chief of the General Staff, Yury Baluyevsky, says Russia may refuse to cooperate with NATO "to develop Europe's missile defence" if it integrates into the USA's global system of missile defence. Baluyevsky also says that the abolition of flank limitations could be a compromise with NATO over Russia's moratorium on its participation in the CFE Treaty.

15 May 2008 The MOD issues a statement saying that Western countries are often giving military assistance to Georgia gratis. It says this aid destabilises the region.

Vladimir Ivanov, aide to the commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces says that the force in Abkhazia may be increased by 300 if the conflict escalates. The number of Russian peacekeeping forces is currently 500.

Russian Air Force Commander Colonel-General Aleksandr Zelin says it is possible that a Russian military base could be set up in Abkhazia.

15 May 2008 The foreign ministers of Russia, India and China meet in Yekaterinburg. They state that Kosovo independence violates the UN Security Council resolution. They state they favour the creation of anti-narcotics security belt around Afghanistan.

15 May 2008 Minority shareholder Tetlis brings a claim against TNK-BP. The Tyumen Arbitration Court rules that 148 foreign specialists of BP working for TNK-BP on secondment must cease their work and their services must not be paid for.

15 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov calls upon all parties in Lebanon to accept the Arab League's proposals to settle the conflict in the country.

15 May 2008 The head of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, is interviewed on Vesti TV. He takes a pessimistic view about the speedy drafting of a new comprehensive cooperation agreement with the European Union, resting the blame with EU newcomers such as the Baltic states and Poland. He also says Russia has no fundamental vested interest in Serbia joining or not joining the EU, as long as the recent agreements with it, first of all in the sphere of oil and gas, are honoured.

15 May 2008 Economic Development Minister Elvira Nabiullina says that the Russian government expects world oil prices to fall to around \$72 dollars per barrel by the end of 2011. She states:

The first challenge we discussed was the pace of the world economic development, which affects the development of the Russian economy. We discussed forecasts of oil prices. As the basic scenario, we think that oil prices will remain sufficiently high, but there will be some decline. Obviously, in the first quarter of this year, there was a record increase in oil prices. In the future, oil prices will fall. We forecast that by the end of 2011 the oil price will be about 72 dollars per barrel. Our calculations and forecasts are based on that.

16 May 2008 The Federal Security Service says it has caught an agent of the Georgian special services in the Southern Federal District. It states that he is a citizen of Russia who is a native of Georgia. The man is Ramzan Turkoshvili, born in 1974, a Chechen from the Kodori Gorge.

The deputy permanent representative to the United Nations, Ilya Rogachev, criticises the resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on refugees and displaced persons in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict zone calling it counterproductive and saying that it distorts the situation in the breakaway province and destabilizes UN efforts to promote a comprehensive settlement of the conflict.

MFA special envoy Yury Popov says that the Georgian delegation at talks in Moscow on the settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz and the Georgian-South Ossetian conflicts, led by Minister of State for Reintegration Temur Iakobashvili, has not proposed anything new and continues to hold a tough position.

The HQ of the Joint Peacekeeping Force in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone says that reports about the contingent of Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia being increased do not correspond to the facts and a scheduled rotation will take place in May.

Russian peacekeepers hold an exercise in the Georgia-Ossetia conflict area.

Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin and Georgian Minister of State for Reintegration Temur Iakobashvili meet in Moscow to discuss the situation in the zones of the Georgian-Abkhaz and Georgian-South Ossetian conflicts. Karasin accuses Georgia of "intimidating Abkhazia and South Ossetia" and of "simulating

efforts" to settle the conflicts.

16 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov says the current spat between Russia and Ukraine is caused by provocative actions of the Ukrainian side and those who are dragging it into NATO.

16 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov praises trilateral cooperation with India and China. He says a mechanism for cooperation between heads of departments of the three countries' foreign ministries has been set up. A joint communiqué is issued following the Yekaterinburg summit of the Russian, Chinese and Indian foreign ministers.

16 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov says Russia confirms its position that Iran should be given security guarantees: "I confirm that the position that I laid out regarding the need to include the issue of security guarantees in the packet of proposals for Iran, and the need to involve Iran in regional cooperation, is conscious." He says this position is not new.

Sergey Lavrov calls on all interested parties to decide as soon as possible on a time for an international conference on the Middle East in Moscow. He says it is up to Israel to decide.

16 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov says NATO should work with the CSTO to stem the flow of illegal drugs from Afghanistan.

16 May 2008 Dmitry Medvedev has talks with the president of Mongolia, Nambaryn Enkhbayar, in the Kremlin.

17 May 2008 During an authorized protest outside the Latvian embassy in Moscow activists of the Young Russia youth movement burn an effigy of Edvins Snore, the author of the book "The Soviet Story", which has been made into a film.

18 May 2008 Aleksandr Diordiyev, an aide to the commander of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone accuses Georgian force agencies' personnel of groundlessly using force against peacekeepers in Zugdidi District (Georgian-controlled part of the Abkhazia conflict zone).

Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia hold exercises.

18 May 2008 Colonel-General Viktor Komogorov, Russian FSB deputy director and head of the service of operational information and international relations says the Russian FSB is ready to cooperate with the UK on the case of Aleksandr Litvinenko but only after London brings excuses for groundless accusations regarding Russian special services.

19 May 2008 Agriculture Minister Aleksey Gordeyev says Russia still wishes to join the WTO despite Russia's intention to review international agreements in the agriculture sector, which was announced by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin.

19 May 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin says Russia is ready to cooperate with Georgia, but wants to see real efforts aimed at reaching an acceptable result.

19 May 2008 The MFA publishes a commentary criticising Georgia for its treatment of peacekeepers in Abkhazia.

19 May 2008 Head of Rosatom State Nuclear Corporation Sergey Kiriyyenko says

A Russian Chronology: April – June 2008 Foreign Policy

the Bushehr Power Plant will be completed on time. According to the agreed timetable, it is to be operational in autumn 2008.

19 May 2008 Gazprom chief executive Aleksey Miller, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan and Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan meet to discuss signing a new contract on gas supplies to Armenia. An agreement was reached during the meeting that the contract would be for the intermediate-term, with a price formula, and that the price of gas would gradually increase until it reached the European level in 2011, as will be the case in Russia.

19 May 2008 A Syrian military delegation led by the commander of the Syrian Air Force and Air Defence Force, Div General Ahmad al-Reteb, arrives in Moscow.

19 May 2008 The Voice of Russia starts broadcasting in Kurdish

The Russian TV channel Vesti starts broadcasting in Serbia.

20 May 2008 The MFA signs a formal agreement with Norilsk Nickel on cooperation in the sphere of countering terrorism and organized crime through prevention of illegal trade in unprocessed precious metals. Under the agreement, the Foreign Ministry undertakes to support Norilsk Nickel's foreign trade activities and render information and consultation assistance to the company with the view, in particular, to counter transnational organized crime and terrorism.

20 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov has talks with President of Abkhazia Sergey Bagapsh in Moscow.

The President of North Ossetia Taymuraz Mamsurov speaks out in favour of the unification of North Ossetia and South Ossetia. He is speaking at a presentation organized to celebrate the 225th anniversary of North Ossetia joining the Russian state. Mamsurov's stance is supported by South Ossetian president Eduard Kokoyty.

Sergey Lavrov addresses a Duma hearing on conflicts in the CIS. He says Russia has fulfilled all the promises it has made Georgia at the meeting of the presidents (Vladimir Putin and Mikheil Saakashvili on 21 February). He says there has been no response from Georgia. He says Georgia is preventing the establishment of a fully fledged dialogue between Tbilisi and Abkhazia and South Ossetia. He says both Tbilisi and the two regions should pledge not to use force. He also says that Russia's steps aimed at developing relations with Abkhazia should not be compared with the Kosovo situation.

He also discusses the Transdnestr settlement process. He says he hopes external forces will not interfere. He says Russia will help Moldova and Transdnestr to negotiate.

20 May 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and leader of the Libyan revolution Mu'ammar al-Qadhafi have spoken in favour of increasing cooperation between their respective countries in civilian and military-technical areas during a telephone conversation.

20 May 2008 The Russian Geophysiker Company declares its readiness to cooperate with Iran in oil and gas drilling industry.

20 May 2008 The MFA criticises the trial in Estonia of Hero of the Soviet Union Arnold Meri on genocide charges.

21 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov says that the MFA's work is unchanged under the new president.

21 May 2008 French Foreign Minister Bernard Kouchner visits Moscow. He has talks with Dmitry Medvedev.

Sergey Lavrov and French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner hold a press conference. Lavrov says that Russia is ready to begin negotiations on a new Partnership and Cooperation Agreement with the EU, and the EU will be ready to approve the mandate for such talks "in the next few days."

21 May 2008 The MFA issues a commentary on the presence of the Russian BSF in Sevastopol. This is a response to Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko's 20 May decree concerning the preparation of a draft law on the termination from 2017 of the operation of the Russian-Ukrainian agreements on the presence of the BSF on the territory of Ukraine.

The head of the Duma international affairs committee, Konstantin Kosachev, says he regrets the Ukrainian presidential decree.

21 May 2008 Abkhaz leader Sergey Bagapsh says Abkhazia is only interested in independence and not in having any positions in the Georgian government.

Head of the Ground Troops Air Defence Colonel-General Nikolay Frolov says Russia has not supplied Abkhazia with air defence systems Strela and Igla, which could have been used to shoot down UAVs in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone.

Sergey Lavrov makes a statement on Abkhazia following a meeting with Members of the Duma Committee on the Commonwealth of Independent States and Relations with Compatriots.

21 May 2008 Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov visits Mongolia. He discusses military-technical cooperation. A Russo-Mongolian military-technical cooperation was signed in Moscow on 20 May.

21 May 2008 Ivan Bobryashov, the head of the border directorate of the FSB in Pskov Region, says that the Estonian leadership is trying to expand into the Pechorskiy District through dual citizenship. Many of these dual citizens are doing their national service in the Estonian armed forces.

21 May 2008 The Duma declines to ratify two international agreements - with Poland and Cyprus - in connection with the process of negotiations on Russia's entry into the WTO. These agreements were declined by the Russian president in June 1996 and in December 2005.

21 May 2008 Russian Railways chief Vladimir Yakunin says the results of a competition for the construction of a railway in Saudi Arabia, which was won by Russian Railways, have been cancelled.

22 May 2008: Andrey Nesterenko is appointed director of the MFA's Press and Information Department.

22 May 2008 Dmitry Medvedev visits Kazakhstan. He and Kazakh leader Nursultan Nazarbayev agree to work out a long-term strategy of economic cooperation between Russia and Kazakhstan. They discuss space and energy cooperation.

22 May 2008 Dmitry Medvedev gives a TV interview on relations with China on the eve of his visit there. On Russia's general foreign policy priorities he states:

As to a set of our foreign policy priorities, they are quite obvious, we have spoken about them more than once. We are for free, calm and democratic development of countries and peoples, for solving all disputable issues within the framework of the existing system of international law, with the use of those institutions that have proved their effectiveness. First of all, it is the United Nations Organization and a number of other institutions that over the last few years have been working and helping the mankind solve disputable situations.

22 May 2008 Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksey Borodavkin and director of the Iranian Foreign Ministry for CIS affairs Morteza Saffari-Natanzi have talks in Moscow.

22 May 2008 Russian Air Force Commander Colonel-General Aleksandr Zelin discusses military cooperation with Syrian Air Force and Air Defence Forces Commander General Akhmad al-Ratyb in Moscow.

MFA spokesman Andrey Nesterenko welcomes the resumption of the talks between Syria and Israel as an important element of settlement in the Middle East.

23 May 2008 Dmitry Medvedev visits China. He promises to increase earthquake aid. Russia and China sign an agreement on the construction of the fourth line of the gas centrifugal uranium enrichment plant and the delivery of Russian enriched uranium. Agreements are also signed on aircraft technology export and import, as well as on interbank cooperation and the setting-up of a timber industry enterprise in Russia.

Dmitry Medvedev and his counterpart Hu Jintao issue a statement criticising the creation of a global system of missile defence. The statement opposes an arm race in space, and calls for dialogue over the Iranian nuclear issue. It calls on all countries to abandon a Cold War mentality.

23 May 2008 Vladimir Putin attends the meeting of CIS prime ministers in Minsk. He has talks with Ukrainian prime minister Yuliya Tymoshenko on WTO entry and gas relations. Putin thanks Ukraine for clearing its gas debt. Russia and Ukraine plan talks on a long-term agreement on gas supplies "in the coming weeks".

Putin has talks with Belarusian President Alyaksandr Lukashenka in Minsk.

23 May 2008 The MFA issues a statement on Russo-Ukrainian security consultations conducted by Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko and Ukrainian First Deputy Foreign Minister Volodymyr Khandohy. It expresses concern about the possibility of Ukraine entering NATO.

The permanent representative of Russia to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, says that the intention of Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko to remove the BSF from Sevastopol is "cheap and not very serious propaganda", aimed at the destabilization of Russian-Ukrainian relations. Rogozin says it is necessary for the BSF to stay at Sevastopol after the current treaty with Ukraine expires in 2017. He says that the relocation of the fleet to Novorossiysk is not a viable option, both because of the absence of infrastructure and unfavourable climatic conditions in Novorossiysk that causes ships to ice up. He also calls for more coordination in Russian foreign policy and says that the remarks by Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov calling for the return of

Sevastopol to Russia were counterproductive.

The MFA says that it does not have any "blacklists" of Ukrainian politicians.

Dmitry Rogozin states that Russia's relations with NATO will radically change if Georgia and Ukraine join: "NATO's eastward expansion at the expense of Ukraine and Georgia is a red line in our relations with NATO and NATO should not cross it. If NATO crosses this line, not only will our relations deteriorate, but they will fundamentally change."

23 May 2008 The Duma adopts an appeal to PACE and the OSCE about the trial of Hero of the Soviet Union Arnold Meri.

23 May 2008 Gazprom and Petrovietnam sign an agreement on geological survey and further development of four new hydrocarbon blocks on Vietnam's shelf.

23 May 2008 Colonel Igor Konashenkov, aide to the Russian Ground Forces C-in-C, states that there will be no increase in the number of Russian peacekeepers in the course of peacekeepers' rotation in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone.

23 May 2008 The MOD states that all Russian space troops must be withdrawn from Baykonur, Kazakhstan, by 1 January 2009.

24 May 2008 Dmitry Medvedev gives a speech at Beijing University. He says that since 2000, Russian-Chinese trade has increased by more than 5.5 times. Its average annual growth is more than 30 per cent. Russia today is seventh among China's trading partners; China is Russia's third. He says the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) has an important part to play in developing large-scale energy projects uniting Russia, Kazakhstan and China.

24 May 2008 The combined headquarters of the Joint Peacekeeping Force in the Georgia-Ossetia conflict zone reports an unsanctioned flight by an An-2 aircraft that it was unable to identify.

26 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov says that Russia has written off \$20 billion of debts by Africa's poorest countries, of which \$10 billion was written off over the past two years.

26 May 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Grushko says that Moscow expects the talks on the new basic agreement between Russia and the EU to start shortly and to have no "artificial" agenda tied to it.

26 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov has talks in Moscow with Afghan foreign minister Rangin Dadfar-Spanta. They discuss economic cooperation and Afghanistan's relations with the CSTO and SCO.

26 May 2008 The MOD denies the claim made by the UN mission in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone to the effect that a Georgian UAV was shot down by a Russian fighter plane on 20 April.

26 May 2008 Viktor Zavarzin, chairman of the Duma committee on defence, says the fight against international terrorism should be the main avenue of cooperation between Russia and NATO.

26 May 2008 Konstantin Kosachev, the head of the Duma International Affairs Committee, publishes an article on foreign policy in *Izvestiya*. He says Russia will not return to the policy of making concessions for the sake of pleasing the West.

27 May 2008 Lt-General Yevgenny Buzhinsky, deputy chief of the MOD's main directorate for international military cooperation, says that the USA has so far made little response to Russian proposals to improve transparency at the proposed US missile defence facilities in Poland and the Czech Republic. He says he doubts that the USA will abandon its plans to build these systems in Eastern Europe, but says that previous experience shows that the USA and Russia usually manage to come to an agreement. He says that the US missile defence plans are aimed at Russia not at any threat from Iran. He also warns that further US missile defence systems could be deployed in Britain and Norway. He says Russia is preparing asymmetric measures to respond to the US deployment. Furthermore if US deployment goes ahead, then Russia will withdraw its offer to the USA to use the Qabala radar in Azerbaijan. Buzhinskiy says that the prospects of updating the CFE treaty depend on the position of the USA.

27 May 2008 The MFA issues a commentary on the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) report on the 20 April air incident over Abkhazia where a Georgian UAV was shot down allegedly by a Russian aircraft.

Deputy Foreign Minister Grigoriy Karasin and EU special representative for the South Caucasus Peter Semneby discuss issues of interaction between Russia and the EU in the Georgian-Ossetian and Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zones.

A regular rotation of 500 Russian peacekeepers in the area of the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict begins, and will finish on 2 June.

Yury Popov, Russian ambassador-at-large, says he is pessimistic about the prospects for the resumption of talks on the settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

27 May 2008 The MFA issues a commentary on the situation of the Russian language in Ukraine. It expresses concern over the "Ukrainianization" of Ukrainian TV.

27 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov visits Denmark. He says he believes that it is not yet sensible to talk about specific deadlines for signing a new basic agreement between Russia and the EU.

27 May 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and the premier of the State Council of the People's Republic of China, Wen Jiabao, discuss the main avenues of the development of interstate cooperation. They agree to create a joint Russian-Chinese commission on energy at the level of deputy prime ministers, which on the Russian side will be headed by Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin.

27 May 2008 Lt-General Yevgenny Buzhinsky, deputy head of the MOD's main directorate for international cooperation, says the Russian Armed Forces will not give up cluster bombs and landmines despite the appeals being made by a number of countries.

27 May 2008 CSTO Secretary-General Nikolai Bordyuzha says that NATO is failing to tackle the Afghan drug threat single-handedly but it is not cooperating with the CSTO over this problem because of political bias.

28 May 2008 Russia's permanent representative at the UN Vitaly Churkin says that Russia believes that representatives of Abkhazia would have to be invited to any session of the UN Security Council about Georgia.

Sergey Lavrov says that it is difficult to negotiate anything with the incumbent Georgian leadership because Tbilisi is oriented solely towards committing acts of provocation against Russia. Lavrov also believes that the policy of provoking Russia has been imposed on Georgia from the outside. He says that Russia has fulfilled its obligations to withdraw military bases from Georgia's territory.

Russian peacekeepers in South Ossetia begin a planned rotation of personnel.

28 May 2008 MFA special envoy Vladimir Dorokhin says that Moscow is prepared to increase its rent payments for the naval base in Sevastopol. He calls on Ukraine not to hurry to break the agreements between the two countries on the presence of the BSF in Sevastopol and continue the dialogue.

28 May 2008 Representatives of five countries that want to divide between themselves the Arctic shelf - Russia, Canada, USA, Denmark and Norway – meet in Greenland. Sergey Lavrov represents Russia. Lavrov states:

This is not a race for something that does not belong to you. This is a mutual wish of the five Arctic states, of five coastal states, not to allow confrontation and do everything to ensure that this area became an area of cooperation. It is very important that there is a common agreement, we will record it at the conference today, that the shared basis for future work is international law, first of all the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.

28 May 2008 A NATO-Russian naval rescue exercise is held in the North Sea.

28 May 2008 Chairman of Yemeni Shura Council Abd-al-Aziz Abd-al-Ghani and chairman of Russian Federal Council Sergey Mironov co-chair a session between the two councils in Yemen.

29 May 2008 General Director of the MiG Aircraft Corporation Anatoly Belov says Russia has offered to supply Algeria with state-of-the-art multi-role MiG-35 fighters to replace 15 MiG-29 planes Algeria has returned to Russia.

29 May 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksey Borodavkin has talks with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade of the Republic of Korea Kim Suk.

29 May 2008 It is reported on Vesti TV that a gas pipeline between North and South Ossetia is almost completed.

29 May 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin visits France.

29 May 2008 A telephone conversation between Dmitry Medvedev and Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko takes place at the initiative of the Russian side.

30 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov says that Russia will ask the UN Security Council to discuss Georgia's spy flights over Abkhazia. Lavrov also says that Abkhaz representatives must be present when the Security Council discusses the issue. This issue is discussed at the UN Security Council. UN experts argue that Georgian UAVs have been used over Abkhazia. This breaches the 1994 Moscow accords.

Russian peacekeepers have conducted a routine rotation of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces battalion in the Georgian-Ossetian conflict zone over the period 27-28 May.

30 May 2008 Sergey Lavrov addresses a conference of 'Compatriots and Russia's Regions' in Moscow.

30 May 2008 The commander-in-chief of the Russian Navy, Vladimir Vysotsky, says that the issue of the withdrawal of the BSF from Ukraine is not being raised at the official level. He says that the BSF will be preserved and developed.

30 May 2008 Armenian foreign minister Edvard Nalbandyan visits Moscow. He discusses the Nagorny Karabakh conflict with Sergey Lavrov. He affirms Russia's commitment to the Minsk Group. Lavrov states:

A little while ago - last year - the co-chairs of the Minsk Group at the ministerial level conveyed to the [two] sides its proposals, which do not exhaust all the issues that are necessary to achieve a full agreement, but register positive movement in the overwhelming majority of aspects of the future settlement...This document is a firm basis for moving forward in future. I am convinced that the meeting of the two presidents which is to take place in St Petersburg is destined to lay the foundation for the further work of the two ministers, with the support of the co-chairs.

He says Russian trade with Armenia is growing and will soon reach \$1 billion a year. Russia also has about \$1 billion invested in the Armenian economy.

31 May 2008 The MOD confirms that units of the Russian Railway Troops have been brought in to repair the railway in Abkhazia. The Georgian MOD warns that these forces must be withdrawn.

The rotation of Russia's peacekeeping contingent within the Joint Peacekeeping Force in the Georgian-Ossetia conflict zone is complete.

31 May 2008 Vladimir Putin is interviewed in *Le Monde*.

June 2008

2 June 2008 Deputy Prime Minister and head of the government staff Sergey Sobyanin is been appointed co-chairman of the Russian-French Council for economic, financial, industrial and trade issues.

2 June 2008 Gazprom chief executive Aleksey Miller meets Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in Baku. Miller offers to buy Azerbaijani gas at market prices on a long-term contract.

2 June 2008 Atomenergoprom says Russia has supplied three initial batches of fuel clusters for the Kudankulam nuclear power plant in India.

2 June 2008 Sergey Lavrov has talks with UN Assistant Secretary-General Dmitry Titov in Moscow. Lavrov says Russia is willing to increase its participation in peacekeeping operations under the auspices of the UN. Titov was appointed head of the Rule of Law and Security Institutions Office in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the UN Secretariat with the rank of UN assistant secretary-general in July 2007.

2 June 2008 Russian ambassador to Georgia Vyacheslav Kovalenko denies claims that Russia intends to recognize the independence of Abkhazia this September.

The MFA issues a report on the UN Security Council meeting on 30 May to discuss the report of UNOMIG on its investigation of the air incident over Abkhazia on 20

April.

3 June 2008 Head of the press service of the MOD Information Directorate, Colonel Aleksandr Drobyshevsky says that Russian military railwaymen have started restoring the Sukhumi-Ochamchira section of the railway in Abkhazia. The MFA issues a statement on the deployment.

Russia's permanent representative to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, calls on NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer not to dramatize the situation around the deployment.

The presidents of Russia and Georgia, Dmitry Medvedev and Mikheil Saakashvili, talk by telephone about the situation.

The chairman of the Federation Council, Sergey Mironov, sends a letter to the speaker of the parliament of the republic of Abkhazia, Nugzar Ashuba. The letter says:

Dear Nugzar Nuryevich. The Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation has viewed the appeal by the people's assembly - parliament - of the republic of Abkhazia on recognition of the independence of the republic of Abkhazia as a fresh confirmation of the aspiration of its people to strengthen their statehood on the basis of the principle of self-determination.

We believe that the world community should take this political reality into account. The Russian side intends to actively use it.

3 June 2008 Armenian Minister of Transport and Communications Gurgen Sargsyan says that starting from 1 June 2008 Armenia handed over the property of the Armenian Railways to the Russian Railways joint-stock company for concession management.

3 June 2008 Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says Russia has never been so close to WTO membership as it is now. He signs a protocol in Riyadh on the conclusion of bilateral talks on Russia's WTO accession.

3 June 2008 Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Kenichiro Sasae and his Russian counterpart Alexei Borodavkin have talks in Japan. They agree to continue negotiations over the Kuriles to pave the way for the conclusion of a peace treaty between the two countries. They also agree to work together on the creation of a post-2012 framework for greenhouse gas emissions cuts.

They also discuss the North Korean nuclear issue. Borodavkin states:

We believe that a certain progress has been made at the negotiations. The discussion of the denuclearization of North Korea is proceeding at a good rate and it is dynamic. We expect that this will bring results. All the contacts that the USA has had with North Korea recently prove this conclusion...Russia will be moving towards making the format of the dialogue on peace and security in Northeast Asia a stable and regular one. The dialogue will allow the parties to exchange information regarding military and political issues, the issues of counteracting new challenges and threats, which will reinforce trust between them.

3 June 2008 Regional Development Minister Dmitry Kozak says a total of 600 million euros is being allocated for implementing seven programmes of border cooperation between Russia and the EU.

4 June 2008 Russian ambassador to the United Kingdom Yury Fedotov says relations between Russia and Britain are starting to show signs of improvement.

4 June 2008 The Duma proposes to Dmitry Medvedev and the government that Russia consider withdrawing from the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership with Ukraine if Kiev implements its plans to join NATO. A Duma resolution states:

If Ukraine joins the NATO Membership Action Plan or takes any other accelerated steps to join NATO, such steps should be seen as Ukraine's unilateral withdrawal from the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Russia and Ukraine, and the Russian Federation should consider withdrawing from it.

Parliamentary hearings were held in the Duma on 1 April 2008 on "The state of Russian-Ukrainian relations and the fulfilment of obligations under the Treaty on Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership between Russia and Ukraine".

Konstantin Zatulin, first deputy head of the Duma CIS Affairs Committee criticises Ukraine's approach over the BSF and Sevastopol.

The Duma speaker, chairman of the Supreme Council of Yedinaya Rossiya Boris Gryzlov, says he supports the leader of the Ukrainian Party of Regions, Viktor Yanukovich, on the need to hold a nationwide referendum on Ukraine's accession to NATO.

The Spravedlivaya Rossiya Duma faction criticises the Duma statement on Ukraine as they say it plays into the hands of Russia's opponents in Ukraine.

URF leader Nikita Belykh criticises the Duma statement.

Capt 1st Rank Igor Dygalo, aide to the Russian Navy commander, says Russia has the right to consider the issue of modernizing its BSF provided that Ukraine is informed about it.

4 June 2008 The MFA says the deployment of Russian Railway Troops to Abkhazia is within the law. This is a response to NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer's call for their withdrawal.

4 June 2008 The head of the Duma International Affairs Committee, Konstantin Kosachev, calls on the EU to follow a policy of an equal partnership with Russia.

4 June 2008 First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov calls on his colleagues in the Council of the Baltic Sea States not to be afraid of cooperation with Russia and Russian businessmen, and invest in Russia. He is speaking at the first international business conference of the Baltic states in Riga.

4 June 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin discusses issues of trade and economic cooperation and energy dialogue with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

4 June 2008 Gazprom says it is bewildered by the statements by US deputy assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs, Matthew Bryza, that the Russian concern's proposal to buy Azerbaijani gas could be related to its not having at its disposal sufficient volumes to fulfil its contracts in Europe.

4 June 2008 OAO Tvel and Paks nuclear power plant (Hungary) sign an agreement on the supply of second-generation profiled uranium-gadolinium fuel for this plant.

5 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev visits Germany. He gives a speech in which he proposes drawing up a new European security treaty, saying this could be done at a summit which all European countries should attend as separate nations, not as members of NATO or other blocs. He says Russia has "come back from the cold" and become "compatible with Europe", stressing their common roots and values. He describes Atlanticism as obsolete, calling instead for a common "Euro-Atlantic space from Vancouver to Vladivostok". He praises the role of the UN in the international system. Medvedev says he hopes that Russia and the EU will manage to arrive at final accords on a new partnership and cooperation agreement at their summit in Khanty-Mansiysk later in June. He praises the Northeast European Gas Pipeline project.

5 June 2008 Russia's permanent representative to the UN Vitaly Churkin says that Russia sees as unsatisfactory the state of affairs at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia.

5 June 2008 Vice-President of Colombia Francisco Santos visits Moscow.

6 June 2008 A Nigerian delegation in talks with Gazprom suggests that Gazprom take part in laying a gas pipeline across the Sahara. The project would run from Africa across the desert and the Mediterranean Sea into Europe.

6 June 2008 An informal CIS summit takes place in St Petersburg. CIS Executive Secretary Sergey Lebedev says that the heads of the CIS states have decided to develop "a joint strategy of economic development of the CIS until 2020". Food security, transport and humanitarian cooperation are also discussed.

6 June 2008 Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko has talks with Dmitry Medvedev. They discuss the BSF.

Sergey Lavrov says that Russia is convinced that NATO membership cannot solve any of Ukraine's security problems. He also criticises Ukraine's stance over the BSF and the decision to invite the Patriarch of Constantinople to the 1020th anniversary of the baptism of Kievan Rus.

Lavrov says Russia will significantly increase the price of gas to Ukraine from the start of 2009. Gazprom press secretary Sergey Kupriyanov confirms that the likelihood of a steep rise in the price of gas for Ukraine is indeed high.

Dmitry Medvedev has talks in Russia with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili.

Sergey Lavrov says that any peace initiative aimed at settling the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict must be discussed first of all with Sukhumi.

President of Abkhazia Sergey Bagapsh says that Russian peacekeeping forces should remain in Abkhazia.

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev has talks with Dmitry Medvedev and President of Turkmenistan Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedow in St Petersburg.

7 June 2008 Finance Minister Aleksey Kudrin says that NATO should become history. He says that "if someone supports it, then, apparently, this may even create new challenges and new risks".

7 June 2008 The head of Rosatom, Sergey Kiriyenko, says that preparatory work at the Bushehr nuclear plant in Iran, including that involving nuclear fuel, will begin in autumn 2008.

7 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev opens the St Petersburg Economic Forum. He says Russia is a global player and is qualified to take part in setting new rules of the game on the world market and to become a recognized international financial centre. He blames "economic egoism" and flawed US policy in particular for the 2007 global financial crisis.

7 June 2008 Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov says that Russian Railway Troops will leave Abkhazia in two months after the end of their mission.

7 June 2008 Gazprom head Aleksey Miller says the domestic market is to be its main priority. He says Gazprom has not, and will not, give ultimatums to foreign partners. Gazprom doubled investment in 2008 year-on-year.

Miller says that Gazprom would like to take part in building an Alaska gas pipeline and has already made corresponding proposals to the project's participants, BP and ConocoPhillips. He states:

Global problems need global efforts to resolve them. That is why the sphere of our interests is not limited to Europe. It is well known that gas production in the USA has been steadily decreasing over the last few years, by more than 30bn cubic metres from 2001 to 2006. Meanwhile, in Russia we have managed to increase production by 70 billion cubic metres over the same period of time.

8 June 2008 Trade and Economic Development Minister Elvira Nabiullina says that Russia has become a world economic leader. She is speaking at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum. She says that the country "has developed a long-term perspective of the economic development and long-term tasks are set not only by the state, these tasks are set by business itself".

First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov says that Russia will become the world's sixth largest economy by the end of 2008:

Russia has been developing for eight years. We will become the world's sixth largest economy by the end of the year. Basic economic institutions have been shaped in Russia. They set up a basis for the stable operation of the world economy. Development of these institutions and the growth of their effectiveness are becoming topical now. Russia has become a full-fledged member of the club of the world's largest economies.

At the Forum he says Russia should stop trying to catch up with the West and work out its own model of modernization. He warns that excessive state interference in the economy is just as dangerous for society as a lack of it. He says the share of the state sector in the Russian economy is much less than 40 per cent. He also says that the government will be significantly reducing the number of strategic enterprises.

8 June 2008 Russia's permanent representative at NATO Dmitry Rogozin says Russia is interested in maintaining the CFE Treaty and is prepared to ratify its adapted version taking into account the changes that have taken place on the continent over the last years.

8 June 2008 First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov says Moscow would like to speed up the process of drawing closer to Belarus in order to create a Union State.

8 June 2008 The MOD denies that a Russian Air Force An-72 aircraft violated Estonia's airspace on 7 June.

8 June 2008 Moscow mayor Yury Luzhkov says that Georgia should recognize the independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia.

8 June 2008 First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov says the MFA sees no need to begin talks on the withdrawal of the BSF from Sevastopol.

Dmitry Rogozin warns Ukraine against joining the North Atlantic alliance:

Ukraine should rigorously honour all the obligations it has assumed, including the articles of the Treaty between Russia and Ukraine, where it is stated that 'Ukraine is an independent and non-bloc state'. If Ukraine changes its status, Russia will be forced to review the agreements that go to the heart of the declaration of Ukrainian statehood.

8 June 2008 Presidential aide Arkady Dvorkovich says Russia intends to stage a meeting of 13 countries devoted to global energy issues in the autumn. He says it will be in the '8+5' format: the G8, China, India, Brazil, South Africa and Mexico.

9 June 2008 The MFA sees as unacceptable the statement made by Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shaul Mufaz that an Israeli attack against Iran is "unavoidable".

9 June 2008 The MFA issues a statement on the Georgian-Abkhaz settlement process. The MFA says it supports the Abkhaz separatist leadership's plan for the resolution of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict.

9 June 2008 Sergey Lavrov has talks with Cypriot Foreign Minister Markos Kiprianou. He calls for talks on a European security agreement:

As to the initiative which the Russian president introduced when he was speaking in Berlin, about the preparation of an agreement on European security, in the speech the president made in Berlin, he clearly explained the need for this move.

The point is that taking into account the nature of threats to security, which has changed fundamentally, when not only military and political threats have appeared, but also various so-called new threats and challenges, be it terrorist or drugs, or challenges in the area of migration, and so on, we need to once again look at the mechanisms with the help of which we all, all countries in the North Atlantic area, can withstand the threats effectively together in our common interests, and not infringing on anybody's interests.

We will propose to our partners to start preparing for a discussion about this initiative. The main thing is that the preparatory work is free from any ideological elements, free from the logic of thinking in terms of different blocs, so that each country would treat this important problem, first and foremost, from the point of view of its national interests. Of course, the organizations which currently exist in the North Atlantic area can be invited to take part in this work.

A Russian Chronology: April – June 2008 Foreign Policy

The final aim of the work on, ideally, signing an agreement on European security is to make security truly indivisible and ensure that no state protects its security at the expense of the security of other participants.

9 June 2008 Sergey Lavrov has talks in Kirkenes with with his Norwegian counterpart, Jonas Gahr Stoere. He says Russia is planning to step up substantially its presence on Spitsbergen in accordance with the 1920 treaty on Spitsbergen.

9 June 2008 Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Duma International Affairs Committee, says the EU should comprehend its responsibility for violations of the rights of language minorities in Latvia and Estonia and recognize the existence of the problem of non-citizens there.

9 June 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin and President of South Ossetia Eduard Kokoyty discuss the possibility of restarting negotiations on the settlement of the Georgian-Ossetian conflict.

10 June 2008 The CIS Executive Committee says that Georgia's proposals to hold consultations aimed at changing the format of the presence and mandate of the CIS Collective Peacekeeping Force in Abkhazia have been communicated to the ministries of foreign affairs of all the member countries of the CIS,

10 June 2008 The MFA issues a commentary calling on Ukraine to stop digging out events in the common history of the two countries that are anti-Russian in nature.

10 June 2008 MOD expert Major-General (retd) Aleksandr Komar proposes in order to end the deadlock in the talks on CFE that the Protocol on Territorial Ceilings to the Agreement on Adaptation of CFE be adjusted:

The problem can be resolved in a somewhat paradoxical manner - by extending the flank regime to the entire territory of the Russia within the area covered by the CFE, with the preservation of the territorial ceilings set by the Agreement on Adaptation, but not the sub-ceilings - this is what the flank limitations on Russia are officially known as...If this idea is implemented, Russia will be in an equal position with other flank states, permitted within the treaty to deploy and redeploy troops freely in its own territory.

10 June 2008 The head of TNK-BP, Robert Dudley, is summoned for a talk with investigators from the investigations directorate under the Interior Ministry's main directorate for the Central Federal District. Dudley says it was a routine meeting.

10 June 2008 Sergey Lavrov discusses energy cooperation with the Norwegian foreign minister Jonas Gahr Stoere and businessmen in Kirkenes. They discuss Russian-Norwegian cooperation in developing the Shtokman gas field.

10 June 2008 Gazprom chairman Aleksey Miller has talks with French President Nicolas Sarkozy in Paris. They discuss issues of Russian gas supplies to France, possibilities of further development of Russian-French cooperation in the oil and gas sector, and the progress of the first phase of the Shtokman gas field project.

11 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev says that neither NATO nor the OSCE are able to entirely ensure security in Europe. He calls for an agreement on common European security:

A way out, as I see it, could be that a comprehensive European agreement be prepared in which all European states would participate, not as states united in some kind of associations, blocs, European Union, but as states, since states' individual legal standing on the territory of Europe has not yet disappeared, that is, as sovereign entities.

Attempts of this kind have been made before; I gave the example of the so-called Kellogg-Briand Pact, which was unsuccessful. But one can still try. To discuss the issue of what could become a basis for a relevant European agreement, a European summit could be organized, where all European states would take part, without delegating their authority to anybody, but acting on their own behalf.

On the USA he says: "Russia will work with any US administration; there is no other way...Whoever comes to power in the White House, Russia is counting on having a constructive and friendly dialogue with the new US administration."

He says Russia will tackle xenophobia. He states: "Today and in the future our constant course will be to build a free and responsible society, observe human rights, freedom of the press and of speech and, of course, the supremacy of the law." He also calls for Cyrillic domain names on the internet. He is speaking at the International Russian Press Congress in Moscow.

11 June 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin says that the Russian authorities will continue their support for the Russian-language press abroad. "We intend to give all kinds of support to the Russian-language press. Yet we will strictly respect its right for independence and independent judgment, including in its assessment of events in our country." He also says:

There is after all something that unites you, and this something is that you belong to a unique media community, which is based not on ideology, not on politics and not even on the allegiance to the same state. In its foundation is a much more important substance - it is none other than great Russian culture, the great Russian language, the Russian word.

He is speaking at the International Russian Press Congress in Moscow.

Deputy Foreign Minister Aleksandr Yakovenko says that the world's interest in the Russian-language media has to do with the Russian economy's growth. He states:

The information space is strengthening in Russia. The number of Russian-language outlets is growing, including those abroad. As you know, new television channels have been launched, which can also be watched abroad. In a word, the Russian information space, the Russian-language information space, is growing. I think this is a stable trend and as we will be witnessing the growth and diversification of the information space in the world, so of course the role of the Russian-language press will be growing.

11 June 2008 The chairman of Yedinaya Rossiya's Supreme Council and Duma speaker, Boris Gryzlov, says he believes that the purchase of super-computers abroad poses a threat to Russia's national security. Gryzlov says that he is planning to personally introduce an amendment to the three-year budget to allocate R2 billion to produce super-computers in Russia.

11 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev signs a decree approving the composition of the commission for Russia's military-technical cooperation with foreign states. Medvedev becomes the chairman of the commission, while Prime Minister Vladimir

Putin will be deputy chairman.

11 June 2008 Gazprom chief Aleksey Miller visits Germany on the 35th anniversary of the commencement of Russian gas supplies to Germany. He says:

Russia has always been and will always be a reliable supplier of fuel to European countries. In 2007, Gazprom supplied over 150 billion cubic metres of gas to Europe; and Germany, as Russia's biggest export market, received over 25 per cent of these supplies. From the very beginning of supplies to the present moment, the total amount of gas exported from Russia to Germany has reached 859 billion cubic metres.

Gas accounts for a large part of Europe's energy balance. I can say that this demand can be met in full, and there will simply be no problems, no restrictions on resources, on gas, in Russia in the 21st century...We are the number one country in terms of reserves, and I can say that there will be enough reserves both for consumers in Russia and for our traditional partners, the European countries.

He says that Gazprom is concerned by European initiatives to create an "energy NATO", whose countries would cooperate if fuel supplies were to stop:

We are convinced that cooperation and international integration, and not protectionist barriers, will give the most reliable protection to national and European interests when it comes to gas supplies. This is why I am particularly concerned about the recent initiatives voiced in Germany to promote the idea of the so-called 'energy NATO', even if under another name. At best, politicizing the energy sector will result in a costly deformation of the market, while the worst-case scenarios may be much more dangerous.

Miller forecasts that oil prices will continue to rise, reaching \$150 a barrel shortly, and \$250 "in the foreseeable future".

11 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev signs the federal law "On ratification of agreement between the government of the Russian Federation and the government of the Republic of Belarus on measures regulating trade and economic cooperation in oil and oil products export." The law was passed by the Duma on 23 May 2008 and approved by the Federation Council on 30 May.

11 June 2008 The first vice president of the Academy of Problems of Security, Defence and Law Enforcement, Colonel-General Viktor Yesin, says the likelihood of integration of the Ukrainian radar stations into the global anti-missile defence system, which Kiev is announcing, is utopia.

12 June 2008 Russian shareholders of TNK-BP, the consortium AAR, announce the launch of legal proceedings against BP. The co-owner of TNK-BP from AAR (Alfa-Grupp, Access Industries and Grupp Renova), Mikhail Fridman, calls on the chairman of the board of directors of BP, Peter Sutherland, to consider proposals by Russian shareholders regarding management of TNK-BP and not to lecture the Russian government.

12 June 2008 Sergey Lavrov says that Russia is going to take part in developing Sevastopol:

Sevastopol is the base of the Russian BSF on the territory of Ukraine. The leadership of the fleet, the leadership of the Defence Ministry, are making a

considerable contribution to the socioeconomic development of Sevastopol, and the current plans envisage an increase in that contribution.

12 June 2008 The MFA says that Moscow is concerned about reports that the head of the UN mission in Kosovo (UNMIK), Joachim Ruecker, is taking steps to wind up the work of the mission. It states:

It is obvious that any actions regarding UNMIK or to change the format of the international presence in Kosovo is only possible based on a resolution of the United Nations Security Council. Leaders of the UN Secretariat know this well. As far as we know, Ruecker has not received any instructions from them.

12 June 2008 Russian envoy to the UN Vitaly Churkin says that uniting the efforts of the CSTO and the NATO-led International Security and Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan in order to resolve the problem of Afghan narcotics will have positive outcomes. He is speaking at a session of the UN Security Council on the results of the adoption of Resolution 1817.

12 June 2008 Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliev says that it is necessary to draw up common mechanisms to stop cyber-terrorists using the global information and telecommunications space. He is speaking at a meeting of G8 interior ministers in Japan.

13 June 2008 Defence Minister Anatoly Serdyukov attends a NATO-Russia Council meeting in Brussels. He says a misunderstanding remains between Russia and NATO with regard to CFE and US plans to deploy missile defence facilities in Eastern Europe. Serdyukov appeals to NATO to help resolve the issue of the transit of munitions from its westernmost exclave Kaliningrad Region through Latvia.

13 June 2008 Prosecutor-General Yury Chayka says that the cooperation between Russian and British law-enforcement agencies on the Aleksandr Litvinenko case is in "a frozen state".

13 June 2008 The chairman of the Federation Council's committee on international affairs, Mikhail Margelov, criticises the UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for permitting the reduction of the structure of the UN administration in Kosovo in favour of reinforcing the work of the EU mission in the region.

13 June 2008 The MFA demands that the Ukrainian side halt prospecting for oil and gas at several sites in the Black Sea because their status has not yet been defined.

14 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev congratulates the residents of Sevastopol on the 225th anniversary of the city's foundation.

Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov visits Sevastopol. He warns Ukraine against joining NATO:

I want ordinary people to understand that the consequences will inevitably arrive, unfortunately. As I have already said, a disruption, a complete disruption of ties between the Russian and Ukrainian military and industrial complexes is inevitable. This is inevitable. This is a fact we may soon be facing. I cannot say who will suffer most from this disruption. I am absolutely confident though that it will be painful for the nations of both Russia and Ukraine.

Apart from this, a reduction of our trade and economic ties is inevitable not

A Russian Chronology: April – June 2008 Foreign Policy
only in the defence and military complex, but in industry on the whole.

Consequence number two - in my opinion - is far more grave. If Ukraine joins NATO, it is inevitable, or almost inevitable that sooner or later a visa regime will be introduced between Russia and Ukraine. It is not because evil and cursed moskals [a pejorative name for Muscovites in Ukrainian] have come with this idea, but because NATO will make Ukraine introduce a visa regime with Russia and only after this Russia will be compelled to respond accordingly.

Ivanov says that the naval base in Sevastopol is an inalienable part of Russia's BSF.

15 June 2008 The MOD rejects Georgian claims that Russian troops are allegedly setting up a military base with heavy combat weaponry and air defence systems near the village of Agubediya in Ochamchira District of Abkhazia.

15 June 2008 First Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Russia fully supports the proposals by the Group of Six (Russia, the USA, China, the UK, France, Germany) on the Iranian nuclear issue. He says the meetings of political directors of the Group of Six in Tehran were constructive.

16 June 2008 The MFA condemns the coming into force of the constitution of Kosovo. It sees it as a violation of the relevant UN Security Council resolution and norms of international law.

16 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev has talks in Moscow with the president of the World Bank Robert Zoellick.

16 June 2008 The chief of the Armed Forces' tactical air defence, Colonel-General Nikolay Frolov, is in China as leader of a Russian military delegation on a visit to last until June 19.

Lt-Gen S Vodopyanov, first deputy chief of the Engineering Troops, heads a military delegation of the Russian Engineering Troops to Germany.

16 June 2008 Mikhail Fridman, the Russian chairman of the board of TNK-BP, criticises the British co-owners of TNK-BP for lack of progress in talks over selling shares.

17 June 2008 The MOD confirms that four Russian peacekeepers in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone have been detained by Georgian law enforcement agencies.

The MFA warns Georgia against proposing consultations before 30 July to revise a format and mandate of the Joint Peacekeeping Forces. The MFA warns that the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from Abkhazia will provoke the escalation of the conflict between Georgia and Abkhazia.

17 June 2008 The MFA criticises the Ukrainian government for reducing the use of Russian as the language of instruction in Ukrainian schools.

17 June 2008 Aleksandr Babakov, the first secretary of the central council of Spravedlivaya Rossiya, and Vladimir Zhirinovskiy, leader of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, warn against Ukraine joining NATO. They warn this could have economic consequences for Ukraine and lead to a visa regime with Russia.

17 June 2008 Gazprom head Aleksey Miller says that Gazprom has not made, and

has not received, any proposals to buy shares in TNK-BP.

17 June 2008 Russia's permanent representative to the UN Vitaly Churkin expresses concern that the US-Iraqi Status of Forces Agreement may provide a basis for the indefinite presence of foreign troops in Iraq and calls for working on a schedule for their withdrawal.

It is important that the planned US-Iraqi Status of Forces Agreement does not become a tool to reinforce the indefinite presence of international troops in Iraq. Otherwise, we have every chance to become witnesses of an even deeper split in Iraq's society, escalating tensions within domestic policy and the growth of negative trends in the security sector.

17 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev issues a decree stating that former Soviet citizens who have the status of non-citizens or aliens in Latvia and Estonia will be able to travel to Russia without visas. This norm will affect about half a million people. In Estonia, the number of Russian-speaking people without citizenship is estimated at about 115,000 people and in Latvia at about 400,000.

17 June 2008 Armenian and Russian Defence Ministers Seyran Ohanyan and Anatoly Serdyukov discuss issues of regional security and stability and reforms in the defence spheres of the two countries at a meeting in Moscow.

17 June 2008 Navy Commander-in-Chief Admiral Vladimir Vystosky visits Turkey. They discuss Black Sea naval cooperation.

18 June 2008 Gazprom Deputy Chairman Aleksandr Medvedev says the building of a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan to China does not create any threat for the implementation of the project on Russian gas deliveries to China.

18 June 2008 The British Council Moscow office confirms it will appeal against back-tax claims by the Russian authorities.

18 June 2008 The MFA states it has no information confirming that negotiations between the USA and Lithuania about deploying US missile defence facilities on Lithuanian territory are under way in case the talks between Washington and Warsaw on this issue fail. Polish Deputy Foreign Minister Witold Waszczykowski has said that the USA is holding talks with Lithuania about the possible deployment in Lithuania if the talks with Warsaw are unsuccessful.

18 June 2008 The four Russian peacekeepers detained in Georgia's western Zugdidi District are released. The MOD insists that the vehicle and ammunition of the peacekeepers seized by the Georgian side in the Georgian-Abkhazian conflict zone be returned.

Dmitry Medvedev has a telephone conversation with Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili. Medvedev says provocations against Russian peacekeepers in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict area are unacceptable.

18 June 2008 The MFA issues a statement condemning the passing of amendments to a Lithuanian law regarding the use of Soviet symbols at public events as an attempt to distort history.

18 June 2008 The MFA and the UN are coordinating a plan to send a Russian helicopter group to take part in a peacekeeping operation in Chad.

18 June 2008 Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere speaks on

Norwegian-Russian relations in a speech at the Norwegian Institute of International Affairs.

18 June 2008 The head of Rosoboronexport's department for analysis and planning, Sergey Svechnikov, says that over the past two years or so Rosoboronexport has signed contracts worth more than \$60 million to supply foreign customers with technical training means in the ground troops hardware category.

18 June 2008 Russian permanent representative to NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, sharply criticizes the leadership of Ukraine for its intention to join NATO. He is interviewed on Vesti TV.

18 June 2008 Sergey Baghapsh, president of the Republic of Abkhazia, is interviewed in *Utro*. He says Abkhazia is oriented towards Russia.

19 June 2008 Lt-Gen Aleksandr Burutin, first deputy chief of General Staff warns that the self-control of the Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia is not endless and they could use force. Peacekeepers carry out combat shooting exercises in the Kodori Gorge.

19 June 2008 King Juan Carlos of Spain visits Moscow for talks with Dmitry Medvedev.

19 June 2008 Major-General Viktor Bondarev is appointed commander of the Siberian Large Strategic Formation of Air and Air Defence Forces.

19 June 2008 Senator Valentin Mezhevich (first deputy chair of the Federation Council's Committee on Natural Monopolies) says he is hopeful that a nuclear agreement between Russian state nuclear corporation Rosatom and the USA will go ahead despite a decision by a US Senate committee to place a veto on the deal because of Russia's cooperation with Iran.

20 June 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak meets US Under Secretary for Political Affairs William Burns in Moscow. Kislyak says that US-Russian relations are better than they are usually portrayed.

20 June 2008 Sergey Lavrov there was more trust and respect in Russian-US relations during the Cold War era than there is now. He states:

Unfortunately, afterwards [the presidency of John F Kennedy] the pendulum of the philosophy of foreign policy swung towards politics based on instincts and ideological superstitions. And now it is important to find an answer to the question when this pendulum will swing in the opposite direction. It will influence what kind of world, what kind of America in this world we will all have to deal with.

Russian-American relations would benefit greatly if mutual trust and mutual respect were established there, the atmosphere which has been typical of the dialogue on the presidential level over these eight years, but has not always revealed itself on lower levels. It is paradoxical, but there was more mutual trust and mutual respect on the interstate level during the Cold War. Perhaps because there was less preaching about what one had to be like and how one had to behave. There was a desire and a necessity to deal with issues which were of real importance for the two countries and the whole world.

He states the following on Russia-US-EU relations:

The point is that Europe does not any longer need any external balances now, be it Russia, the USA or anybody else. And we understand this very well. That is why we speak, in a decisive and consistent manner, in favour of equal relations in the three-way format between Russia, the European Union and the United States of America.

Lavrov says there has been no progress regarding the issue of missile defence facilities in Europe in the talks between Russia and the USA. He says Russia has no information about talks between the USA and Lithuania regarding the issue of deploying elements of the missile defence system.

Lavrov says that the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence, US plans to deploy missile defence facilities in Eastern Europe and the expansion of NATO to the East are projects that should be "frozen" and reconsidered. He is speaking at the international conference "Russia in the 21st Century" in Moscow.

Sergey Lavrov says that the system of global financial and social architecture should be changed.

It is important to understand the following: firstly, there is no reasonable alternative to the global political architecture based on the United Nations Organization and the supremacy of international law. Let us not forget that the UN was established with the view to a multipolar international system even before the start of the Cold War. This means that its potential can only be fully realized now.

Secondly, the global financial and social architecture, on the other hand, was created to a large extent by the West to suit its own interests. And now, when one is witnessing a shift of financial and economic power and influence towards the new fast-growing economies, including the BRIC countries, which nobody can deny, it becomes obvious that the system does not suit the new realities. And, in essence, we need a financial and economic basis which would correspond to the polycentricity of the modern world. Otherwise, it will be very hard to restore the manageability of global development.

Lavrov says that Iran and Iraq should be included in the settlement process of the main international conflicts and not isolated from that process. He also says that Hamas, Hezbollah should take part in the Middle East settlement processes. Lavrov says it is completely incorrect to say that Iran is continuing to develop a nuclear weapon.

20 June 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says that Russia confirms its intention to continue cooperation with Iran over the Bushehr nuclear power station.

20 June 2008 Vitaly Churkin, Russia's permanent representative at the UN, says that the UN Secretary-General should refrain from unilateral actions regarding the reconfiguration of UNMIK without the consent of the UN Security Council. In his report to the Security Council UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-Moon has proposed that a EU mission should take over some of UNMIK's functions.

20 June 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin says Russia and Moldova will continue searching for a way to resolve the problem of the Dniester region, in order to find a solution that is acceptable for all sides. He has had talks with Moldovan Prime Minister Zinaida Greciani at his Novo-Ogarevo residence. Putin says that

there are no insurmountable problems in Russian-Moldovan relations. In 2007 trade turnover was \$1 billion.

20 June 2008 Rosatom deputy chief Nikolay Spassky says Rosatom and the EU are working out an agreement for peaceful atomic cooperation. The talks are currently unofficial.

20 June 2008 Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliev and the chief of the Armenian police, Alik Sargsyan, sign a cooperation agreement in Yerevan.

20 June 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Sergey Kislyak says Russia may increase supplies of military hardware to Afghanistan:

We have delivered hardware to Afghanistan in the past. Now we can sense that in some way the Afghan population and the government needs to take the question of ensuring security into their own hands. This is why we are studying all existing needs and possibilities to continue assisting Afghanistan.

21 June 2008 The MFA states that proposals by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon regarding the reconfiguration of the UN Mission in Kosovo represent a considerable revision of the UNMIK's mandate. The MFA says the proposals exceed the powers given in 1999 by the UN Security Council to the UN secretary-general to ensure international civilian presence in Kosovo.

22 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev and the president of Belarus, Alyaksandr Lukashenka, sign a declaration in Brest in which they condemn any attempts to rewrite history and revise the outcome of World War 2.

23 June 2008 Russian permanent envoy to the EU Vladimir Chizhov says that Russia is not opposed to the EU taking on part of the responsibility in Kosovo as the UN secretary-general has proposed, but the presence of an EU mission in Kosovo must be made official by a UN Security Council resolution to that effect.

Chizhov says that Russia is ready to discuss the possibility of more active EU involvement in resolving frozen conflicts within the territory of the CIS. Chizhov also says that Russia is ready to discuss its bilateral relations with Georgia with representatives of the EU at the summit in Khanty-Mansiysk on 26-27 June.

23 June 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin says Russia is prepared to consider increasing the rent paid for basing its BSF in the Crimea after 2017. The rent is currently around \$98 million a year.

23 June 2008 Konstantin Kosachev, head of the Russian delegation at the PACE and chairman of the Duma international affairs committee, says he is not expecting a breakthrough in Russian-Georgian relations any time soon. He also says that the public discussion of the idea of deploying US ABM facilities in Lithuania cannot but cause concern in Russia.

23 June 2008 Gazprom head Aleksey Miller and Israel's Minister of National Infrastructure Benjamin Ben-Eliezer have talks. Gazprom is considering the possibility of supplying Russian gas to Israel.

23 June 2008 Moscow State Institute of International Relations holds a conference entitled Russia and the Islamic World in Moscow.

24 June 2008 The presidential representative for international cooperation in the

struggle against terrorism and organized crime, Anatoly Safonov, says the use of components of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists is a matter of time:

At the recent consultations with the American side, our partners mentioned the financial part of this matter. At present, many say that the matter of the use of component of weapons of mass destruction has gone from the 'if' plane into the 'when' plane. There is the threat, and we should combat it...

Terrorism has come to a new point, so-called sword and word jihad. Attention should be concentrated on what is happening in the virtual space. The recent events in Lebanon have shown that attention is concentrated on the information world, as a military component has no influence in it. He who wins the virtual space wins the ideological space in which we live.

24 June 2008 Aleksandr Medvedev, deputy chairman of the Gazprom Management Committee, says that eastward expansion is essential for Gazprom to become a global energy corporation. He states:

It is no secret that recent trends regarding prices for oil and petrochemical and oil products result from the demand of such countries as China, India and Korea...In the next 10 years we are planning to enter all markets in the Asia-Pacific region, first of all, the Japanese, Chinese and South Korean markets and in future the markets of such countries as India, Thailand and others.

24 June 2008 Lukoil Vice President Leonid Fedun says that it has purchased a 49 per cent stake in an oil processing facility on Sicily. Lukoil may acquire complete control of the facility in five years.

24 June 2008 Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan visits Moscow for talks with Dmitry Medvedev. They discuss bilateral relations, cooperation within the CSTO and Nagorny Karabakh.

Dmitry Medvedev says that Russia and Armenia have agreed to further promote industrial and economic cooperation. He says Russia is the main investor in the Armenian economy. The accrued volume of capital investment already exceeds \$1.2 billion.

24 June 2008 Sergey Lavrov attends the Berlin Conference in Support of Palestinian Civil Security and Rule of Law. He discusses Russian support for Palestinian security and law-enforcement agencies. So far Russia has given \$40 billion in support of various law enforcement and security projects. He states:

Both Palestinians and Israelis should do everything in their power not to miss a chance that they have now to achieve political settlement. Continuing terrorist attacks and firing missiles at Israeli towns is unacceptable. We should not put up with a disproportionate use of force, which leads to the death of innocent Palestinians, with increasing settlement activity on the Palestinian territories and the blockade of the Gaza Strip. We welcome the truce which was achieved a few days ago and hope it will be a stable one.

Lavrov says that the Moscow conference on the Middle East will be dedicated to giving a most powerful stimulus to Israel and the Palestinians to complete their talks as soon as possible. He says that by September 2008 there should be final clarity as to the time frame for holding the conference.

The Emergencies Ministry sends 30 tonnes of humanitarian aid to the Gaza strip.

24 June 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez discuss the Russo-Venezuelan bilateral relationship and Hugo Chavez's possible visit to Moscow.

24 June 2008 The commander of the Joint Peacekeeping Force in the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zone, Major-General Sergey Chaban, says Russian peacekeepers in Abkhazia have taken steps to counteract possible acts of provocation from the Georgian side.

24 June 2008 CSTO secretary-general Nikolay Bordyuzha visits Bishkek. He makes the following comment on NATO widening:

It is not just an expansion. It is an attempt to create new military facilities along the western borders of CSTO member countries...A military infrastructure is being created around the CSTO. These are not companies of a national economy that bring profit, but military facilities; they pose threats and may be used in some situation. Naturally, we cannot ignore this fact.

24 June 2008 Deputy Foreign Minister Vladimir Titov has talks in Warsaw. He meets Foreign Minister of Poland Radoslaw Sikorski. They discuss US missile defence plans.

25 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev calls for a new collective security system to address current international threats. He states:

International security problems facing the world community are different from those 40, or even 20 years ago. And they cannot be solved through primitive bloc policies. In this respect, we have been consistently advocating the setting up of a collective security system. A recently proposed idea to draw up a new, legally binding European security agreement is in the same vein.

25 June 2008 Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov says the nuclear sector of Russia is open for cooperation with Russian and foreign private investors. He is speaking at the opening of the 1st International Exhibition and Congress on Nuclear Technologies, Atomcon 2008. Ivanov also says that Russia is planning to build 26 new nuclear power plant units by 2020.

25 June 2008 Presidential aide Sergey Prikhodko says that for the first time in history, a Russia-EU summit will discuss cooperation between Moscow and European countries in overcoming global economic challenges. He says Moscow hopes that the Russia-EU summit in Khanty-Mansiysk on 26-27 June will come up with ideas to overcome the food crisis, rising oil prices and climate changes. Prikhodko says that the forthcoming Russia-EU summit will discuss the idea of a European Security Treaty.

25 June 2008 Deputy speaker of the Duma from the Spravedlivaya Rossiya faction Aleksandr Babakov describes as biased the criticism of Russia in the PACE resolution on the state of democracy in European countries.

25 June 2008 Head of Rosatom Sergey Kiriyenko describes Ukraine's decision to buy nuclear fuel in the USA at a higher price than in Russia as political.

Deputy Prime Minister Sergey Ivanov criticizes the US Congress over a refusal by some congressmen to ratify the Russian-US nuclear agreement. The document was signed in Moscow on 6 May between the governments and is designed to simplify business contacts in the nuclear sphere. Some US Congressmen are holding up

ratification until all questions about Russian-Iranian nuclear cooperation are answered.

25 June 2008 Rosoboronexport states that the annual volume of military-technical cooperation between Rosoboronexport and European companies has reached \$120 million.

25 June 2008 Russian permanent representative at NATO, Dmitry Rogozin, has proposed that one of the sessions of the Russia-NATO Council at ambassadorial level be held closer to Afghanistan. He states:

The souls of my colleagues, the ambassadors of NATO member states, could not but have been wounded by information that, despite great military, economic and financial efforts, political costs and overheads, the problem of the West's exit from the situation in Afghanistan remains and is bigger than before... We are ready to continue helping because if NATO admits defeat in the future, which is a likely outcome, this may lead to a strengthened enemy (Islamic extremists), emboldened by success, standing on the threshold of our home.

Zamir Kabulov, Russian ambassador to Kabul, says that the area of Taleban influence in Afghanistan is steadily growing. He is attending a regular NATO-Russia Council session at the ambassadorial level. He says the Taleban influence more than 50 per cent of Afghanistan's territory; they control up to 20 per cent of it.

26 June 2008 Atomenergoprom states that Russia has fully completed the delivery of nuclear fuel for the first loading of the Kudankulam nuclear power station in India.

26 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev meets the head of Abkhazia, Sergey Bagapsh. They discuss ways of resolving the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict and the need to stick to the 1994 Moscow agreement regarding the ceasefire and disengaging the opposing forces.

26 June 2008 The MFA welcomes the fact that North Korea has handed China a declaration about its nuclear issue, and is expecting to receive the contents of the documents before the six-party talks in Beijing.

26 June 2008 The European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg upholds a lawsuit by Chechens who accused the Russian authorities of being involved in the disappearance of their relatives in 2001, and ruled that the Russian Federation should pay them 112,000 euros. Three residents of Chechnya had approached the highest European court because they believed that Russian bodies of justice did not properly investigate the disappearance of their relatives Zelimkhan Umkhanov and Apti Isigov. The plaintiffs claim that Umkhanov and Isigov, together with other residents of the Chechen village of Sernovodsk, were taken from their houses by Russian servicemen during an identity check on 2 July 2001.

26 June 2008 Mikhail Margelov, deputy speaker of PACE and chairman of the Federation Council International Affairs Committee, says that the assembly's criticism of Russia regarding the state of democracy is well-balanced and was not voiced more often than that of other states.

26 June 2008 The Duma foreign affairs committee approves a draft version of its statement "On the actions of the Lithuanian authorities aimed at a deterioration in Russia-Lithuania relations". The document is being sent for expert analysis by the Duma legal directorate, and afterwards it will be submitted for consideration by the

Duma's council on 1 July and considered at the plenary session on 2 July.

26 June 2008 Venezuelan Vice-President Ramon Carrizales visits Moscow. He says Venezuela is ready to buy from Russia all the necessary weapons to ensure its security. Carrizales has talks with Vladimir Putin.

26 June 2008 A delegation of the Indian Armed Forces led by Chief of Army Staff Army General Deepak Kapoor completes a fact-finding visit to the Leningrad Military District. They also visit the North Caucasian Military District.

26 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev replies to a letter from President of Afghanistan Hamid Karzai. He states:

We are ready to help and support the people of Afghanistan in this difficult hour without asking for anything in return. In particular, I can inform you that in response to Afghanistan's request, I have instructed the Russian Government to organise the rapid delivery of 15,000 tonnes of wheat as humanitarian aid. Furthermore, Russia will contribute \$4 million in 2008-2009 to a multilateral trust fund for the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

I fully agree with you that international terrorism is a serious threat to our countries today, and the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan carries a heavy burden in the fight against this evil. This makes it all the more imperative to make Afghanistan's national armed forces combat ready and able to take on full responsibility for the country's security. You can count on Russia's cooperation and support in this work.

26 June 2008 Duma defence committee chairman Viktor Zavarzin says the integration of more East European countries into NATO requires relevant changes to the law governing the Russian grouping of forces in the Kaliningrad Region.

26 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev signs a law on the ratification of an agreement with Tajikistan on the joint planning of the use of troops. The agreement was signed on 23 November 2006.

27 June 2008 A Russia-EU summit takes place in Khanty-Mansiysk. Dmitry Medvedev attends. The summit discusses a new Russia-EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement. The first round of talks will begin on 4 July. Energy cooperation is also discussed, including the Nord Stream project. Medvedev also says that issues related to European security should be discussed at a pan-European level rather than bilaterally. He states:

This led to the idea, the idea about first holding - of course, after serious preparations - a summit in which the European states, the USA and Canada, as well as the European structures that already deal with such issues, would participate, based on one's own, not bloc, conceptions of European security, based on the principles that unite us.

Sergey Lavrov says that the 21st Russia-EU summit went generally well. He makes the following comment at on European security:

We explained our idea of European security, which is based on the principle of territorial integrity, inviolability of the borders, non-use of force in international relations and the right of states to individual security in the Euro-Atlantic space, which presupposes not ensuring security of one country at the expense of others...These are the principles that lay also at the foundation of the

Council of Europe but they are also subjected to tests in the light of recent events.

We think that it is important for all of us together to decide whether they [the principles] are still important and if so, what measures it is necessary to take to put these principles into practice? All countries of the EU, as well as the USA, Canada and other organizations, which are active in the Euro-Atlantic space, must get together and look at how the existing problems could be resolved.

Lavrov says that Moscow has no objections to the EU playing a more active role in solving the frozen conflicts in the post-Soviet space.

Lavrov says that Russia is not seeking to ignore or weaken NATO by its proposals for a new treaty on European security:

Regarding NATO expansion and the view that our proposals for a new security treaty and a European summit are somehow aimed at stopping that process (NATO expansion), we are not planning to ignore NATO. NATO is a very important player in the Euro-Atlantic space...Nor are we planning to weaken NATO; that would be absolutely counterproductive for a whole range of areas where we have common interests, for example, in Afghanistan.

Lavrov says that cooperation in the area of food security was discussed at the summit, and the EU believes Russia can help with resolving the issue:

They put it frankly: they link significant hopes for a solution to the food security problem to Russia, and to the prospect of a further increase of food production in our country...Our approaches coincide, and there is an understanding that Russia and the EU can not only exchange views, but also cooperate closely. At the same time, the significance of the role which Russia plays and could play even more in resolving this issue was underlined.

27 June 2008 The MFA welcomes the demolition of the cooling tower at the Yongbyon nuclear centre in North Korea. It states that this proves that Pyongyang has serious intentions to fulfil the obligations towards the participants of the six-party talks on the North Korean nuclear problem.

27 June 2008 Sergey Lavrov says that reports that Russia allegedly supports some new proposals from Georgia to settle the situation in Abkhazia are a blatant lie.

27 June 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin says the 2009 budget of the Union State of Russia and Belarus should be formed on new principles. He has talks in Moscow with his Belarusian counterpart Syarhey Sidorski.

27 June 2008 First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov says that on the whole, Russia welcomes the idea of expanding the G8, but it believes there is so far insufficient support for this.

27 June 2008 The MFA says that the transformation of the Office of the High Representative in Bosnia-Herzegovina should be carried out in a consistent manner and responsibility for the future of the country should be handed over to the Bosnians themselves. The MFA is commenting on the results of the meeting of the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

27 June 2008 Sergey Lavrov says that Russia will only join the WTO if the conditions are fair: "When the EU says that we could join the WTO in 15 minutes,

A Russian Chronology: April – June 2008 Foreign Policy
they probably mean that to do so we should meet all their demands."

28 June 2008 Prime Minister Vladimir Putin has talks with Ukrainian Prime Minister Yuliya Tymoshenko. They discuss economic cooperation, energy relations, NATO and the BSF. Putin warns of the consequences if Ukraine joins NATO:

We consider any expansion of the North Atlantic alliance to be counterproductive from the point of view of how to ensure international security, because no new threats are dealt with through this expansion. On the contrary, all it does is create new divisions. Let me repeat, however, that in any event it is the choice of those countries that declare their membership of this or that politico-military bloc, joining which undoubtedly limits the sovereignty of this or that state. That, however, is the conscious choice a country makes.

As for the military-industrial complex, we all know, there is no secret about that, that the military-industrial complex of any NATO nation is geared towards arms production to NATO's standards. I am sure that many plants in Ukraine's military-industrial complex will be unable to function to those standards at all, regardless of our relations with Ukraine. As to our cooperation, we ourselves make some types of arms to NATO's standards, and our plants are on the world market of these types of arms and specialized hardware. In that sense, we probably will be able to continue some kind of cooperation. As to sensitive technologies, such as first and foremost high-tech production, missile technology and some other types of modern arms, we will of course in advance think about how to relocate these types of production in that case, whatever the cost is, to the territory of the Russian Federation.

28 June 2008 Dmitry Medvedev meets Finnish President Tarja Halonen at the 5th World Congress of Finno-Ugric peoples in Khanty-Mansiysk. Medvedev also meets Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves.

Chairman of the Duma International Affairs Committee Konstantin Kosachev gives a speech at the Congress fiercely critical of Estonia. The Estonian leadership walks out of the speech.

28 June 2008 A meeting of the Council of CIS Interior Ministers takes place in Batumi, Georgia. Interior Minister Rashid Nurgaliev says that Russia has 100 criminal godfathers.

30 June 2008 Spravedlivaya Rossiya is granted observer status at the Socialist International.

30 June 2008 US Secretary of the Treasury Henry Paulson visits Moscow for talks with the Russian leadership. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin says during his talks that Russia is prepared to create a sovereign wealth fund for state investment abroad. The current volume of investment between the USA and Russia is not very big yet. The figure is about the same for both sides - 8bn dollars.

30 June 2008 The MFA expresses concern about explosions in Abkhazia. On 29 June, in the area of the market in Gagra, two explosions went off. Two explosions went off today in the area of Sukhumi's central market.

Disclaimer

The views expressed in this paper are entirely and solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect official thinking and policy either of Her Majesty's Government or of the Ministry of Defence.

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