






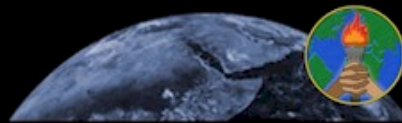
Consolidated weekly report

CHALLENGER: Russia

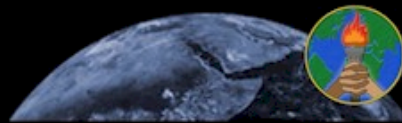
Focus article coming soon

Hazard Level	Change Codes
	↓ Deteriorated
	• Steady
	↑ Improved
	↗ Alert
	

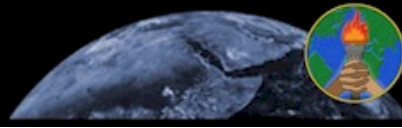
week-ended	See daily list of news items
2007 Jul 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The capacity of the <i>Angarsk uranium enrichment</i> plant in Russia may be quadrupled by 2015 -- more detail on the facility: Enrichment capacity at Angarsk to be boosted.
2007 Jun 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President Putin and Malaysian Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi have called for expansion of the UN Security Council and reform of the methods under which it functions -- Putin, Badawi want to enlarge UN Security Council.
2007 Jun 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Symbolically significant, President Putin has honored Alexander Solzhenitsyn for his links to "<i>the destiny of Russia</i>". Although President Putin is constitutionally unable to run again for <i>President</i>, his career is unlikely to be over; "<i>what he's proposing to do is walk out of the Kremlin and remain a very influential guy</i>" -- Putin may run Russia from the sidelines. President Putin's suggestion of a <u>joint</u> "missile shield" with the US is said to have caused some <i>shock and awe</i> in the US delegation; "<i>if Washington chooses to reject Moscow's proposal to share Azerbaijan's Gabala radar base, it will have to come with a good reason</i>" -- Radar diplomacy. <u>Also see:</u> Le Figaro Antimissile Shield: Vladimir Putin's poker move.
2007 Jun 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "<i>Russia's missile center in the Urals is under investigation for alleged failure to declare sensitive technical documents sent to Brazil ...</i>" Following another non-event G8, President Putin's suggestion of an "alternative" WTO for <i>developing countries</i> and a wider range of <i>world currencies</i> is certain, at minimum, to be a strong bargaining position. At G8 President Putin makes a modest proposal -- a better "<i>missile shield</i>" as a joint venture that would "protect" all of Europe-- Putin Offers Azerbaijan Radar to U.S. New efficiencies such as <i>single-desk arms export</i> have succeeded so well that <i>foreign buyers</i> are receiving more new systems than the Russian <i>military</i> -- Putin is trying to reform Russia's military-industrial complex [Analysis].
2007 Jun 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> see also: Proliferation A <i>surplus</i>, record-low <i>national debt</i> (8.5% of GDP), 6%-7% <i>growth</i> are all real signs of a healthy economy -- The IMF gives Russian economy a clean bill of health. Russia tests new rocket to beat missile defenses -- "<i>The RS-24 intercontinental ballistic missile will strengthen the military potential of Russia's strategic rocket forces to overcome anti-missile defense systems ...</i>"
2007 May 27	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The UK says give us alleged <i>poisoner</i> Andrei Lugovoy; Russia says give us billionaire tax-evader in-exile Boris Berezovsky-- UK-Russia relations strained by Litvinenko. Russia's <i>fifth generation combat aircraft</i> is scheduled to fly by late 2008 -- "<i>the</i>



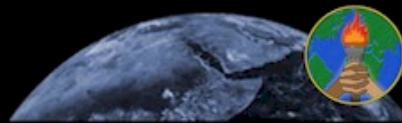
	<p>development of a new generation aircraft will certainly boost the authority and competitiveness of the Russian defense industry on global markets."</p>
2007 May 20	<p>• "The state-controlled energy giant Gazprom now has a stake in 16 of the EU's 27 countries" -- Moscow and EU battle for control in escalating energy war. Coinciding with an all-time low in diplomatic relations, Estonia accuses Russia of a 'cyberattack' -- "Estonia is a pioneer of 'e-government' and one of the most wired countries in Europe...".</p>
2007 May 13	<p>↑ During the <i>Victory over Fascism</i> remembrances, President Putin noted the world is today threatened by "the same disrespect for human life claims to global exclusiveness and diktat, just as it was in the Third Reich." Russia has updated its estimate of Soviet WWII losses to <u>8.9 million</u> – with or without the US the war in Europe would not have been won without the Red Army. President Putin's visit to Kazakhstan and other Central Asian centers was aimed "to strike a blow to Western energy interests in the ex-Soviet region" and seems to have ended in victory in the rivalry for access to the region's vast energy resources -- Russia to Control Gas Out of Central Asia.</p>
2007 May 06	<p>↓ Russia will supply over <u>\$2.2B</u> in weapons, mainly air defense systems, to Libya. One consequence of US missile shield plans in Europe, Russia's suspension of the <i>Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe</i>, means diminished transparency – Russia will stop sharing troop data with NATO. President Putin has called for improvement in Russia's port facilities -- Russia has 62 seaports but due to poor facilities most Russian cargo uses foreign ports.</p>
2007 Apr 29	<p>↓ Ethnic Russians rioted in Tallinn [Estonia] with at least one death on the removal of a war memorial; Russians see a memorial respecting the costly anti-fascist victory: Estonians see it as Russian imperialism. President Putin says US plans to deploy a "missile shield" in Poland and radars in the Czech Republic increases the risk of MAD "many times". "We do not understand what is happening in Europe now that requires such aggressive actions" says President Putin. To punctuate its disapproval, Russia <u>suspended</u> participation in the <i>Conventional Forces in Europe</i> (CFE) treaty. President Putin has expressed impatience with foreign 'interference' in Russian affairs -- "Not everyone likes the stable, gradual rise of our country...The flow of money from abroad used for direct interference in our affairs is growing." The US admitted it "has been rendering technical and financial assistance to support civil community groups and non-governmental organizations ..." Russia has proposed the <u>world's longest undersea tunnel</u> -- the proposed tunnel with a highway, railway, pipelines, and power lines will run under the Bering Strait and connect Russia directly to Alaska. Russia has said it will veto the UN Kosovo resolution as presently formulated -- Kosovo is confident it will become independent in <u>May 2007</u>; Russia says that is unlikely. India accounts for about 40% of Russian arms exports. Russia is striving to increase its world share of uranium enrichment which presently stands at <u>40%</u>.</p>
2007 Apr 22	<p>• Rightist parties, in a show of unaccustomed unity, have agreed on a single candidate in an attempt to make gains against the Putin dynasty. [Kosovo is a political tug-of-war between Russian and NATO ...] In Kosovo, the unintended death of two Albanian protestors from UN rubber bullets which had time-expired in 1994 [and hence unsafe] will not assist resolution of the issue. IATA has rated Russia [who brought the world no-frills flying] as the most dangerous place for air travel.</p>



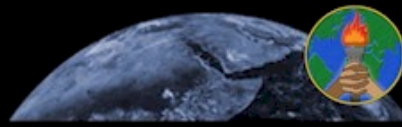
2007 Apr 15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In <i>Chechnya</i>, almost 140 <i>militants</i> have been detained since January 2007 -- pro-Kremlin Chechen President Ramzan Kadyrov, a one-time warlord, says all illegal armed groups will be eliminated within two months. Secretary of State Rice has “warned” Russia against helping <i>separatists</i> in Georgia. [Conversely, it is bad if Russia opposes separatists in <i>Kosovo</i>.] Russia sees the Ukraine joining NATO as a strategic challenge-- Bush Signs NATO Bill. Police and OMON special forces broke up an unauthorized <i>rally</i> before it began. A second day of protests without a permit was also broken up. Elsewhere in Moscow there was also an authorized pro-government rally said to number 15,000. Russia’s <i>working population</i> is dying out -- the Russian population has been <u>falling</u> since 2006, bringing a future <i>aged care</i> burden as in the West, but more so. Billionaire tax-evader in-exile Boris Berezovsky says he is plotting new Russian “revolution” -- “<i>we need to use force to change this regime</i>”.
2007 Apr 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]
2007 Apr 01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Russia’s <i>Central Election Commission</i> has become a <i>security agency</i> and will have the added function of preventing “<i>undesirable parties</i>” from taking part in elections. An update on Russia’s continuing <i>Chechen</i> adventure -- In the front line of Putin’s secret war. The testing of <i>Angara</i> launch vehicles (the <i>Baiterek</i> project) at Baikonur space center in Kazakhstan has been delayed. Russia reconfirms that <i>land forces</i> are the core of its armed forces -- “<i>Russian Land Forces are deployed in all six military districts of the country and, according to some estimates, about 400,000 personnel are enlisted.</i>” Russia, borrowing terminology from others, says it is <i>a force for good</i> in the world -- “<i>New-found political stability at home under President Vladimir Putin and high energy prices have given Russia the confidence to assert itself abroad.</i>” Russian <i>arms exports</i> grew 50% 2001-2006 -- major importers are China, India, Algeria, Venezuela, Iran, Malaysia and Serbia. Russia’s destruction of <i>chemical weapons</i> is presently on schedule – it has so far destroyed 7,000 tonne, 17.5% of total declared quantity of 40,000 tonne.
2007 Mar 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A useful survey of Russian <i>arms dealing</i> with seven <i>Latin-American</i> countries -- The Russian Arms Merchant raps on Latin America’s Door. The US wishes to send a delegation to Russia’s <i>North Caucasus</i> Republic of <i>Chechnya</i> to learn from Russian <i>antiterrorism</i> experience.
2007 Mar 19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The US is said to “alarmed” that Russia is treating its <i>energy</i> as strategic resources and is maximizing revenue from them. The Jamestown Foundation says Russia is gaining ground in reasserting influence in <i>Central Asia</i> -- Russia Reclaiming Central Asia as Sphere of Influence.
2007 Mar 12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> [nothing significant to summarize but see links to stories in this topical area]
2007 Mar 05	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Moscow’s</i> mayor Yury Luzhkov has started a move to close many of the 2,000 <i>gaming halls and casinos</i> that were opened in Moscow in recent years; some will be converted to <i>public libraries</i>. Russian <i>weapon exports</i> have grown from \$6.5B in 2006 \$8B in 2007.
2007 Feb 26	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓ Russia is highly peeved at US unilateral plans to install <i>missiles</i> on the Russian border -- “<i>Imbalances that have emerged ... are going over the top in terms of a sensible equilibrium.</i>” [Nobody say “Cuban missile crisis”.] Sergei Ivanov has been installed as one of four <i>first deputy prime ministers</i> and given responsibilities for <i>defense</i> and other leading policy areas – the appointment indicates Ivanov is Putin’s preference as his <i>successor</i>. Elsewhere Ivanov says Russia will now make “state-of-the-art <i>precision-guided weapons</i>” a major priority”



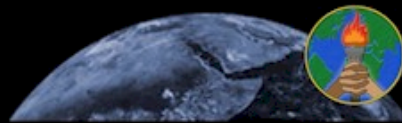
- 2007 Feb 19 ↓ Russian authorities report that 120 “*bandits*” and “*international terrorists*” were killed or arrested during 2006. A *bombing* at a *McDonald’s* in *St. Petersburg* is a puzzle – because it’s a *McDonald’s* and because it’s *St. Petersburg*. President **Putin** has appointed *Defense Minister* Sergei **Ivanov** as *Deputy Premier*, a move seen to position Ivanov well to succeed Putin whom can not stand for another term as President. [Like Putin, Ivanov has had a long career with the KGB/FSB.] Moscow again warns against **EU** and the **US** against promoting *Kosovo* independence -- Russia threatens to make **Serbia’s** *Kosovo* a precedent for **Georgia’s** *Abkhazia* and *South Ossetia*, and **Moldova’s** *Transdnestr*. A Russian court ruled that pirating *Microsoft software* for a school’s computers is an offence but not worth a penalty. Russia says it may scrap the *arms control treaty* because of plans by the **US** to build a *missile shield* in *Eastern Europe*. President **Putin** says several off-hand remarks of late about a Russian *threat* and Russian “*instability*” is simply playing the “*anti-Russian card*” to raise *defense spending*, “*using the non-existent Russian threat to get more money from the US Congress for military operations*”; “*As far as predictability is concerned, I believe that Russia is as predictable as the United States.*”
- 2007 Feb 12 • President **Putin** has made the first *visit* by a Russian leader to **Saudi Arabia**. Moscow says it is ready for dialogue with **Japan** on the *Kurils* -- the four southern Kurils were not specifically mentioned in the 1951 *Treaty of San Francisco* and have been under *dispute* since then. Russia warns **EU** the keep its diplomatic hands off the dissident ex-Soviet regions *Moldova*, *Georgia* and *Azerbaijan*. *Unprocessed raw materials* rose from 80% in 2000 to 85% in 2005 – President **Putin** says this reliance on raw material exports trend should cease. The head of *LUKoil* insists Russia should aim to refine all *crude oil* on Russian soil -- “*...transition to the tougher Euro-5 car emissions standard by 2015 will require a \$5 billion investment in Russian refining facilities.*” Russia says it is willing to help the **US** stabilize **Afghanistan** -- “*We will of course never send our servicemen there, but everything else is open for discussion.*”
- 2007 Feb 05 • Interior Minister Adilgirei **Magomedtagirov** barely escaped *gunmen* and a *bomb* in *Dagestan*. Russia’s *domestic debt* is up 2.8% in January 2007 to \$40B -- *net borrowing* in 2007 will be 213.5 billion rubles (\$8.02B). Russia’s *military spending* in 2007 will be 23% higher than last year and account for 16% of overall budget expenditure. Russia looks to a new generation of relationships with *Latin American* countries -- high tech products and services to Latin America; raw materials, foodstuffs (and *Brazilian aircraft*) to Russia. Russia’s foreign minister says that the **US** is “difficult” to deal with -- “*too much potential for crisis has built up in addition to Iraq and Afghanistan.*” President **Putin** says that Russia will have an “effective” response to **US** missile plans; Russia already has *Topol-M*, but is also developing a “completely new system of *strategic weapons*.”
- 2007 Jan 29 ↑ *Far Right* groups have held rallies in Moscow and several other cities – the mix of *Communists* and *Nationalists* called for the elimination of prison sentences for the crime of inciting *ethnic hatred*: “*We have a right to hatred*” **Ukrainian** bailiffs have attempted to seize *radio beacon* facilities leased by the Russian *Black Sea Fleet* in the *Azov Sea-Black Sea* over a contractual disagreement. Russia again says that *Chechnya* rebels are holed up in **Georgia** -- “*We have information that a certain number of members of illegal armed groups are still present in the Pankisi Gorge.*” **Belarus** has for the moment rejected any chance of *union*



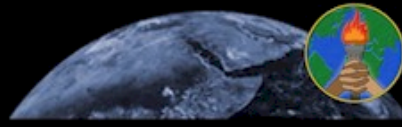
	<p>with Russia -- "<i>Relations between the two countries hit their lowest point when Belarus tried to impose a transit levy on Russian oil ...</i>"</p> <p>The OECD has raised Russia's risk rating from fourth rank to third rank [an improvement].</p> <p>Svobodny space center towards the Chinese border will be closed in 2007, leaving Baikonur in Kazakhstan, which will be phased out next, and Plesetsk in northwest Russia which will developed as the sole facility.</p>
<p>2007 Jan 22</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rump of Russian Communists hope to restore the glories of the former Soviet Union -- "<i>Without a union between Russia, Ukraine, Belarus and other brotherly republics ... we do not have a future.</i>" <p>Russia has outlined plans for a CIS regional air defense system which would serve as a "prototype for similar coalition military structures in the Caucasus and Central Asia."</p> <p>546 gunmen surrendered since amnesty was declared in Chechnya -- the Kremlin's offer of fair treatment for surrender was declared in July 2006 and expired on 15 January 2007. The success of the Chechen amnesty plan is contested -- "<i>The dueling statements highlighted the difficulties of precisely assessing the state of the insurgency in Chechnya.</i>"</p>
<p>2007 Jan 15</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia is sending detectives to the UK for their own investigation of the "spy poisoning" -- Alex Goldfarb, who runs (fugitive oligarch, alleged criminal) Berezovsky's Foundation for Civil Liberties in New York, says this is a stunt to deflect attention from Moscow. <p>Foreign Policy in Focus said "<i>Instead of a one-man dictatorship, the Kremlin administration more closely resembles a struggling, fractured corporation that at best is trying to become transparent....</i>". see Misreading Russia</p>
<p>2007 Jan 08</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Putin opponents say the BBC has been penetrated by FSB (KGB) agents.
<p>2007 Jan 01</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A German minister has said Russia has "no chance" of full G8 membership -- "<i>Russia's use of energy as a political tool has led to strong opposition in some countries, particularly the US, to making Russia a full G8 member.</i>" <p>Russian forces have left Georgia for the first time in 200 years.</p>
<p>2006 Dec 25</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia continues to cement trade and strategic ties with Brazil and Argentina -- "<i>both South American giants are interested in Russian participation in <u>great inter-regional plans</u>.</i>" Russian and Argentine special services cooperated to dismantle a Latin American cocaine criminal gang. Following weeks of US allusions to the strategic use of space, Russia says military use of space is possible -- "<i>We categorically oppose the deployment of any weapons in space, but this does not mean that space cannot be used in military purposes.</i>" Russia test-fired an ICBM -- "The RS-20V Voevoda, which NATO identifies as the SS-18 Satan, was fired from its silo in the Orenburg region of the southern Ural Mountains. President Putin sees a danger of its east (former Soviet Central Asia) fading away -- "<i>The Far East is poorly linked to the economic, information and transportation network of the rest of Russia.</i>" Russian experts warn that the country is now vulnerable to terrorist cyber-attack -- "<i>The country's infrastructure is becoming more networked and less isolated than before, which could make it more vulnerable to cyber-attacks.</i>"
<p>2006 Dec 18</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • President Putin gave a photo opportunity as he inspected Russia's latest truck deployable missiles -- "For the near future, Topol-M will have no rivals in the world." The Whodunit continues over who poisoned Litvinenko -- in an interview a KGB veteran said Litvinenko was a traitor but Russia is not killing ex-spies any more; "Professionals don't use polonium," he said. A German radiation expert doubts Russian involvement in the polonium poisoning -- "Secret agents are normally trained to kill without leaving any evidence. [But] they have practically bulldozed a



	<p>superhighway all the way to Moscow.." A survey revealed 78 % of Russian political elite come from the KGB-FSB – it is Russia's <i>Ivy League</i>.</p>
2006 Dec 11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> President Putin has again stressed the importance of Central Asia for much including <i>space</i> launches -- "Without any exaggeration, Kazakhstan is one of the leaders in the integration processes taking place in the post-Soviet space." Russia will create an international nuclear fuel cycle services center with the help of France.
2006 Dec 04	<p>↓ Georgia, already a member of WTO, threatens to block Russia's membership unless customs arrangements [and other relations] with Russia improve.</p> <p>A leading Russian critic of Putin's regime, a defector who was FSB station chief in London, is poisoned in London.</p> <p>Russian oil wells are blown up in Chechnya, but it is uncertain whether it is the work of Chechen rebels or organized crime.</p> <p>President Putin has announced the intention to develop strategic deterrence that can "destroy any potential aggressor whatever updated systems of weapons he has".</p> <p><i>Countercurrents.org</i> published an intelligent discussion by an Indian diplomat on the likely implications of the <i>mid-term elections</i> on US-Russian relations.</p> <p>Russia has 14 GLONASS GPS satellites, will launch another 3 during 2006, and will have 24 by the end of 2009.</p>
2006 Nov 27	<p>↓ A meeting of the CIS council prepared for the CIS Summit in Minsk on November 28 2006. Georgia's Speaker says Georgia has no reason to stay in the CIS -- a final decision may be taken after the upcoming Summit.</p> <p>Numerous reports tracked the death by poison of former FSB officer Litvinenko.</p> <p>Russia will increase military spending by 30%, to \$27.5B. The Interior Minister says over 880 terrorist plots were foiled in Russia this year.</p>
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2006 Nov 13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A vote that the West says is unlawful confirms South Ossetia's wish for secession from Georgia to join Russia. <p>Russia is moving closer to admission to WTO membership -- "It took 12 years of negotiations to get to this point, and details are still being nailed down. "</p> <p>Some analysts said that the failure of a recent Russian missile test increases fears of a nuclear 'hair-trigger' until Russia can feel 'safe'. [Item includes a good back-grounder on Russian strategic nuclear status.]</p> <p>UN sanctions against DPRK has interrupted a Russian project that would supply a joint north-south Korean electricity grid.</p>
2006 Nov 06	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> As a taste of the energy diplomacy to come throughout the world, following a diplomatic fight, Russia has doubled the price of gas it sells to Georgia. <p>Russia's core sectors are showing record growth at 5.7% , and debt is down to \$50B. Three disparate parties have formed a coalition as a nominal opposition, but a real merger of three very different political forces in the regions will be a challenge.</p>
2006 Oct 30	<p>↓ A report claimed Russia led arms sales to the developing world in 2005 -- France</p>



	ranked second with \$6.3 billion in sales, and the US was third with \$6.2 billion.
2006 Oct 23	<p>↓ The fate of Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, and many other <i>NGOs</i>, is in limbo under new registration procedures in "national security or morals" interests.</p> <p><i>Killing</i> has become a business and political method in Russia; <i>Radio Free Europe</i> gives a detailed inventory of killings.</p>
2006 Oct 16	<p>↓ Russia has cut US firms from investment in <i>oil and gas development</i> and has dropped plans to supply gas to the US -- the Kremlin is combining "a important economic role with a <i>geopolitical</i> one."</p>
2006 Oct 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia has returned alleged Russian <i>spies</i> it was holding but tensions are far from over.
2006 Oct 02	<p>↓ <i>Psychiatry</i>, a favored Soviet method of dealing with <i>dissidents</i>, has again made an appearance in Russia.</p> <p>Georgia arrested Russian officers for <i>spying</i> and surrounded Russia's military headquarters in Tbilisi.</p> <p>The 'Three Whales' <i>corruption</i> case has claimed careers of FSB Colonel-Generals and "created deep internal rifts in almost every security body".</p>
2006 Sep 25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US and UK have expressed "deep concern" over the Kremlin deviously grabbing a greater share of <i>gas</i> and <i>oil</i> projects. Mikhail Gorbachev has belatedly agreed with President Putin's assertion of Kremlin authority as best for Russia. With reported turnout of 80%, voters in Transdnister overwhelmingly voted in favor of independence from Moldova, with a view to eventually joining Russia. Analysts said Georgia is in danger of falling back into post-communist violence."
2006 Sep 18	<p>↓ <i>Radio Free Europe</i> presented a good discussion of the significance of separatism in Transdnister, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia. A central banker was shot dead, possibly in relation to the bank's revocation of licenses of unreliable commercial banks. Russia test-fired two <i>submarine</i>-launched <i>ICBMs</i> 6,000km to a land target in Arkhangelsk.</p>
2006 Sep 11	<p>↓ President Putin has visited South Africa, the first Russian head of state to visit the country — by opening a third plant, Russia hopes to eliminate 20% of <i>its chemical arsenal</i> by April 2007.</p> <p>Following abiding public disagreements analysts are less optimistic that a deal with the US can be reached this year — sudden cancellation of a joint US-Russia military <i>exercise</i> may be a symptom of growing Russian nationalist antipathy to the US.</p>
2006 Sep 04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Germany, soon to take over EU presidency, wants to look at ways "Russia can be irreversibly bound to the organization".
2006 Aug 28	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It has become obvious that the United States has lost Iraq..." says a Russian analyst looking at Russia's place in the real geopolitics beyond Iraq — Russian authorities have found the perpetrators of a bomb attack on a market to be young anti-immigrant ("<i>hate crime</i>") activists.
2006 Aug 21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Russia met with Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan on the Black Sea to discuss a customs union and Central Asia water and energy issues — Singapore will provide consultancy to Russia on the establishment of two special economic zones — the most powerful remaining Chechnyan commander, turned up at a government headquarters and surrendered.
2006 Aug 14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [nothing significant to report]
2006 Aug 07	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Georgia and Russia made military postures in the Kodori Gorge of disputed



	Abkhazia.
2006 Jul 31	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Although Russian-ASEAN trade is a mere \$6B it is growing at up to 40% and, significantly, relations with strategically-vital ASEAN seem to be genuinely strong.
2006 Jul 24	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russia emerged from the peace-and-love of the G8 and announced, for an inobvious reason, that it was ready to conduct a nuclear test if it wished to and then staged a massive counter-terrorism exercise in the Caucasus. But a week of highs ended lower when the ASEAN-led East Asia Summit said that some member had black-balled Russia's membership at this time.
2006 Jul 17	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• After weeks of hints, Russia claimed the right to make <i>pre-emptive strikes</i> anywhere in the world in its national security interests, largely a consequence of the recent murder of Russian diplomats in Iraq. President Putin showed off his home-town and one of the capitals of old Europe, St Petersburg, to the G8 who suddenly realised that in today's currency – <i>energy</i> – Russia is rich.
2006 Jul 10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russia saw reasons for hope in Chechnya but reasons for worry in Moldova and Georgia as President Putin hones a pop-star image in a world internet chat and prepares for the G8 in his home town, St Petersburg.
2006 Jul 03	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Russia succeeds in gaining observer status to the significant Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), solidifies ties with Turkey, and test launches a ballistic missile.
Commencement of Service	

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