

***THE FOREIGN POLICY AND DIPLOMATIC
ACTIVITIES OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION IN
2009***

REVIEW

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, RUSSIA

Moscow, March 2010

CONTENTS

PREFACE	-	3
MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY	-	7
Russia's Participation in UN Activities	-	7
Russia's Participation in the G8, G20 and BRIC	-	13
International Cooperation in Combating New Challenges and Threats	-	18
Disarmament, Arms Control and Nonproliferation	-	29
Conflict Resolution and Crisis Response	-	38
Inter-Civilization Dialogue	-	45
GEOGRAPHICAL DIRECTIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY	-	47
CIS Space	-	47
Europe	-	60
USA and Canada	-	83
Asia-Pacific Region	-	90
Middle East and North Africa	-	105
Africa	-	107
Latin America and Caribbean	-	111
ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY	-	115
LEGAL SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN POLICY ACTIVITIES	-	120
HUMANITARIAN FOREIGN-POLICY ORIENTATION	-	128
Human Rights Issues	-	128
Protecting the Interests of Overseas Compatriots	-	133
Consular Work	-	136
Cooperation in Culture and Science	-	139
ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY, POLITICAL PARTIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS	-	144
INTERREGIONAL AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION	-	149
INFORMATION SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN POLICY	-	153
HISTORICAL/ARCHIVAL ACTIVITIES	-	155
PROVIDING SECURITY FOR OVERSEAS AGENCIES	-	159

PREFACE

International events in 2009, including the global financial/economic crisis, facilitated the emergence of a positive, unifying agenda for the world community. An ever larger number of states concluded that there is a need for collective action to tackle common tasks in economics, finance and the climate change struggle, and cope with the spread of weapons of mass destruction, and other global challenges and threats. Our country came up with a number of concrete initiatives to entrench the positive trends in world affairs.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, in his speeches at the 64th UN General Assembly session and at the UN Security Council summit on nuclear disarmament and nonproliferation, declared the priority of solving the problem of an imbalanced global governance system, enshrining the principle of the indivisibility of security in international law, advancing the process of multilateral nuclear disarmament and reinforcing the global nonproliferation regime and called for creating in the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and other types of WMD and their delivery systems.

At Russia's suggestion, multilateral deliberation was given a jump-start on creating a new architecture of Euro-Atlantic security through codifying the whole array of political undertakings made by the Euro-Atlantic states at the Cold War's end and making them into legal obligations. The Russian Draft European Security Treaty was sent to leaders of foreign states and international organizations active in the Euro-Atlantic space.

A noticeable improvement occurred in Russian-American relations. The turn of the United States under the administration of President Barack Obama towards multilateral diplomacy, along with more active participation in collective efforts to look for solutions to the topical problems of today, created favorable conditions for forging cooperation between Russia and the USA on a pragmatic basis. Intensive Russian-US negotiations since May 2009 aim at concluding on a basis of equality

and the parity of obligations of the sides, a new Treaty on Further Reduction and Limitation of Strategic Offensive Arms which would reinforce strategic stability in the world and facilitate positive changes in the disarmament sphere.

An important result of the year was normalization of relations with NATO – a revived political dialogue and the progress in practical cooperation. The first full-blown ministerial meeting of the Russia-NATO Council since the Caucasus crisis of 2008 took decision to jointly review common security challenges and threats in the 21st century.

The realities of a qualitatively new geopolitical situation found reflection in the National Security Strategy of the Russian Federation to 2020, approved in May by the President of Russia. The fundamental principle of the Strategy is “security through development.” The document stresses that Russia will pursue a pragmatic foreign policy that excludes costly confrontation, with reliance upon the norms of international law and upon the principle of providing reliable and equal security for all states.

A continuing agenda for the world was overcoming the effects of the global economic and financial crisis, which laid bare the instability of the world’s postwar financial architecture. The representative Group of Twenty, in whose work Russia took an active part, became a leading forum for coordinating international efforts to devise effective global governance tools in the realm of economics and finance. The tendency stayed robust for the new centers of economic growth and political clout to gain further strength, along with the striving of these states for concerted action to uphold common interests, inter alia through the mechanisms for network diplomacy (including SCO, BRIC and RIC). The basis for preserving the UN’s leading role in dealing with the most acute world economic problems was laid at the Conference at the Highest Level on the World Financial and Economic Crisis and Its Impact on Development held in New York in June 2009.

The events of the year confirmed the strengthening of another important trend – towards the regionalization of world politics, which in the long run will lay a firm basis for the next stage of globalization. The imperative of strengthening the

regional level of governance fully declares itself in the integration processes in the CIS space where significant results have been achieved, among them the formation of the Customs Union made up of Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus, the decision to set up the Anti-Crisis Fund and High Technology Center of the Eurasian Economic Community, the CSTO signing the Agreement on Collective Operational Reaction Force and the start of the work on its creation.

Other lines of the multivector Russian foreign policy were being developed, in particular, the deepening of the strategic partnership with the European Union, interaction within the G8, OSCE, Council of Europe, APEC and other multilateral organizations and associations, and relations with friends and partners in Europe, the Middle East, Southeast Asia and Latin America. The first visits by a President of Russia to Nigeria, Angola and Namibia were held. They made it possible to take relations with the African states to a qualitatively new level.

Adhering to the principles of resolving the regional conflicts by political and diplomatic means through engagement of all concerned parties, Russia continued to contribute actively to international efforts for Nagorno Karabakh, Transnistria and Middle East conflict settlement, to stabilize Afghanistan and resolve the crises over Iran's nuclear program and the Korean Peninsula nuclear problem.

There was a step-up in foreign policy efforts in such areas as international cooperation to combat new challenges and threats, including counteraction against terrorism, drug and human trafficking, piracy and other types of organized crime. Russian diplomacy continued to focus on international collaboration to overcome global poverty, including energy and food poverty, and to eliminate the effects of natural and manmade disasters. The First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety took place in Moscow.

Measures were taken to increase the effectiveness of the information support of foreign policy work and counter attempts at rewriting history to the detriment of Russia's interests, to broaden the participation of Russian representatives, inter alia from the traditional religious confessions, in the international dialogue of cultures

and civilizations, to enlist nongovernmental organizations and the political science community in the foreign policy process and to create public diplomacy entities.

A reflection of our country's proactive role in world affairs was the creation in Russia of new international discussion platforms. Under the auspices and with the participation of President Dmitry Medvedev, Yaroslavl hosted the International Conference 'The Modern State and Global Security' in which leading Russian and foreign state and public figures, diplomats, scholars and experts took part. Their speeches and the work of the sections, devoted to government social responsibility, the diversity of the democratic experience, the effectiveness of global institutions, the struggle against terrorism, separatism and xenophobia, confirmed the relevance of a broad international discourse on ways of post-crisis development, and overall the collective comprehension of the present stage of world development.

President Medvedev, in his article 'Forward, Russia!' and Annual Address to the Federal Assembly, accentuated the necessity of tying the entire diplomatic work more closely to the needs of the socioeconomic development of Russia and of increasing its effectiveness in the attraction of foreign investment and advanced technologies and in the harmonization of relations with foreign states on the basis of the mutual penetration of economies and cultures, in the spirit of joint solidarity. The President gave instructions to the Government and Foreign Ministry designed to put activities for creating favorable external conditions for the realization of the long-term goals of the modernization of Russia and its technological breakthrough on a systemic footing.

MULTILATERAL DIPLOMACY

Russia's Participation in UN Activities

Russia undertook vigorous efforts to preserve the UN, created on the basis of a polycentric vision of the world, as an unalternative global forum with a universal mandate and generally accepted legitimacy, and to establish the Organization as a center for open and fair debate and the coordination of world policy on a just basis, without double standards.

Starting from the necessity of adapt the world Organization to a changing world, Russia spoke for reforming international institutions while reinforcing the central role of the UN and preserving its interstate nature.

Russia stuck to a balanced policy on the issue of reforming the **UN Security Council**, accentuating the need to continue work on all available proposals without speeding the negotiation process, taking an artificially selective approach towards the existing models and attempting to impose putting them to a vote.

As part of efforts to prevent an erosion of the Charter prerogatives of the UNSC, bearing primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security, Russia determinedly warded off attempts to revise the powers of this one of the UN main bodies, including those of its five permanent members.

During the consideration in the UNSC in May-June of the extension of the mandate for the UN presence in Georgia and Abkhazia, Russia came out in favor of a status neutral solution to the issue of continuing the work of the UN observers in the region. Yet because of the stance of western partners seeking to reiterate the territorial integrity of Georgia, an acceptable resolution text failed to be agreed and the UN Mission in that part of Transcaucasia wrapped up.

At the 64th UNGA session the Russian delegation secured weighty support for the draft resolutions initiated by it on "Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities," "Developments in the field of information and

telecommunications in the context of international security,” “Inadmissibility of certain practices that contribute to fuelling contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance,” and “Cooperation between the UN and the SCO.” Preparatory work was done for the celebration in 2010 of the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II (Russia cosponsored with the CSTO member states the draft of the relevant resolution of the UN General Assembly).

Russia continued to assist the work of the **United Nations Peacebuilding Commission** aimed at institutional consolidation and efficiency improvement. The Russian Federation’s contribution to the budget of the Peacebuilding Fund stands at 2 million US dollars annually.

On the economic front of UN activities, major attention was devoted to the utilization of its socioeconomic bodies to accomplish the priority tasks for Russia in eradicating poverty, achieving other Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), raising the practical impact of the participation of Russia in multilateral economic cooperation, and creating an enabling international environment for our country’s full-blown integration into the world economy.

Russia contributed to reinforcing the role of the **United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)** as an authoritative venue to search for collective solutions to the topical problems on the international socioeconomic agenda. Held in Geneva in July, the substantive session of ECOSOC constituted a forum for a constructive, result-oriented multilateral dialogue on a broad range of issues of the international agenda in the sphere of development in the conditions of the global financial and economic crisis (GFC). The intergovernmental process was actually launched of realizing the decisions of the UN Conference on the GFC in New York and of getting ready for an upcoming UN Summit on the Millennium Development Goals in September 2010. Political guidelines were formulated for the work of the UN system on key global health care and sustainable development issues, with due emphasis on assistance to countries in overcoming the adverse effects of the crisis, primarily in the social sphere.

Russian diplomacy used the United Nations platform for the promotion of the Conceptual Approaches to a new legal base in international energy and energy-transit cooperation, as initiated by President Medvedev.

Russia's position strengthened markedly in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP). Their capabilities were actively used to reach a higher level of economic interaction with our neighbors in Europe, on the Asian continent and within the CIS. In this case special attention was devoted to realizing environmental conventions, making use of energy efficient technologies, providing energy security, developing and adopting unified transport standards and rules, and easing trade conditions.

2009 saw Russia's first earmarked voluntary contribution of \$1.2 million to ESCAP. This money is to be used for projects that will help to strengthen in line with the interests of the Russian state and business the international cooperation in these regions, particularly in the fields of energy, transport, environment, trade and investment.

Of great importance was the **First Global Ministerial Conference on Road Safety** held in Moscow in November under UN auspices. The Moscow Conference has shown that Russia is acknowledged as a leader in international cooperation in this field, and opened a new page in efforts to overcome the effects of road traffic accidents claiming 1.3 million lives annually and inflicting considerable social and economic damage.

In the list of global priorities of the international community the problems of sustainable development, environmental protection and urbanistics moved into one of the first places. Accordingly their significance rose in the framework of Russian foreign policy efforts aimed at shaping favorable conditions for providing a healthy environment, raising the quality of life and bolstering the environmental safety of the Russian Federation.

Russia made its contribution to the work of the United Nations Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD), and continued to augment its participation in

the activities under the United Nations Environment Program (UNEP) and United Nations Human Settlements Program (UN-Habitat), and under major international environmental conventions and agreements.

Russia played a key role in international efforts to reduce the anthropogenic load on the planet's climate system. Its representatives took an active part in the preparation and holding of the **UN Climate Conference** in Copenhagen. President Dmitry Medvedev headed the Russian delegation at this forum.

Russia continued to work towards accession to the other most important multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants, the Rotterdam Convention on the Prior Informed Consent Procedure for Certain Hazardous Chemicals and Pesticides in International Trade, the Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety.

Activities were carried out to put relations with UN operational funds and programs, first and foremost UNDP, UNICEF and UNFPA, on a fundamentally new basis – with regard for the Russian Federation's graduation into the category of donor countries. In particular, the elaboration continued of the modalities for the establishment of a Russian National Committee for UNICEF which would through the attraction of private sector funds and individual donations provide financing for the Fund's activities both at home and abroad, primarily in CIS countries.

Despite the global financial and economic crisis, Russia built up its level of participation in **international development assistance**. It took decisions to extend credits worth more than US\$4.6 billion to several neighboring countries. Together with the EurAsEC countries we established an anti-crisis fund of US\$8.5 billion, to which Russia contributed US\$7.5 billion. We also expressed the readiness to invest US\$10 billion in the IMF's additional resources for countries in need, and US\$100 million for underdeveloped countries.

The Russian Federation continued to pursue a line on deepening the mutual understanding among all actors of international cooperation on the questions of development assistance. Progress in this sector was achieved at the High Level

United Nations Conference on South-South Cooperation held on December 1-3 in Nairobi, Kenya. Its outcome has confirmed the existence of considerable potential for the further development of Russian relations with developing countries.

Cooperation with UNIDO received an extra boost. Russia became a “pure donor” of this body. An administrative agreement was signed on the procedure for use of the annual Russian voluntary contribution of US\$2.6 million to UNIDO’s Industrial Development Fund. The money will go to projects involving technology transfer, investment attraction and industrial capacity building in both the CIS and developing countries.

Cooperation by Russia with international humanitarian organizations providing emergency food aid gained further strength. In the past year the total Russian contribution to the International Civil Defense Organization and the UN World Food Program (WFP) for these purposes reached US\$50 million. In 2009 Russia held the post of Chair of the WFP’s Executive Board, actively helping to perform its mission, and to mobilize donor resources for multilateral humanitarian activities.

Collaboration was augmented with the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Russia was reelected to its executive governing body – the FAO Council – for the period to 2014. The introduction of the Russian language in the work of the body was successfully continued, which gives an opportunity to Russians engaged in the farming sector to use its informational resources.

Collaboration between the Russian Federation and **UNESCO** was actively developed. A Permanent Delegate of Russia to UNESCO, Eleonora Mitrofanova, was elected Chairperson of the body’s Executive Board for the first time.

Within the framework of the International Program for the Development of Communication, the Eleventh World Russian Press Congress took place in June in Lucerne, Switzerland.

The celebrations of World Philosophy Day, annually observed by UNESCO, were held in Moscow and St. Petersburg from November 16-19. More than 100 eminent world philosophers took part in the conference and round tables on the

theme of “Philosophy in the Dialogue of Cultures.” The creation of an association “Cities of Russia for Civil Solidarity and International Harmony” was officially announced on December 10 under UNESCO’s project “Coalition of Cities against Racism and Xenophobia.

Russia continued to retain the position of a major donor to the International Fund for the Elimination of Doping in Sport, by transferring another contribution of 500000 euros to the Fund’s account. Russia was elected to the Presidium of the Conference of Parties to the Convention against Doping in Sport and to the Fund’s screening committee.

As part of cooperation by Russian NGOs with UNESCO, the Russian Peace Fund established official relations with the body in 2009. Our tennis player Vera Zvonareva was given UNESCO’s honorary title of Promoter of Gender Equality.

The first meeting of national committees of UNESCO’s Information for All Program took place in Moscow on December 7-8.

Russia continued to be engaged (under UNESCO’s project and in close coordination with Belgrade) in the restoration of Serbian Orthodox shrines – UNESCO world heritage sites in Kosovo province, Serbia.

On August 19-24, Kazan hosted the central UNESCO event of the UN-designated International Year of Astronomy 2009 – the International Conference ‘Astronomy and the World Heritage: Through Time and Continents.’ More than 450 delegates from different countries, including Bulgaria, UK, Germany, Spain, Italy, Indonesia, US, France and the CIS countries took part in the conference.

On September 17-19, the International Congress of UNESCO Chairs on Education for Sustainable Development was held in Khanty-Mansiysk in which the representatives of 18 countries took part.

The 35th session of the UNESCO General Conference, held in October-November, unanimously adopted a resolution prepared at Russia’s initiative that definitively closed the question of the draft declaration of principles relating to cultural objects displaced in connection with the Second World War. By the same token we prevented, through our persistent diplomatic efforts, an attempt at the

approval in UNESCO of a document seeking to revise the outcomes of the postwar settlement.

The session endorsed a number of other Russian initiatives. In particular, it backed the proposals to set up a Regional Museum Center for Capacity-Building in Museum Studies in Moscow under UNESCO auspices and to launch a UNESCO satellite science education project in Russia.

During the General Conference of UNESCO, the Russian Federation was elected to the governing bodies of a number of international programs of the body – the Intergovernmental Council of the International Program for the Development of Communication and the Intergovernmental Council of the Information for All Program. Held as part of the General Conference, the 17th session of the General Assembly of the States Parties to the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage voted to elect the Russian Federation to the Intergovernmental World Heritage Committee.

Russia's Participation in the G8, G20 and BRIC

2009 saw a marked increase in international collaborative efforts within the **Group of Twenty**, directed at working out decisions on how to overcome the effects of the world financial and economic crisis and to construct a new, more perfect global financial architecture.

During the G20 summit in London on April 1-2, leaders agreed to act jointly to restore confidence, economic growth and jobs in the world economy, to bolster the financial system and regulation, to provide additional resources for and reform international financial institutions, to help expand global trade and investment and give up protectionism and to create the conditions for sustainable development worldwide. The leaders took decision to mobilize US\$1.1 trillion to support anti-crisis measures on a global scale.

One of the chief outcomes of the summit in Pittsburg (September 24-25) was the decision to institutionalize the Group of Twenty and hold its leaders' meetings

on a regular basis. The G20 thus emerged as a new global forum designed to be the engine of the process of establishing a more perfect and equitable world financial and economic system. Of principled importance in this context is the agreement reached in Pittsburgh for the redistribution of a large quota share in IMF and World Bank (of 5% and 3% respectively) in favor of developing countries. Another major outcome of the summit was the adoption of a framework for strong, sustainable and balanced growth. The framework contains the main principles for sustainable economic activity and envisages tools for joint monitoring of their fulfillment.

Also of great significance is the decision of G20 to transform the Financial Stability Forum into the Financial Stability Board with extended powers in the area of monitoring the situation in financial markets in order to prevent new crises. The Board includes as full-fledged participants, Russia and other G20 members that did not participate earlier in the Financial Stability Forum. It held two meetings (June, September), in which the Russian delegation took part.

Russia actively cooperated with its **Group of Eight** partners in a search for answers to the pressing international-political and social-economic problems of a global character.

In the first half of the year the representatives of Russia took part in 12 G8 ministerial meetings, including those of labor, agriculture, environment, energy, justice and interior, and economic development, as well as of finance ministers and governors of central banks. Sessions of the G8's working bodies were held, with Russian experts actively involved. As part of the so called Heiligendamm Process – a structured dialogue between G8 and the five most important partners (Brazil, India, China, Mexico, South Africa) – a report was prepared at its conclusion, and submitted to the leaders.

Sergey Lavrov was in Trieste, on June 25-27, for the Meeting of G8 Foreign Ministers, which examined a wide range of issues such as WMD nonproliferation, the fight against terrorism, organized crime and piracy, and peacekeeping/peace-building. There was an outreach session on Afghanistan and Pakistan, which apart from these countries included a number of countries of the region (China, India,

the countries of Central Asia and the Persian Gulf), as well as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Turkey and Australia.

On July 8-10, the President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, took part in the G8 summit in L'Aquila. On all agenda items we held a balanced stand, consistently upholding a line on strengthening multilateral principles in international relations. The summit decisions, enshrined in the Declaration by the G8 Heads of State and Government, their statements on WMD nonproliferation and counterterrorism, the G8+5 Joint Declaration, the statement with African countries and in the broadly adopted statement on global food security, meet the interests of Russia not only in terms of an overall mindset for collective work but also in terms of content of concrete measures.

Issues relating to the global financial and economic crisis were most widely discussed at the meeting. The G8 heads of state reaffirmed the commitments taken at the G20 London Summit concerning the adoption of all necessary measures for the maintenance of demand, growth resumption and the preservation of financial stability, including the toughening of financial regulation and the strengthening of international financial institutions, as well as the preservation of market openness across the world. The so called Lecce Framework, to systematize and streamline the principles for the regulation of international financial and economic activities, was adopted, as well as giving support to the idea of shifting to a "green" model of growth, which on the whole fits in with the economy modernization tasks before Russia. Efforts by our country to stimulate elaboration of a new legal framework for energy cooperation also found reflection in the summit documents – including the propositions encouraging international initiatives to promote energy dialogue, improve the organization of the energy market and prevent sharp price fluctuations in it.

An equally important focus of the meeting was aid to the poorest developing countries, worst affected by the crisis. In the course of the debate Russian President Medvedev, having accentuated the adverse consequences of the food crisis, voiced proposals for its overcoming with due regard for the decisions of the grain summit

in St. Petersburg. At the end of the debate, the G8 reiterated the decision to launch the Global Partnership for Agriculture and Food Security. Also reaffirmed were the previously assumed commitments to increase by the year 2010 the average annual volumes of development assistance to US\$50 billion, and to allocate for support of health care \$60 billion (by 2012) and education \$1.2 billion (by late 2010). The broadly adopted statement on food security laid down the objective of mobilizing \$20 billion within three subsequent years for assistance to sustainable agricultural development. A meeting with the participation of African states endorsed the idea of establishing a partnership for water supply and sanitation.

In the environmental protection field, agreement was reached for developed countries to cut their greenhouse gas emissions to 80 percent and more below 1990 levels by 2050. Strong was the position of Russia – a 40 percent rise in the energy efficiency of its economy, and a 10-15 percent reduction in emissions by 2020, and support for the global emission reduction target.

The political agenda of the summit turned out to be jam-packed. A separate statement on counterterrorism was adopted. The statement on the nonproliferation of WMD included a proposition on the G8's support of the Russian-US agreement of July 6, 2009. In the section of its outcome document on the fight against piracy, the summit attested to the need to assist the coastal states of Africa with antipiracy capacity building. Especially, largely at Russia's prompting, the summit underlined the importance of creating an international legal framework for combating piracy.

Among regional problems, the Iran question spurred the greatest discussion. Still, it was possible to balance the outcome-document propositions concerning the Iranian nuclear program, accentuating at the insistence of the Russian side the need to look for a negotiated solution. On other regional subjects (the nuclear program of the DPRK, the Middle East, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Myanmar) the positions of Russia and the other G8 members were generally close.

On the summit's fringes the leaders of Russia, the United States and France adopted a joint statement on Nagorno Karabakh, calling upon Baku and Yerevan to expedite the settlement process.

After the end of the summit, the G8 working and expert groups continued to be actively engaged in this endeavor. In September Sergey Lavrov took part in the G8 Foreign Ministers meeting held in New York on the sidelines of the 64th UN General Assembly session. It reviewed the situation around Iran's nuclear program and the state of affairs in Afghanistan. A second ministerial meeting, in November, adopted a statement on the results of the Afghan elections.

At the same time after the G20 Pittsburg Summit, which established the G20 as the top world forum to discuss international economic and financial problems, the role of the G8 began to evolve, primarily in terms of its relationship with the significantly more representative G20. Such a closed format as the financial G7 exhausted its meaning of existence.

Cooperation within the **BRIC** (Brazil, Russia, India and China) format was focused on crafting concerted approaches to the most topical issues in international relations and world development. The main objective was to coordinate the actions of the four countries in the context of efforts to overcome the global financial and economic crisis.

The point of departure for a close dialogue of the four countries, oriented towards practical results, was the first full-scale BRIC summit held at the Russian side's initiative on June 16 in Yekaterinburg, which the leaders wrapped up with a joint statement disclosing a common vision of the ways for surmounting the global financial crisis. During the summit, a ministerial statement of the BRIC countries on global food security was released.

On September 24, the fifth meeting of BRIC foreign ministers took place in New York on the sidelines of the 64th General Assembly session. Its special focus was agreeing on common approaches to topical problems of world development, among them ensuring food and energy security, tackling the effects of the financial and economic crisis, and resisting climate change.

The practice of holding BRIC finance ministers and central bank governors meetings on the sidelines of the ministerial events of the financial G20 (Horsham, March; London, September) acquitted itself well. Reflected in the communiqués of

the quadripartite meetings were the consolidated positions of Russia, China, Brazil and India on the key items of the G20 agenda, including the reform of international financial institutions. This became the central theme at the meeting of the finance ministers of the BRIC countries on October 3 in Istanbul, within the framework of the annual conference of the IMF and World Bank.

A meeting of the BRIC high representatives for security affairs was held on May 28-30 in Moscow at the initiative of the Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation.

From September 1-2, the BRIC International Competition Conference was held in Kazan at the suggestion of the Russian Federal Antimonopoly Service and with support from the Government of Russia. The meeting ended with the signing of the joint communiqué in which the heads of the BRIC countries' competition agencies expressed their readiness for subsequent exchanges of views on various competitive policy and law enforcement issues in a four-way format and agreed on organizing this kind of conferences on a regular basis.

Collaboration between regional authorities and between public organizations became a regular feature. On May 14-15, in St. Petersburg, under the aegis of the government of this city, a second theoretical and practical conference 'BRIC: Step by Step' took place in which the representatives of the municipal authorities and universities of its sister cities – Rio de Janeiro, Mumbai, Shanghai and Qingdao – participated.

International Cooperation in Combating New Challenges and Threats

Vigorous efforts were undertaken to strengthen international cooperation in the struggle against new challenges and threats. Much emphasis in this activity was placed on the prevention of "double standards" and on tough response to attempts at politicizing multilateral and bilateral collaboration in this sector.

International **antiterrorist collaboration** was arranged as capacity building efforts for the UN, called upon to perform the central and coordinating role in the

struggle against terrorism and other criminal threats on a global scale. The focus of the work with states, at international and regional venues and bilaterally, continued to be facilitating reinforcement of the international legal bases for counterterrorism and implementation of 13 relevant UN conventions and protocols to them, as well as the UN Security Council's antiterrorist resolutions.

Special attention was paid to the comprehensive realization of the **United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy (GCTS)**, accentuating in the work with the partners such priority areas of the GCTS as terror prevention, and efforts to counter the radicalization of public sentiments, the ideology of extremism and violence, and the use of media space and the global Internet network for terrorist purposes.

Russia assisted capacity building for the auxiliary antiterrorist committees of the Security Council, above all the **Counter-Terrorism Committee (CTC)** and its **Executive Directorate**, which coordinates international efforts to bolster national potentials of antiterrorist security. Russian representatives sought to expand CTC contacts with the international and regional organizations with the participation of Russia and continued the practice of annual CTC briefings by senior officials of the working group of the International Meeting of Heads of Special Services and Law Enforcement and Security Agencies.

One of the important objectives in the UN sector continued to be reinforcing the sanctions regime against Al-Qaida, the Taliban and associated individuals and entities. In the UN Security Council 1267 Committee Russia supported the line on updating the sanctions list, which, however, must remain an effective instrument of the international community in countering the real threat which Al-Qaida and the Taliban represent amid the overall degradation of the politico-military situation in Afghanistan. In the work with the partners, Russian diplomats insisted on the need for a balanced approach to the issues of delisting, and underscored the importance of including persons in this list who support or finance terrorist activities out of the funds derived from illicit drug production or trafficking. It was from this principled

standpoint that Russian diplomacy approached the work of drafting and negotiating a new SC sanctions resolution – resolution 1904 – adopted on December 17.

In the **Group of Eight**, with the active participation of Russia, the L'Aquila summit (July 8-10) adopted a number of documents on new challenges and threats – the G8 leaders' statement on counterterrorism; the political declaration sections on transnational organized crime, corruption, piracy and security at sea; an updated report to the G8 leaders on national efforts in the fight against corruption.

Within the framework of the G8 Roma/Lyon Group, work continued on a significant number of projects initiated by the Russian side or being implemented jointly with the partners. Their thematic reach was broadened to include the causes and conditions conducive to the radicalization and recruitment of a population into terrorist groups; counteraction against the use of the Internet network and other contemporary means of communication for terrorist and criminal purposes; law enforcement measures in case of heightened terrorist threats; the use of biometric systems of personal identification; and ensuring transportation security.

Vigorous support was given to the line on streamlining the work of the **G8 Counterterrorism Action Group (CTAG)**, on using its political potential to cope with the tasks of international anti-terror and on strengthening technical assistance mechanisms.

Active bilateral contacts were maintained on counteraction against the new threats and challenges through the mechanisms of interagency groups and relevant consultations. Sessions of the working groups and consultations on this problem were carried out with the US, FRG, PRC, Canada, Kazakhstan, Norway, Denmark, Spain, Switzerland, India, Algeria, the Arab Republic of Egypt, Mali, and Pakistan.

Counterterrorism cooperation with major **European organizations** was built up. Thus, as part of the further development of cooperation with **NATO** in the field of combating terrorism, above all in the Russia-NATO Council (RNC) format, an expert workshop on protecting pipeline transport from terrorist threats was held in Brussels with participation by experts from the capitals (June), as well as a session of the RNC Ad Hoc Working Group on the Terrorist Threat to the Euro-Atlantic

Area on the theme of response to the terrorist threat to critically important energy infrastructures (October) with the participation of the representatives of competent Russian agencies and the private sector (OAO Lukoil).

A Public-Private Expert Workshop on Preventing the Abuse of Non-Profit Organizations for Terrorist Financing, and an Expert Workshop on Public-Private Partnerships: Engaging with the Media in Countering Terrorism, both organized by the **OSCE**, took place in Vienna, with the leading participation of the Russian side, in September and October respectively. The events made a significant contribution to adequately fleshing out the content of the antiterrorism decisions of the meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens, December 1-2.

Antiterrorist cooperation with the **European Union** grew stronger. During the course of the expert consultations on counterterrorism in the Russia-EU Troika format (Brussels, February and October) an in-depth exchange of status appraisals took place with regard to global and regional aspects of the terrorist threat at this stage. The parties underlined the particular importance of countering the ideology and advocacy of terrorism, as well as radicalization in Muslim communities, and discussed priorities in further effective collaboration between Russia and the EU in international formats.

As part of its antiterrorist cooperation with the **Council of Europe**, Russia was active in the work of the Committee of Experts on Terrorism (CODEXTER), the key CoE body in this field. The Committee, with the effective participation of Russian representatives, continued to identify and fill the gaps in international laws on counterterrorism and to exchange information on national anti-terror approaches along with relevant analytical evaluations, in particular, on the issues of combating cyber terrorism and countering recruitment into terrorist groups.

In May, Madrid hosted the First Conference of the States Parties to the 2005 Council of Europe Convention on the Prevention of Terrorism. Upon the proposal of the Conference, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on July 1 ordered CODEXTER to regularly supervise and monitor the effective application and fulfillment of this Convention.

Collaboration in combating terrorism and other new challenges and threats was firmly on the agenda of the key international organizations in the **post-Soviet space and the AP region**.

Activities in the **CIS** were built with an eye to the Russian chairmanship of the body in 2010. The Russian side endeavored to ensure strict fulfillment of the long-term cooperation programs of member states in the struggle against terrorism, illicit drug trafficking and cross-border organized crime for the years 2008-2010, and strove to improve legal regulation in the areas of cooperation where there is a shortage of it, first and foremost in the struggle against illegal arms trade.

In the **CSTO** vigorous efforts were undertaken to build up the antiterrorist and antinarcotics capabilities of the Organization, to expedite the establishment of the Collective Operational Reaction Force, and to continue successfully the Kanak international antinarcotics operation aiming to suppress the contraband of narcotics from Afghanistan, with imparting to it the status of a permanent regional project.

Relying upon the possibilities of Russia's **SCO** chairmanship in 2008-2009, a number of antiterrorist documents were initiated and submitted for signing to the summit in Yekaterinburg in June, including the SCO Convention against Terrorism envisaging the coordination of actions by member states and the improvement of the mechanisms for combating the threats of terrorism (training of counterterrorism specialists, the establishment of a necessary legislative base) and the Agreement on Cooperation with Respect to International Information Security. Steps were taken to raise the effectiveness of the activity of the Regional Antiterrorist Structure of the SCO and to fill it with specific content, as well as measures for the expeditious launch of a mechanism of anti-narcotics cooperation in the Organization.

The question of strengthening cooperation among the **CIS**, **SCO** and **CSTO** was constantly in view, first and foremost in the key area of establishing antidrug and financial security belts around Afghanistan.

On the platform of the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** new areas of antiterrorism collaboration were established ahead of the 2nd Russia-ASEAN Summit in Hanoi in 2010. A Joint Working Group on Counter Terrorism

and Transnational Crime was set up, whose July meeting in Naypyidaw, Myanmar, ended with the adoption of a Work Action Plan in this field. The representatives of Russia took part in the Russia-ASEAN Senior Officials' meetings on transnational crime.

Participation in the activities of the **ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF)** was defined by the prospect of Russia's co-chairmanship of the Intersessional Meeting on Counter-Terrorism and Transnational Crime in 2010. International information security and critical infrastructure protection were approved as its title theme. The representatives of Russia joined the activity of other ARF platforms where themes of new challenges and threats are discussed, notably – intersessional meetings on nonproliferation and maritime security.

Under auspices of the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)** Forum, Russia's proposal was being worked up for the establishment of a closed Internet portal within APEC for the exchange of information on the themes of countering cyber terrorism. The transfer of the first part of Russia's voluntary contribution to the APEC Support Fund equal to US\$250000, meant primarily for financing joint projects in the realm of personal security (counterterrorism, energy, transportation, food, environmental and information security, and emergency preparedness) had a positive response.

APEC Counter-Terrorism Task Force-led activities were arranged from the perspective of Russia's chairmanship of the Forum in 2012. Work was completed on, and the circulation organized of, a document on best practices in critical energy infrastructure protection.

A substantial contribution was made to developing the negotiation process to elaborate a draft **Caspian Sea** security agreement.

Heightened attention was paid to Russia joining the processes of antiterrorist and anti-narcotics collaboration in the **Western Hemisphere**. Russian diplomats took part in meetings of the Inter-American Committee against Terrorism and the Inter-American Drug Abuse Control Commission.

Measures were undertaken to realize further Russia's international **initiative to strengthen the antiterrorist partnership of states, business and civil society**, put forward in 2006. Thus, as part of the Russian SCO chairmanship the Foreign Ministry of Russia hosted in April an international round table on "The State and Business Versus Terrorism" involving representatives of state and non-state circles of the SCO countries, observer states and Turkmenistan, as well as senior officials from a number of Russian nongovernmental organizations.

To explore optimal means against terrorist attacks on critical infrastructure, representatives from Russian concerned ministries and agencies as well as business circles took part in the second international meeting on public-private partnerships for the protection of vulnerable targets against terrorist attacks, organized by the United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute (June, Tromsø, Norway).

Matters of bolstering antiterrorist cooperation between state authorities and the media were considered in detail at the Fifth 'Terrorism and Electronic Media' International Conference, arranged by the International Academy of Television and Radio (October, Aiyia Napa, Cyprus), in which a Russian cross-sector delegation took an active part.

To further mobilize joint contribution to antiterrorist cooperation by Russian state and non-state organizations, the Business Council under the auspices of the Russian Foreign Minister held a session in Moscow in November in which a series of new ideas and projects of anti-terror public-private partnerships were put forth.

Work was actively conducted to **counter the global narco-threat**, primarily emanating from the territory of Afghanistan, at international, regional and bilateral levels.

In particular, Russian basic approaches to the Afghan drug problem were set forth in UNSCR 1890 on the Situation in Afghanistan. The resolution calls on the International Force to step up its activities on the anti-narcotics front, and describes the drug situation in the country as posing a "threat to regional peace and security."

In addition, the ideas of Russia were reflected in UNGA resolutions 64/17 “On the situation in Afghanistan” and “International cooperation against the world drug problem.” The latter resolution approved the decisions of the high level ministerial segment of the 52th session of the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND; Vienna, March), orienting the international community toward solving by 2019 the task of cardinally reducing the illegal production of opium, cocaine and cannabis.

Within the framework of the CND session, Russia’s delegation consistently underlined the need for the international community to adopt resolute and adequate measures to rectify the drug situation in Afghanistan. Among them: establishing a supervisory board to assess the effectiveness of aid being provided to Afghanistan; making more precise the international forces’ mandates to employ their capabilities to better counter escalation of narco-expansion from Afghan territory; control over supplies of precursors and their substitutes; developing public-private partnerships and producing a “code of conduct” for the chemical industry; cutting off financial support to the narco-industry; and widening the scope of international and regional anti-narcotics operations.

The proposals from Russia on combating Afghan drug trafficking find ever greater support within the “**Paris-Moscow**” process being carried out under the auspices of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. During the meeting of the session of the governing body of the process – the Consultative Political Group (Vienna, November) – among the areas of its activity in 2010 at the Russian side’s prompting the following challenges were set forth: counter financial flows relating to Afghan drug traffic; exert control over precursors; and enhance the cross-border cooperation of the states of Central and West Asia.

A major event was the Special Conference on Afghanistan held on March 27 in Moscow under the aegis of the Russian **SCO** Chairmanship and dedicated to the crafting of regional approaches to containing terrorist and drug threats emanating from its territory. The documents adopted at its end give maximum consideration to such principled aspects for Russia as reinforcing the Afghan security structures

in combating narcotics production and trade; the role of the international force in coordination of efforts with the Afghan authorities in countering the narco-threat; broadening assistance to the law enforcement and judicial bodies of Afghanistan, including personnel training, with the goal of destroying narcotics laboratories; and putting an end to the precursor trade and links between terrorism and narco-crime. The importance was particularly emphasized of establishing and strengthening the “financial and anti-narcotics belts” in the region.

The Moscow Conference had a considerable international response. Most of the leaders of the concerned states and international organizations, including UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon voiced support for the decisions adopted at it. The conference was also commended in a number of relevant resolutions passed during the 64th UNGA session.

In the context of **Russia-EU** interaction on the anti-narcotics front, dialogue continued on implementing the decisions of the Russia-EU Permanent Partnership Council (Kaliningrad, May), aimed at taking joint action to inter alia counter the Afghan narco-threat, and on agreeing the section of a new Russia-EU Partnership and Cooperation Agreement dealing with international control over narcotic drugs.

A new moment in relations between Russia and the EU was the launch of a negotiation process on a draft agreement on control over drug precursors.

A Russian-backed **OSCE** project was actively developed for the training of Afghan narcotics policemen at the Russian Federal Police Peacekeeping Training Center in Domodedovo and for the organization of research on the interconnection between the drug business and terrorism. Work was conducted to optimize OSCE’s collaboration with Afghanistan, above all in the context of reinforcing the borders of the countries of Central Asia and in the training of personnel, based inter alia on Russian training facilities.

With NATO being rather passive in fighting Afghan narcotics, cooperation was being forged with this organization in the anti-narcotics sphere as well. There continues to operate the RNC-sponsored project for training anti-narcotics cadres for the law enforcement agencies of Afghanistan and the states of Central Asia. As

of now, about 1000 officers from those states have taken a course of training under this project.

The administration change in Washington made it possible to raise **Russian-American narcotics control cooperation** to a qualitatively new level. At the end of the talks in Moscow between Presidents Medvedev and Obama on July 6, a joint statement on Afghanistan was adopted determining inter alia the concrete areas of collaboration in the suppression of heroin traffic from Afghanistan. The Russian-American Working Group to counter illicit drug trafficking was created as a result.

In the drive against **transnational organized crime** the Russian Federation focused its efforts on the creation and effective functioning of a juridical base and mechanisms of interstate cooperation within the UN and regional organizations. In the center of attention were such particularly dangerous forms of criminal activity as illegal arms trafficking, trafficking in persons, especially women and children, corruption and high technology crimes.

As part of the line on acceding to all major international conventions in this field, the Russian Federation signed in May the Council of Europe Convention on Laundering, Search, Seizure and Confiscation of the Proceeds from Crime and on the Financing of Terrorism. Russia also applied for joining the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development Convention on Combating Bribery of Foreign Public Officials in International Business Transactions.

Russia was an active participant of all most significant global and regional anti-crime forums and made a weighty contribution to their work. The priority for our country in this case was work in the UN, designed not only to play a key role in the coordination of international anti-crime efforts, but also to increasingly take on the elaboration and advancement of global principles, norms and practices of international law enforcement cooperation.

Combating corruption remained one of the Russian priorities in the anti-crime drive. In this sense the National Plan to combat corruption and the decisions taken in its pursuance fully met the needs for expanding international cooperation by Russia. Important milestones on the road of establishing an international anti-

corruption front were such major international events in this area as the 6th Global Anti-Corruption Forum and the 3rd session of the Conference of the States Parties to the United Nations Convention against Corruption, held in November in Doha, the capital of Qatar. The Conference established a UNCAC implementation review mechanism developed with the active participation of the Russian delegation that will make it possible to objectively – without applying “double standards” – assess states’ efforts in this sphere and help to increase the effectiveness of international cooperation.

Great importance was attached to the fight against a new challenge – **piracy**. The Russian Federation focused on consolidating efforts by the world community in the struggle against this danger. Russia’s representatives took an active part in the preparation of UNSC resolutions on this question. Of particular political and practical significance was the setting up of a mechanism for coordinating actions by states and international organizations conducting anti-piracy operations, Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia (CGPCS), of which Russia is a member. We pursued a line on ensuring the inevitability of punishment for persons detained on suspicion of piracy. Russian diplomats participated in dealing with the issue of releasing the Arctic Sea dry cargo ship.

Russian initiatives were successfully advanced aiming at the implementation of the idea of establishing a global system of **international information security (IIS)**.

The goal of Russia’s efforts to bolster IIS is to prevent mankind from being drawn into another arms race spiral at a qualitatively new technological level, to preserve resources for development, as well as to avert and suppress the possibility of information and communication technologies being used for solving tasks that run counter to security interests of states and international stability as a whole. In Russia’s activities for creating the IIS system major emphasis was put on the UN. As a result the Russian draft of the UNGA resolution “Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security” was adopted by consensus, for the first time in recent years.

At the same time, active diplomatic efforts were undertaken by the Russian side in the framework of other authoritative international organizations and fora, in particular, OSCE, CSTO, CoE, G8, International Telecommunication Union, and the Internet Governance Forum.

The Russian IIS approaches made considerable headway within the SCO framework. During the June SCO summit in Yekaterinburg, the Agreement among the Governments of the SCO Member States on International Information Security Cooperation was signed on the basis of the draft formulated and proposed by the Russian side. The Agreement determines the presence and essence of specific IIS threats, as well as envisages the major thrust areas, principles, forms and vehicles of multilateral cooperation in this area. It is proposed to keep this agreement open for accession by other states.

Information security efforts by the world community were focused within the UN **Group of Governmental Experts (GGE) on IIS**. The mandate of the GGE envisions continued research on existing and potential information security threats and possible joint action to remove them. The GGE first met in November. A Russian governmental expert was elected chairman of the GGE. Based on results of its work, the Group is to prepare the draft of a UN Secretary General report at the next, 65th UNGA session.

Disarmament, Arms Control and Nonproliferation

Russia sought ways to get the disarmament process out of stagnation and to establish a more favorable situation in the field of disarmament. The resources of multilateral diplomacy, first and foremost forums like the UN and the Conference on Disarmament were used in this endeavor.

We carefully studied new **initiatives in the field of nuclear disarmament**, put forth both at the governmental level (the initiative of British Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the statement of US President Barack Obama) and at the level of nongovernmental organizations (Global Zero, the Evans-Kawaguchi Commission,

the Luxembourg Forum). While supporting the ultimate aim of these initiatives – a world free of nuclear weapons – the Russian side pointed to their limited character, and emphasized that the complete elimination of nuclear weapons is possible only through a gradual process of general and complete disarmament. It can be achieved only based on a comprehensive approach under favorable international conditions – the preservation of strategic stability and the observance of the principle of equal security for all states.

The weight and practical impact of efforts aimed at streamlining and giving additional effectiveness to the global regime for the nonproliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) increased substantially.

We worked consistently to consolidate the UN's role as the international coordination body in questions of peace and security playing a determinant role in disarmament affairs and the formation of international standards in the field of the nonproliferation of WMD and their delivery vehicles. We actively helped to adopt **resolution 1887** at the **United Nations summit** on September 24, having achieved the reflection in it of the topical concerns of the world community and of its desire to provide an adequate answer to existing global challenges associated with nuclear nonproliferation and disarmament. The resolution also shaped an extensive near-term action program to deal effectively with the common challenges and threats in the nuclear sphere.

A systemic task continued to be the all-out effort towards universalizing and strengthening the **Treaty on the Nonproliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT)** as a pillar for the system of collective security. Progress toward this end calls for the unconditional fulfillment by all NPT parties of their undertakings on the basis of the balance of the Treaty's three fundamental parts: nonproliferation, disarmament, and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy.

Russia worked to reinforce the NPT as a point of departure in dealing with international issues linked with the formation of optimal algorithms of cooperation in peaceful nuclear energy and with the determination of high global safekeeping and leak prevention standards for nuclear materials, equipment and the appropriate

technologies along with ensuring their non-diversion to military purposes. Russia consistently pursued a line designed to ensure that nonproliferation challenges that may arise, as well as disarmament tasks can and must be dealt with on the basis of the NPT.

Russia advocated for developing and universalizing the safeguards system of the **International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)**, inter alia through establishing the **Additional Protocol to the IAEA Safeguards Agreement** as a universally recognized norm for verifying NPT parties' compliance with their nonproliferation undertakings.

We made maximum use of the third session of the Preparatory Committee for the upcoming NPT Review Conference in May 2010 to deal with such topical tasks as developing IAEA verification capabilities and imparting a new impetus to the NPT-based multilateral formats.

Preparatory work was conducted to ensure the expeditious entry into force of the **Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)**, the launch at the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva of **Fissile Material Production Cutoff Treaty (FMCT)** negotiations and the expansion of regional areas free of nuclear weapons. At the 6th Conference on Facilitating the Entry into Force of the CTBT, the Russian side underlined the necessity of collective efforts to expeditiously turn the Treaty into an effective international legal instrument, and called upon states which have not yet signed or ratified the CTBT, and in the first place those on which its entry into force depends, to do so urgently and without any preconditions.

Foreground tasks continued to be preventing nuclear matériel and the related technologies from falling into the hands of non-state actors. Russia built up further the potential of multilateral cooperation accumulated in recent years, based both on UNSC resolution 1540 and on a conventional foundation, as well as international operating mechanisms like the **Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism** and export control regimes.

Active Russian effort was invariably demanded by regional nonproliferation challenges, including the **Iran and DPRK nuclear problems**. Our actions were

directed to solving these problems solely by politico-diplomatic methods: this line was pursued in the UN Security Council, in the IAEA and in collaboration with the six world powers on Iran, as well as with the partners in the Six-Party Talks on the Korean Peninsula nuclear problem.

Advance along the nonproliferation track, and consistent efforts to remove problem tangles on it, enabled Russia to create conditions for laying the foundation of a new architecture of international cooperation in the field of the peaceful atom, the basic element of which is designed to be multilateral approaches to the nuclear fuel cycle. The relevant Russian initiatives were pushed at such influential venues as the IAEA, which took decision to set up a guaranteed reserve of low-enriched uranium in Angarsk, Russia.

Tasks remained as urgent as they ever had been in getting preferential tariff treatment for Russia's high value added exports where the nuclear nomenclature held one of the leading places. The aim of Russian diplomacy was to provide equal political conditions for Russian companies in the world nuclear market subject to their observance of nonproliferation requirements, as well as to cut short attempts at targeted restrictions or at unfair competition under noncommercial pretexts. We conducted the appropriate work in export control regimes – the **Nuclear Suppliers Group** and the **Zangger Committee**.

Russia consistently honored its obligations under the **Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC)**. One month earlier than the deadline (December 31, 2009), we destroyed 45 percent or 18 thousand tons of our stocks. The chemical weapons destruction program in Russia is aimed at the complete elimination of all available arsenals by April 29, 2012 in line with the CWC requirements. The representatives of CWC states parties noted that Russia was firmly committed to fulfillment of its obligations under the Convention within the specified time, and that it was taking concrete measures toward this end.

The Russian side actively participated in the work of intersessional meetings of experts and of states parties to the **Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC)**, which are an important tool for developing the multilateral mechanism

for effective strengthening of the Convention. Russia demonstrated high interest in the work on reducing the risks of new epidemics and promoting general awareness of the tasks in bolstering the national and international mechanisms to prevent and combat infectious diseases. Within the framework of those meetings a constructive discussion took place on the issues of streamlining international cooperation in the biological sphere for peaceful purposes.

Efforts were made to attract gratuitous assistance for carrying out priority programs in the **G8 Global Partnership** – the destruction of chemical weapons and complete dismantling of decommissioned nuclear submarines. About US\$320 million was received for these purposes.

The activity of the UN General Assembly's First Committee intensified and became more constructive, which clearly manifested itself during the 64th General Assembly session.

The principal efforts were focused on pushing the Russian draft resolutions: "**Transparency and confidence-building measures in outer space activities**"; and "**Developments in the field of information and telecommunications in the context of international security**." A concrete positive result was obtained, with both documents approved by consensus. The number of countries cosponsoring the Russian initiatives increased. The high level of their international support proved the topicality of the issues raised by Russia and the world community's readiness to continue their in-depth and comprehensive consideration.

An active search continued for ways to unblock substantive activity within the framework of another principled component of the disarmament "triad" – the **Conference on Disarmament (CD)**. This work led to the fact that for the first time after a long interval, the Work Program of the Conference was adopted. This result, despite the Conference's failure to solve a number of procedural issues and to embark on practical activities, created a qualitatively new atmosphere at the CD, because, in particular, it sparked meaningful discussions on the draft submitted by Russia and China of a **Treaty on the Prevention of the Placement of Weapons**

in Outer Space, the Threat or Use of Force against Outer Space Objects, with the prospect of moving the theme on to a negotiation path.

Pursuant to the decision adopted at the Russian and US presidents' meeting in London on April 1, the sides engaged in intensive negotiations to develop a new legally binding agreement on reduction and limitation of strategic offensive arms to replace the **START Treaty**, which expired on Dec. 5. The basic parameters for a future treaty were set in the Joint Understanding on SOA, signed in Moscow on July 6.

December 4 saw the adoption of the Presidents' Joint Statement reaffirming the commitment by Russia and the US to continue their cooperation in the spirit of the START Treaty after its expiry, as well as the firm intention to ensure the entry into force of the new treaty as soon as possible.

Russia pursued a line on barring unilateral deployment of **strategic missile defense systems**. Using international forums as well as bilateral political contacts with the USA and key European countries, the representatives of Russia sought to bring home to the partners that excessively developing missile defense systems out of proportion to real threats could have an adverse effect on the maintenance of stability and international security.

After the American administration's decision to scrap plans to deploy fixed elements of a US strategic missile defense system in Europe, Russian-US dialogue was activated with the object of defining possible areas of anti-missile cooperation. This theme became one of the main items on the agenda for regular meetings of the Working Group on Arms Control and International Security, established under the Bilateral Presidential Commission.

The Russian side underlined the need to forge multilateral equal antimissile cooperation, inter alia by creating a "pool of antimissiles" of interested states and international organizations. The principal elements of this initiative are laid down in the Russian and US Presidents' Moscow Statement on Missile Defense of July 6. Russia embarked jointly with the United States on the gradual realization of the provisions of the document. The first round of Russian-US formal consultations on

missile challenge appraisal took place in December under auspices of the Russian Security Council.

At the end of 2009, in conjunction with the NATO states, ways were charted to resume activity lines of mutual interest for **cooperation in nonstrategic missile defense** under the auspices of the Russia-NATO Council.

Work continued on the explanation of the Russian initiative for imparting a global character to the **Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty**. Attention was again drawn to this initiative in the speech of Russian President Medvedev at the 64th UNGA session and in the Russian report at the session of the Preparatory Committee for the 2010 NPT Review Conference.

Russia helped promote regional stability in Europe through participation in the processes of the reduction and limitation of conventional armed forces, as well as by the application of current and adoption of new military confidence-building measures on the basis of the observance of the principle of equal security for all the parties.

In the European arms control domain, the situation surrounding the **Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty)** remained complicated. We continued the dialogue with the NATO nations on CFE problems, and held an array of multilateral and bilateral meetings. On May 5 the Russian side circulated a memo entitled “Restoring the Viability of the CFE Treaty: The Way Forward.” It pointed out the need to impart a balanced character to the “package solution” that must envision reciprocal actions by the parties (including enactment of the adapted Treaty, along with adoption of additional measures to bring it into conformity with the European security realities); and stressed that all controversial aspects should be tackled directly within the framework of the package so as to exclude divergent interpretations of the agreement.

As part of efforts to reinforce “hard” security in Europe, Russia widely used the possibilities offered by the **OSCE Forum for Security Cooperation (FSC)**. The recent revival of the activities of the FSC began to acquire the character of a relatively stable tendency, which found reflection in the decisions of the Athens

meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council (in particular, to launch targeted renewal of security and confidence building measures and make a contribution to perfecting the conflict prevention and resolution mechanisms).

The **Open Skies Treaty (OST)** continued to be successfully implemented, which helped to ensure the military security of the Russian Federation and bolster trust and transparency in the space stretching from Vancouver to Vladivostok. The OST member states, along with addressing several long-range technical problems, embarked on the preparation of the Second Review Conference for the Treaty, to be held in Vienna in June 2010.

Much attention was devoted to strengthening the cooperation of the Black and Caspian Sea littoral states in order to counter terrorism, the spread of WMD and other new challenges and threats.

Despite existing difficulties, discussion was renewed on giving appropriate functions to the **Black Sea Naval Co-operation Task Group (Blackseafor)**. The cooperation among the relevant naval forces in the format of **Operation Black Sea Harmony** was successfully continued.

Based on the Second Caspian Summit decisions, the littoral states' work on a Caspian Sea security cooperation agreement moved onto a more practical footing (with the participation of border and customs services, interior ministries and other concerned agencies). In October the first meeting at the level of deputy ministers of foreign affairs was held in Baku to discuss the draft of this agreement.

To increase the effectiveness of the **Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR)** there was launched an informal review initiated by Russia in 2008, for technological risks and threats in the missile sphere, meant to define how to adapt this mechanism to them. The MTCR Technical Annex continued to be improved along with pursuing a policy for priority accession to the Regime of states having large missile potentials and capable of contributing substantially to solving missile nonproliferation tasks.

Within the framework of the **Hague Code of Conduct** against Ballistic Missile Proliferation the Russian side actively raised the question of the fulfillment

by member states of their respective obligations and of getting, first and foremost, missile significant countries to accede to the Code.

Russia's participation in the **Wassenaar Arrangement on Export Controls for Conventional Arms and Dual-Use Goods and Technologies (WA)** aimed to give this mechanism practical orientation. The Russian side made maximum use of the WA capabilities to prevent the remilitarization of Georgia. We got the Russian initiative approved for carrying out an analysis of the fulfillment by Wassenaar of its major statutory function: to prevent destabilizing accumulations of conventional arms in general. And efforts continued to push a best practices document regarding control over the re-export of conventional arms.

Purposeful work was conducted towards Russia's accession to the Australia Group on nondiscriminatory terms.

We stepped up close cooperation in various bilateral and multilateral formats in the context of the implementation of **UN Security Council resolution 1540**, a basic framework for nonproliferation. In September-December with active Russian participation a comprehensive implementation review for this resolution took place in the course of which the Russian side presented a wide set of recommendations meant, first and foremost, to enhance the effectiveness of the work of the UNSC 1540 Committee and to consolidate its role as the coordinator of global efforts for the expeditious and full implementation of the resolution.

In the CIS sector, measures were underway to bring member states, first of all those of CSTO, up to the Russian standards in **export controls (EC)**. There were traditional inter-foreign ministry consultations in Moscow on a broad range of EC and nonproliferation issues (December).

Russia continued to actively participate in the review process for **Inhumane Weapons Convention (IWC)** and the protocols thereto, as well as in IWC talks on cluster munitions. The Russian position in the talks was such as to secure a balance between humanitarian and defense interests.

Vigorous foreign policy support was provided for the Russian Federation's **military-technical cooperation (MTC)** with foreign states. We worked to perfect

the legal framework for such collaboration and to prepare intergovernmental MTC agreements (one signed with Saudi Arabia). We signed agreements with Venezuela on intellectual property protection in the MTC area and on the protection of secret information.

The process continued to tidy up license agreements with ex-Warsaw Pact states with a view to their discontinuing the unauthorized production and re-export of Soviet/Russian-designed arms and military equipment.

To strengthen the position of the Russian defense-industrial complex in the world arms market, necessary assistance was provided for the participation of our enterprises in foreign arms and military equipment exhibitions, for the arrangement of similar exhibitions on the territory of Russia and for the participation of Russian enterprises in major foreign tenders for the supply of arms and military equipment.

Conflict Resolution and Crisis Response

The Russian Federation actively participated in resolving regional conflicts and crisis situations by politico-diplomatic means with reliance upon international law.

The Middle East settlement theme remained among the priority work areas for Russian diplomacy. Active work was conducted to normalize the situation in the Arab-Israeli zone of conflict.

In relation to Israel's military operation in the Gaza Strip in late December 2008 – January 2009, Russia called for an immediate end to bloodshed. Contacts with leading regional powers, the Quartet partners and other members of the world community were directed toward support of efforts for exit from the crisis. Russia actively contributed to the passage of SC resolution 1860 calling for an immediate, durable and fully respected ceasefire leading to the full withdrawal of Israeli forces from Gaza.

On May 11, a Russian-sponsored ministerial-level United Nations Security Council meeting on the Middle East was held under the chairmanship of Foreign

Minister Sergey Lavrov. The Council adopted a statement enshrining consensus in support of a two-state principle and a comprehensive solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict. It called for the expeditious resumption of talks between the Palestinians and Israelis on the basis of the existing legal framework. The objective of restoring Palestinian unity on the platform of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Arab peace initiative was reflected in the statement. The Security Council reaffirmed the Quartet's coordinating role and expressed unequivocal support for the convocation of a Moscow Conference on the Middle East.

Three meetings and a teleconference of the Middle East Quartet were held with the active participation of the head of Russian diplomacy.

The Russian Federation continued in various formats a line on helping **Iraq** to stabilize the situation in the country, suppress terrorism and restore normal life. Emphasis was laid on the importance of achieving national consensus on the basis of a broad dialogue involving the representatives of the major political forces and ethno-religious communities of Iraq.

Russia welcomed the compromise reached by the Iraqis in December over the new law on parliamentary elections, which were set for March 7, 2010. At the initiative of the Russian Central Election Commission, an agreement in principle was reached to provide technical assistance to the Iraqi side in the preparation and holding of the elections.

With regard to **Sudan**, assistance was rendered to efforts at implementing the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and resolving the situation in Darfur. To this end, Mikhail Margelov, special presidential representative for Sudan and chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Russian Federation Council, visited Sudan in January and December. A theoretical and practical conference on Sudan was held in October in Moscow on his initiative; it received a positive assessment from the UN, other international and regional bodies and the Sudanese themselves.

International tension over the **Iranian nuclear program** continued to linger. Russia as one of the six nations dealing with the program continued to exert efforts toward resolving the situation by political and diplomatic means.

The UN Security Council and the Six repeatedly called on Iran to cooperate fully with the IAEA to confirm the peaceful orientation of its nuclear program. On September 23 the six world powers held a ministerial meeting in New York, which adopted a joint statement. On September 24, the UNSC summit adopted resolution 1887 reaffirming the previous UNSC resolutions on Iran.

On October 1, a meeting between EU High Representative Javier Solana and Secretary of the Iranian Supreme National Security Council Saeed Jalili took place in Geneva with the participation of the political directors of the Six. The meeting ended with the parties reaching a mutual understanding that Tehran would grant IAEA inspectors unfettered access to the uranium enrichment facility being built near the city of Qom and that the representatives of Russia, the US, France, Iran and the IAEA would meet to go through the technical aspects of a scheme for the Iranians to ship most of their low enriched uranium abroad for its upgrading and processing into fuel assemblies for the Tehran research reactor (the meeting was held in Vienna on October 19-21).

In conjunction with the findings of the report of the IAEA Director General on Iran, dated November 16, about Tehran's violation of some of its obligations under the Safeguards Agreement with regard to the facility being built near the city of Qom, the IAEA Board of Governors, in its meeting in November, with Russia's support adopted a resolution on Iran by a majority of votes urging Tehran to ensure the fulfillment of the appropriate UNSC resolutions, including suspension of the construction of the facility near Qom, as well as to apply all transparency measures in accordance with IAEA demands.

It was assumed that Iran would take the signal in the resolution of the IAEA Board of Governors most seriously. But this did not happen. Furthermore, Tehran announced its intention to radically expand its nuclear activities contrary to the UN Security Council resolutions and IAEA Board of Governors decisions.

We continued to work energetically to find ways to resolve the **Korean Peninsula nuclear problem** – denuclearize the peninsula completely, irreversibly and verifiably in line with the NPT norms and standards, including renunciation by

Pyongyang of all nuclear weapons and the corresponding nuclear programs and the return of the DPRK to the NPT and the IAEA safeguards regime. We consistently stood up for the necessity of a political and diplomatic solution and, to this end, the expeditious resumption of Six-Party Talks (Russia, China, the DPRK, the Republic of Korea, the USA and Japan) with the participation of the IAEA. In response to Pyongyang's second nuclear test, UNSC resolution 1874 was passed with Russian support, and sanctions were imposed against the DPRK.

Special attention was devoted to shaping – through the Six-Party process – the foundations for a Northeast Asia Peace and Security Mechanism. The relevant working group agreed on the principled content of the Russian draft of the Guiding Principles for Peace and Security in the region.

Russia was consistently in favor of a diminution in the level of confrontation and the alleviation of tension in inter-Korean relations. In contacts with the leaders of the DPRK and the ROK we urged resumption of dialogue and cooperation and the solution of the existing problems by peaceful, politico-diplomatic means.

Russia's proposals for large-scale three-way (Russia-DPRK-ROK) projects like connecting the Trans-Korean and Trans-Siberian Railways, and building a gas pipeline for the supply of Russian gas to the Republic of Korea and a high-voltage power transmission line across the territory of the DPRK also corresponded to the interests of forging mutually beneficial cooperation.

The situation in the **Islamic Republic of Afghanistan** (IRA) continued to be extremely tense. Extremist groups active on its territory managed to expand their presence in the earlier relatively quiet northern provinces of the country and carry out a series of large-scale terrorist attacks in the Afghan capital. Under conditions of domestic political instability, Afghanistan continued being a source of narcotic and terrorist threats posing a serious challenge to the national security of Russia.

Neutralizing the threats and helping to build the capacity of the authorities of the IRA in the struggle against them remained the priority of the Russian Afghan policy. In this conjunction we reinforced bilateral cooperation with Afghanistan on the antinarcotics and antiterrorist fronts, particularly in a regional format, with the

use of SCO and CSTO capabilities. A legal base was created for Russian-Afghan collaboration in the anti-drug drive. Russia trained national, including military and antinarcotics, cadres for Afghanistan, and gave substantial humanitarian, military-technical and educational assistance to the IRA.

Within the bounds of the policy approved by the President, Russia took steps aimed at hindering the formation of an independent **legal personality for Kosovo**, and resisted the attempts of Kosovo joining international entities, in particular, the World Customs Organization. Russia acted in coordination with Belgrade and with other states not recognizing the unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence.

On the basis of a principled stand, Russia presented on April 16 its statement to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) with regard to the UN General Assembly inquiry whether Kosovo's UDI conforms to international law. The representatives of Russia took an active part in the ICJ proceedings on this subject (The Hague, December) and helped suspend the process of recognition of Kosovo's "statehood" by foreign countries.

Russia insisted on the precise observance of UN Security Council resolution 1244 in the reconfiguration of the international presences in Kosovo, and strove for the preservation of the supremacy of the politico-administrative role of the UN as represented by its mission in Kosovo, and to ensure that the EU's mission EULEX deployed there on the basis of the accords reached in the UNSC, strictly observed the principle of neutrality regarding the status of Kosovo.

Regular preemptive work was conducted with a number of western countries in order to curb extremist-minded Albanian circles as well as to avert use of force to "discipline" Kosovo Serb leaders.

Upon concurrence with the Serbian side, work continued on the elaboration of the projects to restore Orthodox shrines in Kosovo under the aegis of UNESCO.

Under the Medvedev-Sarkozy agreement, 5 rounds of **Geneva Discussions on Stability and Security in Transcaucasia** involving delegations of the Republic of Abkhazia, the Republic of South Ossetia, Georgia, Russia, the US, EU, UN and OSCE were held in 2009.

Russia's priority was to provide reliable security for Abkhazia and South Ossetia on the basis of bilateral arrangements with these republics. This primarily implied conclusion of legally binding agreements on the nonuse of force between Georgia, on one hand, and South Ossetia and Abkhazia, on the other. The Abkhaz, Russian and South Ossetian sides presented concrete elements of drafts of such agreements directed at a real reduction of tension and the restoration of trust in the region.

Furthermore, the discussion of humanitarian issues was an important, but not derived-from-the-security-sphere component of Geneva Discussions. The Russian Federation supported the universally recognized humanitarian principles for return of refugees – safety, voluntariness and dignity.

September 30 saw the publication of the Tagliavini Commission's report, the principal conclusion of which is unambiguous – the current leadership of Georgia unleashed the aggression against South Ossetia in August 2008 in violation of the principles of international law.

The joint incident prevention and response mechanisms began to work in the area of the Georgian-South Ossetia and Georgian-Abkhaz borders, the proposals for which had been agreed in February in Geneva. The work of the mechanisms envisions participation of representatives of all the local structures responsible for law and order and security and of international organizations (UN, EU and OSCE). A 24-hour hotline was in place.

The joint incident prevention and response mechanism in the Georgia-South Ossetia border area was launched in April, leading to 8 meetings during 2009. The main themes: the issue of detained Ossetians and Georgians, exchange of border incident information, border-crossing procedures. In November the South Ossetian side suspended participation in the mechanism, tying its continuation to clarifying the fate of Ossetians who have been detained and gone missing on the territory of Georgia over the last two years.

July saw the beginning of regular meetings on the Georgian-Abkhaz border as well. Regarding places for meetings it was decided to hold them alternately in

Gal, Abkhazia, and Zugdidi, Georgia. The main issues: crossing the border on the river Ingur, especially by schoolchildren; incidents in the border strip, the sides' military maneuvers; the sea blockade of Abkhazia.

Under the conditions of persistent tension in the zones adjacent to Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Geneva Discussions provided a way to remove the acuteness of the problems that had piled up through information exchange and joint discussion of acceptable security and confidence building measures.

In **Nagorno Karabakh settlement**, we stepped up efforts to assist the sides in the quest for a mutually acceptable solution to the Nagorno Karabakh conflict in the spirit of the propositions of the Declaration of Armenia, Azerbaijan and Russia, signed at the highest level in Moscow on November 2, 2008.

Both as an OSCE Minsk Group co-chair and on its own, Russia vigorously helped to achieve positive dynamics of the negotiation process. On July 10, at the Group of Eight summit in L'Aquila, the presidents of the OSCE Minsk Group Co-Chair countries (Russia, the US and France) adopted a joint statement on Nagorno Karabakh urging the parties to resolve the remaining differences and affirmed their commitment to support the leaders of Armenia and Azerbaijan as they finalize the Basic Principles for Settlement.

On Medvedev's proposal, three meetings of the presidents of Armenia and Azerbaijan on Nagorno Karabakh took place in 2009 with his participation: in St. Petersburg (June), Moscow (July) and Chisinau (October), along with six bilateral Armenia-Azerbaijan meetings at summit level. The meetings helped the parties to agree individual elements of the Basic Principles for Settlement being discussed by them.

In conditions of the completion of the first and the beginning of the second round of direct talks between the leaders of the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot communities, following its principled **Cyprus settlement** policy, Russia continued to dialogue regularly with all parties involved in the Cyprus settlement process to help them reach a comprehensive, just and viable settlement based on the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. We stood against unilateral outside actions and

attempts to impose any recipes or calendars of settlement and external arbitration on the Cyprus communities.

Within the framework of efforts to provide favorable conditions for reaching a Cyprus settlement, Russia was actively involved in elaborating resolution 1898 adopted by the UNSC on December 14, which extended the mandate of the United Nations Force in Cyprus with no changes until June 15, 2010.

Inter-Civilization Dialogue

The promotion of inter-civilization dialogue continued being in the center of attention of Russian diplomacy. An important role in this field of activity belongs to the **Alliance of Civilizations** (AoC) set up in 2005 under the aegis of the United Nations. Russia supported the development of this inter-civilization structure, and regularly took part in the events conducted within its framework.

In particular, a Russian delegation participated in the Second Forum of the Alliance that was held in Istanbul in April. The Forum showed the growing interest of the world community in inter-civilization problems, demonstrated the relevance of the Alliance of Civilizations and provided impetus for its further activities.

The representatives of Russia also took part in the ministerial meeting of the Alliance held on the sidelines of the 64th General Assembly session in September in New York, in the High-Level Roundtable on the Social Integration of Migrants held under AoC auspices during the same period, and in the Meeting of the Focal Points of the Alliance of Civilizations' Group of Friends in November in Rabat, Morocco.

Russia's National Plan to develop relations with the Alliance of Civilizations became the groundwork for our engagement with this inter-civilization entity. It was officially handed over to the AoC Secretariat in June. The key provisions of the plan correspond to the Alliance's principal areas of activity: education, youth policy, mass media, and migration. It also includes sections dedicated to cultural and religious themes. The implementation of the National Plan presupposes broad

cooperation by state institutions with nongovernmental organizations and members of the academic community and other segments of civil society.

Within the UN, Russian delegations took an active part in the work of such permanent mechanisms as the Tripartite Forum on Interfaith Cooperation for Peace and Ministerial Meetings on Interfaith Dialogue and Cooperation for Peace. Our representatives cosponsored the resolution entitled “**Promotion of Inter-Religious and Intercultural Dialogue, Understanding and Cooperation for Peace**” that was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December.

We helped to push the initiatives of the Russian Orthodox Church to create advisory councils on interfaith dialogue within international organizations.

In furtherance of the ROC initiative to set up an advisory High-Level Group (HLG) on Interfaith Dialogue under auspices of the Director General of **UNESCO**, a meeting between UNESCO Director General Koichiro Matsuura, and Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia and a number of world religious leaders was held in Moscow in July. They agreed the general parameters for the functioning of the HLG “in a cooperative partnership” with UNESCO. The meeting participants were received by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

On June 29-30, Strasbourg served as the venue for the Second Exchange on the religious dimension of intercultural dialogue, an annual event organized by the Committee of Ministers of the **Council of Europe**. The theme of this exchange was “Teaching religious and convictional facts - A tool for acquiring knowledge about religions and beliefs in education; a contribution to education for democratic citizenship, human rights and intercultural dialogue.” The representatives of the Russian Orthodox Church took part.

The **Russia-Islamic World Strategic Vision Group** continued its activities. In December its fifth meeting took place in Kuwait City. Among the main tasks before the Group are the expansion of Russian cooperation with Muslim countries and facilitation of the development and strengthening of inter-civilization dialogue. Two international conferences were dedicated to this theme: “The CIS Muslims

Are for Interfaith and Interethnic Harmony” and “Russia and the Islamic World: Partnership for Stability,” held in Moscow in the summer and autumn.

The **World Public Forum “Dialogue of Civilizations”** continued to make a weighty contribution to encouraging contacts among members of the intellectual, political, cultural, religious, and business elites of different countries. Its activities were concentrated on the quest for a conceptual basis for preserving the coherence of the world community in the contemporary global situation, and prospects of the formation of a post-crisis world.

GEOGRAPHICAL DIRECTIONS OF FOREIGN POLICY

CIS Space

Deepening of integration processes in the **Commonwealth of Independent States** space remained a priority thrust area for Russian foreign policy. A meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of State (Chisinau, October), two meetings of the Council of Heads of Government (Astana, May; Yalta, November), and two meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers (Ashgabat, April; Chisinau, October) took place.

The global financial and economic crisis induced the CIS countries to search for joint measures and tools to counter its adverse effects. The standing conference of finance ministers of the CIS member states began working, the result of whose activity at this stage became the preparation of a Draft Plan to carry out the joint measures of the CIS member states to overcome the effects of the global financial and economic crisis for the years 2009-2010, which was approved at a meeting of the CIS Council of Heads of Government on November 20 in Yalta.

Vigorous efforts continued to bring to fruition the CIS Further Development Concept and the Plan of Principal Measures for its realization. The questions of the economy were at the forefront of collective collaboration within the CIS. The CIS Council of Heads of Government (CHG) in May approved a Plan of Measures to

realize the first stage (2009-2011) of the CIS Economic Development Strategy to 2020.

2009 was declared the Year of Energy in the CIS. A Concept for Energy Cooperation among member countries, and an Agreement for the Coordinated Development of International Transport Corridors running through their territory were signed at a CHG meeting in November, which also approved Guidelines for Long-Term Innovation Cooperation among member countries. The fulfillment of the tasks set in these documents will make it possible to enhance the stability of the economic development of all member countries and to strengthen their position in the global economic system.

One of the key priorities of CIS activity remained promotion of cooperation in the humanitarian sphere. Special attention was devoted to getting ready for the celebration of the 65th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War, taking into account the national programs (packages of measures) adopted in the member countries. There operates the Plan of Joint Measures in this sphere, as approved by the Heads of State in October 2008. The CIS leaders, at a Chisinau summit, signed a Joint Message to the CIS Nations and the World Public in Conjunction with the Sixty-Fifth Anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War 1941-1945 and a Decision to Declare 2010 in the CIS as Year of the Veterans of the Great Patriotic War under the motto "We Won Together".

Work was conducted to carry out the Plan of Priority Measures in the Sphere of Humanitarian Collaboration of the CIS Member States for 2009-2010, approved on May 22 at a CHG meeting in Astana. As part of the practice of holding thematic years, 2009 was declared Year of Youth in the Commonwealth space.

To step up the work and create proper conditions for the activity of the CIS Interstate Humanitarian Cooperation Fund (IHCF), the Government of the Russian Federation signed in Moscow on April 22 an Agreement with the IHCF on terms of its presence on the territory of the Russian Federation, with immediate effect. On September 24-25, the fourth forum of creative and scientific intellectuals was successfully held in Chisinau.

Efforts continued to streamline the Commonwealth institutions. The Council of Heads of State, at a meeting in Chisinau, approved a new version of the Rules of Procedure of the CIS Council of Heads of State, Council of Heads of Government, Council of Foreign Ministers, and Economic Council. This document aims at more effective work of the major statutory bodies, and complements the Regulation on Chairmanship in the Commonwealth and the Regulation on National Coordinators of Member States, approved in October 2008.

The Chisinau summit took decision to hand over the chairmanship of the CIS to the Russian Federation in 2010. There were prepared, and approved by the President of Russia, a Russian Chairmanship Concept and an Implementation Plan which were presented to the leaders of the CIS countries.

On August 18, Georgia's decision to withdraw from the CIS, adopted a year prior to this, took effect. This, however, did not influence the further development of the Commonwealth. Georgia retained its participation in the treaties concluded within the CIS framework the list of which was approved at a Council of Heads of State meeting in Chisinau on October 9.

The Eurasian Economic Community (EurAsEC) confirmed its role as the nucleus of economic integration within the CIS space. 2009 saw the completion of the legal framework for the **Customs Union (CU)** of a EurAsEC trio **consisting of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia**, which enabled the CU to start activities on Jan. 1, 2010. A CU supranational body – the Customs Union Commission – began work. Measures adopted included the CU Customs Code, the Unified Commodity Nomenclature of Foreign Economic Activity in CU, the Unified Customs Tariff, the Unified System of Measures of Nontariff Regulation, and the Unified List of Goods, to which apply prohibitions or restrictions on import or export by the CU member countries in trade with third countries (with effect from January 1, 2010). The decision was taken to commence operation of the single customs territory of CU from July 1, 2010.

A further step was taken towards ensuring the next, after the Customs Union, integration stage – an informal meeting of the leaders of the three states in

Almaty on December 19 approved a plan to establish a Single Economic Space of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan. The work for its implementation was organized.

Planning work was conducted on strengthening and adapting the EurAsEC to the needs of member states. An Anti-Crisis Fund commenced operation within the Community. Joint anti-crisis measures were being developed in the format of a working group at the level of deputy ministers of economy. The Community's Plan of Joint Measures to ensure the progressive development of member economies in conditions of the world financial crisis was adopted, along with steps undertaken to establish within the Community a new separate area of cooperation – in science, technology and innovation. A EurAsEC Center for High Technology was set up.

A line on bolstering the **Collective Security Treaty Organization (CSTO)** and transforming it further into a multifunctional security entity was consistently pursued. To strengthen the CSTO's instruments of response to security threats for member states, the decision was taken to create a Collective Operational Reaction Force (CORF) of the CSTO. The Agreement on the CORF was signed at a session of the CSTO Collective Security Council on June 14. The purpose of the Force is to repulse military aggression, to conduct special operations against international terrorism, extremism, transnational organized crime and drug trafficking, as well as to neutralize the effects of natural and man-made disasters.

Bilateral relations in the CIS space received a further boost.

The **Russia-Belarus relationship** was marked by the continuation of robust integration processes and by a further strengthening of the economic foundation of union building. Political dialogue continued to be intensive: during the year, eight meetings between the presidents of Russia and Belarus took place, as well as two Supreme State Council sessions and three sessions of the Council of Ministers of the Union State. Collaboration at the level of agencies was distinguished by high effectiveness: joint collegium meetings of the defense, finance, economy, foreign affairs ministries, prosecutor general's offices, account chambers, and meetings of the customs and border committees of the Union State were held during the year.

In the trade and economic sphere, priority attention was paid to carrying out the measures aimed at countering the impact of the global financial and economic crisis on the economies of Russia and Belarus. Despite a certain fall in their mutual trade, the level of cooperative and manufacturing ties was generally preserved. In fact, Belarus's share in Russia's foreign trade even rose to 5.1%. To ensure stable economic and social development of Belarus, Russia extended a \$500 million state credit to Minsk.

The conduct of the large-scale West-2009 strategic exercises bears testimony to the intensive Russia-Belarus cooperation in the realm of collective security.

Considerable attention was invariably devoted to providing equal rights for the citizens of Russia and Belarus. In particular, the Agreement on Free Movement and Choice of Residence took effect. It envisages freeing Russians and Belarusians from the need to register and report to migration authorities within 30 days.

Cultural links continued to be close. The Year of Russian Culture in Belarus was a great success, and in 2010 a Year of Belarus Culture is planned to be held in the Russian Federation.

Relations with **Ukraine** did not evolve smoothly. They bore the imprint of the unstable domestic political situation that grew tense as the presidential election drew nearer. First of all, the purposeful Russophobic policy of President Viktor Yushchenko and his retinue, attempts to play the "Russia card" in the pre-election struggle, were a cause for deep concern.

Remaining unacceptable for Russia was the line of the Ukrainian leadership on consciously distorting our common history, along with making heroes of Nazi accomplices, intensively ousting the Russian language from various spheres of life in Ukrainian society, artificially foisting upon the international community a thesis about the mass famine of 1932-1933 in the Soviet Union as a "genocide against the Ukrainian people," illegally confiscating units of Russian property in the Crimea, and infringing on the rights of Russian businesses. A practice of barring Russian politicians and public figures from entry into Ukraine continued to be applied.

Russia had to vigorously counteract attempts by the Ukrainian side to make the normal functioning of the Russian Black Sea Fleet stationed on the territory of Ukraine difficult.

The problems in Russia-Ukraine relations forced Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to send an open letter to the President of Ukraine on August 6, in which the “sore spots” in bilateral cooperation were clearly identified.

At the same time, the intergovernmental cooperation format remained fully functional: Moscow, then Yalta hosted the fourth and fifth meetings of the Russia-Ukraine Interstate Commission’s Committee on Economic Cooperation, led by the prime ministers of the two countries. Other structural units of the commission also functioned on a regular basis.

Considerable attention was devoted to cooperation with Ukraine in the gas sphere. After settlement of the crisis in January on the basis of the contracts signed between Gazprom and Naftogas of Ukraine, the question of timely payment for the supply of Russian gas to Ukraine was solved and its uninterrupted transit to Europe ensured.

In view of the adverse influence of the world financial crisis on the national economies of the two countries, a noticeable reduction in mutual trade failed to be avoided as of year-end.

Contacts were maintained at the level of ministers of foreign affairs. On Oct. 6-7, the heads of the foreign affairs agencies met in Kharkiv with the governors of the border regions of Russia and Ukraine to discuss substantively measures aimed at reinvigorating cross-border and interregional ties.

There was an intensive exchange of views on European and global security, inter alia through the prism of efforts to push the Russian initiative to conclude a European Security Treaty. In a joint statement on December 4, Russia and the US reaffirmed the security guarantees in the Budapest Memorandums of December 5, 1994 for Ukraine along with the Republic of Belarus and Republic of Kazakhstan.

A major event was the late July-early August pastoral visit of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia to Ukraine. The visit made an important contribution to

preserving unity between the peoples of the two countries as well as to overcoming contradictions in the Ukrainian Orthodoxy.

The sharpening of domestic political problems in the **Republic of Moldova**, due to a polarization of political forces there, directly impacted Russian-Moldovan dialogue. There was reaffirmed on the Russian side the interest in maintaining the policy towards deepening the bilateral partnership, integration cooperation within the CIS and towards reinforcing the sovereignty and neutral status of the Republic of Moldova.

Interaction continued in tackling the Transnistrian issue, taking into account the favorable conditions created by the meeting in Moscow (March) of the leaders of the parties in conflict and the agreement reached by them through the mediation of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

Russian relations with **Abkhazia** and **South Ossetia** bore the character of allied, partner ties. Political dialogue at the top level (three meetings with Abkhaz President Sergey Bagapsh took place, and two with President Eduard Kokoity of South Ossetia) and at the level of senior officials and ministers was substantive and frank. Ties intensified under auspices of legislative and executive bodies, as did interregional cooperation. The principles of Russian policy laid down at the period of recognizing the republics' independence remained unchanged.

There was formed the interstate juridical base of relations, predicated on the treaties of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance. An important addition to them came with the agreements on cooperation in state border protection and in the military field, meant to reinforce security not only for the republics, but the region as well. During 2009, Russia signed a total of 24 interstate, intergovernmental and interdepartmental documents with Abkhazia, and 25 with South Ossetia.

A priority task was to carry out the socioeconomic development assistance agreements, and the comprehensive plans to rehabilitate social facilities, housing and utilities, power supply, communication and mass communications, education, health care, agriculture and transport. The comprehensive plan with South Ossetia comprises 909 projects. Significantly, on the day marking the one-year anniversary

of Russia's recognition of South Ossetia's independence a gas pipeline between Dzurikau (North Ossetia) and Tskhinval was put on stream. A similar plan is being realized with Abkhazia. Its first stage covers the years 2010-2012 and provides for allocating 10.9 billion rubles to establish a transport and logistics center, develop tourism and recreation zones, and reconstruct administrative buildings, social and cultural facilities, housing and utilities.

The comprehensive plans are designed to assist substantially in rehabilitating the economy and infrastructure, and increasing goods and services production and population incomes while reducing unemployment.

In Abkhazia and South Ossetia interdepartmental humanitarian events were conducted under the motto "Mutual Assistance. Cooperation. Security" aiming at providing aid to the population, creating a mechanism of interaction with executive bodies, security agencies and the scientific and cultural community of the republics and stabilizing the sanitary and epidemiological situation there.

Throughout 2009, relations between Russia and **Georgia** remained actually frozen. Official Tbilisi continued a consistent anti-Russian policy aimed at wiping out the spiritual, cultural and kinship ties of Russians and Georgians. Under these conditions, Russia demonstrated the readiness to restore ties between the Russian and Georgian peoples, but not with the Saakashvili regime. The opening on March 5 of the respective interests sections at the Swiss embassies in Tbilisi and Moscow makes it possible to smooth over the negative consequences of the irresponsible decision of Tbilisi to sever diplomatic relations with Russia, for our compatriots in Georgia and the large Georgian diaspora in Russia, along with dealing with urgent consular and humanitarian matters. After an exchange of notes the Verkhniy Lars and Kazbegi checkpoint on the Russia-Georgia border was opened from March 1. Considering the humanitarian significance of air links with Georgia, the Russian side gave consent to the execution of a series of charter flights to Moscow and St. Petersburg during the New Year and Christmas season.

Saakashvili's regime continued to rearm its army and restored the previous military potential. Russia called on the international community to refuse to supply

arms to the Georgian side in order to exclude a recurrence of those tragic events in Transcaucasia.

A policy of strengthening the partner elements in relations with **Azerbaijan** was consistently pursued, and steps were undertaken to introduce new forms of long-term mutually beneficial cooperation. A rich political dialogue was underway. Seven meetings between the leaders of the two countries took place. The President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, made a working visit to Baku (June). The mutual understanding at the top level facilitated creating favorable conditions for progress in all areas of interaction.

The world crisis exerted a certain adverse influence on the indices of mutual trade with Azerbaijan. In the first 11 months of 2009 the trade turnover constituted \$1.6 billion, or 26.5% less compared to the similar period of 2008. At the same time the realization commenced of Russia's large investment projects in the food industry (May) and the banking sphere (November) of Azerbaijan. The signing of a medium-term contract for the supply in 2010-2014 of Azerbaijani gas to Russia (Oct.) opened a new page in bilateral relations. The intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation held its 12th meeting in May, which attested to the strong ties in this field.

Military and military-technical cooperation was effected with regard for the need to maintain a balance of forces in the Caucasus region. The third meeting of the bilateral intergovernmental commission on MTC (July) ended with the signing of a Program for Cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Republic of Azerbaijan in the Military and Military-Technical Fields for 2009-2012.

Traditionally, humanitarian ties were actively developed. In Baku a Russian Center of Science and Culture was formally opened in March, along with a branch of Lomonosov Moscow State University in February and a Russian Book House in November. Russian Cultural Days were held in Azerbaijan (September) and Days of Azerbaijan in Russia (June).

There continued the high positive momentum of **Russian-Armenian** partner relations, for which the regular, rich political dialogue at the highest level set the

tone. Interagency contacts were stably maintained; intergovernmental commissions for economic and techno-military cooperation, an inter-parliamentary commission on collaboration, and joint sectoral bodies operated. The juridical base of relations was being streamlined.

As of year-end, Russia again took a leading place among Armenia's foreign economic partners. Even though the bilateral trade turnover decreased somewhat under the impact of the world financial crisis, growth of Russian investment in the Armenian economy was still substantial thanks to coordinated anti-crisis measures. Its accumulated volume reached US\$2.4 billion. The implementation of investment projects continued in the gas and power industries and in railway transport. The improvement in crisis conditions of the performance indices of the railway ferry between the ports of Kavkaz and Poti demonstrated the promising prospects of this route. A Russian long-term stabilization credit of US\$500 million was extended to Armenia in June.

In April a Russian Center of Science and Culture opened in Yerevan, meant to become the main venue for the development of humanitarian contacts. A Season of Armenian Culture was held in Russia.

The tour of several Russian regions by Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan bore testimony to the expansion of interregional ties.

Russia and Armenia constructively cooperated within the integration formats in the CIS space and in the foreign policy sphere.

The Russian Federation continued to pursue an active foreign policy in **Central Asia**, directed to ensuring stable and secure development of the region. Primary attention was paid to bilateral relations, and simultaneously this work was reinforced by appropriate efforts through regional structures: CSTO, EurAsEC and SCO.

In conditions of the world financial and economic crisis, economic and trade cooperation remained a priority thrust, above all in the energy sphere. In particular, work continued on the preparation for realization of the agreement between Russia,

Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan to build a Caspian pipeline – an important tool for ensuring the energy security of Russia and the Central Asian states.

Russia attached paramount significance to providing assistance to the states of the region in the fight against regional security challenges and threats: terrorism, extremism, illicit drug trafficking, and organized crime emanating first of all from the territory of neighboring Afghanistan where the situation kept deteriorating.

Progressive development of relations continued with **Kazakhstan**, a leading strategic partner and ally of Russia in the Central Asian region. Traditionally, the political dialogue was intensive: the presidents met 11 times, regular contacts were maintained at the level of prime ministers and ministers of foreign affairs.

A number of important decisions aimed at deepening the bilateral integration processes were adopted at the Sixth Russia-Kazakhstan Interregional Cooperation Forum with the participation of the presidents of the two countries in Orenburg. The expansion of the format of the event from cross-border to interregional level is evidence of the significant potential of this form of collaboration.

The successful fulfillment of the Russia-Kazakhstan Plan of Joint Action for 2009-2010 determined the positive growth dynamics of relations in the areas of outer space, military technology, scientific and humanitarian cooperation, transport and communications and the fuel and energy sector.

In the economic domain, Russia and Kazakhstan undertook joint steps to overcome the adverse effects of the global financial and economic crisis. Despite a certain decrease in the index of annual trade turnover (about \$14 billion, according to preliminary estimates), the qualitative parameters for cooperation in strategically important branches of the economy underwent no substantial change.

Uzbekistan remained one of the strategic partners of Russia. The leadership of Uzbekistan was supportive of Russia's foreign policy and economic initiatives in the region and the world. At the same time, Tashkent continued to hold a special position on a number of international issues.

On January 22-23, the state visit of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to Uzbekistan took place. Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov paid an official visit to Tashkent on December 21-22.

Mutual trade in 2009 amounted to about \$3 billion. According to this index, Uzbekistan held fourth place in Russian foreign trade with the CIS countries. Work continued on streamlining the legal framework for bilateral cooperation, including in the fields of MTC and labor migration.

Work continued on deepening partner collaboration with **Kyrgyzstan**. In the course of the February visit to Moscow by Kyrgyz President Kurmanbek Bakiyev intergovernmental agreements were signed envisaging the participation of Russia in building the country's largest Kambaratin Hydropower Plant-1, the repayment of a part of Kyrgyzstan's debt to Russia in kind and the write-off of the rest of it. At the same time, in view of the country's difficult economic position, Russia gave a soft loan and gratuitous financial aid to Kyrgyzstan.

Within the framework of the fulfillment of the Memorandum of Intention on the Further Development of Bilateral Military Cooperation, the parties essentially completed the preparations for conclusion of an interstate agreement on the legal status and conditions governing the presence of Russia's combined military base in Kyrgyzstan, which will fix all Russian military facilities there, including the Kant Air Base.

Cooperation between Russia and **Tajikistan** was marked by the heightened intensity of top level contacts. Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon made a working visit to Moscow on February 24, and paid a state visit to Russia from October 22-23.

As part of a working visit to Tajikistan from July 30-31, Russian President Medvedev took part in the official launch ceremony at Sangtuda-1 HPP, built with the participation of Russian capital. Dmitry Medvedev also had a meeting with the presidents of Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan in which the issue of ensuring regional security was discussed.

Cooperation continued to develop in the drive against illicit drug trafficking and organized crime. A bilateral intergovernmental agreement on collaboration in combating illicit traffic in and abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and an agreement on cooperation between the prosecutor general offices of the two countries were signed.

The opening of a branch of Moscow State University in the Tajik capital was a major event in Russia-Tajikistan humanitarian cooperation. There was signed an intergovernmental agreement on activities of the branches of the tertiary education institutions of the two countries within Russia and Tajikistan.

Bilateral trade in January-October 2009 fell 25.6% compared to the similar period of 2008 and amounted to US\$621.2 million, which was due to the effects of the global financial and economic crisis.

For relations with **Turkmenistan** 2009 was marked by a high intensity of political dialogue. The countries exchanged four top-level visits. The outcomes of the meetings of the heads of state provided a positive impulse for further growth of cooperation in all areas, and played a decisive role in finding a mutually acceptable solution to the problem of resuming the supply of Turkmen natural gas to Russia, which had ceased in April because of an accident on the Central Asia-Center gas pipeline section that runs across the territory of Turkmenistan.

While giving priority to collaboration in the fuel and energy sector, the sides undertook steps to further cooperation in agriculture, transportation, education and culture and in other areas. The coordinating role of the bilateral intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation stood ever more clearly revealed.

Regional ties received a further boost. During the visits of the leaders of St. Petersburg, the Astrakhan Region and Tatarstan to Ashgabat, contracts were signed for the participation of the business circles of these regions in the modernization of the infrastructure of Turkmenistan, in shipbuilding and in the manufacturing of sea drilling rigs.

Good results were achieved in the fields of education and culture. A Pushkin Russian-Turkmen Secondary School was built in Ashgabat with Gazprom financial support. In April, Russian Cultural Days were held in Turkmenistan.

Europe

Efforts of Russian diplomacy were focused on pushing further the initiative advanced by the President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, to conclude a **European Security Treaty**, which is designed to reflect the new realities in the Euro-Atlantic space, to put a seal of finality to the Cold War era and to enshrine in international law the principle of the indivisibility of security. Russia suggests that the initiative be discussed at various international venues involving multilateral organizations – OSCE, NATO, CSTO, EU and CIS.

Following thorough international discussions the Russian side prepared and sent a draft of the Treaty to the leaders of the countries and executive heads of the international organizations in the Euro-Atlantic space. The purport of the draft is to impart a legally binding character to the previous undertakings that no one in the Euro-Atlantic space would try to secure himself at others' expense, and to agree a mechanism to apply the principle of indivisible security in practice when a party to the Treaty thinks that his security is encroached upon. The Euro-Atlantic states and organizations active in the politico-military security area were invited to participate in the Treaty.

The main objective of Russian policy in relations with the **European Union** remained unchanged: to build an equal, mutually beneficial strategic partnership. To achieve this objective, consistent efforts were undertaken to bring to fruition the road maps for the development of the Four Common Spaces: common economic space; space for freedom, security and justice; space for co-operation on external security; and space for research, education and culture. Talks on a new Russia-EU framework agreement were actively promoted. In the course of the seven rounds of

talks (five of them – in 2009) considerable work was done to agree the text of the document that made it possible to move to editing the consolidated agreement text.

Two Russia-EU summits (Khabarovsk, May 22; Stockholm, November 18); a Government of Russia-European Commission meeting (Moscow, February 6); meetings of the Russia-EU Permanent Partnership Council at the level of ministers of foreign affairs (April, October), as also on energy (April), on freedom, security and justice (May, December) and on environment and ecology (November) took place. There was a Russia-EU foreign ministers meeting in a 1+27 format arranged on the fringes of the UN General Assembly session. Practical cooperation between the sides continued within the framework of sectoral dialogues, totaling sixteen in 2009.

The global financial and economic crisis and the steep fall in prices for raw materials, especially primary energy carriers, had an adverse effect on the indices of economic and trade relations between Russia and the EU (gross trade turnover for January-October 2009 stood at US\$185.8 billion, a decrease of 44.2 percent over the similar period of 2008). Despite the fact that the character of relations did not change and the European Union retained its position as the principal trade and economic partner of Russia, cooperation by the sides in overcoming the negative trends in the world economy and establishing a new financial architecture acquired special significance in these circumstances.

Considerable attention was devoted to questions of the partnership between Russia and the EU in building an effective structure of European security and on climate change and energy security issues. A Memorandum on an Early Warning Mechanism in the Energy Sector within the Framework of the Russia-EU Dialogue was signed before the summit in Stockholm. The agreement on cooperation in the field of science and technology was extended for a further five-year period.

Russia-EU cooperation in crisis management was being developed. Russian helicopters participated in the EU operation in Chad and CAR and close interaction was established between Russian and EU ships dealing with piracy in the Horn of Africa area. At the November summit the EU reaffirmed its preparedness to work

on a Russia-EU agreement on crisis management. The work on an Agreement with the EU on Secret Information Protection moved into the final stage.

The Russian side consistently and persistently worked towards introducing a visa-free regime between Russia and the EU. The Russian Federation stressed that it would move to a visa-free regime even now if the European Union was ready for that.

During the Russia-EU summit in Stockholm, the Government of the Russian Federation and the European Commission signed five agreements on the financing and implementation of the following cross-border cooperation programs for the period 2009-2013: “Colarctic,” “Karelia,” “Southeastern Finland-Russia,” “Russia-Latvia-Estonia” and “Russia-Lithuania-Poland.” Their overall budget will be about Euro 437 million, of which the Russian side allocates Euro 103.7 million.

Russia consistently advocated for strengthening the role of the **Council of Europe (CoE)** as an independent and self-sufficient mechanism for pan-European integration ensuring the unity of the legal and humanitarian spaces of the continent.

An important event was the meeting of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev with the new CoE Secretary General Thorbjorn Jagland on December 23 in which the determination of Russia was stated to bolster the capacity of the CoE in the task of building Europe without dividing lines, and the importance of the Council of Europe for continued modernization of the country.

Russia firmly upheld a line on preserving the universal character of the work of the CoE in accordance with the Plan of Action adopted in 2005 and confirmed in the decisions of the 119th session of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe (Madrid, May 12). Special attention was devoted to strengthening pan-European cooperation in the fields of social cohesion, including the protection of children and the disabled; the struggle against new challenges and threats, among them terrorism and money laundering; human rights protection in cyberspace and the development of information technologies; culture and legacy, education, youth, sports, and the promotion at CoE venue of intercultural dialogue and its religious component.

The prevention of the realization of the “celebration” of August 23 as “Day of Remembrance for Victims of Stalinism and Nazism,” proposed by the European Parliament, should be regarded as a positive tendency.

The initiative for concluding a European Security Treaty became a serious stimulus for reviving the political debate in the **OSCE** on strengthening the Euro-Atlantic security architecture and on rethinking the role of the organization itself in line with the demands of the times. A broad understanding of the need to jointly look for solutions to the lingering European security problems came about in 2009.

During the Annual Security Review Conference (June 23-24), Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov explained in detail the necessity to remove systemic setbacks in “hard” security, including the crisis of the arms control regime, above all the CFE Treaty; stagnation in confidence-building measures; attempts to settle regional conflicts by force, as clearly revealed in the aggressive actions of Georgia against South Ossetia in August 2008; takeover by NATO military infrastructure of new areas near the Russian borders along with the striving of the alliance to take over global security functions; and the continuing threats of international terrorism, drug trafficking and other forms of transfrontier organized crime.

Under the influence of Russia’s ideas of ways to improve the pan-European security architecture, the OSCE in 2009 launched the Corfu Process (named after the venue for the informal meeting of foreign ministers from the member states of the Organization held on the Greek island of Corfu on June 27-28). In the course of the series of consultations held at OSCE headquarters in Vienna under this process various aspects of security were considered in detail, among them the principles of interstate relations, the issues of conflict settlement in the OSCE space, and the common challenges in the politico-military, economic-ecological and humanitarian fields.

The OSCE Ministerial Council, meeting in Athens on December 1-2, took decision to carry on the Corfu Process in 2010. Reflected in the documents adopted was the realization of the inability of the existing Euro-Atlantic security structure to prevent conflicts; they also noted the dead-end situation in the domain of arms

control in Europe. It was agreed that the focus of Corfu discussions would be such questions as fulfilling the OSCE principles and obligations; conflict prevention and resolution; arms control; security and confidence building measures; transnational threats and challenges; economics and ecology; human rights, democracy and the rule of law; increasing the effectiveness of the OSCE, and its interaction with other organizations.

Russia's draft document on crafting uniform principles of conflict resolution was placed on the OSCE agenda. Also on the negotiation table were other Russian initiatives, including additional politico-military confidence building measures and ensuring freedom of movement/visa liberalization (the "forgotten" political pledge earlier adopted in the Organization). The task remained urgent to reform the OSCE and transfer all of its work (including the organization of international observation of elections) onto a clearly defined, collectively agreed normative base in the form of, first and foremost, the adoption of a Charter of the OSCE.

Against the backdrop of attempts to falsify history, the adoption at the OSCE Ministerial Council in Athens of a declaration in relation to the 65th anniversary of the end of the Second World War was a weighty contribution to the preservation of historical memory. It was cosponsored by all CSTO member states and Serbia.

Russia backed the efforts of the CSTO and CIS member state Kazakhstan in preparing for its OSCE chairmanship in 2010. In particular, Kazakhstan's proposal to convene an OSCE summit in 2010 was given support.

After a pause in relations with **NATO**, due to the August events of 2008, the process of the gradual restoration of the work of the Russia-NATO Council (RNC) began. Political dialogue was resumed. An informal foreign ministers meeting took place in Corfu on June 27 in the course of which it was noted that the absence of interaction on key security issues did not correspond to the interests of the NATO countries and Russia. Special attention on the part of Russia was called to the need to observe in practice the basic principle of the inadmissibility of some countries reinforcing their security at the expense of the security of others.

The official RNC meeting at the Foreign Minister level on December 4 took decisions to improve the work and structure of the Council, inter alia to ensure its fail-safe efforts to deal with crisis situations. Agreement was reached to carry out a joint review of the security challenges in the 21st century (Afghanistan, terrorism, piracy, the spread of WMD and their delivery vehicles, the vulnerability of critical infrastructure) and a Work Program of the RNC for 2010 was agreed.

During the working visit to Moscow on December 15-17 by NATO's new Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen, problematic issues in, and prospects for Russia-NATO relations were discussed; the sides reaffirmed their commitment to increase the effectiveness of RNC practical activities in areas where the security interests of our countries coincide.

Military contacts began to be resumed. Measures were outlined for increased operational compatibility, search and rescue at sea, counter-piracy, and cooperation on missile defense.

Cooperation continued on Afghanistan with regard for the common interest in its long-range stabilization. The RNC project to train cadres for the antinarcotics agencies of Afghanistan and the countries of Central Asia was being successfully carried out (all in all, 314 officers took a course of training in 2009, including 141 at the Russian Federal Police Peacekeeping Training Center in Domodedovo).

Air transit to Afghanistan for military personnel and equipment was made available (under the bilateral agreements with Germany, France, Spain and the US) and railway transit of nonlethal cargo for ISAF troops began in February. Russian companies took an active part in the transportation of supplies.

The RNC project for compatibility of air traffic control systems reached the final stage; it will help counter terrorist threats from the air more effectively. Study was made of practical issues of building the capacity of partners to rapidly respond to terrorist attacks (including with WMD) and natural and man-made disasters.

Efforts continued to develop the renewed **Northern Dimension** policy: there was established a Partnership on Transport and Logistics, along with a Partnership on Culture, and a Business Council.

Russia helped the further unfolding of the potential of cooperation through the **Barents Euro-Arctic Council (BEAC)**, **Arctic Council (AC)** and the **Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS)** and advocated devising an optimal model for the coordination of efforts by all the regional formats active in Northern Europe and in the Arctic.

Within the framework of the Arctic Council practical steps were undertaken to realize Russian initiatives like establishment in the Arctic of a unified system to prevent and eliminate the consequences of man-made disasters, and the creation of an “Electronic Memory of the Arctic,” a kind of open Internet library of history, culture and science of the region. In November Russia took up the post of co-chair of a task force to develop an international instrument of cooperation on marine and air search and rescue operations in the Arctic.

As was noted at the BEAC 12th ministerial session in Murmansk (October), Russia had successfully completed its two-year chairmanship of this body in 2007-2009, having fully carried out the declared program. The Russian chairmanship’s work facilitated an appreciable deepening of the partnership in the Barents Region and the strengthening of the positive trends in the Arctic.

Russia consistently pursued a line on imparting new dynamics to the **Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization (BSEC)** in order to help overcome the adverse impact of the global financial crisis on the region’s economies. Purposeful efforts were exerted to create a favorable political and business climate, preserve regional stability, increase the effectiveness of the body and strengthen its regional and international reputation.

Russia paid major attention to realization of multilateral cooperation projects in the BSEC stimulating domestic reforms and the integration of the economies of the region into the international system of the division of labor in transport, energy, disaster management, environmental protection, and countering organized crime and terrorism. Great significance was attached to the parliamentary dimension of the BSEC. In June-November Russia headed the BSEC Parliamentary Assembly (Chair – Boris Gryzlov).

Russian representative Andrey Kondakov was elected president of the Black Sea Trade and Development Bank for 2010-2014. As an important economic tool of the BSEC, the Bank concerns itself with financing for regional projects. Russia remains one of the main depositors of this bank and recipients of credits allocated by it.

Russia continued to pursue a line on the need to develop equal and mutually beneficial cooperation between the BSEC and EU through the EU's involvement in the most promising regional projects.

Germany remained a priority partner for Russia in Europe. Its parliamentary elections (September), and the ensuing changes in the composition of the coalition government, did not affect the intensiveness of Russian-German political dialogue at the highest level (seven summits were held in different formats). The new FRG government reaffirmed continuity in the country's policy aimed at developing the strategic partnership with Russia, which acts as an important factor of European and global politics.

The focus of joint attention was on overcoming the impact of the global financial/economic crisis on bilateral economic ties and reforming the international financial system. Despite the reduction of mutual trade due to the world economy's decline (according to preliminary estimates, by 40% of the 2008 level), the two countries proceeded onward with their "beacon projects" in energy, including the construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, in transport, the aerospace and auto industries, machine building, health care services and housing and utilities.

The flow of German investment into the Russian economy remained stable (\$5 billion). Traditionally the German business community showed high interest in cooperation with Russian partners, as attested, inter alia, by the regular meetings of the captains of the German economy with Russia's Prime Minister (five meetings in various formats) and Government members. A tendency towards intensification of investment cooperation became evident – including the attraction of investment from Russia in German high tech companies with an eye to establishing strategic production alliances in promising and science-intensive branches of the economy.

Cooperation between Russia and Germany in international affairs was aimed at the alignment of interests, particularly as applied to the key tasks of renewing the pan-European security architecture, developing Russia-EU and Russia-NATO relations, advancing disarmament, arms control and the nonproliferation of WMD, reaching a political and diplomatic settlement of the Iranian nuclear problem, and stabilizing Afghanistan.

There was rich cultural and humanitarian collaboration, including intensive civil society dialogue, ramified ties among NGOs, parties and public associations, the expanding youth and educational exchanges and contacts between people.

Considerable attention was paid to the experience of historical reconciliation between the peoples of the two countries, to countering attempts to rewrite history and distort the role of the USSR in the victory over fascism, and to overcoming the Cold War legacy. Of signal importance in this respect was the Russian President's participation in the commemorative events for the twentieth anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall in the German capital on November 9.

Positive dynamics by and large prevailed in relations with **Britain**, despite the persistence of some "irritants." The political dialogue intensified. Constructive were President Dmitry Medvedev's meetings with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown on the sidelines of the summits of the G20 in London (April) and the G8 in L'Aquila (July). David Miliband's working visit to Moscow in November, the first by a UK Foreign Secretary in the last five years, enabled a thorough exchange of views on bilateral issues and topical international problems.

Despite the unfavorable situation in the world economy and financial sphere, the development of economic, commercial and investment ties was noted. They remained one of the load-bearing pillars of Russian-British relations, determining in no small degree their overall positive vector. At the end of the first half of 2009, the accumulated British investment in the Russian economy totaled \$24.58 billion (fourth place among foreign investors). The Russia/UK Intergovernmental Steering Committee on Trade and Investment resumed work after a long break, meeting in London for a session in November.

Relations with **France** received a substantial boost. Foreign policy dialogue evolved in the spirit of mutual respect for interests. Its confidential nature and the desire for close cooperation in dealing with key issues on the international agenda were reaffirmed. The bilateral Security Cooperation Council involving foreign and defense ministers regularly functioned (its eighth session took place in October in Moscow). The working group on European security, created within the Council, promises to impart additional impetus to the interaction (its first meeting was held in Moscow in November 2009).

France is one of Russia's priority trade and economic partners: the bilateral trade turnover stably rose in the last six years and its decrease in 2009, due to the world financial crisis, was noticeably slower than with other western partners. In 2009 French companies for the first time pulled ahead of American companies in total size of accumulated investment in the Russian economy (\$9.9 and \$7.9 billion respectively). The most promising areas of bilateral cooperation are outer space, aircraft manufacturing, energy, communication and telecommunications, the auto and oil industries, the agro-industrial complex, housing and utilities.

In the course of the 14th session of the commission on bilateral cooperation at the level of heads of government in Paris in November the two countries signed an intergovernmental agreement on the labor activity of citizens of one state on the territory of the other state that greatly eases the procedure of entry and employment for highly qualified specialists, heads of enterprises, staff of representative offices and affiliated companies and for young employees; and agreements and contracts for implementing joint projects in the oil and gas, telecommunications, transport and pharmaceutical industries. An extensive and many-sided program for the Year of France in Russia and the Year of Russia in France was approved.

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in 2009 visited **Italy** three times: in March to attend together with President Giorgio Napolitano of Italy in the official handover ceremony of the Russian Orthodox Church Metochion in Bari to the Russian side; in July to attend the G8 summit in L'Aquila, and in December to hold the 6th round of enlarged interstate bilateral consultations. Silvio Berlusconi,

the President of the Council of Ministers of Italy, came to Russia twice (May and October). The central theme of the bilateral agenda was work on overcoming the adverse foreign economic conditions, deepening and diversifying economic, trade and investment ties, and moving to a new quality of cooperation oriented towards the realization of science-intensive, high technology projects. There continued the implementation of large-scale bilateral projects in energy, aircraft, helicopter and car manufacturing, transport, communication and telecommunications. The foreign policy dialogue with Italy bore a constructive character, and was distinguished by the identity or similarity of positions on major international problems.

The key event in **Russian-Spanish** relations was the state visit by President Dmitry Medvedev of Russia to Madrid on March 1-3. The Declaration on Strategic Partnership between Russia and Spain, signed by the leaders of the two countries, reflected the present level of mutual understanding and cooperation, and outlined the objectives for further development. Moscow and Madrid engaged in constant dialogue on the most topical international problems, in particular coordinated their approaches to countering the global financial and economic crisis, and discussed the Russian initiative to conclude a European Security Treaty. At the invitation of the head of the Russian state, Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero, President of Spain's Government, spoke at the international conference in Yaroslavl (September) on the theme of the role of the state in ensuring security in the contemporary world.

Active political dialogue was maintained with **Portugal**, chiefly in the first half of 2009, because from the summer due to a number of objective reasons, in the first place – the preparation for a series of autumn elections – Lisbon began to focus on the domestic political aspects of activity. Nevertheless, Portugal remained an important and benevolent interlocutor striving to take into account the interests of Russia and its concerns in the politico-military and economic spheres.

Russia-Netherlands ties, underlain by vigorous economic, commercial and investment cooperation, were energetically developed. The Netherlands continued to hold the leading position among Russia's foreign partners in volume of trade and investment in the Russian economy. During the visit of Dmitry Medvedev to

the Netherlands from June 19-20, the Hermitage on the Amstel, a multifunctional museum with exhibition halls, was opened in Amsterdam. It marked a noticeable event in European cultural life.

Russian-Belgian contacts bore an active character. The foreign ministers of the two countries, meeting in September in New York, discussed a broad spectrum of issues on the international agenda and in bilateral cooperation. They agreed the next Joint Action Program of the two countries for 2010-2012. Partner relations with **Luxembourg** evolved with due regard for the influence of the country in the European Union and its noticeable role in global financial processes.

Partner relations were maintained with **Greece** at various levels, as attested by productive contacts, extensive bilateral and regional projects being successfully realized, mutual understanding and similar approaches on key international issues. Among the concrete positive results of 2009 are the intercorporate agreement on the realization of the South Stream project signed in Sochi between Gazprom and DESFA; cooperation with regard to the construction and operation of the trans-Balkan Oil Pipeline, Burgas-Alexandroupolis; the signing of the next Joint Plan of Action for 2010-2012 setting key directions of bilateral interaction in the political, economic, energy and other fields, including MTC.

An intensive dialogue continued with **Turkey** at summit, senior officials and ministerial levels. During the course of a state visit to Russia by Turkish President Abdullah Gul, the heads of the two states signed a Joint Declaration on Progress towards a New Stage in Relations and Further Deepening of Friendship and Multidimensional Partnership. For the first time in the practice of bilateral relations the decision was taken to establish a new mechanism of Russian-Turkish interstate consultations, the Top-Level Cooperation Council. It is meant to shape a strategy and set major guidelines for developing relations between Russia and Turkey and to facilitate implementing large-scale projects of business cooperation.

Economic and trade relations evolved dynamically, above all in the field of energy. During the course of a working visit to Ankara by Prime Minister Vladimir Putin in August, twenty intergovernmental, interagency and corporate agreements

on cooperation in various fields were signed. Joint work on the realization of major infrastructure projects: the South Stream gas pipeline and the Samsun-Ceyhan oil pipeline moved onto a practical footing.

A regular political dialogue was augmented with the **Republic of Cyprus** on the basis of the November 2008 Joint Declaration on Further Intensification of the Relations of Friendship and Comprehensive Cooperation. The collaborative effort between the two parties featured a high degree of trust and mutual understanding; they substantively discussed sensitive issues, including the Russia-EU relationship. Cyprus repeatedly reiterated its interest in concluding Russia's proposed European Security Treaty, to which it had already expressed international legal support.

Relations intensified with **Malta** – there was a working visit by the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malta, Tonio Borg, to Russia in November.

2009 was marked by noticeable events in relations with the **Vatican** – a visit to the Vatican by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his meeting with Pope Benedict XVI took place on December 3, during the course of which the decision was taken to establish full diplomatic relations between the Russian Federation and the Holy See.

In the **Northern Europe** sector, relations of good-neighborly cooperation were developed most intensively with **Finland**. The state visit of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to Finland (April 20-21), the meetings of the presidents of the two countries in St. Petersburg (June), in Sochi (Aug.) and in New York (Sept.), the talks between the heads of government in Helsinki (June) and in St. Petersburg (Oct.), and their attendance at the Third Russian-Finnish Forest Summit also there, ensured the high dynamics of bilateral dialogue and cooperation. The bicentennial of Finland's joining the Russian Empire as an autonomous grand duchy, which had commenced the formation of Finnish statehood, was widely observed.

Despite the world economic crisis and the substantial drop in mutual trade, the realization of priority projects was continued, such as the opening scheduled for 2010 of a high-speed passenger rail line between St. Petersburg and Helsinki.

The Finnish government took a favorable decision on the project for laying the Nord Stream gas pipeline through the economic zone of Finland in the Baltic Sea.

Relations with **Norway** continued to be boosted. The talks held in Moscow on May 19 by Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg with President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin of Russia confirmed the mindset to further strengthen cooperation across the spectrum of bilateral relations, especially in the North, and dialogue on key international issues. The formation of a strategic energy partnership made headway – including work on developing the Shtokman Gas Condensate Field in the Barents Sea, and cooperation in joint Barents Sea fish resources management. Dialogue was developed on practical issues relating to the Russian presence in Spitsbergen.

Relations were intensified with **Denmark**. In September Russian President Dmitry Medvedev conversed with Danish Prime Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen in New York, and in November talks took place in Moscow between the heads of government, confirming the significant potential for Russian-Danish cooperation in key areas. Both countries sought to minimize the effects of the world financial-economic crisis on bilateral economic and trade cooperation. In October Denmark was the first European country to give permission for laying the Nord Stream gas pipeline in its economic zone in the Baltic Sea.

The working visit of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev to Stockholm on November 17-18 gave new impetus to relations with **Sweden** and strengthened the reciprocal understanding of the need to build them on the basis of mutual respect, consideration for the interests of the sides, and constructiveness. A positive signal for the reset of Russian-Swedish relations was the positive decision of the Swedish government on the project for the laying of the Nord Stream gas pipeline through Sweden's economic zone in the Baltic Sea.

Yet a number of basic issues for Russia are still not removed in Russian-Swedish relations – above all, extraditing terrorism and extremism suspects to the Russian Federation, and shutting down the 'Kavkaz Center' website that continues to broadcast from the territory of Sweden.

Measures were undertaken to further strengthen economic and trade ties with **Iceland**, and to streamline the legal framework for bilateral relations.

While relations with the **Baltic States** remained burdened with anti-Russian rhetoric, the encouragement of Nazi accomplices and the ousting of the Russian language from the sociocultural sphere, certain positive tendencies became evident in this sector.

Some progress was made in relations with **Lithuania**. Dalia Grybauskaite, elected president of the country, generally showed a disposition towards improving relations with Russia, and readiness to foster a pragmatic and mutually respectful dialogue. For the first time in a long period, a telephone conversation took place between the presidents of the two countries; Sergey Naryshkin, Chief of Staff of the Presidential Executive Office of Russia, visited Vilnius; two meetings between the heads of the foreign affairs agencies took place; and inter-ministry and inter-agency contacts intensified. Practical matters of bilateral cooperation were tackled quite productively within the framework of the intergovernmental commission, a regular session of which was held in Vilnius in the autumn.

Ties with **Latvia** by and large evolved positively. Chairman of the Account Chamber Sergey Stepashin and Culture Minister Alexander Avdeyev visited Riga. Interregional ties were reinvigorated. The bilateral intergovernmental commission on economic, scientific, technical, humanitarian and cultural cooperation operated successfully. Its co-chairs' meeting and the third session of the commission were held quite productively in St. Petersburg and Riga.

Active work was done to streamline the juridical base of bilateral relations. A Joint Russian-Latvian Demarcation Commission began to operate. There was a working meeting of the co-chairs of the Joint Commission for the implementation of the Agreement on Burial Grounds.

Relations with **Estonia** remained complicated. Official Tallinn kept avoiding resuming talks to resolve the situation with conclusion of border treaties, Estonian law enforcement bodies dragged feet on investigating the death of Dmitry Ganin, a Russian citizen, and the practice continued of imposing politicized visa restrictions

on Russian citizens who opposed the dismantling of the monument to the Liberator Soldier in Tallinn in 2007.

At the same time there was a step-up in interagency contacts on practical issues of mutual interest. Certain positive signals appeared in the area of improving the juridical base of cooperation, particularly in the social and humanitarian sphere.

Primary attention was paid to ensuring the **functioning of the Kaliningrad Region**. The mechanism of passenger transit “from Russia to Russia” by and large operated satisfactorily. At the same time in conjunction with the partners a search was conducted for solutions under which Russian citizens permanently resident in the Kaliningrad Region would face no difficulties with transit to third countries. Prerequisites emerged for resolving the problem of freight transportation rates. But as before, the question remains open of updating the legal framework for Russian military transit.

There was continued persistent work with the European partners to ensure that the preferential handling procedure of local cross-border movement covers the entire territory of the Kaliningrad Region and the appropriate areas of the adjacent states.

The political dialogue with **Austria** was highly intensive and dynamic. The Russian President’s meeting with Federal President Heinz Fischer in New York (September), the talks of the Russian leadership with Austrian Federal Chancellor Werner Faymann in Moscow (November), and the exchange of visits at the level of ministers of foreign affairs (June and October) made it possible to outline ways for advancing joint investment projects, in particular, in the energy and transport spheres and for broadening cooperation within the framework of the UN and other international organizations.

A landmark event in relations with **Switzerland** was the first state visit to the country by a Russian President (September 21-22). The substantive discussion with the leadership of the country and with leading representatives of the business community bore out the focus of the sides on the comprehensive development of bilateral ties, including the buildup of economic and investment collaboration, and

on partner cooperation on pressing international problems. During the course of the visit important intergovernmental agreements were signed on the facilitation of the issuance of visas to the citizens of Russia and Switzerland, on readmission and on cooperation in the field of protection against disasters. Swiss diplomacy effectively represented Russia's interests in Georgia after the severance of diplomatic relations by the regime of Mikhail Saakashvili.

The visit of Dmitry Medvedev to Switzerland, just as his meeting on Sept. 17 in Moscow with Hereditary Prince Alois of **Lichtenstein**, became an indicator of the multi-pronged Russian foreign policy and highlighted much common ground with the small neutral states holding a specific position on the European political stage.

Despite the lingering differences between Russia and **Poland** in approaches on a number of international and bilateral issues, including on the "historical file," systemic work continued to delineate a constructive agenda of relations. A tangible positive impulse to their development was given by the September 1 visit of Prime Minister Vladimir Putin to Gdansk to attend the international commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the start of World War II, during which he had talks with Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk.

The principal mechanisms of bilateral interaction operate in an active mode. On May 6, the Committee for Russian-Polish Cooperation Strategy held its fifth session as part of the visit to Moscow by Radoslaw Sikorski, Poland's Minister of Foreign Affairs. In March the 2nd meeting of the intergovernmental commission on economic cooperation was held in Warsaw; in May we had a meeting of the Russian-Polish public forum; and the Group for Difficult Issues arising from the history of Russian-Polish relations met in May and November. On the initiative of the speakers of the upper chambers of the parliaments of the two countries, a new mechanism of Russian-Polish cooperation, the Forum of Regions, was kicked off in September in Moscow.

The unfavorable current worldwide economic conditions adversely affected the dynamics of bilateral economic cooperation. Trade in January-November 2009 fell 42 percent compared to the same period in 2008.

Russian-Polish humanitarian collaboration remained at the proper level. The Second Russian Song Festival in Zielona Gora took place in July and in November the Third Sputnik over Warsaw Russian Film Festival was held in Poland.

The culmination of **Russian-Hungarian relations** was the second round of intergovernmental consultations involving the heads of government held on March 10 in Moscow, during the course of which the mutual interest was reaffirmed in expanding economic and trade cooperation and implementing mutually beneficial projects of investment and cooperative interaction, particularly at the interregional level. In trade volume (approximately \$7 billion at year-end 2009) Russia, despite the adverse influence of the world economic crisis, remains a major foreign trade partner of Hungary. To further expand the range of economic ties it was decided to set up a branch of the Trade Representation of the Republic of Hungary in Rostov-on-Don.

An active foreign policy dialogue was maintained; the foreign ministers met twice on the sidelines of the OSCE conference in Corfu on June 28 and in Athens on December 2.

Russian-Hungarian contacts in the domains of culture, science and education expanded noticeably: a program of cultural exchanges was agreed, a Protocol on Education Cooperation for 2009-2011 was signed, and heads of relevant agencies of the two countries met regularly.

Relations with the **Czech Republic** were built in conditions of its presidency of the EU in the first half of 2009 and of the unstable domestic political situation in the country. The anti-Russian sentiment being whipped up in the Czech media and society and unfriendly rhetoric from key politicians of the right center government coalition continued to adversely affect the general atmosphere of bilateral ties. The political dialogue proceeded within the framework of the Czech EU Presidency: in January the Czech Prime Minister paid a working visit to Russia in order to settle

the gas crisis, and a meeting of the ministers of foreign affairs of the two countries took place in February during the Russia-EU Troika meeting in Moscow.

The situation changed after the resignation of Mirek Topolanek's cabinet in March due to an internal political crisis. On May 22, talks between the presidents of Russia and the Czech Republic took place in Khabarovsk on the sidelines of the Russia-EU summit, resulting in a desire to rectify the unfavorable trends of recent years. Approved in June, the interim government of the country led by Jan Fischer took the path of normalizing relations with Russia, re-establishing mutual trust and reinvigorating economic and trade ties. On October 14 the head of the Czech state paid a working visit to Moscow which confirmed the reciprocal disposition to take bilateral relations to a new level of development.

The world economic crisis noticeably affected the state of commercial and economic relations. Trade fell almost 50% compared to 2008. Held in September in Prague, the fifth meeting of the Russian-Czech intergovernmental commission on economic, industrial and scientific-technical cooperation stated that one of the ways to overcome the adverse effects of the crisis is to revitalize bilateral trade and economic cooperation.

The evolution of **Russia-Slovakia** relations was characterized by intensive political dialogue and high dynamics of across-the-board cooperation. The working visits to Russia by Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico took place in January and November and by Minister of Foreign Affairs Miroslav Lajcak in September.

Bilateral trade in January-October 2009 also fell more than 50 percent due to the world financial crisis. Nevertheless, positive momentum continued in business ties. A meeting of the bilateral Intergovernmental Commission on Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation was held in November. The countries signed a Long-Term Program of Cooperation in the Field of Atomic Energy.

Scientific and technical cooperation progressed vigorously: the International Laser Center in Bratislava was completed; the joint project for the construction of a proton therapy center in Ruzomberok reached the home stretch; and headway was made in the development of the Cyclotron Center in Bratislava.

The basis for deepening collaboration with **Bulgaria** was the realization of joint energy projects: the construction of Belene NPP and of the pipelines Burgas-Alexandroupolis and South Stream. Top-level contacts gave extra impulse to this process: on February 4-6, Bulgarian President Georgi Parvanov paid an official visit to Russia; Bulgarian Prime Minister Sergei Stanishev made a working visit to Moscow on Apr. 26-28; and Vladimir Putin conversed in Gdansk with Bulgarian Prime Minister Boyko Borisov on Sept. 1.

Holding the Year of Russia in Bulgaria in 2008 and the Year of Bulgaria in Russia in 2009 was a unique event in the history of Russian-Bulgarian relations. The activities involved in the exchange of national years helped to satisfy the close partnership requirements of the two countries both in the field of culture and in the areas of economy, education, science and technology, including at the interregional level.

Following the thirteenth session of the Russian-Bulgarian intergovernmental commission on economic and scientific-technical cooperation in Sofia (December) and the meetings of its co-chairs in Moscow (April, October) ways were charted to implement joint projects in energy and to intensify cooperation in the transport and social spheres. Parliamentary ties were maintained.

Relations with **Romania** were something of a mixed bag; they evolved in a contradictory setting. The enhanced intensity of contacts at the beginning of 2009, including the visit to Moscow of the Romanian foreign minister (February), failed to positively influence the quality of bilateral political dialogue. The incoherence of Bucharest's approach to the promotion of cooperation and the series of openly unfriendly moves it undertook toward Russia predetermined a decline in interstate relations, and led to the curtailment of plans to develop top and high level political contacts. In these circumstances we took the path of supporting inter-parliamentary exchanges (State Duma Deputy Speaker Valery Yazev went to Bucharest), as well as economic cooperation (the Romanian ministers of economy and tourism visited Moscow) and cultural and humanitarian links.

Russian relations with **Serbia** continued to evolve in the format of strategic partnership. The political dialogue was distinguished by stable positive dynamics. A landmark event was the official visit of President of Russia Dmitry Medvedev to Serbia on October 20, timed to celebrate the 65th anniversary of the liberation of Belgrade from the fascist occupation. It gave a powerful additional impulse to the deepening of bilateral ties.

Special attention was paid to advancing main energy projects. There began the gradual realization of the arrangements flowing from the intergovernmental agreement on cooperation in the oil and gas industry: to build the Serbian section of the South Stream gas pipeline and the Banatski Dvor underground gas storage facility and for Gazprom Neft to acquire a controlling parcel of shares in the state company NIS Petroleum Industry of Serbia (the deal completed in February).

Held in Belgrade, the 8th meeting of the Russian-Serbian Intergovernmental Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation and Trade Committee (October) identified priority areas of work on streamlining the mechanisms of inter-economy collaboration.

Foreign policy moves were being coordinated, primarily in Kosovo conflict settlement, more specifically at International Court of Justice hearings to determine whether Kosovo's self-proclaimed independence conforms to international law. In February and October Serbian Minister of Foreign Affairs Vuk Jeremic paid visits to Moscow. Work on updating the legal framework for Russian-Serbian relations intensified.

Through EMERCOM, on the basis of targeted financial resources allocated by Russia, assistance was given to Serbia in demining areas affected by the NATO bombings of 1999.

Montenegrin President Filip Vujanovic made a working visit to Moscow in February and met with Dmitry Medvedev. The President of Russia was invited to visit Montenegro.

Montenegrin Foreign Minister and Co-Chairman of the bilateral Intergovernmental Committee on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical

cooperation Milan Rocen attended the XIII International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg (June).

In October, the third meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee was held in Petrovac, Montenegro, with the participation of IGC-chairmen (Emergencies Minister Sergey Shoigu represented Russia).

Relations with **Croatia** were intensified considerably. In the course of the meetings between the Russian leadership and Croatian President Stejpan Mesic during his visit to Moscow on December 14, and the conversation between Chairman of the Russian Government Vladimir Putin and Croatian Prime Minister Jadranka Kosor in Gdansk (September), agreements were reached to enhance bilateral cooperation, including in the fuel and energy, investment, and infrastructure sectors.

Based on the results of the Moscow meeting of the Russian-Croatian Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation (February), as well as the Zagreb meeting between its Co-Chairmen Sergey Shoigu and Croatian Vice-Prime Minister Damir Polancec (October), ways were mapped up for implementing major joint projects. Systematic contacts between the foreign ministries facilitated bilateral relations and strengthened interaction in international organizations, including in the UN Security Council, of which Croatia was a non-permanent member in 2008-2009.

During the meeting between the chairmen of the Russian and **Slovenian** governments in Gdansk on September 1 and top-level contacts in Moscow on November 14 and in Maribor on November 18, agreements were reached to boost cooperation. An inter-governmental agreement was reached on Slovenia's accession to the South Stream project. During Slovenian Foreign Minister Samuel Zbogar's Moscow visit on April 8, a substantive exchange of views took place on a wide range of issues concerning Russian-Slovenian interaction and pressing international problems.

Interaction with **Macedonia** proceeded under the earlier agreements on the development of trade, economic, investment, and humanitarian cooperation, and

the legal framework of relations. Macedonian Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Zoran Stavreski made a working visit to Moscow in November as part of preparations for the fourth meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation.

Russia vigorously pressed for a balanced policy within the framework of peaceful settlement in **Bosnia and Herzegovina**. While maintaining dialogue with the partners from the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Russian officials insisted in the UN Security Council on strict compliance with the Peace Agreement and on respect for the legitimate interests of all Bosnian parties, and worked toward a speedy transformation of the international presences in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These issues were given priority during Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to Sarajevo (November) and his conversations with the leadership of the country, Bosnian Serb leader Milorad Dodik and High Representative Valentin Incko.

Central place in cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, primarily with its constituent Republika Srpska, was occupied by investment partnership, primarily by the contract for the privatization of oil refineries by Zarubezhneft OJSC. Interaction in international organizations was stepped up within the context of Bosnia and Herzegovina's election to the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member in 2010-2011.

Ministerial consultations with **Albania** (Moscow, June) and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's meeting with Albanian Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Illir Meta (Athens, December) confirmed the mutual commitment to furthering the regular dialogue both on bilateral and international issues, including Kosovo.

The level of trade and economic cooperation did not match the existing potential and was reduced to mere barter trade, which was sustained mainly by Russian export. At the 6th session of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic and Scientific-Technical Cooperation held in Moscow in December an

agreement was reached to intensify interaction, primarily in the fields of energy, transport, and tourism.

USA and Canada

The election of the new US president and the subsequent adjustments in the previous administration's foreign policy settings had a positive effect on the climate of **Russian-American interaction**. Both sides expressed interest in building pragmatic, mutually advantageous and long-term cooperation that would meet contemporary needs and be based on the principles of trust and equality.

The constructive and open top-level dialogue was an important element of Russian-American interaction. The presidents of Russia and the USA had five meetings in 2009. In addition to full-format talks at the Moscow Summit on July 6-8, Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama met on April 1 on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in London, on September 23 on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York, on November 15 on the sidelines of the APEC Summit in Singapore, and on December 18 on the sidelines of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.

Updated approaches toward the development of Russian-American ties were reflected in the joint statement adopted after the first personal meeting between Presidents Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama on April 1, 2009 on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in London, which contained such bilateral cooperation principles as numerous common interests, readiness to expand the partnership, work together to strengthen strategic stability and security, respond together to global challenges, and resolve disagreements in the spirit of mutual respect and by taking each other's interests into account.

In pursuing the policy toward further development of Russian-American relations an important role is given to the **Presidential Commission for the Development of Cooperation**, created at the Moscow Summit in July, which includes a dozen working groups covering various areas, thus making it possible to

integrate diverse contacts between our countries into a single mechanism. The commission works under the Presidential Action Plan, which states respective tasks and outlines guidelines for the future. By the end of the year, the commission had been formed, the general scope of its work had been determined, and the parties had begun full-scale work toward specific results.

The foreign ministries continued the practice of regular consultations that covered the whole range of Russian-American relations and pressing international issues.

The foreign ministers maintained constant contact with each other: Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton on March 6 on the sidelines of the Disarmament Conference in Geneva, on March 31 on the sidelines of the international conference on Afghanistan in The Hague, on May 7 in Washington during a visit to the USA, on July 22 on the Island of Phuket, Thailand, on the sidelines of ASEAN events, on September 23 in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly, on October 13-14 in Moscow, where they had their first meeting as the coordinators of the Presidential Commission for the Development of Cooperation, and on November 19 on the sidelines of Afghan President Hamid Karzai's inauguration in Kabul.

The Barack Obama administration had returned disarmament to the list of Washington's priorities, thus noticeably invigorating the Russian-American dialogue on **military-political issues**. The Working Group on Arms Control and International Security was created and started operating within the Russian-American Presidential Commission. It held two meetings in Moscow (October 12 and December 7).

Priority in the military-political area of Russian-American relations was given to the drafting of an **agreement on further measures to reduce and limit strategic offensive weapons**, which should replace the START that expired on December 5, 2009. In accordance with the statements and documents adopted at the top level in London on April 1 and in Moscow on July 6, eight rounds of negotiations were held. Despite the tight schedule and a considerable number of

military-technical problems encountered by the parties during the talks, a large set of documents were drafted, which can serve as the basis for further development of relations between Russia and the USA in the strategic field. The issue of strategic offensive weapons was also discussed during regular Russian-American top and high-level contacts.

The year 2009 was marked by a new turn in the Russian-American dialogue on missile defense, particularly in connection with the Barack Obama administration's decision to give up plans to deploy elements of the third launch area in Europe. According to the Joint Statement of the Presidents of Russia and the USA on Missile Defense (Moscow, July 6), the parties had studied possible areas of bilateral cooperation in the field of missile defense. The first meeting of the bilateral Working Group on the Assessment of Missile Challenges of the 21st Century was held in Washington on December 22 as part of this work. The Russian delegation was led by Deputy Secretary of the Security Council of the Russian Federation Vladimir Nazarov.

Russia proceeds from the need for a multilateral security system – “an anti-missile pool” of interested states and organizations, designed to monitor the missile proliferation situation in the world, and to provide proper and timely response to challenges and threats in this field. Russia’s specific proposals in this respect are stated in the Memo that was handed over to the American side on March 31.

Russian-American interaction also developed in the field of non-proliferation, including in the context of preparations for the upcoming NPT Review Conference in May 2010. The geographical reach of the Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism (GICNT) had increased, bringing to number of its participants to 75 states. In the context of regional non-proliferation, the parties concentrated on the Iranian nuclear program and the nuclear problem of the Korean Peninsula.

A new impetus was given to bilateral cooperation in the field of atomic energy and nuclear security, which developed under the Joint Statement of the Presidents of Russia and the USA of July 6. The first meeting of the relevant

working group under the Presidential Commission took place in Washington on September 28-29.

The present U.S. administration's desire to rely more on multilateral diplomatic efforts when addressing pressing global and regional issues had created favorable conditions for invigorating Russian-American **interaction in the international arena**. It was based on the principles of equality and mutual respect and aimed to enhance coordination both within the framework of bilateral mechanisms, primarily the relevant working groups under the Presidential Commission, and at major international forums, such as the United Nations, the Group of Eight, and the Group of Twenty.

Special attention was given to international security, new threats and challenges, stability and sustainable development at the global and regional levels. The potential of interaction with the USA was actively tapped in order to upgrade the principles of our cooperation with NATO, make the OSCE more efficient, and ensure that Russian interests are taken into account in the fledgling Euro-Atlantic spaces in various dimensions.

A special emphasis was placed on the coordination of efforts on Afghanistan in order to accelerate the development of consolidated international approaches during the new stage of settlement. The joint Russian-US political platform for the reconstruction of Afghanistan as a sovereign state was laid out in the Joint Statement of the Presidents of Russia and the USA on Afghanistan (July). Being guided by the importance of supporting multilateral stabilization efforts in Afghanistan, Russia granted the USA the right to use its airspace for military transit to the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

The discussion of problems in the post-Soviet space was geared toward balancing the growing US presence in the region, and ensuring a high level of transparency of American diplomacy. Close dialogue on the Transcaucasia was conducted at the Geneva discussions and other international forums and on a bilateral basis for the sake of stabilization in the region.

Moscow and Washington gave priority to the development of Russian-American **trade and economic ties**. Affected by objective factors associated with the negative impact of the global economic crisis, the overall decline in business activities, and negative trends in prices and demand for key export-import commodities, bilateral trade turnover in the first 11 months of 2009 dropped by 34.2% to \$16.3 billion, according to the Federal Customs Service. Russian export, which continued to be dominated by raw materials, shrank by 33.7% to \$8.2 billion, and import, consisting mainly of machinery and food, decreased by 34.8% to \$8.1 billion.

Investment cooperation showed oppositely directed dynamics. While in 2008, accumulated American investments in Russia stood at \$8.8 billion (including \$3.2 billion worth of direct investments), they dropped after the third quarter of 2009 to \$7.6 billion, or 2.9% (compared to 3.3% before) of the overall amount of foreign capital investments. Russian investments in the U.S. economy on the contrary had somewhat increased and reached \$6.1 billion after the first nine months of 2009, including \$5.1 billion in direct investments (\$5.5 billion and \$4.7 billion respectively in 2008). Bilateral investment flows remained relatively limited not only in volume, but also in sector orientation. American capital investments in Russia targeted mainly the fuel and energy sector, while Russian metallurgical companies were most active in the USA.

The development of trade and economic cooperation with the USA remained one of the priority objectives for Russian economic diplomacy. The commitment to more vigorous economic interaction is proclaimed in the joint statement of the presidents adopted at their meeting in London on April 1. A representative economic block was formed within the Presidential Commission, including working groups for the development of business ties and trade and economic relations, energy, agriculture, science and technologies, and space. Intensive inter-departmental work is under way to flesh out their agenda and draft specific bilateral projects.

In addition to direct contacts between the finance, trade, and energy ministers of the two countries, the Russian-American economic dialogue resumed between the foreign ministries in December. At their meeting, First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov and Under Secretary of State for Economic, Energy and Agricultural Affairs Robert Hormats discussed the current state of the world and national economies, the work of the Group of Twenty, energy and financial problems, the investment climate, the export of American agricultural products to Russia, and Russia's accession to the WTO and OECD.

Bilateral **business dialogue** evolved, too. A delegation of CEOs of major Russian companies led by RUIE President Alexander Shokhin visited the USA on March 10-13. The RUIE and the US Chamber of Commerce adopted a joint statement, in which they laid out the main principles for preserving and strengthening long-term mutually advantageous partner ties between the Russian and American business communities. Contacts also continued at the XIII Petersburg International Economic Forum, the Russian-American summit in Moscow, and other bilateral and multilateral events.

In the context of regional interaction, the 14th Russian-American Pacific Partnership annual meeting made a significant contribution to the expansion of contacts between Siberia and the Far East and the US West Coast states.

Relations with Canada on the whole showed positive dynamics. Cooperation continued at such multilateral organizations and forums as the Group of Eight, the United Nations, the OSCE, and APEC. Contacts continued between the parliaments and agencies of the two countries, as well as between Russian regions and Canadian provinces.

Due to the global economic crisis and the overall decline in business activity, Russian-Canadian trade turnover in the first 11 months of 2009 decreased by 33.4% to \$1.6 billion, according to the Federal Customs Service. Russian export, which continued to be dominated by raw materials, shrank by 47.6% to \$0.5 billion, while import, which consisted mainly of machinery, decreased by

24.5% to \$1.1 billion. Canadian investments in Russia in 2009 had amounted to \$142 million, and Russian investments in Canada stood at \$49 million.

Despite the negative trade dynamics, the business communities of the two countries showed interest in further expansion of cooperation, implemented big joint projects and carried out transactions in the ore-mining industry (development of the Nezhdaninskoye gold deposit in Yakutia, development of the Novosibirskiy polymetal deposit in Eastern Siberia), in the construction industry, including the construction of Olympic facilities in Russia (a combined motor and railway road from Adler to Alpika, and the Olympic Village). MDA Corporation signed a contract with the Radio Research and Development Institute for designing and supplying payload modules for the Express-AM5 and Express-AM6 spacecraft. An additional bilateral agreement on cooperation in the field of uranium enrichment was made in June.

First Deputy Prime Minister Viktor Zubkov and Canadian Minister of International Trade Stockwell Day co-chaired a meeting of the Intergovernmental Economic Commission in Moscow in the summer. The second bilateral business forum was held at the same time under the auspices of the Russian-Canadian Business Council, with the participation of leading Russian and Canadian companies.

A special place in relations with Canada had been traditionally occupied by cooperation in the Arctic, which developed both in the bilateral format and within the framework of the Arctic Council. It includes the mining of natural resources in the Arctic, the development of regional transport infrastructure, environmental protection, and preservation of the culture and way of life of the indigenous peoples of the North.

Asia-Pacific Region

Russia continued to step up its participation in leading multilateral APR associations in order to achieve fuller integration into political and economic life of the region and develop broad regional cooperation.

The Yekaterinburg Summit of the **Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO)** held on June 15-16 completed the annual cycle of the Russian Federation's chairmanship in this integration association. During its chairmanship, about thirty different events were organized, including a special conference on Afghanistan under the SCO auspices, which received broad international coverage and was attended by more than 30 states and international bodies (Moscow, March). For the first time, such mechanisms were set in motion as a conference of the ministers of interior affairs and public security and the heads of anti-drug services, and the SCO Youth Council was formed. The results of the Yekaterinburg Summit showed that SCO is consistently changing from a sub-regional body preoccupied mainly with security issues in Central Asia to one of the pillars of the emerging multi-polar world.

At its meeting (Beijing, October), the Council of the SCO Heads of Government considered measures to enhance economic and humanitarian cooperation in the organization. The Joint Communiqué, the Joint Initiative for Overcoming the Consequences of the Global Financial and Economic Crisis and the Development of the Regional Economy, and the Joint Statement on Fighting Infectious Diseases in the Region of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization were adopted. A protocol on cooperation in the training and advanced training of customs officials was signed between the customs services of the SCO member states in the presence of the heads of government.

In accordance with the agreement by and between the heads of government, the first meeting of the finance ministers and the chairmen of the central (national) banks of the SCO member states was held in Almaty on December 8-9. The focus

was on joint measures to overcome the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis, and on the formation of a new global financial architecture.

Vigorous work at the **Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)** forum focused on the creation of favorable conditions for trade and investment interaction in the Asia-Pacific Region and full engagement of Russia in regional integration processes for economic development, primarily in Siberia and the Far East.

Russia productively participated in discussions on economic issues from the forum's agenda, which was dominated by the need for a balanced, comprehensive and sustainable growth in the APEC economies and the region as a whole. The recommendations in this field approved at the APEC summit in Singapore (November) take into account Russia's approaches and are consonant with the provisions of the anti-crisis strategy being carried out in Russia.

An important event was the successful “defense” of the report on the APEC Individual Action Plan Peer Review of Russia 2005-2008. Based on its results, APEC experts highly praised the steps aimed at improving Russia's foreign economic policy and facilitating the achievement of the forum's program goals.

The APEC Special Task Group on Mining and Metallurgy under Russia's chairmanship made a report containing proposals on how to ensure sustainable development in this sector, which is fundamental for many APEC economies. The Special Task Group's mandate was extended for another two-year period.

In October, the Government of the Russian Federation adopted a resolution on Russia's accession to the system of APEC Business Travel Cards in April 2010, which will become Russia's practical contribution to the efforts aimed at intensifying contacts between APR business circles.

Comprehensive preparations continued for the Russian Federation's chairmanship in APEC in 2010. The task of creating an infrastructure needed for the summit in Vladivostok was addressed consistently. Special attention was paid to filling the Russian chairmanship with substance and determining its priorities.

Practical steps to develop dialogue partnership with the **Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)** were made taking into account Russia's

growing role in the Asia-Pacific Region. The decision was made at the Russia-ASEAN ministerial meeting (Phuket, July) to hold the second Russian-ASEAN summit in Hanoi in the autumn of 2010. Russia's permanent representative to ASEAN was appointed.

The focus was on the intensification of trade and economic cooperation and the expansion of interaction with the Association in such key areas as energy and energy security, fight against terrorism and transnational crime, emergency prevention and response, science and technologies, cultural exchanges, tourism.

MGIMO University and the ASEAN Secretariat signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the establishment of the ASEAN Center in Moscow, which should facilitate broader scientific and humanitarian contacts.

Active work continued to implement projects under the ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership Financial Fund, to which Russia contributed an additional \$750,000 in 2009. The money was used to finance Russian language training programs for ASEAN tour operators, introduction of modern methods of teaching foreign languages to entrepreneurs, and use of electronic commerce systems by small and medium-size business in the ASEAN member states. New project proposals were put forth in the fields of biotechnology, peaceful atomic energy, renewable energy, and emergency response.

Work within the **Asia Cooperation Dialogue (ACD)** was geared on a priority basis toward determining, together with other forum participants, how to improve its work organizationally and substantively. The 8th ACD Ministerial Meeting (Colombo, October) showed interest in Russia's suggestions to give a regional dimension to the search for ways to overcome the global financial and economic crisis, and engage Asian countries in anti-crisis efforts.

Purposeful steps were taken towards the development of interaction in the **Russia-India-China (RIC)** format. The vector for further work was set at the 9th Meeting of the RIC Foreign Ministers (Bangalore, October), which stated the main guidelines for coordination of efforts in the trilateral format – UN reform, coping with the consequences of the global financial and economic crisis, climate

changes, prospects for SCO development, and Afghanistan. A RIC expert meeting on emergency response, a trilateral scientific conference, and the 2nd conference of businessmen from the three countries were held. The decision was adopted to hold the 3rd conference in 2011 in Russia, and to create coordination mechanisms under the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Russia, India, and China.

Support was garnered for Russia's application for accession to the **Asia-Europe dialogue mechanism (ASEM)** which is expected to be officially completed at the 8th Summit of the forum in Brussels in October 2010. Efforts continued toward Russia's engagement in the work of **East Asia summits (EAS)**. Ties with Asian and Pacific states were developed further.

Relations with **China** remained among Russia's foreign policy priorities. Russian-Chinese partnership and strategic interaction were advanced considerably in terms of improving and strengthening bilateral ties as well as coordinating positions on key international issues.

Top-level contacts were highly substantive and intensive. Four meetings of the heads of state were held. The Joint Statement adopted during the Chinese President's visit to Russia in June noted important events in the bilateral dialogue: the completion of demarcation work along the entire length of the Russian-Chinese border, the approval of the Action Plan for 2009-2012 to implement the Treaty of Good-Neighborliness, Friendship, and Cooperation, the commissioning of the bilateral energy dialogue at the level of deputy prime ministers, and the start of a large-scale project for the Year of the Russian Language in China and of the Chinese Language in Russia in 2009-2010.

At their 14th regular meeting in Beijing in October, the prime ministers of Russia and China agreed to enhance cooperation in the fields of natural gas, atomic energy, civil aviation and aircraft making, high technologies, telecommunications, transport infrastructure, banking, and finances.

Close interaction was maintained among Russian and Chinese ministries and agencies, active contacts continued between legislative, judicial and audit bodies, regions, political parties, and public organizations. A new round of the bi-lateral

dialogue on strategic security, and a meeting of the Russia-China Friendship Committee for Peace and Development were held.

The global financial and economic crisis caused a decline in Russian-Chinese trade by almost one-third from 2008. At the same time, joint efforts helped achieve considerable progress in a number of key areas of bilateral economic cooperation. Agreements were signed for the construction of an extension of the Eastern Siberia – Pacific Ocean pipeline to China, for long-term crude oil supplies to China and for a big Chinese loan to Russia for this purpose. The Program of Cooperation between Regions in Russia's Far East and Eastern Siberian and China's North-East was approved. The Perspective Plan of Bilateral Investment Cooperation was adopted.

The growing military-political trust was confirmed by Russian-Chinese military exercises codenamed Peace Mission 2009 and the signing of an intergovernmental agreement on ballistic missile and space carrier rocket launch notifications.

The focal point of humanitarian and social cooperation was the Year of the Russian Language in China, during which more than 200 events were organized. An intergovernmental agreement on the mutual establishment of cultural centers was signed. More than 1,500 Chinese children affected by the 2008 earthquake in China were received by Russia for rest and rehabilitation.

Coordination with China on international and regional issues grew stronger within the UN, SCO, BRIC, RIC, the Group of Twenty, and multilateral associations in the Asia-Pacific Region. Close interaction continued on international terrorism and drug trafficking, non-proliferation, the nuclear problem of the Korean Peninsula, the Iranian nuclear program, Afghanistan, and the Middle East.

Following the appointment in **Japan** in September of the Yukio Hatoyama government of the Democratic Party, which for the first time positioned Russia as Tokyo's partner in the Asia-Pacific Region, more favorable conditions emerged for bringing bilateral relations to the level of partnership.

The meetings between Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Japanese Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama in New York in September on the sidelines of the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly and at the APEC summit in Singapore in November, as well as negotiations with Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada in late 2009 in Moscow made it possible to map out guidelines for further intensification of bilateral cooperation by effectively tapping its vast unused potential.

Prime Minister Vladimir Putin's visit to Japan in May became an important event, during which an impressive set of trade, economic and other agreements was signed.

Discussion continued on the search for a mutually acceptable solution to the peace treaty issue, including border delimitation, on which the two countries still disagreed substantially.

Despite the global financial crisis, which caused a decline in mutual trade, investment cooperation continued to deepen, primarily in the energy sector in the Far East and in the automobile industry. Accumulated Japanese investments in the Russian economy had reached \$6.1 billion, thus making Japan one of the top ten investment partners of Russia.

Interaction with the **Republic of Korea** came closer to the level of strategic partnership, helped by broad-based cooperation in politics and economy, in the international arena, expanded contacts and exchanges in scientific, cultural and humanitarian spheres. A rather active bilateral political dialogue was maintained. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and President of the Republic of Korea Lee Myung-bak met at L'Aquila (Italy) on the sidelines of the G8 summit on July 8-9. Visits were made to the Republic of Korea by Chairman of the Higher Arbitration Court of Russia Anton Ivanov (May), Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin (February), and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (April), Seoul was visited by Plenipotentiary Representative of the President in the Far Eastern Federal District Viktor Ishayev (August), by the heads of the Ministry of Transport, the Federal Fisheries Agency, the Federal Service for Supervision of Natural Resources, the

Federal Agency for Culture and Cinematography, the Audit Chamber, and the Federal Space Agency, and visits were paid to Moscow by the defense minister (July), the minister of innovative economy (August), and the ministers of culture, sports and tourism of the Republic of Korea (March).

The legal framework of bilateral relations continued to be improved – in November the President of Russia signed a law on the ratification of the agreement on simplified visa procedures for citizens making mutual short-term trips.

Close interaction continued in the field of peaceful space exploration (the first launch of the Russian-South Korean carrier rocket KSLV-1 took place on August 25 at the Naro Space Center built with the assistance of Russian specialists) and other high-tech industries. South Korean business stepped up participation in investment projects in Russia. Big economic projects involving the Republic of Korea and the DPRK were considered, primarily the reunification of the Trans-Korean and the Trans-Siberian Railways. At the same time, bilateral trade and economic cooperation declined by about 50% of the 2008 level due to the global financial crisis.

The development of good-neighborly relations with the **DPRK** continued. At the same time, this process was negatively affected by the unresolved nuclear problem of the Korean Peninsula.

The legal framework of relations was strengthened, and the bilateral political dialogue and contacts were maintained at various levels. In November, Russia ratified the agreement on temporary employment of citizens of one state on the territory of the other. In April, the intergovernmental Plan of Cultural and Scientific Cooperation for 2009-2011 was signed.

The DPRK was visited by Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov (November) and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov (April). The Russian Center was opened in Pyongyang in April at the Pyongyang Institute of Foreign Languages, a leading linguistic institute in the country.

The parties began modernizing the Hasan-Rajin railway section and building a container terminal at the port of Rajin.

Political contacts with **Mongolia** were furthered. A key event in bilateral relations was Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's state visit on August 25-26, which was timed to coincide with the 70th anniversary of the joint victory in the Battle of Khalkhin Gol. The Declaration on the Development of Strategic Partnership between the Russian Federation and Mongolia was signed during the visit.

The appointment of the state corporation Rostekhnologii as the Russian shareholder in major joint limited liability companies, Erdenet Enterprise and Mongolrostsvetmet, and the transfer of state-owned shares in the Russian-Mongolian Ulan-Bator Railway JSC to RZD OJSC for trust management made it possible not only to make the main "locomotives" of bilateral economic cooperation and Mongolian budget donors much more resistant to crises, but also to start making plans for their large-scale modernization.

Inter-governmental agreements were signed to create new joint limited liability companies Dornod Uranium for exploring, producing and processing uranium ore, and Infrastructure Development for building railways and developing Mongolia's strategic mineral deposits.

The development of multifaceted strategic partnership with **India**, based on the commonness of long-term interests of the two countries, remained among Russia's main foreign policy priorities.

In 2009, proclaimed the Year of India in Russia, bilateral interaction was marked by especially intensive contacts at all levels. Indian President Pratibha Patil made a state visit to Russia on September 2-6. Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh visited Russia twice: on June 15-16 to attend SCO and BRIC summits in Yekaterinburg and on December 6-8 for an official visit. Major agreements were reached. Their implementation will strengthen Russian-Indian cooperation in priority areas.

Regular contacts continued between the foreign ministries, the security councils, ministries and agencies, facilitating harmonized coordination of the two countries' efforts on key international, regional and bilateral issues.

The IX Session of the bilateral Intergovernmental Commission on Military-Technical Cooperation and the V Session of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific-Technical, and Cultural Cooperation were held in Moscow in October.

More than 150 events took place in Moscow, St. Petersburg and other cities as part of the Year of India in Russia.

The development of relations with **Iran** was among Russia's foreign policy priorities, which facilitated the search for solutions to acute international and regional problems: Iraq, Afghanistan, the Middle East, and others.

The commitment to continuing and furthering this policy was confirmed at the traditional annual meeting of the presidents of Russia and Iran on the sidelines of the SCO Summit in Yekaterinburg (June 16). Regular consultations between the foreign ministries were held, the inter-parliamentary political dialogue evolved, bilateral contacts between interested agencies of the two countries were maintained.

Pursuant to political agreements with Teheran, interaction was intensified in such fields as the fight against international terrorism and response to the drug threat.

In the first nine months of 2009, bilateral trade turnover decreased by 18.2% from the same period of the previous year due to the financial crisis and stood at \$2.17 billion.

On November 29-30, the 8th meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held in Teheran. Based on the results of the meeting, a memorandum of cooperation was signed between Iran's Ministry of Petroleum and Russia's Ministry of Energy, which calls for drafting a "road map" shortly for joint fuel and energy projects. At the meeting, an intergovernmental commission co-chairman, Energy Minister Sergey Shmatko visited the Bushehr nuclear power plant, where he had talks with Iranian officials in order to coordinate the power unit commissioning schedule underlain by safety issues. The

tentative commissioning date for the Bushehr nuclear power plant is July or August 2010.

Sergey Shmatko negotiated with Iranian officials three times, including for enhanced bilateral interaction at the Gas Exporting Countries Forum.

The development of bilateral relations was adversely affected by the unresolved issues pertaining to the Iranian nuclear program.

Russia intensified work on the **Afghan** track. The presidents of Russia and Afghanistan met twice: in June in Yekaterinburg on the sidelines of the SCO summit in the trilateral Russia-Afghanistan-Pakistan format, and in July in Dushanbe in the same format, with the participation of Tajikistan's leader. Afghanistan's Second Vice President Karim Khalili visited Russia in May.

The Special Conference on Afghanistan initiated by Russia was held in Moscow in March under the SCO auspices. It adopted a declaration, a statement and an action plan of the SCO member states and Afghanistan on the fight against terrorism, illegal drug trafficking, and organized crime.

The Russian-Afghan Intergovernmental Agreement on Cooperation Against Illegal Trafficking in Drugs, Psychotropic Substances and Their Precursors was signed during Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to Kabul (March). In October, an agreement on anti-narcotics cooperation was signed with Russia's Federal Drug Control Service during a visit to Russia by an Afghan minister.

Pursuant to the instructions issued by the presidents of Russia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, the foreign ministers of the three countries adopted a joint statement in Trieste (Italy) in July, which underscored the need for more vigorous counterterrorism, anti-drug and economic cooperation.

On November 19, Sergey Lavrov attended the inauguration of Afghanistan's newly elected President Hamid Karzai in Kabul.

Intensive parliamentary contacts continued. In November, the chairman of the upper house of Afghanistan's parliament, Sibghatullah Mojaddedi made an official visit to Russia. The chairman of the lower house of parliament, Younus Qanooni, and his deputy M.S. Sajugi (May) visited Russia (December) to attend

Intergovernmental Assembly sessions. A delegation of the Federation Council led by First Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council Alexander Torshin visited Kabul in June.

Ties between the education and health ministries of the two countries, as well as contacts between entrepreneurs and members of the business communities developed. An exhibition of Afghanistan's manufactured goods and agricultural products intended for export was held in Moscow in December for the first time in years.

Throughout 2009, Russia provided comprehensive humanitarian aid to Afghanistan to a total amount of more than \$30 million.

Political dialogue with **Pakistan** intensified at the top and high levels. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met with Pakistani President Asif Zardari twice (in Yekaterinburg in June and in Dushanbe in July). Chairman of the Russian Government Vladimir Putin had contacts with Pakistani Prime Minister Yusuf Gillani in Davos in January and in Beijing in October on the sidelines of the meeting of the SCO heads of government. The Russian and Pakistani foreign ministers had talks in Moscow in March during the SCO special conference on Afghanistan, and met in Trieste in June. Meetings of the bilateral consultative group on strategic stability and the working group on counterterrorism were held in Moscow. An agreement was reached to begin practical work of the Russian-Pakistani Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, and Scientific-Technical Cooperation.

Constant dialogue was maintained at the high political level with **Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Republic of Maldives**. The legal framework of cooperation with these countries was strengthened. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov made the first-ever working visit to Sri Lanka (October), during which an intergovernmental agreement on cooperation against illegal trafficking in drugs and psychotropic substances and their use, and a memorandum of understanding between the Russian and Sri Lankan ministries of emergency situations were signed. The Consular Convention between Russia and Bangladesh

entered into force (December). A draft intergovernmental agreement on cooperation between Russia and Bangladesh on the peaceful use of atomic energy was initialed (October). Russian Supreme Court Chairman Vyacheslav Lebedev visited Nepal (August), and his Nepalese counterpart visited Moscow (September). Fruitful cooperation with these states continued at international and regional forums. The decision was adopted with Russia's support to grant the status of SCO dialogue partner to Sri Lanka (June).

Positive dynamics continued in relations with **Indonesia**. During a telephone conversation in September, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev invited Indonesian President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono to come to Russia on an official visit. A meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade and Economic Cooperation was held (October). The Russian-Indonesian Business Council was founded in Moscow (November). Intensive exchanges of delegations continued at various levels. In the first ten months of 2009, trade turnover had amounted to \$765.7 million (\$1.4 billion in 2008).

Mutual commitment to broadening **Russian-Malaysian** cooperation persisted. Malaysia remained one of the biggest trade partners of Russia among ASEAN countries. In the first ten months of 2009, mutual trade turnover had exceeded \$1.3 billion (over \$2.4 billion in the whole of 2008). Ties grew stronger in the fields of high technologies and space. A Malaysian telecommunication satellite was successfully launched aboard a Russian carrier rocket (June).

A key event in the expanding relations with **Brunei** was Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah's official visit to Russia (October), during which agreements were reached to intensify political, trade and economic ties. Brunei's Minister of Foreign Affairs and Trade Mohamed Bolkiah had travelled to Moscow (June-July) to prepare the visit.

Preparations continued for the opening of the Russian Embassy in Bandar Seri Begawan (scheduled for early 2010).

The dynamics of **Russian-Philippine** relations increased slightly. Philippine President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo made a working visit to Russia in connection with her participation in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (June), and the leaders of the two countries had a meeting on the sidelines of the APEC Summit in Singapore (November). Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met his colleague Alberto Romulo at the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly in September. Mutual trade turnover had increased by almost 20%, and Russian export, by more than 40%.

Relations with **Thailand** were advanced considerably. An intensive and confidential political dialogue was fostered with the government of this country that had come to power in December 2008. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to Bangkok (July) became an important event. Efforts to lay the foundation for further intensification of relations were largely helped by the results of the 4th meeting of the Joint Commission on Bilateral Cooperation (November) with the participation of Vice-Prime Minister and Government Chief of Staff Sergei Sobyenin, during which Russian-Thai relations were fully inventoried, and a joint action plan was signed for advancing cooperation between Russia and Thailand in 2010-2014.

Bilateral trade turnover with Thailand had declined considerably due to the global financial crisis: from January to November 2009, it had amounted to \$1.25 billion (\$3.82 billion in the whole of 2008).

The signing of the Protocol of Cooperation between the Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation and the Ministry of Culture of the Kingdom of Thailand for 2009-2011 opened up good prospects for intensifying humanitarian contacts.

Strategic partnership with **Vietnam** was strengthened fundamentally. Vietnamese Prime Minister Nguyễn Tấn Dũng's working visit to Russia became a major event. During the meetings with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the sides confirmed mutual commitment to stronger partner ties and discussed practical measures for further development of cooperation in the fields of oil and gas, energy, banking, finance, education, and

personnel training, the development of natural resources, transport, and telecommunications, and identified new promising areas of cooperation. Mutual trade turnover in the first ten months of 2009 had exceeded \$1.5 billion.

Issues pertaining to a broader political dialogue and higher effectiveness of cooperation in the international arena were discussed at a meeting between Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Vietnamese President Nguyễn Minh Triết on the sidelines of the APEC Summit in Singapore in November and during Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's official visit to Vietnam in July. The second round of consultations was held in Moscow in July as part of the Russian-Vietnamese strategic dialogue at the level of first deputy foreign ministers.

Vietnamese National Assembly Chairman Nguyễn Phú Trọng's official visit to Russia in April and the signing of an agreement on cooperation between the Federation Council and the National Assembly of Vietnam proved important for the development of strategic partnership with Vietnam, including inter-parliamentary interaction.

Ties with **Singapore** entered a qualitatively new stage. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev made an official visit to this country (November), the first one in the history of bilateral relations. An agreement was reached at the top level to create an intergovernmental commission on cooperation. Moscow was visited by Singapore's Minister Mentor Lee Kuan Yew (October) and Foreign Minister George Yeo (March).

Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov met Singapore Parliament Speaker Abdullah Tarmugi (January) on the sidelines of the 17th Session of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum. First Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov attended the 4th annual Russia-Singapore Business Forum (Singapore, September). The Russia-Singapore Business Council was established in Moscow (October).

Bilateral trade turnover continued to grow: in the first ten months of 2009, it had reached about \$1.2 billion (an increase of 31.6% from the same period of 2008).

Substantive dialogue was maintained with **Cambodia**. Cambodian National Assembly President Heng Samrin made an official visit to Moscow (November). The 5th meeting of the bilateral Intergovernmental Commission on Trade, Economic, Scientific and Technical Cooperation was held in Phnom Penh (November).

Trade turnover in January-October 2009 increased by 27.3% from the same period of 2008, reaching \$34.8 million.

Cultural and educational cooperation developed positively. More than 100 Cambodian citizens studied at Russian civil and military higher educational institutions at the expense of the federal budget.

Political, trade and economic ties with **Myanmar** were developed further. Russia held a balanced position on the “Myanmar issue” at the UN Security Council and other international organizations, speaking against unjustified internationalization of this topic and at the same time supporting the Road Map worked out by the Myanmar leadership for democratic reforms and the transition to a civilian government.

One of the priority areas of cooperation was the training of Myanmar personnel in Russia (about 3,000 students from this country studied at Russian higher educational institutions).

Because of the global economic crisis, trade turnover with Myanmar had decreased twofold (in the first 11 months of 2009, it had amounted to \$15.6 million).

Russian-Australian relations grew stronger, primarily owing to a closer political dialogue that had become more confidential and constructive. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met Australian Prime Minister Kevin Rudd on April 1 ahead of the G20 Summit in London. In March, Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov travelled to Australia on an official visit. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met his Australian colleague Stephen Smith in July on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) in Thailand.

Bilateral trade turnover in January-August 2009 had reached \$402.6 million.

Russia-New Zealand relations invigorated and had a constructive nature. Our countries actively interacted in international and regional affairs, primarily at the UN, APEC, and ARF. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov met New Zealand Minister of Foreign Affairs Murray McCully in July on the sidelines of the ASEAN events in Thailand. In December, after a long break, the New Zealand minister made a working visit to Russia.

Bilateral trade turnover in January-September 2009 had amounted to \$99.1 million.

Middle East and North Africa

The situation in the Middle East and North Africa remained extremely unstable due to a series of conflicts fuelled by inter-confessional contradictions and the deteriorating social and economic conditions. Internal political tensions were characteristic of many countries in the region. International efforts continued against this background to rescue the Middle East out of the chronic crisis, and Russia played an active role in them.

Interaction with the states in the region aimed to expand political dialogue on the basis of common vision for a modern world order, and to promote mutually advantageous economic projects.

The main event in relations with **Egypt** was Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's official visit to this country (June), during which the bilateral Strategic Partnership Treaty was signed. Despite the global financial crisis, bilateral trade turnover had exceeded \$4 billion. The number of Russian tourists in Egypt had reached two million.

Mutually advantageous cooperation continued with **Algeria**. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia on the sidelines of the G8 Summit in L'Aquila (July) and Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika at the UN General Assembly session in New York (September).

Relations with **Morocco** developed in a stable manner. The Chairman of the House of Representatives of the Parliament of Morocco, Mustafa Mansuri, visited Moscow in March as a personal envoy of King Mohammed VI. The practice of meetings between the foreign ministers of the two countries was continued on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in New York (September).

The strengthening of the political dialogue, including at the top level, can be considered a positive result on the **Syrian** track. Two big economic facilities built by Stroystrangaz OJSC were commissioned in Syria: a section of the pan-Arab gas pipeline and a gas processing plant.

Assistance continued to **Lebanon** to help it preserve civil peace and strengthen its statehood. Russian officials took an active part in the discussion of Lebanese issues in the UN and spoke consistently in support of Lebanon's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. The meeting between Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Lebanese Prime Minister Saad Hariri in Copenhagen (December) gave a considerable impetus to the development of Russian-Lebanese relations.

Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki visited Moscow in April as part of Russia's efforts to restore full-formal relations with **Iraq**. Meetings between the foreign ministers of the two countries had become regular. Russian Energy Minister Sergey Shmatko visited Baghdad in October. The joint working group for inventorying contracts made by and between Russian organizations and Iraq before the war held a meeting. Two stages of international tenders were held in Baghdad in July and December. Based on their results, a number of energy companies, including NK Lukoil OJSC and Gazprom Neft OJSC, acquired the right to develop Iraq's West Qurna-2 and Badra oilfields.

A high level of contacts was maintained with the states on the **Arabian Peninsula**: visits to Moscow were paid by President Ali Abdullah Saleh of the Republic of Yemen (February), and by Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al-Nahyan, the Crown Prince of Abu-Dhabi (June). Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin's visit

to the United Arab Emirates (November) was important for the development of trade, economic and investment cooperation.

Measures were taken to enhance coordination in the gas sector. A ministerial meeting of the **Gas Exporting Countries Forum** took place in Doha in December.

Work continued to build the dialogue mechanism with the General Secretariats of the **Cooperation Council for the Arab States of the Gulf** and the **Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC)** within the format of relations with these organizations. OIC Secretary-General Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu was in Moscow in March to attend the Special International Conference on Afghanistan held under the SCO auspices. He was received by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov led the Russian delegation to the 36th Session of the OIC Council of Foreign Ministers (Damascus, May).

Russian-Israeli relations were characterized by the mutual desire to develop cooperation further. Israeli President Shimon Peres met with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in Sochi in August. Russia and Israel closely interact in the international arena in combating international terrorism and anti-Semitism, and in preventing a revision of the results of World War II.

Russian-Palestinian relations were maintained at a high level. Palestinian National Authority President Mahmoud Abbas made a working visit to Moscow in April.

Africa

A principled stance in support of Africa allowed Russia to make progress in ensuring global stability and facilitate the development of fruitful cooperation with African countries.

Priority was given to the creation of a favorable political climate for the expansion of multifaceted contacts with the continent. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's trip to Africa, during which he visited **Nigeria, Namibia, and Angola**

(June), gave a strong impetus to the development of the whole range of relations with African countries.

A big set of intergovernmental and interdepartmental documents and contracts between Russian and African companies was signed during the visits. Standing out among them are Agreements on the Encouragement and Mutual Protection of Investments with all the three countries, a medium-term program of economic, scientific-technical, and trade cooperation for 2009-2013 with Angola, documents on the creation of a joint venture between Gazprom OJSC and the Nigerian National Petroleum Corporation and on the creation of the Angolan national satellite communications and broadcasting system ANGOSAT.

An important role was given to regular contacts with high representatives of African countries. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's Moscow negotiations with Foreign Ministers Alexis Thambwe Muamba of the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** (April), Assunção dos Anjos of Angola and Moctar Ouane of **Mali** (May), and **Ugandan** President Yoweri Museveni's private visit to Russia in August were of big political significance. Sergey Lavrov met with the president of **Somalia**, and the foreign ministers of the DRC, Nigeria, and **South Africa** during the ministerial week at the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly.

Inter-parliamentary ties played a noticeable role in the development of Russia's relations with the African continent. A delegation of both houses of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation attended the 120th Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) in April. A delegation of the Foreign Affairs, Defense and Security Committee of the National Assembly of Namibia led by its Chairwoman Lucia Basson visited Moscow in October.

Increasingly growing attention was paid to broadening the geographical reach of cooperation between Russian regions and African countries in the economic, scientific and technical fields. Cooperation with South Africa is most advanced in this respect as it covers such constituent entities of the Russian Federation as Moscow and the Moscow Region, St. Petersburg, the Kaluga and Ulyanovsk Regions, and the Krasnodar Territory. Legal and contractual relations

were officially established between the Moscow Region and the Province of Gauteng, and between St. Petersburg and Cape Town. A protocol of cooperation between St. Petersburg and Johannesburg is being coordinated.

Contacts with the African Union (AU) were developed further. The participation of the Russian delegation led by Federation Council Chairman Sergey Mironov (July) in the summit of this pan-African organization in Libya became an important step in this respect.

Contacts developed with the main sub-regional organizations on the continent: the Southern African Development Community (SADC), the Economic Community of the West African States (ECOWAS), and the Intergovernmental Authority on Development. In keeping with the earlier agreements, 13 grants were issued from the federal budget in 2009 specifically for SADC. The Russian ambassadors accredited to SADC and ECOWAS regularly attended these organizations' summits and other major events.

Active political work continued in the UN, primarily in its Security Council, on the **strengthening of peace and security** in Africa. Specific interaction with non-permanent members of the UN Security Council from the African group covered a wide range of issues, including the strengthening of the UN role as the central mechanism of collective response to global contemporary challenges. This work produced positive results, as evidenced by the positive attitude of the Africans to the Russian initiatives at the UN.

Efforts were taken towards a **political settlement of conflicts** on the African continent. This concerned primarily Russia's participation in the work of the UN Security Council, the Group of Eight, the International Contact Group on Guinea, and the Group of Friends of the Great Lakes Region. Russia sought to consistently step up participation in peacemaking efforts in Africa.

Russian servicemen and law enforcers (about 370 persons) are engaged in all of the UN peacekeeping operations in Africa: in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Western Sahara, Sierra Leone, Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, and Sudan. Russian helicopter groups carried out missions within the UN Mission in Sudan as well as

the Mission in Chad and the Central African Republic. Relevant Russian educational institutions ran training programs for African peacekeepers.

Russian Navy ships escorted Russian and foreign vessels in the Gulf of Aden as part of the **fight against piracy**. Eight attempts to seize ships were stopped and four pirate ships were detained. The Russian sailors' actions were highly commended in the world, and many partners call for developing cooperation against piracy. As of now, Russian Navy ships operating in the Gulf of Aden have established the most effective working interaction with the European Union's Operation Atalanta designed to fight piracy off Somalia. The large anti-submarine ship Admiral Chabanenko, which has necessary means for communication with Western partners, has been deployed in the region since December.

Russia continued to be actively involved in concerted international efforts to provide comprehensive **assistance to Africa** for its sustainable development, including within the framework of the Group of Eight.

One the important aspects of assistance to Africa was the **reduction of the debt burden for the states in the region** under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative. By this moment, Russia has written off \$20 billion worth of debts owed by African countries. Negotiations on debt relief in the amount of about \$547 million are coming to an end with Benin, Zambia, Madagascar, Mozambique, Tanzania, and Ethiopia.

Russia provided humanitarian aid to countries in the region, including on a bilateral basis. Given Russian priorities, the donor contribution to the UN World Food Organization for 2009 was used for assistance to Guinea (\$1 million), Zimbabwe (\$2 million), Ethiopia (\$2 million), and Somalia (\$1 million).

The Russian Ministry of Emergency Situations delivered over \$500,000 worth of relief supplies to the population of Namibia affected by a flood. Humanitarian assistance (\$2 million) was provided to the DRC through the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

Russia continued to assist African states significantly in the field of **personnel training**. More than 4,500 Africans are studying in Russian higher educational institutions, including about 50% at the expense of the federal budget. Seven hundred fifty government grants have been provided to African countries for Academic Year 2009-2010.

Relevant Russian educational institutions have training programs for Afghan peacekeepers. In addition, 159 specialists from 15 African countries completed training courses in 2009 at the Interior Ministry's St. Petersburg University, the Interior Ministry's Volgograd Academy, the Interior Ministry's Academy of Management, and the Interior Ministry's All-Russia Institute of Advanced Training. Russia's contribution to this work met a positive reaction on the continent.

Assistance to the development of **bilateral trade and economic ties** with African states remained one of the priorities. The search was conducted for new forms and methods of cooperation in various areas. Existing intergovernmental commissions on cooperation with African countries stepped up their work. The intergovernmental commission with South Africa convened (October), and meetings of the co-chairmen of the Russian-Namibian and the Russian-Guinean intergovernmental commissions were held (October and November respectively).

Latin America and Caribbean

The year 2009 passed under the sign of further intensification of Russian-Latin American relations in various areas. Top-level and high-level interstate contacts developed vigorously. President of **Cuba's** State Council and Council of Ministers Raul Castro visited Moscow in January-February; **Bolivian** President Evo Morales visited Moscow in February; **Chilean** President Michelle Bachelet visited Moscow in April; **Venezuelan** President Hugo Chavez visited Moscow in September; **Ecuadorian** President Rafael Correa visited Moscow in October; **Brazilian** President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva attended the BRIC Summit in Yekaterinburg in June.

Interstate contacts were also maintained at other levels. Venezuelan Vice President Ramon Carrizalez visited Russia (June). Russian Deputy Prime Minister Igor Sechin visited Venezuela (July), Cuba (July), and **Nicaragua** (July). Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev visited Chile in October. Venezuela's National Defense Council Secretary-General Viviam Antonio Duran was in Moscow in December. A number of trips were exchanged by the ministers of justice and emergency situations, the heads of judicial, law enforcement and anti-narcotics agencies, as well as trade and economic delegations and regional officials.

Inter-parliamentary ties continued to develop. Delegations of the Federation Council visited Cuba (January, April), and State Duma delegations travelled to Venezuela (January) and Cuba (November).

The dialogue between the Foreign Ministries was furthered. The Russian foreign minister met with the ministers of foreign affairs of **Argentina**, Brazil, Cuba, **Mexico**, Nicaragua, **Peru**, and **Uruguay** as President Pro-tempore of the Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR) at the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly in New York. The foreign ministers of Ecuador and the **Dominican Republic** were received in Moscow.

Russia's ties with **integration associations** and groups operating in the region developed dynamically.

Work continued on an economic cooperation agreement under the memorandum on the creation of a mechanism for political dialogue and cooperation with the **Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR)**, and possibilities were explored for signing a strategic partnership treaty. Agreements between the houses of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation and the MERCOSUR Parliament were prepared for signing.

Contacts with the **Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America (ALBA)** were fostered. A Russian delegation led by Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev attended the ALBA Summit in Cochabamba (Bolivia) in October.

Andean Development Corporation President Enrique Garcia visited Moscow in October. Working contacts were maintained with the **Andean Community**, the **Central American Integration System**, the **Association of Caribbean States**, and the **Latin American Integration Association**. By attending sessions of the **Organization of American States** and its bodies, Russian delegations advanced Russian foreign policy approaches in the inter-American community, primarily in respect of the fight against terrorism and drug trafficking. Russia was granted the status of observer at the Latin-American Association for Training Centers in Peacekeeping Operations.

Russia's contacts with Latin American partners at the bilateral and multilateral levels, including within the UN and other international organizations, BRIC, Heiligendamm-L'Aquila process, the Group of Twenty, and APEC, based on the similarity of positions on various international issues, made it possible to secure Latin American support for a number of important Russian initiatives in the international arena.

The **legal and contractual framework of Russian-Latin-American relations** continued to strengthen: more than 20 agreements were signed with Argentina, Bolivia, Venezuela, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Nicaragua, Panama, and Ecuador.

Trade and economic ties were furthered. Over the past year, the intergovernmental and high-level commissions stepped up their work. Specific results for the development of bilateral relations were achieved during meetings of the intergovernmental commissions with Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, and Chile, and the high-level commission with Venezuela. The first meeting of the intergovernmental commission with Ecuador was held. The decision was made to resume the work of the intergovernmental commission with Nicaragua.

Trade turnover with Latin American and Caribbean countries declined by 40% on the whole (and amounted to \$8.5 billion in the first ten months) due to the global financial and economic crisis. At the same time, Russian business became increasingly interested in moving into Latin American markets. New prospects

appeared and current cooperation projects continued to be implemented in the energy, oil and gas, nickel, and food industries, and in the field of space exploration.

Humanitarian ties continued to be developed. A regional Conference of Compatriots Living in the Americas was held in Mexico City in October. A regional roundtable on information support to the State Program for the Resettlement of Compatriots was held in Montevideo (Uruguay) in November. The Russian government sent relief supplies to Guatemala, Cuba, and Nicaragua.

ECONOMIC DIPLOMACY

Russia's foreign policy in the field of international economic relations focused on assisting the development of the national economy by further expanding Russia's participation in global economic ties on fair non-discriminatory terms. Diplomatic efforts in this respect were geared to ensuring economic security of the country, forming a fair international trade system, ensuring full participation of the Russian Federation in international economic organizations, diversifying the Russian presence in the global markets by expanding foreign economic ties and exports. Measures were taken to resist commercial and political influence of foreign states that violate the rights of the Russian Federation and Russian enterprises, and discrimination against Russian investors and exporters on foreign markets.

Despite the serious impact of the growing global economic crisis, the investment climate on the whole remained positive. According to UNCTAD, Russia is among the five countries that are most attractive for direct foreign investments, with only China, India, and the USA being ahead.

As of October 1, 2009, **accumulated foreign investments** in the Russian economy stood at \$262.4 billion (4.4% more than in 2008), according to the Federal Service for State Statistics. Investments made on a recoverable basis made up the biggest portion of the accumulated foreign capital – \$146.2 billion (55.7%), direct investments accounted for \$104.1 billion (39.7%), and the share of portfolio investments was \$12.1 billion (4.6%).

The main national investors were Cyprus, the Netherlands, Germany, the British Virgin Islands, and the USA. They, as well as France, Luxembourg, Japan, and Ireland accounted for 79.1% of all accumulated direct foreign investments.

Foreign investments in the Russian economy in the first nine months of 2009 had amounted to only \$54.8 billion, representing a decrease of 27.8% from the same period of the previous year, mainly due to the growing liquidity problems on the world financial market caused by the continuing global economic crisis.

The **Russian Foreign Ministry** stepped up **interaction with domestic business**. An agreement on cooperation with the all-Russia public organization “The Union of Machine Builders of Russia” was signed.

The main task of the Business Council under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was to develop close ties with the Russian business community in order to protect Russia’s political and economic interests abroad. The latest meeting held in November focused on the strengthening of anti-terror partnership between the government and business.

Multilateral and bilateral cooperation continued to develop in the **energy sector**. The Foreign Ministry was directly involved in ensuring a favorable situation on the world oil markets for Russia and strengthening the positions of the country in the energy community. The Russian Foreign Ministry coordinated approaches to interaction with OPEC, IEA, IEF, and the Gas Exporting Countries Forum (GECF). Unanimous election by the GECF member states of Leonid Bokhanovsky of Russia as Secretary-General of this organization became an important foreign policy event.

In May, Russia signed the charter documents of the International Partnership for Energy Efficiency Cooperation (IPEEC) on the sidelines of the G8 energy ministers’ meeting in Rome.

The Conceptual Approach to the New Legal Framework for International Energy Cooperation, proposed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev in Helsinki in April, was advanced in various formats.

Support was provided to major investment energy projects aimed at implementing the strategy of diversification of export routes for hydrocarbon supplies from Russia (Nord Stream and South Stream gas pipelines, Burgas-Alexandroupolis, Eastern Siberia – Pacific Ocean, Baltic Pipeline System, and Caspian Pipeline Consortium). Approvals were obtained for the construction of the Nord Stream gas pipeline in the exclusive economic zones of Denmark, Finland, Sweden, Germany, and Russia, and Turkey’s permission for marine engineering surveys in its exclusive economic zone under the South Stream project.

Priority was given to using **Russia's transit potential** as a transport link between Europe and Asia, including under the North-South International Transport Corridor project.

The Interstate Council of the Eurasian Economic Community (June) made the decision to create a single negotiating team of the Customs Union member states on **accession to the WTO** and coordination of the positions of Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan, taking into account their agreements to form this integration association.

In this connection, consultations were held with the WTO Secretariat and interested WTO member states, during which our partners were informed of the intention of Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan to join the WTO within the framework of the effective mandates of the Working Groups, i.e. as individual states but on harmonized terms at the same time. The decision on the date of the next round of talks will be made by the chairmen of the working groups on accession to the WTO after the receipt of additional information on the Customs Union, the schedule and terms of its creation, and the legal framework, as well as after consultations with WTO members.

Coordinated by the Russian Foreign Minister, work towards **Russia's admission to the OECD** continued in cooperation with the Russian Ministry of Economic Development and other agencies. A mechanism was worked out and approved for inter-agency coordination of the negotiation process, and a plan of cooperation with the Organization's divisions was approved for coordinating the terms of Russia's admission to the OECD regulatory framework.

At the ministerial meeting of the OECD Council in June, Russian Minister of Economic Development Elvira Nabiullina presented to OECD Secretary-General Angel Gurría an "initial" Memorandum on Russia's Position Regarding the Organization's Regulatory Instruments, drafted by Russia and approved by the Government of the Russian Federation, which marked a practical start of negotiations on accession to the OECD.

The first negotiations on the contents of the Memorandum were held in July during a visit to Moscow by an OECD Mission led by Deputy Secretary-General Carlo Padoan, and were subsequently continued at the expert level in the departmental format. Substantive work began for Russia's accession to the OECD anti-corruption convention.

Cooperation with the **World Bank** continued in the form of consultative services to Russia and implementation of donor programs in developing countries. In September, the Government of the Russian Federation made the decision to provide support to the poorest nations affected by the global financial and economic crisis, and to make a contribution of \$50 million to the World Bank Rapid Social Response Program Trust Fund in 2009-2011.

Russia continued interaction with members of the World Bank Group: the **International Finance Corporation (IFC)** and the **Multilateral Investment Guarantee Agency (MIGA)**. In the past fiscal year, IFC invested over \$760 million in Russia, and the overall volume of loans for projects had amounted to \$2.24 billion (third place among this financial institution's clients). MIGA's gross liabilities in Russia in the same period had reached \$973 million (first place among beneficiary countries).

Strategic partnership was strengthened with the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**, one of the biggest investors in the real sector of the Russian economy with the combined volume of investments exceeding €11.2 billion. In the past fiscal year, EBRD investments in projects in Russia had reached €1.8 billion (36% of the Bank's overall operations).

On November 25, the EBRD Board of Directors approved the Bank's strategy in the Russian Federation for 2009-2012, which determined areas of the Bank's activities in accordance with the priorities set forth in the Concept of Long-Term Socio-Economic Development of the Russian Federation up to 2020, taking into account the crisis period trends.

With the coordination of the Russian Foreign Ministry, the initiative to open a representative office of the **European Investment Bank (EIB)** was studied and

supported, the main parameters of the future agreement were determined and Russia's position at the talks with the EIB was approved.

The terms of Russia's possible admission to **regional development banks** – the Asian Development Bank and the Inter-American Development Bank -- were studied. Further efforts were taken to reform the International Investment Bank and the International Bank for Economic Cooperation.

The Russian Federation traditionally continued to pay a great deal of attention to the development of economic and environmental aspects of OSCE activities, the transformation of the OSCE Economic Forum into a place for discussing pressing issues and working out practical decisions and recommendations.

Russia actively participated in the **UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD)** to devise a policy for the sake of sustainable development and reduction of poverty, and work out specific recommendations on how to minimize negative consequences of the global financial and economic crisis. A number of anti-crisis initiatives were supported, including those calling for creating an early warning mechanism for the international monetary system and its reform.

Russia consistently supported the efforts of the **International Labor Organization (ILO)** aimed at exercising fundamental rights of the working people. ILO initiatives within the proposed concept of decent work and employment were reflected in the social policy of the Russian leadership designed to create conditions for achieving a new quality of life for citizens.

LEGAL SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN POLICY ACTIVITIES

The drafting and adoption of **new international regulatory acts** governing relations that are most vital for the national interests and Russia's accession to such effective documents remained among Russia's most important diplomatic tasks in the field of international law.

Work continued in 2009 to promote major Russian proposals concerning the drafting of a European Security Treaty, the universalization of obligations under the Soviet-American Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty of 1987, the conclusion of a treaty on the prevention of arms deployment in space, the use of force or threat of force in respect of space objects, and substantial strengthening of the legal framework for the activities of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

At the same time, work continued to coordinate a new treaty on the basic principles of relations between Russia and the European Union; to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on their Destruction of 1971 and the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on their Destruction of 1993 by introducing mechanisms for ensuring the performance of obligations of the states under them; to ensure the effectiveness of the regime based on the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty of 1968; to coordinate the Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism; and to improve legal regulation of international cooperation against crime.

Special significance was attached to negotiations on a draft treaty between the Russian Federation and the USA on further reduction and limitation of strategic offensive weapons, which should replace the Soviet-American START of 1991.

On the whole, the international and legal discussions remained focused on the situation surrounding **Kosovo, Abkhazia, and South Ossetia**, which affects key principles of international law: territorial integrity of states, the right of peoples to

self-determination, the ban on the use of force in international relations. Russia took efforts to ensure that irresponsible and unlawful actions and decisions (encouraging unjustified separatist aspirations as in the case of Kosovo, or an attempt to resolve an interethnic conflict by force as in the case of Abkhazia and South Ossetia) did not rock the whole system of modern international law.

These problems continued to be the subject of examination by **international judicial bodies**. The **UN International Court of Justice** held hearings on the legitimacy of unilateral declaration of Kosovo's independence, which involved almost thirty states. Russia presented its position at the Court, too. Together with numerous like-minded countries, we noted the unlawfulness of the declaration of Kosovo's independence that runs counter to both the principle of territorial integrity of states and U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 which calls for resolving the Kosovo issue through negotiations within Serbia.

The International Court of Justice, the European Court of Human Rights, and the International Criminal Court continued proceedings connected with the conflict in the Caucasus in August 2008. As part of those proceedings at the International Court of Justice, Russia presented objections against the Court's jurisdiction; and at the European Court of Human Rights, against the acceptability of Georgia's interstate complaint. In both cases, Russia's arguments were based on the fact that Georgia's attempts to engage authoritative judicial bodies for addressing problems that Tbilisi had tried to solve by force could not but be considered as abuse of international justice. At the same time, of almost three thousand complaints filed by citizens of Russia and South Ossetia with the European Court of Human Rights against Georgia, seven were selected by the Court for examination on a priority basis. Russia intends to participate in these hearings at the European Court of Human Rights as a third party.

The International Criminal Court (ICC) studied the Caucasian file for war crimes and crimes against humanity in the actions of the Georgian military and officials. Russia submitted a large amount of materials to the ICC, including the results of the national investigation of attacks on Russian peacekeepers and

Russian citizens. Based on the results of the examination of these materials, the ICC is preparing a visit to Russia by a group of its prosecutors for a more thorough analysis of the nature of the investigations conducted by Russian law enforcement agencies.

The ICC activities on the Sudanese track were watched closely as well. Russia exerted efforts to ensure a reasonable balance between international criminal justice and peacekeeping interests in Sudan as part of the Darfur file.

Discussion continued on the problems associated with the work of temporary criminal tribunals: the **International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY)** and the **International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR)**. Russia actively participated in the U.N. Security Council's search for optimal ways to implement the approved strategy of winding up the work of these judicial bodies. Efforts were taken toward timely transformation of the tribunals' work into the phase of "residual" functions.

Russia made a weighty contribution to the exercising and development of **international humanitarian law (IHL)** which continued to evoke an increasingly growing interest. As part of celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of the Geneva Conventions on International Humanitarian Law of 1949, Russia participated in the discussion on further prospects for the conventions and IHL in general and the role of the UN and other international organizations in the implementation of IHL.

These and other issues remained on the agenda of leading **international law forums**: the Sixth Committee of the UN General Assembly, the Council of Europe's Committee of Legal Advisers on Public International Law, the Consultative Committee of the Heads of Law Services at the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the CIS member countries, and consultations of legal advisers from the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of the five permanent member states of the U.N. Security Council. These forums were actively used for promoting Russian approaches toward key international legal problems.

The international legal community's attention was riveted to the improvement of the practice of targeted UN Security Council sanctions subject to compliance with the appropriate legal procedure; the scope of immunity for states and their officials in contemporary circumstances; the exercise by states of "universal jurisdiction" in respect of persons suspected of grave international crimes; and the improvement of national practices for complying with international obligations. Russian diplomacy consistently pressed for these discussions to take into account both the interests of progressive development of international law and fundamental juridical and political positions of Russia.

The adoption by the **UN International Law Commission** of draft articles on the responsibility of international organizations in the first reading became an important event. By so doing, the Commission moved close towards completing the work on a set of issues associated with international legal responsibility. Russia believes that this work should lead to appropriate UN General Assembly decisions that will give the Commission's texts the status of full-fledged legal instruments.

International legal support to maritime activities of Russia was one of the main areas of the Russian Foreign Ministry's work. Russian representatives took an active part in the coordination of maritime resolutions at the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly, in discussions on a number of issues pertaining to international maritime law (informal consultative process, a conference of the member states of the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea of 1982, a meeting of the "leading naval powers"), and in the work of the International Seabed Authority.

Serious attention was paid to international legal cooperation in the **fight against piracy** off Somalia. Russian representatives to the special international Contact Group actively advanced the idea of an international mechanism for the prosecution of persons suspected of piracy. The discussion covered key problems associated with the establishment of such a body and offered specific solutions to them. Although no consensus was reached on this initiative, Russia continued, together with its partners, to look for mutually acceptable effective solutions for the prosecution of persons suspected of piracy.

A Russian-Polish agreement on **navigation in the Kaliningrad Bay** was signed on September 1. The agreement offered a pragmatic solution to the problem of border crossing in the bay by the two countries' ships, which will facilitate the development of bilateral ties.

Russian officials took an active part in the final stage of negotiations on the FAO Agreement on Port State Measures to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing, the Convention on Conservation and Management of High Seas Fishery Resources in the South Pacific Ocean, and the Hong Kong International Convention for the Safe and Environmentally Sound Recycling of Ships.

The **Government Commission on Fisheries** worked to improve the Russian regulatory framework governing fishing issues and consider international aspects of fishing activities.

A great deal of attention was paid to the **Russian Federation's policy in the polar regions**.

Considerable work was done to draft a Strategy for the Development of the Arctic Zone of the Russian Federation and National Security up to 2020 and the Federal Law "On the Regulation of Activities of Russian Citizens and Legal Entities in Antarctica".

Pursuant to the Ilulissat Declaration adopted by the foreign ministers of Russia, the USA, Denmark, Canada, and Norway (May 2008), the five circumpolar nations had established cooperation on pressing problems in the northern Arctic region: consultations between the Foreign Ministries' law departments, expert meetings on the expanded continental shelf in the Arctic, and fishing in the region.

Negotiations were intensified with Norway on the delimitation of seawaters in the Barents Sea and the Arctic Ocean. A methodology was approved for calculating delimitation parameters, which made it possible to move on to the final stage of drawing the delimiting line and making an appropriate agreement. Russian-Norwegian consultations were held on certain aspects of the legal status of

Spitsbergen in the context of the problems experienced by Russian companies on the archipelago.

The **international legal formalization of the state border** of the Russian Federation continued: legal support was provided to demarcation works with Latvia, Lithuania, and Kazakhstan, verification of the border with Finland and Norway, and preparations for border verification with China.

For the purpose of protecting Russian **property interests**, work continued to reregister former Soviet real estate abroad to the Russian Federation. In 2009, re-registration was completed in another two countries.

The **legal and contractual basis of cooperation with foreign states** developed consistently. The President and the Government of the Russian Federation made decisions on the signing of more than 100 interstate and inter-governmental agreements.

The **legal framework of integration process in the post-Soviet space** was furthered. These activities were carried out most actively through EurAsEC, where a number of international agreements were signed on tariff and non-tariff regulation of mutual trade, on statistical records of mutual trade and trade with third countries, on sanitary, phytosanitary and veterinary control.

The legal and contractual basis of the Customs Union of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan expanded considerably. A key event was the signing on November 27 of the Treaty on the Customs Code of the Customs Union, and a set of agreements regulating various aspects of economic relations between the Customs Union member states.

The circle of states with which Russia has signed agreements on mutual assistance in criminal cases is growing (with Japan and Panama in 2009). A number of initiatives were prepared for creating additional opportunities for interaction with foreign partners in the field of mutual legal assistance. Work continues on the draft Agreement on Cooperation between Russia and EUROJUST.

The ratification by the Russian Federation of the European Social Charter (revised) and the entry into force of the treaty with Italy on cooperation in the adoption of children became important steps in the development of international legal **guarantees of human rights and freedoms**. Preparations continued for the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, and Protocol No. 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights.

Efforts were taken to improve the regulatory framework regulating **citizens' foreign trips**. In 2009, agreements were signed with Abkhazia, Argentina, Brunei, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, Mali, Serbia, and Hong Kong (China) to simplify or eliminate completely visa formalities for all or certain categories of individuals. Similar agreements signed earlier with Venezuela and Denmark entered into force.

Work continued to **strengthen the legal basis of economic cooperation** in order to ensure broader guarantees for the rights of Russian investors abroad, and at the same time encourage an influx of investments into the Russian Federation. Agreements on the encouragement and mutual protection of investments were signed with Abkhazia, Angola, and Turkmenistan, similar treaties with Venezuela, Indonesia, Jordan, Qatar, and the People's Republic of China were ratified. The agreements with Indonesia, Jordan, and Qatar entered into force.

The Singapore Treaty on the Law of Trademarks was ratified. This document, aimed at harmonizing national trademark registration legislation, provides additional benefits to the applicant and the right holder and takes into account the development of new communication technologies.

Contractual and legal means were also used to **eliminate double taxation**. In 2009, the relevant agreements with Brazil, Venezuela, Botswana, Singapore, and Saudi Arabia entered into force. At the same time, work continued to actualize the documents signed in this field earlier: amendments to the conventions with the Federal Republic of Germany and the Czech Republic entered into force. They aim, inter alia, to strengthen tax control through information exchanges. With a view to improving the quality of agreements on the avoidance of double taxation, a

new model bilateral document was drafted as the basis for talks with foreign partners.

A fresh impetus was given to the development of relations in the **energy sector**, including its diversification for ensuring energy security, expanding the energy market, and developing alternative energy sources. In addition to the signing of bilateral documents in this field, the mechanism of multilateral cooperation in the field of gas export assumed a new quality: the Gas Exporting Countries Forum, where Russia is one of the main participants, became a full-fledged international organization. One of Russia's priorities in this sector was the South Stream project, for the implementation of which, the relevant Russian-Slovenian inter-governmental agreement was signed and work continued on a similar Russian-Austrian document.

The Russian Federation continued to participate in the improvement of the regulatory framework of international cooperation in the field of **civil aviation** security, primarily at the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). Russian experts worked on amendments to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Seizure of Aircraft and the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts Against the Safety of Civil Aviation which are aimed at strengthening the security of flights aboard civil aircraft.

HUMANITARIAN FOREIGN-POLICY ORIENTATION

Human Rights Issues

The year 2009 was marked by the growing number of human rights and humanitarian issues considered by international organizations.

The Russian Federation continued to actively advance its approaches in the **UN human rights bodies**, (particularly in the UN Human Rights Council and the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly). On Russia's initiative, the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly re-adopted the Resolution “Inadmissibility of Certain Practices that Contribute to Fuelling Contemporary Forms of Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance”. The document was strengthened with a provision emphasizing the special role of history lessons that teach about the dramatic events that resulted from the ideology of Nazism and fascism, especially in light of the upcoming 65th anniversary of the Victory in World War II.

A Review Conference on the implementation of the Durban Declaration and the Program of Action to Combat Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance was held under the UN auspices in Geneva in April. The final document, drafted by the working group chaired by Russia, provided a solid platform for further actions to combat racism in the international arena and a “code of guiding principles” for drafting national plans and programs of action in this field.

In May, Russia was re-elected to the UN Human Rights Council (HRC) for a second three-year term (2009-2012), which reflected a high assessment of the Russian contribution to the international cooperation aimed at encouraging and protecting human rights, and recognizing the country's key role in international human rights organizations. In February, Russia completed the HRC Universal Periodic Review. Russia's national report was met with noticeable interest among

the states. The substantive and constructive dialogue with the Russian representatives involved more than 50 delegations that made a rather positive assessment of the human rights situation in Russia and measures to improve it, and pointed out the need for improving certain regulatory acts and law enforcement practices, and gave a number of specific recommendations.

Russian delegations continued active work at regular and special HRC sessions. On Russia's initiative, the Resolution "Promoting Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms through a Better Understanding of Traditional Values of Humankind" was adopted with a view to promoting a more thorough perception of human rights. Another Russian initiative calling for the creation of the Council's Intergovernmental Working Group for reviewing its work and functioning modalities received broad support.

Cooperation was established with HRC special procedures, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), and the treaty bodies. The implementation of the Conceptual Framework for Cooperation between Russia and the UNHCR for 2007 and the subsequent period continued. In November, the UNHRC and Russia, as one of its main donors, began regular consultations on strategic planning for UNHRC activities for 2010-2011. In October, the Human Rights Committee considered Russia's 6th Periodic Report on compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Russian Federation monitored human rights violations in other countries, and actively raised relevant issues in multilateral formats as well as at bilateral consultations with a number of states and the European Union.

During international cooperation in the **social sphere** as part of Russia's participation in the work of the relevant UN, CE, and OSCE bodies, special attention continued to be paid to social support to the population during the global financial and economic crisis, gender equality, children's rights, the interests of young people, the wellbeing of senior citizens, equal opportunities for persons with disabilities, and the strengthening of the family.

The Russian delegation took an active part in the 47th Session of the UN Commission for Social Development (CSD), and addressed all issues on the agenda during the discussion of social integration and the position of socially disadvantaged groups of people. Given the 20th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child marked in 2009, a special emphasis was placed on Russia's new large-scale efforts to perform and expand international obligations in respect of children's rights. Following the ratification by Russia in 2008 of the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts, Russia drafted its first report on compliance with this international agreement. Work continued to prepare for signing and subsequent ratification the Optional Protocol to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography, and the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children Against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

At the 53rd Session of the UN Commission on the Status of Women (CSW), which was held under the sign of the 30th anniversary of the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women, the Russian delegation informed the international community of the regular national report on compliance with the Convention which had been submitted to the UN and which is to be considered in July 2010. As part of the implementation of the UN Secretary-General's "UNiTE to End Violence Against Women" campaign, a special emphasis was placed on Measures to prevent and eradicate all forms of such violence, including in the family.

The Russian Federation consistently advocated a stronger status and bigger role for the CSD and the CSW as authoritative international institutions that provide for a constructive and useful dialogue among all groups of states on social and gender issues.

Participation in these international forums and the work of the Third Committee of the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly made it possible to inform the international community about the implementation of the strategy

aimed at bringing Russia to leading international positions in respect of key quality of life indicators, implementation of major national social projects, and full social protection of people despite the deleterious effects of the global financial and economic crisis.

Work continued to advance Russian priorities within the framework of the “humanitarian basket” at the **Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)**. At the OSCE's 14th annual Human Dimension Implementation Meeting (Warsaw, September 28 – October 9), priority was given to issues of tolerance, suppression of neo-fascism and glorification of Nazism, as well as to human trafficking, the fight against terrorism, the protection of ethnic minorities, prevention of discrimination against the Russian-speaking population in the Baltic countries, Ukraine, and Georgia.

Constructive interaction was maintained with the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Knut Vollebaek, OSCE Representative for the Freedom of the Media Miklos Haraszti, and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office's Special Representative for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings Eva Biaudet who visited Russia in November.

Priority aspects of human rights cooperation with the **Council of Europe** were cooperation with the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR), the Commissioner for Human Rights, and the organization's monitoring bodies, such as the European Committee for the Prevention of Torture and Inhuman or Degrading Treatment and Punishment, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities, and the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance.

The Russian Federation invariably advocated ECHR reform in order to make the court more efficient; Russian representatives participated in the consideration of appropriate initiatives aimed at finding long-term solutions to the issue of Russia's accession to Protocol No. 14 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.

Russia's ratification on June 3 of the European Social Charter (revised) of May 3, 1996, became a significant event in international social cooperation and mirrored Russia's close attention to the quality of life of the most disadvantaged sections of the population, including persons with disabilities, women, children, elderly people, and migrants.

Russia's interaction with the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Thomas Hammarberg developed dynamically. He visited Moscow in January and met with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, State Duma Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Konstantin Kosachev, and Human Rights Commissioner Vladimir Lukin. In February, Hammarberg was in Moscow to attend the Council of Europe Conference on Social Cohesion. On September 2-11, the Commissioner visited the Chechen Republic and the Republic of Ingushetia, where he was received by the two presidents and other top officials. In December, he was in Moscow to attend the conference "Sakharov's Ideas Today" organized by the Andrei Sakharov Foundation and marking the 20th anniversary of the scientist's death.

In order to familiarize himself with the humanitarian situation in the zone of the Georgian-South Ossetian conflict, Thomas Hammarberg visited Georgia and Abkhazia on February 8-12, and travelled to Georgia and South Ossetia on November 27 – December 3.

Russian diplomats helped to prepare consolidated information in connection with the CE Mission's questionnaire on the investigation of facts in the context of the August 2008 events in the Caucasus.

The protection of human rights and national minorities in post-Soviet countries remained in the focus of attention. The human rights situation in these countries was monitored constantly to keep track of gross violations of human rights and the rights of ethnic minorities. Issues connected with discriminatory policy against ethnic minorities in some of the CIS and Baltic countries were raised with the relevant international organizations (UN, OSCE, the Council of Europe, and the EU) and their specialized institutions (the OSCE High

Commissioner on National Minorities, the Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights, and special rapporteurs of the UN Human Rights Council).

Using the possibilities of the **European Court of Human Rights (ECHR)** underlay one of the key efforts to protect the rights of the Russian-speaking minority in the Baltic countries. An important factor of that work is Russia's participation, as a third party, in the examination by the ECHR of cases, politically significant for Russia, concerning complaints from Russian citizens permanently residing in Latvia and Estonia (Vasily Kononov, Igor Vasilevsky, the Vikulovs, and others).

Protecting the Interests of Overseas Compatriots

The Russian Federation worked actively to develop closer interaction with compatriots living abroad.

The Government Commission on Overseas Compatriots (GCOC) worked under the chairmanship of Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The Commission's activities focused on the implementation of the program of work with overseas compatriots in 2009-2011, the drafting of the Federal Law "On Amendments to the Federal law 'On the State Policy of the Russian Federation in Respect of Compatriots Aboard'". At the end of the year, after approval by the interested executive authorities, the draft law was submitted to the Government of the Russian Federation.

The GCOC continued efforts to preserve the ethnic culture of compatriots and support the Russian language abroad. Despite some decline in federal budget appropriations due to the economic crisis, educational, scientific and belles-lettres literature was supplied, including as part of new initiatives. Support was provided to Russian theaters. Exploratory trips for compatriots' children to Russia, medical rehabilitation of Great Patriotic War veterans and recreation for compatriots' children from disadvantaged families were organized.

The GCOC provided organizational and financial assistance in holding traditional festivals: “The Great Russian Word” (Crimea), “Vivat, Russia!” (Estonia, Latvia, and Germany), and “With Russia in the Heart” (Kazakhstan), as well as the Third European Russian Forum “United Europe from the Atlantic to the Pacific: Dreams or Reality?” (Brussels). An international conference entitled “Successful Compatriots: Contributing to the Preservation of the Russian Ethnocultural Environment, Protecting the Rights of the Russian Community” was held in Moscow in June.

Purposeful work continued to structure and consolidate the Russian community nationally and globally. The World Coordinating Council of Russian Compatriots and coordinating councils of compatriots’ organizations created in the majority of countries with big Russian communities carried out their activities. Russian overseas institutions helped organize eight regional and more than 80 national conferences of compatriots.

The **World Congress of Compatriots** was held in Moscow in December 1-2, attended by about 500 prominent representatives of the Russian community and activists of public organizations from 89 countries. The significance of the event was emphasized by the participation of President Dmitry Medvedev and his all-embracing speech covering key aspects of Russia’s interaction with the overseas community.

A great deal of attention was given to helping form the Russian-language information environment. The specialized magazine “Russkiy Vek”, a thematic supplement to the Komsomolskaya Pravda daily, three regional magazines published by compatriots (Baltiiskiy Mir, Yedinstvo v Raznoobrazii, and Shire Krug) continued to be published. The Internet portal for compatriots (www.ruvek.ru) operated. The publication of books from the “Russians in the Home Countries” series continued. Support was provided to compatriots’ publications in their respective countries and to the creation of national and regional Internet portals.

The libraries of Russian literature, clubs and studios at the Russian science and culture centers (RSCC) were actively visited by compatriots, and specialized Russian language courses worked at the majority of RSCCs. The network of points of access to legal information at RSCCs for compatriots expanded. In 2009, such centers operated in 11 countries (Austria, Denmark, Cyprus, Malta, Serbia, Bulgaria, France, Finland, Belgium, Hungary, and Germany)

Efforts were taken to engage Russian regions more actively in the work with compatriots. To this end, a roundtable entitled “Overseas Communities of Russian Federation Nationalities: Experience of Interaction with the Historical Homeland” was held in Kazan in November, with the participation of representatives from ethnic republics and autonomous areas of Russia and foreign ethnic communities, and the thematic section “The Contribution of the Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation to the Support of Compatriots” was organized as part of the World Congress of Compatriots.

Interaction developed with the Russian Orthodox Church to strengthen the spiritual unity of Russian compatriots. Sets of religious and ethnical literature were supplied to compatriots abroad. A roundtable entitled “The Russian Orthodox Church and Compatriots in European Countries: Coworking Experience and Prospects” was held in Brussels in June.

The fully justified practice of rewarding the most active compatriots for their contribution to the preservation of the Russian language and Russian culture and the strengthening of ties with the historical homeland continued. At the end of October, the President of Russia signed a decree awarding a number of compatriots the Order of Friendship or the Pushkin Medal; the Compatriot’s Badge of Honor and GCOC Certificates of Honor were also presented in the second award ceremony during the World Congress of Compatriots.

Compatriots received practical help in the protection of their rights, including when applying to international judicial bodies. The question of establishing a specialized fund for support and protection of compatriots was studied.

The implementation of the **State Program for Assistance to Voluntary Resettlement of Compatriots Living Abroad to the Russian Federation** was stepped up, its regulatory framework was improved, and information work was intensified. The number of Russian regions participating in the program had increased to 20. About 18,000 people had arrived in the Russian Federation since the start of this resettlement project.

The monitoring of the state of and prospects for the State Program in a number of European and Central Asian countries confirmed the unflagging interest in the project among compatriots, and the need to increase the number of Russian regions involved and open new channels for the participation of compatriots in the State Program.

Consular Work

Consular work had been traditionally geared to protecting the rights and interests of Russian citizens and legal entities abroad.

As part of the public administration reform, the Russian Foreign Ministry completed the procedures needed for the enactment of all ten administrative regulations on the performance of government functions (provision of services) falling within the jurisdiction of the consular service.

The total number of Russian institutions abroad had reached 236 (consular sections of the embassies began working in Abkhazia and South Ossetia). The institute of honorary consuls developed actively: eight new positions for honorary consuls of the Russian Federation abroad and 22 positions for foreign honorary consuls in Russia were created. As of December, there were 92 Russian honorary consuls abroad and 102 foreign honorary consuls in Russia.

Because of the overall decline in the mobility of people due to the global financial crisis, the number of visas issued to foreign citizens by Russian consular institutions abroad somewhat decreased (by 16%) from 2.9 million in 2008 to 2.42 million in 2009.

Active efforts were taken to strengthen consular ties with the **CIS** member states. An inter-governmental agreement was signed with Abkhazia on mutual visa-free trips by the citizens of the two countries. A similar agreement with South Ossetia was prepared for signing. Consultations were held with the consular services of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, and Ukraine.

In **Europe**, priority was given to the creation of the migration space with a simplified visa regime for people's trips. Bilateral agreements on visa-free trips with Serbia and on simplification of visa procedures with Denmark entered into force. The agreement on simplification of visa procedures with Iceland was ratified. A similar agreement was signed with Switzerland. Relevant inter-governmental agreements with Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Norway were drafted for trips by people living in border-lying regions. Special attention was paid to the creation of favorable conditions for trips by residents of the Kaliningrad Region.

The first round of consultations on all thematic blocks of the dialogue on mutual visa-free trips by the citizens of the Russian Federation and the European Union was concluded. Russia's readiness to introduce a visa-free regime as soon as possible was confirmed.

Consular relations with the **APR countries** developed dynamically. An agreement on the abolition of visa procedures for the citizens of Russia and permanent residents of Hong Kong (PRC) was signed and has been in effect since July 1. The Russian-South Korean agreement on the simplification of visa procedures and the Russian-Brunei agreement on the terms of mutual trips by the holders of diplomatic and service (official) passports entered into force. Negotiations continued on the conclusion of agreements on the terms of mutual trips by citizens with India, Indonesia, China, the DPRK, Malaysia, Mongolia, Singapore, and Japan.

Consular relations with countries in the **Americas** were developed further. Regular exchanges of views continued with the USA and Canada, covering the

whole range of consular and legal issues. Agreements on visa-free trips by citizens were signed with Argentina and Nicaragua and on visa-free trips by the holders of diplomatic and service passports with the Dominican Republic. Agreements on visa-free trips by citizens with Guatemala, Colombia, Uruguay, Chile, and Ecuador were drafted.

A Russian-Egyptian agreement on the simplification of visa procedures and a Russian-Mozambican agreement on visa-free trips by the holders of diplomatic and service passports were signed in the field of consular relations with countries of **Africa, the Middle and Near East**. The agreement with Mali on visa-free trips by the holders of diplomatic and service passports entered into force. Amendments are being drafted to the effective Russian-Syrian agreement on visa-free trips by the holders of diplomatic, service and special passports. Negotiations were stepped up on the simplification of visa procedures with the Persian Gulf states: Qatar, the UAE, Oman, and Saudi Arabia.

Countering illegal migration remained one of the priorities in the work of the consular service. **Readmission agreements** are among the most effective means of doing that. Readmission agreements with Vietnam and Denmark entered into force, and a similar agreement was signed with Switzerland. Consultations were held under the auspices of the Federal Migration Service on draft agreements with Armenia, Moldova, India, and Sri Lanka, and on bilateral implementation protocols to the Russia-EU Agreement on Readmission of May 25, 2006, with Austria, Italy, Cyprus, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia, Finland, France, the Czech Republic, and Estonia.

Special attention was paid to **military-memorial aspects** of foreign policy activities in the run-up to the 65th anniversary of the Victory in the Great Patriotic War. Work was intensified to protect Russian (Soviet) military burial sites. Draft agreements on the status of military burial sites were discussed with Lithuania and Estonia.

Operations to evacuate Russian citizens from Gaza Strip, and to organize search and rescue efforts for tourists in Thailand, India, and China can serve as an example of successful response by the consular service in **emergency situations**.

Cooperation in Culture and Science

Work continued to develop international **cultural, educational, and sport** cooperation.

The Federal Agency for CIS Affairs, Compatriots Living Abroad and International Humanitarian Cooperation (**Rossotrudnichestvo**) had completed its formation and got actively engaged in the implementation of the country's foreign policy. The Agency's activities abroad were carried out through the active and purposeful work of its offices – **Russian Science and Culture Centers (RSCC)** -- which acted in close interaction with other Russian institutions abroad.

In 2009, fifty-three Russian science and culture centers and 26 Rossotrudnichestvo offices operated in 72 foreign countries. In the first quarter of the year, Russian science and culture centers were opened in Chisinau, Baku, and Yerevan. The center in Kiev moved to a new building. An office was opened in Abkhazia in December. The coordination of draft intergovernmental agreements and the discussion of issues pertaining to the opening of Russian centers in Minsk, Bishkek, Ashgabat, Dushanbe, Simferopol, Odessa, and Almaty in 2010 entered the final stage. The network of offices in foreign countries expanded, too. In December, a center was opened in a solemn ceremony in Amman (Jordan).

RSCC activities covered such areas as information support for Russia's foreign and domestic policy, assistance in expanding international cultural, educational scientific, technical, and business ties, work with compatriots, support of the Russian language and Russian education, and interaction with nongovernmental organizations, and the foreign public. Last year, RSCCs abroad organized and held more than 6,000 major events aimed at demonstrating Russia's

achievements in various fields. Work with CIS countries remained a priority for Rossotrudnichestvo.

Special significance was attached to the implementation of programs for **support of the Russian language**, and to methodological, organizational and substantive measures to preserve and expand its positions.

RSCCs were the only place for extensive teaching of the Russian language through courses abroad, using up-to-date Russian programs. Forty-seven centers in 42 countries offered a network of Russian language courses. More than 20,000 people attended the courses, where about 200 teachers and supervisors worked. Testing centers were created and certificates confirming language skills were issued at the courses.

For the purpose of improving this work and making it more systemic, the departmental target program “Unified System of Teaching Russian at RSCCs Abroad” was drafted.

In order to promote the Russian language, about 1,000 educational, scientific, methodological, cultural, and enlightening events were held at RSCCs: conferences, seminars and roundtables on Russian language teaching methods and practices, Russian language festivals and holidays involving leading Russian philologists, and book exhibitions; sets of textbooks and methodological literature, modern computer training programs were supplied. The following events need to be mentioned specifically: Russian language and culture festivals in Armenia, Latvia, and Uzbekistan; Russian literature festivals in Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, and Tajikistan; the international festival “Our Pushkin”; a tutorial workshop in Moscow for RSCC and foreign Russian studies centers' teachers; Russian Language and Russian Education Days in Chile and Argentina; a regional forum in Egypt for Russian studies specialists in North Africa and the Middle East. The I International Research-to-Practice Internet Conference “Russian Language@Literature@Culture: Pressing Problems of Studying and Teaching in Russia and Abroad” was held in Azerbaijan, Belgium, Hungary, Israel, and Ukraine.

With a view to supporting interest in Russian language studies in CIS countries, Russian language training methodology centers were created at RSCCs and provided with necessary training, methodological, technical and personnel resources. A concept and a program for such centers were worked out. They call for organizing Russian language courses for different age and social groups, and advanced training courses for Russian language teachers. The first Russian Language Center was opened in December at the Yerevan-based RSCC.

Assistance was provided to the Russkiy Mir Foundation that implemented a wide range of programs, including the provision of grants to support humanitarian projects in the fields of the Russian language and culture, Russian-language mass media and information resources.

Work was stepped up to promote **Russian education**, advance educational services, and expand cooperation between educational institutions of Russia and partner countries. In particular, the first Russian-French forum was held at the Paris-based RSCC in November for the rectors of humanitarian universities and the deans of humanitarian departments at higher educational institutions, which played an important role in enhancing scientific and humanitarian contacts between the two countries.

By facilitating the strengthening and development of bilateral educational cooperation with the partner countries, RSCCs helped coordinate, and prepare for signing, inter-governmental and inter-university agreements in the field of education. A concept for the export of Russia's educational services was drafted to determine the principles, key goals and objectives pertaining to the provision of educational services to foreign citizens in and outside Russia, and measures to ensure the attractiveness of the system of education in Russia and increase its competitiveness.

A great deal of attention was paid to **scientific and technical cooperation**. As part of this work, scientific and technical exhibitions, scientific conferences, and meetings of scientists were held at RSCCs and at partner forums. In order to promote Russian science, the Consolidated Plan of Information and Exhibition

Support to Russian Science and Culture Centers Abroad was worked out, under which 17 scientific and technical exhibitions and seminars were held at RSCCs. The Intellectual Property Center opened in Sofia (Bulgaria) with the assistance of Rossotrudnichestvo.

The International Target Program of Innovation Cooperation Among CIS Member Countries for up to 2020 was drafted. The creation of the CIS Interstate Innovation Center of Nanotechnologies in Dubna became an important step in the implementation of this program.

A UNESCO project for the publication of a Russian-language version of the Encyclopedia of Nanoscience and Nanotechnology, authored by 44 scientists from 11 countries of the world, was presented at the UNESCO Headquarters in Paris in November, with the participation of Russian diplomats.

Rossotrudnichestvo began organizing permanent exhibitions for CIS member countries at the All-Russia Exhibition Center in Moscow by providing necessary assistance to the exhibition center in establishing contacts with the relevant bodies in the CIS countries in order to set up pavilions for the CIS member states.

Work continued to **strengthen the positions of Russian culture**, familiarize the foreign public with the Russian cultural heritage and contemporary Russian art. Russian culture festivals, exhibitions, concerts, and Russian film days involving leading Russian cultural figures were organized at RSCCs, theaters or cultural centers. RSCCs organized big cultural events marking the 200th anniversary of Nikolai Gogol and the 210th anniversary of Alexander Pushkin. In all, more than 1,800 concerts, 500 art and 1,000 photo exhibitions, and 2,300 film events were held. Special attention was paid to the preparation and holding of events associated with the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War. About 1,000 military events were organized: all representative offices held functions (meetings and receptions), the laying of wreaths to war memorials and Russian soldiers' burial sites, thematic exhibitions, meetings, concerts, and theatrical programs.

The practice of holding thematic years of Russia in foreign countries and of foreign countries in Russia was carried on. In particular, events associated with the Year of Bulgaria in Russia and the Year of India in Russia proved successful. An action plan for the Year of Russia in France in 2010 was approved. Such high-profile events were organized abroad as Russian Culture Days and Weeks and Russian Regions' Culture Days and Weeks.

More than 1,000 book and illustration exhibitions and presentations of Russian publishing houses were organized; they were attended by hundreds of thousands of people. The book collection of RSCC libraries had reached almost 500,000 items. A large number of belles-lettres, reference and educational literature and presentation materials were supplied to the RSCCs in Azerbaijan, Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine, Greece, and Jordan.

Special attention was given to **work with young people**. Under UNESCO's "Towards a Culture of Peace" program, the international youth mission "Youth on the Way to a Culture of Peace and Accord against Fascism and Extremism" was organized in European countries in May. The first forum of young CIS leaders was held in Moscow in June.

Active work continued in connection with preparations for the **XXII Winter Olympic Games and the XI Paralympic Games in Sochi in 2014**, as well as the XXVII World Summer Universiade 2013 in Kazan. The all-Russia sport forum "Russia – Sport Power" can be regarded as a large-scale international sports event.

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FEDERAL ASSEMBLY, POLITICAL PARTIES AND CIVIL SOCIETY INSTITUTIONS

Interaction with the **Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation** remained an important part of the Russian Foreign Ministry's work. The leadership of the Russian Foreign Ministry regularly attended State Duma and Federation Council meetings, and participated in the work of their relevant committees. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov spoke at the Federation Council Government Hour on “Russian Foreign Policy Priorities at the Current Stage” (January), and at expanded meetings of the committees on foreign affairs of the two houses in December: at the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs on Russian-Japanese relations, and at the State Duma Committee on Foreign Affairs on foreign policy results in 2009 and Russian diplomacy tasks for 2010.

A great deal of attention was paid to expert support to lawmaking work on foreign policy, foreign economic, defense and humanitarian issues in both houses of the Federal Assembly. With the Foreign Ministry’s assistance, the State Duma passed, and the Federation Council approved, the Federal Law “On Amendments to the Federal Law ‘On Defense’” which determined the procedure for operational use of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation outside the country.

Ratification of international treaties and agreements with foreign states and international organizations remained an important part of interaction between the Russian Foreign Ministry and parliament. Over the past year, the Federal Assembly ratified 55 international legal acts. Most of the ratified documents concerned the development of bilateral and multilateral cooperation between Russia and CIS countries, the strengthening of the Commonwealth’s defense capabilities, and further integration of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan within the Customs Union and the consolidation of its legal and contractual basis.

The Russian Foreign Ministry continued to provide expert, consultative, and information support to the Federal Assembly in developing parliamentary diplomacy, enhancing inter-parliamentary ties both when implementing bilateral

contracts with foreign parliaments and carrying out events at the parliamentary assemblies of the CE, the OSCE, BSEC, the CIS, EurAsEC, and other international forums. Over 800 parliamentary exchanges and events took place in Russia and abroad. With the assistance of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Russian parliamentarians at the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, and the International Parliamentary Conference on European Security (Kiev) worked more substantively and politically more intensively in terms of promoting the initiative concerning a European security treaty, and so did inter-parliamentary commissions of the Federal Assembly in working with the parliaments of Italy, France, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, and China.

The Russian Foreign Ministry provided **assistance to political parties**, primarily to those represented in the State Duma, in establishing and developing ties with foreign partners, taking into account political parties' possibility to contribute constructively to the strengthening of Russia's foreign policy positions.

Interaction continued with **leading Russian NGOs specializing in international relations**, such as Russkiy Mir, the Andrew the First Called Foundation and the Center of National Glory of Russia, the Federation of Peace and Accord, the National Council of Children's and Youth Associations, the Society of Solidarity and Cooperation with the Peoples of Asia and Africa, the Russian Peace Fund, and the International Public Fund for the Unity of Orthodox Christian Nations. A traditional annual meeting between the Foreign Minister and the Russian foreign policy-oriented NGO community was held in February.

The Russian Association for International Cooperation (RAIC) and its more than 70 public associations, including Russian societies of friendship with foreign countries, were important partners of the Russian Foreign Ministry and Rossotrudnichestvo. In October, Rossotrudnichestvo hosted a RAIC conference entitled "The Role and Place of People's Diplomacy in Foreign Policy Activities of the Russian Federation".

Assistance was provided in the implementation of a three-year (2008-2010) program of cooperation between the Russian Federation and the CE Conference of

International Non-Governmental Organizations. The action plan for 2009 was implemented practically in full, thus boosting the integration of Russian NGOs into European public organizations.

Interaction on NGOs continued with the Council under the President of the Russian Federation for the Development of Civil Society Institutions and Human Rights, the Public Chamber, its Inter-Commission Working Group on International Activities, the Federation Council Commission on the Development of Civil Society Institutions, the Ministry of Justice of Russia, and other Russian agencies.

The Russian Foreign Ministry's interaction with the **Russian Orthodox Church and other traditional confessions and religious organizations** became closer and more substantive, given the growing role of the religious factor in international relations.

An important coordinating mechanism was provided by the Working Group on Interaction between the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Russian Orthodox Church, which paid special attention to the expansion of cooperation between the Ministry and the Church in the implementation of governmental programs for work with compatriots, protection of their rights, satisfaction of their spiritual and cultural needs, and the promotion of the Russian language and culture.

The Russian Foreign Ministry's efforts aimed to help strengthen the positions of the Russian Orthodox Church in the near and far abroad and in the international arena in general. Following the election of Metropolitan Kirill Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, the Russian Foreign Ministry helped organize and carry out the ROC head's visits to Turkey (July), Ukraine (July and August), and Belarus (September).

The Russian Foreign Ministry actively developed partnership with Russian Muslim organizations within the framework of the operating Consultative Council.

Countering the proliferation of anti-Semitism and xenophobia was an important component of the Russian Foreign Ministry's foreign policy activities. Partner ties were broadened with Jewish centers in the country, primarily the World Congress of Russian Jewry. Interaction with other confessions grew stronger

on issues of peacemaking and dialogue between civilizations, including within the framework of the CIS Interreligious Council.

The Russian Foreign Ministry's interaction with the **scientific and expert community** focused on efforts aimed at increasing practical effects from the use of Russia's scientific potential, independent politological examination and other civil society institutions when fulfilling practical foreign policy tasks. The central organizing role in this work was played by the Scientific Council under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, the core of which consists of the heads of academic institutes grouped into International Relations Sections under the Branch of Public Sciences within the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Important results were achieved in this respect. In particular, the expert and politological track made it possible to incorporate the Russian initiative of signing a European Security Treaty (EST) into the pan-European discussion with politicians, scientists and experts on Euro-Atlantic security, and shift the debates towards a joint search for ways to overcome existing deficits and develop mechanisms for responding to common threats and challenges.

The focus was not only on the engagement of the Russian expert community in international, primarily European, discourse on pressing present-day problems, but also on the creation of new discussion forums in Russia. The **International Conference "The Modern State and Global Security"** held in Yaroslavl in September with the participation of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev proved quite fruitful in this respect. Its results were welcomed by international experts as a continuation of multilateral politological dialogue started at the World Policy Conference in Evian in October 2008.

Big organizational work was done to prepare an international conference in Moscow as part of the politological forum "Security for All: New Architecture of Interaction", and to ensure Russia's participation in the implementation of the trilateral (Russia, USA, Europe) project aimed at drafting concerted expert proposals regarding the future Euro-Atlantic security architecture, which was named "Euro-Atlantic Security Initiative" (EASI).

Acting pursuant to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's instructions, the Russian Foreign Ministry completed a comprehensive study of issues pertaining to the creation of the non-profit partnership "Russian Council on Foreign Relations" and the A.M. Gorchakov Fund for Public Diplomacy (orders concerning both entities were signed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on February 2, 2010).

The Ministry's work was based on active use of analytical data and results of case studies addressing the most pressing world policy issues conducted by a number of academic institutes and independent examination centers, including the Foreign and Defense Policy Council (FDPC), the most important meetings of which are attended by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia. Scientists from the Diplomatic Academy of MGIMO University conducted case studies for the Russian Foreign Ministry on a regular basis. Possibilities were considered for using the research potential of the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research for foreign policy interests.

Network interaction was maintained and strengthened between permanent Russian and foreign expert and discussion forums, including such authoritative ones as the Valdai International Discussion Club, the Schlangenbad Dialogue (Germany), and seminars at the Research Institute of the German Council on Foreign Relations.

The Russian Foreign Ministry maintained contact with the Russian Pugwash Committee under the Presidium of the Russian Academy of Sciences, considering the Pugwash movement of scientists as an important channel for expanding cooperation with the international scientific community and facilitating the formation of the international agenda.

INTERREGIONAL AND CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION

The Russian Foreign Ministry helped Russian regions develop dynamically their international and foreign economic ties. Work was intensified to **ensure the coordinating role of the Ministry in the development of external ties of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation**. An updated version of “The Russian Foreign Ministry’s Concept for Coordination of International and Foreign Economic Ties of the Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation” was approved.

Priorities regarding practical assistance to regions included the drafting and improvement of the **regulatory framework** for inter-regional and cross-border cooperation. Twenty-seven agreements on cooperation between constituent entities of the Russian Federation and foreign partners were signed and registered at the Ministry of Justice in 2009. As of the end of 2009, they had signed 1,980 agreements with representatives of 79 foreign states. The majority of them were signed with CIS states, including 281 with Ukraine, 242 with Belarus, and 174 with Kazakhstan.

The Russian Foreign Ministry provided specific assistance to constituent entities of the Russian Federation in attracting foreign investments, solving innovation tasks, developing trade and economic, scientific-technical, and cultural ties with foreign partners, carrying out foreign policy events in regions, conducting negotiations on major agreements, facilitating businesses’ access to external markets, and opening regional representative offices abroad.

Great significance was attached to presentations of regions’ potential through the Russian Foreign Ministry as a means of facilitating their external ties (five events were organized).

A considerable role was assigned to work with the **Congress of Local and Regional Authorities of the Council of Europe (CLRAE)** and its subdivisions, European regional associations for cooperation and European organizations specializing in the work with regional and local authorities. An important place

was given to the development of twin-city ties between administrative and territorial entities of the Russian Federation and foreign partners.

The Russian delegation to the CLRAE had initiated discussion on the global financial crisis and its consequences at the local and regional levels. The Russian delegation actively supported the Congress' strong position in respect of Latvian authorities in connection with the discrimination against “non-citizens” who permanently live in this country.

In 2009, Russia became a full party to two protocols to the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities of 1980 (Madrid Convention), which develop and complement the Convention and extend it to inter-regional relations.

In the **Council of Europe**, Russian Foreign Ministry officials worked on the draft 3rd protocol to the abovementioned Convention, which determined the status of European regional associations for cooperation (Euroregions) and which was submitted for signing by the CE member states in November.

Work on the draft Federal Law “On Cross-Border Cooperation” continued.

Russia performed the functions of the chairman of the Conference of CE Ministers responsible for Spatial/Regional Planning. Conferences were held on cultural heritage and the Landscape Convention. Russia presented a draft Convention for the Improvement of Regional Policy in the Russian Federation, worked out pursuant to the Guiding principles for Sustainable Spatial Development of the European Continent.

The Russian Foreign Ministry took an active part in preparing and holding the 16th Session of the Council of Europe Conference of Ministers responsible for Local and Regional Government (Utrecht, November) and in examining its documents, particularly the Utrecht Declaration and Agenda – Program of Cooperation for 2020-2013.

Several constituent entities of the Russian Federation continued work within European regional associations for cooperation (Euroregions). The majority of them showed positive dynamics and efficiency, primarily in relations with CIS

partners. Russian regions actively interacted with European regional organizations such as the Assembly of European Regions and the Association of European Border Regions.

Such coordinating bodies as the **Council of the Heads of Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation under the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (CHCE)**, its working body -- the **Consultative Council of Constituent Entities of the Russian Federation for International and Foreign Economic Ties under the Russian Foreign Ministry (CC)** -- continued to play an important role in the development of interaction between the Russian Foreign Ministry and Russian regions.

The XIII CHCE meeting (May) discussed issues pertaining to the development of cross-border and international regional cooperation of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation as exemplified by Russian-Belarusian experience, and diplomatic support for foreign economic ties of regions, subject to the priorities set forth in the Anti-Crisis Program of the Government of the Russian Federation for 2009. The Council issued a number of recommendations for the extension of positive experience of inter-regional cooperation in Russian-Belarusian relations to other CIS countries.

The 20th CC session (November) discussed how to intensify inter-regional and cross-border cooperation in light of the main guidelines for Russia's foreign policy in the CIS. The participants in the session discussed the most effective aspects of work with CIS partners and ways to intensify and diversify inter-regional and cross-border ties.

The XIV CHCE meeting (December) focused on the development of cross-border cooperation between constituent entities of the Russian Federation and adjacent regions in EU member states as part of the European Neighborhood and Partnership Instrument. The Council determined a set of tasks for federal executive bodies and relevant Russian regions for energetic promotion of programs of cross-border cooperation with European partners.

The **territorial bodies (offices) of the Russian Foreign Ministry** in Russia continued to improve their work as one of the central elements in the coordination of international and foreign economic ties of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation. The Russian Foreign Ministry directed its work toward actualizing relevant regulatory documents and streamlining organizational and personnel aspects of their work. The decision was made to open the 39th office in Grozny. Three divisions of offices (there were 11 as of the end of 2009) were closed as part of the efforts to optimize the system of territorial bodies. The offices assisted the administrations of the constituent entities of the Russian Federation in holding international events, organizing regional presentations in Moscow and abroad, maintaining contacts with foreign partners, and coordinating draft international agreements.

A new area of work – **interaction with Cossack organizations** and associations on matters pertaining to their international ties – evolved. The Russian Foreign Ministry was actively engaged in the work of the Council for Cossacks under the President of the Russian Federation created in January and led the work of the Council's Commission on International Activities of Cossack Societies and Associations. A database was created for Cossack organizations in the near and far abroad in 38 countries of the world, Cossack regalia and historical values abroad. Assistance was provided to the Administration of the President, Russian institutions abroad, the Council, and Cossack Troops Societies (CTS) on matters of interaction with Cossack organizations abroad, CTS international activities, the return of Cossack regalia and historical values to the country.

INFORMATION SUPPORT FOR FOREIGN POLICY

The main objective of information work was to bring to foreign partners and the Russian public accurate and timely information about the country's foreign policy activities in the international arena, Russia's positions and initiatives regarding the main issues on the international agenda.

Leading foreign mass media continued to be dominated by negative assessments of events in Russia, criticized its domestic and foreign policy. Contradictions became more pronounced in the interpretation of Russian history in the 20th century, primarily the causes and results of World War II, and the Soviet past. Resolutions of influential international organizations that had essentially equated Nazism to communism proved to be, on top of it all, big information provocations designed to divide Russian society along the worldview lines.

This is why a key task was not only to provide information support to Russia's domestic and foreign policy abroad, and counter anti-Russian propaganda campaigns, but also to form information flows inside the country actively in order to support the broad-based public consensus around the Russian foreign policy.

Russian Foreign Ministry senior officials spoke to members of Russian and foreign mass media about 300 times. Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov was vigorously engaged in information work and gave 36 interviews to leading international news agencies, printed media and television and radio companies, and held more than 90 press conferences. Deputy foreign ministers and the official spokesman of the Russian Foreign Ministry also cooperated actively with mass media. The official spokesman held weekly briefings for foreign journalists accredited in Moscow.

The Russian Foreign Ministry continuously updated its website, a leading Russian Internet resource of official foreign policy information. In 2009, it was visited more than 1.8 million times. The most frequently requested topics covered with the help of the website included the Russia's Foreign Policy Results; Russia's

Position at the 64th Session of the UN General Assembly; the World Congress of Compatriots; Famine in the USSR: 1930-1934 Documents; OUN-UPA Activities. Documents; etc.

The website's multimedia possibilities were used extensively. The "Photo and Video" section offered 160 video recordings of Russian Foreign Ministry senior officials' speeches, 132 exclusive photographs, and several photo exhibitions for the 65th anniversary of the Victory.

Despite the negative coverage of Russian issues in the Western press, interest in Russia among the foreign audience remained quite high. Owing to intensive citing of news from the Russian Foreign Ministry's website by leading international news agencies and domestic mass media, official Russian foreign policy information reached 30 million people in other countries daily.

Measures were taken to promote Russian television broadcasts abroad, including Russia Today in English, Spanish and Arabic. As before, support was provided to the updated version of Rossiiskaya Gazeta's project to print a special supplement on Russia in The Washington Post (USA), The Daily Mail (Great Britain), and The Economic Times (India). Information work through Russian institutions abroad included regular presentations by ambassadors and representatives of Russian overseas institutions in mass media of the host countries, the publication of news bulletins and other information materials. Overseas institutions enlarged the content of their websites and improved their design.

HISTORICAL/ARCHIVAL ACTIVITIES

Countering attempts to distort or rewrite history to the detriment of Russia's interests remained the core aspect of historical and archival activities. An important benchmark for making this work systemic and progressive was provided by a resolution of the Russian Foreign Ministry Board (March 2008), the implementation of which was continuously overseen by the relevant inter-departmental group. The Commission under the President of the Russian Federation against the Falsification of History to the Detriment of Russia's Interests created in May with the assistance of the Russian Foreign Ministry should help coordinate this work at the federal level.

The main efforts in this respect focused on issues associated with the events prior to World War II, the 70th anniversary of its beginning, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, and the 65th anniversary of the Victory. Work continued to neutralize Kiev's anti-Russian campaign centered on the "famine-genocide" issue. The measures taken helped somewhat dampen the negative effect from the opponents' actions and direct the discussion on the Second World War toward its real causes. Active efforts were taken to depoliticize the "historical" discussion and put it on a scientific and academic basis, which was helped by the meetings of the joint commissions of historians with Germany, Austria, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Lithuania.

Intensive work continued to provide historical and documentary support to top-level and high-level contacts: copies and replicas of documents from the Russian Foreign Ministry's archive were provided in connection with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's visits to Bulgaria, Finland, the Netherlands, Germany, and Italy, as well as Government Chairman Vladimir Putin's visit to Poland. Copies of archival materials were handed over to foreign partners during Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's visit to Moldova, and during First Deputy Foreign Minister Andrey Denisov's visit to Canada.

In order to counter the distorted interpretation of historical events, retrospective references and analytical information based on archival documents were used: ten such materials were prepared, the most important of which were posted on the Ministry's website.

Eight historical publications in mass media, prepared on the basis of archival materials, furnished useful information support. Assistance was provided to Russian and foreign mass media in preparing reports and publications on international and historical topics, the history of Russia's foreign policy and foreign service (Channel One, RTR, TV Tsentr, Kultura, TRK Peterburg Channel 5, the Japanese television company NHK, the China Pro and VIP Premier magazines, the newspaper Hokkaido Shimbun), and a number of public organizations (Gorbachev Foundation, Historical Memory Foundation, and Historical Perspective Foundation), and to the Russian Orthodox Church in implementing various historical and patriotic projects.

A great deal of attention was paid to traditional exhibition activities: the Russian Foreign Ministry, including the Center of Russian Foreign Service History, hosted nine exhibitions of historical documents marking commemorative dates and jubilees, 39 displays were prepared and sent to overseas institutions, five exhibitions were prepared for display at the Diplomatic Academy. Jointly with the Foreign Ministry of Macedonia, an exhibition of documents on the history of bilateral relations was organized. Materials were provided for six thematic exhibitions of the Federal Archival Agency, and 12 displays for leading museums and exhibition halls in Moscow, St. Petersburg, and other Russian cities.

Measures were taken together with the Main Department for International Cooperation of the President's Property Management Department to find Russian property abroad.

The development of international cooperation against the revision of history was helped by three bilateral consultations with the historical and archival bodies of partner countries, and the Russian Foreign Ministry's participation in 15

different academic and research events on history and documents in Russia and abroad.

Traditional working contacts were maintained with the Federal Archival Agency, government and departmental archives.

Ties with a number of institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences, research centers, museums, the Russian National Library, and other scientific and historical organizations were furthered, including during joint research projects and the preparation of collections of documents. A collection of documents entitled “Soviet-Chinese Relations. 1949-1951” was published. Steps were taken to prepare Volume XXV of the “USSR Foreign Policy Documents” dating back to 1942 for publication, implement a project (in cooperation with the Institute of World History of the Russian Academy of Sciences) to publish Volume IV of the collection of documents “The USSR and the German Issue. 1941-1949”, and to prepare bilateral collections “Soviet-Finnish Relations. 1944-1948” (together with Finland) and “Soviet-Yugoslav Relations. 1945-1956” (together with Serbia). Work continued on the multi-volume fundamental work “The 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War” under the auspices of the Russian Defense Ministry and with the participation of the Russian Foreign Ministry, MGIMO University and the Diplomatic Academy.

The Russian Foreign Ministry continued active preparations for the publication of a collection of correspondence of Russia’s First President Boris Yeltsin.

The Central Scientific Library and the Reference and Information Center of the Russian Foreign Ministry worked continuously.

The Russian Foreign Ministry’s archive dovetailed its work to the practical needs of Russian Foreign Service: more than 9,500 documents were accepted for storage, including 212 compacts. Considerable effort was taken to process over 8,000 different inquiries. Reading rooms worked in the archives: they were used by 351 researchers (4,306 visits were registered), including 99 foreign ones from 23 countries.

Pursuant to effective legislation, work continued to declassify archival documents both at the Russian Foreign Ministry (256 declassified files from the Ministry's archive were made available for research), and other governmental and departmental archives as part of the routine work of the inter-departmental commission on the protection of state secrets.

Efforts continued to create the Electronic Archive of the Russian Foreign Ministry and the Electronic Library of the Central Scientific Library.

PROVIDING SECURITY FOR OVERSEAS AGENCIES

The complex situation around the Russian diplomatic missions in some countries, primarily in the Middle and Near East (Iraq, Afghanistan, Iran, and Yemen), created by the activity of terrorist organizations, tensions in the Caucasus as a result of Georgia's actions, continuing abductions of Russian sailors by pirates, and other incidents strongly necessitated more effective measures to provide comprehensive protection for Russian overseas institutions and ensure the security of their employees and Russian citizens abroad in general. The resolution of this task was regarded as an important prerequisite for the success of Russia's foreign policy.

In this connection, work continued to carry out the set of measures, approved by the Government of the Russian Federation, to ensure the security of Russian institutions abroad, taking into account new challenges and threats in 2008-2010 and beyond. These issues were regularly discussed at the inter-departmental level.

The Ministry continued working for the speediest creation of a situation and crisis management center, which should become an important tool in the coordination of efforts aimed at ensuring the security of Russian overseas institutions and Russian citizens abroad.