

JANUARY

Alan Greenspan stands down after 18 years as chairman of the **U.S. Federal Reserve**. The 79-year-old's policies were central to the economic boom of the 1990s

FEBRUARY

The **Winter Olympics** get underway in **Turin, Italy**, with 2,500 competitors from 85 countries



MARCH

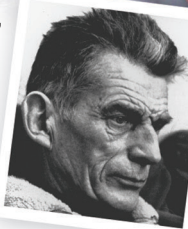
Parliamentary elections in **Ukraine** will be hotly contested between the parties of President **Viktor Yushchenko** and **Yulia Tymoshenko**, the prime minister

who was a key figure in the 2004 **Orange Revolution** but was sacked amid accusations of corruption

The Congress of South African Trade Unions plans an **HIV/AIDS** conference to tackle the stigma that prevents many from seeking treatment in the country with the highest infection rate in the world and 900 deaths a day from the epidemic

APRIL

The centenary of Irish-born playwright **Samuel Beckett** is celebrated. The Nobel Prize winner, whose most famous work is **Waiting for Godot**, portrayed the human condition as one that was insignificant in a bleak universe



THE YEAR AHEAD

MAY

UN peacekeepers end their mission in **East Timor**, the fledgling nation that broke away from Indonesia in 1999 after a vote of independence which led to a bloody campaign by Indonesian-backed militia



JUNE

The soccer **World Cup** kicks off in **Germany**. The tournament is the world's most watched event, notching up an average of over 300 million viewers per match in 2002



AUGUST

Jerusalem hosts **World Pride**, a festival of tolerance and multiculturalism postponed from 2005 to avoid clashing with the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza



SEPTEMBER

The **WWF** releases its biennial list of the world's most endangered species



OCTOBER

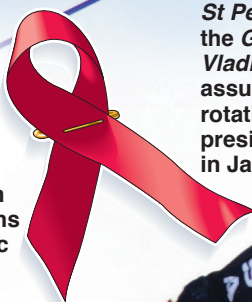
The **Nato Response Force** becomes fully operational with 25,000 troops capable of deployment within five days. The multinational NRF, designed to be lethal and agile, was set up in response to the 9/11 attacks on U.S. cities

Iran's first nuclear plant, the \$1 billion **Bushehr** facility is



due to come on stream, fuelling controversy over the country's atomic ambitions

St Petersburg hosts the **G8 summit** after **Vladimir Putin** assumes the rotating presidency in January

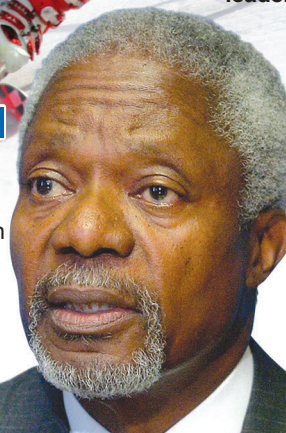


NOVEMBER

The 12th **ASEAN summit**, attended by leaders from 10 South-East Asian countries, is held in the **Philippines**

DECEMBER

Kofi Annan steps down as UN Secretary-General after two five-year terms. His successor is likely to come from Asia – the world's most populous continent – with **Thailand** and **Sri Lanka** having offered candidates so far



JULY

A tsunami warning system for the **Indian Ocean**, capable of alerting authorities within 10 minutes, is due to be in place. Critics say the sensors will send many false alarms and are not matched by emergency evacuation plans in each nation