



BLACK SEA NEWS UPDATE

EU – BLACK SEA OBSERVATORY

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I. ARMENIA

1.

Armenian Prime Minister Joins Ruling Party

19.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Armenian_Prime_Minister_Joins_Ruling_Party/1882257.html

Armenian Prime Minister Tigran Sarkisian has become a member of the governing Republican Party of Armenia (HHK), RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. Eduard Sharmazanov, the HHK's chief spokesman, said on November 17 that Sarkisian applied for party membership "several days ago" and that the application was swiftly approved by the party's top governing body, which is headed by President Serzh Sarkisian (no relation to the prime minister).

2.

IMF Approves Fresh Loan Tranche for Armenia

15.11.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/97622.php>

Expressing satisfaction with the economic policies of the Armenian authorities, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) has disbursed a fresh €60 million installment of a large-scale loan designed to help the country cope with the ongoing economic crisis. While announcing the release of the fresh stand-by arrangement (SBA) tranche, Takatoshi Kato, the IMF's deputy managing director said: The authorities have fully implemented their economic program, which calls for the continuation of fiscal and monetary easing and a flexible exchange rate.

II. AZERBAIJAN

1.

Azerbaijan to Build Trade and Logistics Centre in Minsk

22.11.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/97760.php>

Acting Chairman of the Economy Committee of the Minsk Oblast Executive Committee Vita

Tsivilskaya recently announced that an Azerbaijani trade and logistics centre will be built in the Minsk region, Trend news agency reported. The project worth €10-12 million, will be implemented in 2010-2012. Cooperation between the two countries expanded recently and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev visited Belarus on 12 November. The Azerbaijani side has already registered the InterStroiPortalPlus company.

2.

Azerbaijan's Concerns about its Security Guarantee as NATO Partner are Fair and Reasonable:
Jamestown Foundation President

21.11.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1585358.html>

Azerbaijan's concerns about country's security guarantee as a NATO partner are fair and reasonable, "especially after war in Georgia last year", President of Jamestown Foundation in Washington DC Glen Howard believes. "NATO can give security guarantees to a country in particular circumstance," Howard told Trend News today. He was commenting on Azerbaijani Deputy Foreign Minister Araz Azimov's proposal that NATO should provide security guarantees not only to its members, but also to partners such as Azerbaijan.

3.

Azerbaijan: Proposal to Cancel 2010 Parliamentary Elections Hits

19.11.2009, EurasiaNet

READ MORE: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/eav111909.shtml>

A governing party politician's proposal to postpone Azerbaijan's 2010 parliamentary elections "until the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is resolved" has met with both support and censure from President Ilham Aliyev's Yeni Azerbaijan Party. While senior party officials now dismiss the proposal as "a joke," the idea suggests that some politicians are keen to test the outer limits of the ruling party's 16-year hold on power. The call to cancel the parliamentary elections surfaced during a November 13 debate about next year's budget for social welfare payments. Yeni Azerbaijan Party (YAP) parliamentarian Aydin Hasanov suggested using the 50 million manat (about \$62.5 million) budgeted to finance the elections for "increasing pensions."

4.

Azerbaijan: Outrage and Disappointment Follows Bloggers' Conviction

16.11.2009, EurasiaNet

READ MORE: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/civilsociety/articles/eav111609.shtml>

Many international and domestic observers worry that the recent convictions of two youth activist-bloggers in Azerbaijan are sounding the death knell for the democratization process in the South Caucasus country. Twenty-six-year-old Adnan Hajizade, a co-founder of the OL (To Be) youth movement, and 30-year-old Emin Milli, a co-founder of the online Alumni Network, were arrested on July 8 for hooliganism after they allegedly started a brawl in a Baku cafe. The pair received prison sentences of two years and two and a half years respectively after a lengthy trial.

III. BULGARIA

1.

EU Lifts Aid Freeze on Bulgaria

18.11.2009, EUBusiness

READ MORE: <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/bulgaria-aid.1hl>

The European Commission announced Wednesday that it had lifted a freeze on millions of euros in potential aid to Bulgaria after Sofia improved its management of EU funds. "The commission is lifting the suspension," a spokesman told reporters. "Today's decision is the result of considerable efforts

made by the Bulgarian authorities, in cooperation with the commission, to identify previous irregularities and to offer proposals for corrective action," he said. "The decision shows that Bulgaria has taken the recommendations of the commission seriously, and improved the financial management and control of European Union funds." The spokesman said the decision would free up 82.563 million euros (123.4 million dollars) in aid money for which Sofia would have to apply.

IV. GEORGIA

1.

Georgia Overcame Economic Crisis, Says Saakashvili

22.11.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/97769.php>

peaking at a live televised government's session in a resort of Lopota in Kakheti region, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili said that Georgia had overcome the sharpest phase of economic crisis, Civil Georgia reported. We can feel revival in many sectors, but primarily this is manifested in the return of investor confidence, he added. He pointed out that Eurobonds have gone down in price below the level that was recorded in their issuance and now this index hit 7.2 percent, which would boost investor confidence.

2.

Georgian Ex-Diplomat Turns TV Boss

21.11.2009, Russia Today

READ MORE: http://russiatoday.ru/Top_News/2009-11-21/georgia-tv-opposition-kitsmarishvili.html

The former Georgian Ambassador to Russia will head the opposition TV channel in Georgia. The "Maestro" channel has become known in Georgia for its anti-government programs. One of its most successful reality-shows "Cell Number 5" has drawn some seriously-high viewer ratings to Maestro. It featured Georgian opposition leaders in a makeshift prison built in a studio, to talk current affairs – and dissect the current government.

3.

Georgian Senior Officials Meet NATO Chief

18.11.2009, Civil.ge

READ MORE: <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21691>

State Minister for Euro-Atlantic Integration and Vice-Premier, Giorgi Baramidze, met with NATO Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen in Brussels on November 18. The Georgian delegation also included Deputy Foreign Minister Giga Bokeria and Deputy Defense Minister Nikoloz Vashakidze. A meeting of NATO-Georgia Commission at ambassadorial level was also held in Brussels.

4.

Georgia Asks Belarus not to Recognize South Ossetia, Abkhazia

18.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgia_Ask_Belarus_Not_To_Recognize_South_Ossetia_Abkhazia/1881595.html

Georgia urged fellow former Soviet republic Belarus today not to follow Russia in recognizing the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states. Belarus dispatched parliamentarians to Georgia and its rebel territories this week to consider the issue, with Minsk torn between loyalty to traditional ally Russia and a bid to improve relations with the European Union, which supports Georgia. Russia recognized the regions in August 2008 after crushing an assault by U.S.-ally Georgia on South Ossetia in a five-day war. Only Nicaragua and Venezuela have followed suit.

5.

Saakashvili Visits Qatar to Attract Investments

15.11.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/97621.php>

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili paid an official visit to Qatar as part of the authorities' attempts to attract investments, Georgian officials said. The delegation, which also includes economy, agriculture and energy ministers, met Qatar's Prime Minister Hamed Bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani, The Messenger reported. The aim of the visit is to attract investments to Georgia, members of the delegation said. The visit comes less than month after President Saakashvili traveled to Kuwait.

V. GEORGIA-RUSSIA

1.

Georgia Considers Opening its Border with Russia

17.11.2009, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35739&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=2140c08039](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35739&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=2140c08039)

On November 13, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili convened yet another session of his country's National Security Council (NSC) with the participation of major parliamentary and non-parliamentary opposition parties. Boycotted by radical politicians, but highly appreciated by moderates, as a mechanism to conduct dialogue with the government and participate in the decision-making process, the so-called expanded sessions –whose topics are sometimes chosen even by the opposition– of the NSC has already become a tradition in a country facing internal and external challenges of enormous magnitude.

2.

'Georgia' Sets out to Tell Tale of War with Russia

17.11.2009, EuroNews

READ MORE: http://www.euronews.net/2009/11/17/georgia-sets-out-to-tell-tale-of-war-with-russia/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+euronews%2Fen%2Fworld+%28euronews+-+world+-+en%29

Russian armour has streamed into Georgia creating lines of refugees fleeing the fighting. But fears of international criticism are limited to upcoming reviews in "Variety", because it is only a movie. Finnish-American director Renny Harlin, better known for "Die Hard 2" or "Cliffhanger" has come to Georgia to make a film about its war last year with Russia. "We try not to take sides. I hope that politicians on both sides of the border will be happy with the product, and proud of the movie and take into their hearts our statement which was 'make love not war'," he said.

3.

Children Haunted by Georgia-Russia War

13.11.2009, IWPR

READ MORE: <http://www.iwpr.net/EN-crs-f-357466>

Volunteers try to help bereaved youngsters still traumatised by the conflict. more than a year after the Georgian-Ossetian war, 11-year-old Sofiko Okropiridze still relives the horrors of it daily. "We left the village on August 9 in papa's car. That day they bombed the road we were on. It was so scary," she reluctantly remembered when asked to describe leaving the family's home village of Banata, just outside South Ossetia. It was badly damaged in the fighting between Russian and Georgian forces in August last year. The psychological damage has been such that, according to her mother Nino Kazieva, she has spent two weeks in hospital and is far from being the girl she was before the war. Such traumatised children are a terrible legacy of the conflict, and, experts say,

resources are inadequate to give each of the children the treatment they need.

VI. MOLDOVA

1.

Moldova Ranks 92nd in 2009 Corrupting Perception Index

22.11.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/97749.php>

Moldova moved up on the 2009 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI) published by Transparency International (TI) on 17 November. This year, Moldova takes the 92nd position out of 180 countries surveyed, as opposed to the 112th place in 2008, Info-Prim Neo reports, quoting a communiqué from TI Moldova. The CPI ranks 180 countries according to the perceived levels of corruption among public officials and politicians, as assessed by international experts and institutions. It scores countries on a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 is perceived to be highly corrupt and 10 indicates low levels of corruption. Moldova's score is 3.3 points, as against 2.9 points last year.

2.

EBRD Says Moldova Sorely Affected by Crisis

15.11.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/97600.php>

The small and medium-sized companies encountered considerable difficulties in raising loans from banks. The conclusions are contained in the transition report for the first six months of this year presented by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development at the Summit of the Central European Initiative in Bucharest, Info-Prim Neo reports. Though the investment climate in Moldova has improved during the last few years, the implementation of the laws in the given area leaves much to be desired, said Erik Berglof, chief economist at the EBRD.

3.

Re-Setting the Eastern Partnership in Moldova

13.11.2009, CEPS

READ MORE: <http://www.ceps.eu/book/re-setting-eastern-partnership-moldova>

If EU leaders are looking for ways to make the Eastern Partnership successful, there are worse places to start than Moldova. Recent elections brought to power a four-party Alliance for European Integration, making the country the only post-Soviet state (aside from the Baltics) in the last ten years where the transfer of power took place via elections. Moreover, in terms of trade, its dependence on the EU is also greater than that of any other post-Soviet state and its support for European integration is the highest in the region. It also shares a language and a history with Romania (an EU member state), and due to migration flows and geography, it has the highest intensity of people-to-people interaction with the EU compared to the other former Soviet states. The country could serve as a laboratory for a different sort of European neighbourhood policy – a partnership that is more effective, more attuned to local needs and that gives palpable benefits for both the EU and its partners. Certainly, a successful EU policy on Moldova will not on its own transform the entire neighbourhood, but it could be a template for a more effective EU policy towards other post-Soviet states like Georgia, Armenia or Ukraine.

VII. ROMANIA

1.

Romanian Election Requires Run-Off to Choose Next President

23.11.2009, Telegraph

READ MORE: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/romania/6631589/Romanian-election-requires-run-off-to-choose-next-president.html>

Romania faces a run-off vote after no clear winner emerged in a presidential election overshadowed by a political crisis that has threatened to derail emergency international funding for the country's recession-ravaged economy. Exit polls taken on Sunday evening showed that the centre-Right Traian Basescu, the incumbent president, scored a narrow victory over his main rival and Left-wing candidate Mircea Geoana. But with President Basescu, who is aiming for a second five-year term, taking about 33 per cent of the vote in comparison to Mr Geoana's 31 per cent the country must vote again on December 5 as the two men go head to head. Both the two front-runners have called the vote the most important since the overthrow of communism in Romania a decade ago.

2.

Romania to Ease Entry for Some 1 Million Moldovans

19.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Romania_To_Ease_Entry_For_Some_1_Million_Moldovans/1882223.html

Moldovan Prime Minister Vlad Filat says that up to 1.2 million Moldovans - or more than one-quarter of the population - will be able to travel easily to EU-member Romania due to an agreement he signed in Bucharest last week, RFE/RL's Moldovan Service reports. The agreement will allow Moldovans living within 50 kilometers of the Romanian border to get multientry permits to enter Romania that are valid for two to five years. Moldovans need visas to enter Romania and other EU countries.

VIII. RUSSIA

1.

Russian Defence Orders to Grow 8.5% in 2010: Putin

21.11.2009, Xinhua Net

READ MORE: http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-11/21/content_12516449.htm

Russia's military orders will increase 8.5 percent to total 40.5 billion U.S. dollars next year, Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said Saturday. "I consider the growth in military orders to be an important instrument for modernizing the military industrial complex itself, and also connected sectors, and providing a stimulus for the emergence of promising scientific developments, and production of new materials and components," Putin said at the 11th national congress of the United Russia Party. Putin, who is leader of the ruling party, also said Russia's economy is expected to shrink by 8 to 8.5 percent this year, while inflation will be under 10 percent, "one of the best indicators after 1992."

2.

Russia's President Makes Rare Call for Ruling Party Reform

21.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Russias_Medvedev_Raps_Ruling_Party_Over_Elections/1884094.html

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev today made a rare criticism of the ruling, pro-Kremlin United Russia party, saying the party has undermined democracy in recent regional elections. Speaking at the party's annual congress in St Petersburg, Medvedev said some regional branches of the party did not allow voters to express their will, and he ordered leaders of United Russia to try to win future

votes fairly. United Russia, which dominates Russia's political scene, is led by Vladimir Putin, Russia's powerful prime minister and Medvedev's mentor.

3.

Russia's Tabloid King Builds an Empire

21.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Russias_Tableid_King_Builds_An_Empire/1884265.html?page=1#relatedInfoContainer

Aram Gabrelyanov has all the makings of a Russian Rupert Murdoch. The self-made millionaire sits atop a mushrooming media empire based entirely on the sensationalist charms of tabloid journalism. Gabrelyanov even runs his own school of tabloid journalism, a long-term strategy he hopes will permanently alter what he sees as Russia's stiff - and sometimes boring - media landscape. "In Russia, they think that there is quality journalism and there is nonquality journalism. I completely disagree," he says. "I think that there is interesting and uninteresting journalism."

4.

Council of Europe Welcomes Russia's Extension of Death Penalty Ban

19.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091119/156908152.html>

The Council of Europe welcomed on Thursday a decision by Russia's Constitutional Court to extend a moratorium on capital punishment. The court said that the ban, introduced in 1999, had begun an "irreversible process" toward the abolition of the death penalty in the country. The 1999 decision imposed a moratorium until jury trials were introduced in all of Russia's regions. Chechnya, the only region where jury trials are not available, is due to introduce them on January 1, 2010. However, Constitutional Court chairman Valery Zorkin said that the introduction of jury trials in Chechnya "does not make it possible to apply the death penalty on Russian territory" as Russia has signed international agreements banning the death penalty. "I warmly welcome today's announcement by the Constitutional Court on the death penalty," Secretary General of the Council of Europe Thorbjorn Jagland said in a statement.

5.

Putin Highlights Decline in Trade with Ukraine

19.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091119/156910242.html>

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin drew attention on Thursday to a "very big" slump in trade turnover with neighbor Ukraine. "A crisis is, of course a crisis," Putin said after talks with Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko in Ukraine's Black Sea resort of Yalta. "It affects both Ukraine and Russia, and virtually the whole world. But we have seen a very large slump in trade turnover with Ukraine." Putin also pointed out that trade turnover with Ukraine had fallen to less than \$15 billion from \$25 billion. Trade with Belarus is now \$16 billion, the Russian premier said.

6.

Reclaimed Water: New Environmental Technologies in Russia

19.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/video/20091119/15690517.html>

Closed water reuse cycles and waste-free production are normal practices in developed European countries. RIA Novosti found out which companies operating in Russia use these technologies to ensure they are environmentally friendly.

7.

Russia Makes Surprise CO2 Pledge at Summit

18.11.2009, EUobserver

READ MORE: <http://euobserver.com/24/29014>

Russia made a surprise pledge to cut back on CO2 emissions at a summit with the EU in Sweden on Wednesday (18 November). Russian diplomats said the country is ready to cut emissions by 20 to 25 percent below 1990s levels by 2020, up from a previous commitment of 10 to 15 percent. The move, coming two weeks before the United Nations climate summit in Copenhagen, falls slightly short of the EU target of 20 to 30 percent for developed countries. It also fails to clear up the issue of Russia's unused carbon credits, which could cause a crash on the carbon exchange market if Moscow cashes them in. European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso welcomed the CO2 decision. "We are currently negotiating among the world capitals," he said about pre-Copenhagen talks. "But you cannot negotiate with nature. You cannot negotiate with physics."

8.

Russia Could Delay Maiden Launch of Angara Rocket

18.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091118/156889970.html>

The maiden launch of Russia's new Angara carrier rocket could be postponed for at least one year due to shortage of funds from the Defense Ministry, the top Russian space official said Wednesday. The Angara rocket, currently under development by the Khronichev center, is designed to put heavy payloads into orbit. The launch facilities were expected to be finished by 2010, and the first launch had been originally scheduled for 2011. "There is a serious delay in the construction of launch facilities [for Angara] due to the shortage of financing from the Defense Ministry. We are doing everything we can on our part," said Anatoly Perminov, the head of the Federal Space Agency Roscosmos.

9.

Changing Times in Russia

13.11.2009, BBC

READ MORE: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8357630.stm>

Russia's President Dmitry Medvedev has proposed reducing the number of time zones spanning his vast country. He did not say by how many, but Russia currently has 11 time zones. The BBC's Penny Spiller reports on how Moscow could go about making it happen.

10.

The Far Right in Russia: Cracked Up

12.11.2009. The Economist

READ MORE: http://www.economist.com/world/europe/displaystory.cfm?story_id=14859385

Still an active presence, but one the authorities may not tolerate much longer. Russian fascists did not hide their elation when Stanislav Markelov, a human-rights lawyer, and Anastasia Baburova, a young journalist, were shot dead in Moscow last January. Mr Markelov had been a vital link between anti-fascist activists, such as Ms Baburova, and the police. Yet the sense of impunity long enjoyed by Russia's far right has been dented by the arrest of a man and a woman for the murders. The police even seem to have got the right people (and others are still being hunted).

11.

Medvedev Calls for Break with Soviet Past

12.11.2009, The Financial Times

READ MORE: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e8bea0d6-cf77-11de-b876-00144feabdc0.html>

Russian president Dmitry Medvedev on Thursday called for a "backwards" Russia to modernise its economy and political system and make a clean break with the past. Expectations had been high for Mr Medvedev's annual address to both houses of parliament after he published a highly critical article in September laying out his criticism the status quo in Russia. In his speech, Mr Medvedev said the Russian economy was still too dependent on Soviet-era industries and export of natural resources. "The nation's prestige and welfare can't depend forever on the achievements of the past,"

he said. "All that has kept the country afloat, but it is rapidly ageing."

12.

Kremlin Attempts to Double its Grain Exports

12.11.2009, The Financial Times

READ MORE: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/e187bff4-cfb4-11de-a36d-00144feabdc0.html>

When Pyotr Stolypin, prime minister under the last Tsar, gave Russian farmers the right to own land, the country soared in five years to be the world's biggest grain producer. A century and a production roller-coaster ride later, Russia once again has set its eyes on becoming a major grain player, banking on strong private sector interest due to rising global food prices. This is in spite of the financial crisis curtailing some investors' ambitions. "It is just a matter of time," says Arkady Zlochevsky, president of the Russian Grain Union, the industry association. "If market conditions are good, there will be investment and we could add a lot of food to world markets."

IX. SOUTH OSSETIA

1.

Peruvian Opposition Urges Recognition of S.Ossetia, Abkhazia

19.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20091119/156903771.html>

Peru's opposition party has submitted a proposal to the Peruvian Congress to recognize the former Georgian republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent, the party leader has said. Ollanta Humala told RIA Novosti on Wednesday that his Peruvian Nationalist Party, the country's second largest political group, submitted the proposal last week. It is currently holding talks with various political forces and parliamentary blocs to win their support. "Peru is one of the countries that have officially recognized Kosovo as independent, and we believe Abkhazia and South Ossetia also deserve official recognition as two new republics," Humala said.

X. TURKEY

1.

EU President: Herman Van Rompuy Opposes Turkey Joining

19.11.2009, Telegraph

READ MORE: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/eu/6600570/EU-president-Herman-Van-Rompuy-opposes-Turkey-joining.html>

The poetry-loving favourite to become the first president of Europe, Herman Van Rompuy, is also a hard-line opponent of Turkey's bid to join the European Union because it is an Islamic country. Herman Van Rompuy, Belgium's Prime Minister, has in the past spoken out against Turkish EU membership because, he warned, it would dilute Europe's Christian heritage. His position on the issue is so strong that he has won the support of Vlaams Belang, the controversial far-right Flemish anti-immigrant party in Belgium.

2.

Transforming Turkish Foreign Policy: The Quest for Regional Leadership and Europeanisation

13.11.2009, CEPS

READ MORE: <http://www.ceps.eu/book/transforming-turkish-foreign-policy-quest-regional-leadership-and-europeanisation>

Turkish foreign policy today is far more proactive and multi-dimensional than at any time in the history of the republic. Turkey presents itself as a mediating power in the European neighbourhood,

intent on developing relations with all actors in order to promote peace and regional integration. This foreign policy line could be considered as an asset for Turkey's prospects of EU membership. The current EU discourse of constructing Europe as a 'global actor' necessitates a strong EU presence in the wider neighbourhood. A Turkey that can effectively use its soft power resources could significantly help to remedy the weakness of the EU presence in these regions. Furthermore, it could help prevent the region's sources of instability from spilling over into the EU. In many respects, Turkey may be viewed as 'doing the European Neighbourhood Policy' for the EU. Nevertheless, this contribution is dependent on certain conditions.

XI. UKRAINE

1.

Yushchenko Pledges to Force Russian Navy out of Crimea

23.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20091123/156950212.html>

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko pledged on Monday in an election campaign statement to force Russia's Black Sea Fleet to leave Ukraine's Crimea by 2017. "The Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Federation must be pulled out of Ukraine before 2017 in accordance with the Constitution of Ukraine and the agreements signed," Yushchenko said in a statement published on the website of the country's Central Election Commission. Russia's Black Sea Fleet uses a range of naval facilities in Ukraine's Crimea, including a base in Sevastopol, as part of a 1997 lease agreement valid until 2017. Yushchenko has led calls for Russia to prepare to withdraw its fleet from Ukraine's territory when the agreement on the base expires, although Russia hopes to extend the lease.

2.

EU Observers Start Monitoring Ukraine Election Campaign

23.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20091123/156946632.html>

An election observation mission from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will start on Monday monitoring the presidential election campaign in Ukraine. The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights has so far sent over 50 observers to Ukraine. Another 600 European officials will arrive in the country on a short mission on the day of elections, January 17, 2010. The election campaign in Ukraine started on October 19. A total of 18 candidates have been registered to run for the president.

3.

Russia, Ukraine Seek to End Gas Feud at Yalta

19.11.2009, EUBusiness

READ MORE: <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/russia-ukraine-gas.lig>

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin Thursday was to meet his Ukrainian counterpart Yulia Tymoshenko for a rare meeting aimed at preventing a repeat of last winter's gas crisis. They will meet at the Livadia Palace in the Crimean resort of Yalta, the venue for the 1945 conference between Joseph Stalin, Franklin Roosevelt and Winston Churchill where the Big Three leaders met to redraw the postwar map. While relations between Russia and pro-Western Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko have reached crisis point, Putin and Tymoshenko have repeatedly boasted of their cordial relationship.

4.

EU Running on Empty in Ukraine

16.11.2009, EUobserver

READ MORE: <http://euobserver.com/9/28988>

Ukrainian politics is like Mexican telenovelas. The characters are the same for years and years: charming but cunning Tymoshenko, dull but pragmatic Yanukovich, idealistic but weak Yushchenko, plus the whole plethora of old faces from Litvin to Tihipko. Yatsenyuk is the only new face, campaigning with smart khaki billboards, but with surprisingly old-fashioned views. However, the 2010 election campaign is different from the past elections in Ukraine. The change is not in personalities, but in subtleties of their rhetoric.

XII. BSEC

1.

Azerbaijan to Raise Nagorno-Karabakh Question at Plenary Session of BSEC PA

21.11.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/official/parliament/1585429.html>

At the 34th plenary session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), which will be held in Moscow, the Speaker of the Parliament of Azerbaijan will raise the issue of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict. It is expected that the speech of the Speaker at the meeting will touch upon the issues of contamination of rivers and damages inflicted to the environment in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, the head of the Parliament's press service Akif Tevekkuloglu briefed the media on Nov. 21.

2.

BSEC Convened in Istanbul

11.11.2009, TRT

READ MORE: <http://www.trtenglish.com/trtinternational/en/newsDetail.aspx?HaberKodu=ff124ac4-b1c9-424f-be6c-90e576385850&title=BSEC%20convened%20in%20Istanbul>

Permanent Secretariat of the Organization of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) held a meeting in Istanbul on Tuesday, November 10, where new term goals were set. As the Term President of the BSEC, Bulgarian Deputy Foreign Minister Marin Raykov chaired the meeting which was attended by representatives of the member states and observer states.

XIII. CAUCASUS

1.

Mediators Report 'Important Progress' in Karabakh Talks, but Difficulties Remain

22.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Azerbaijani_Armenian_Presidents_Meeting_Again_To_Discuss_NagornoKarabakh/1884679.html

Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and his Armenian counterpart, Serzh Sarkisian, made "important progress" today at four hours of talks in the German city of Munich to discuss the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, mediators say. "Some important progress has been reached," said Bernard Fassier from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). "At the same time, we have identified some difficulties." Both Aliyev and Sarkisian left the talks without speaking to journalists. Fassier told reporters that he and his co-mediators from the United States and Russia would begin to prepare for the next round of talks, but did not say when such talks might take place.

2.

Azerbaijan Military Threat to Armenia

22.11.2009, Telegraph

READ MORE: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/azerbaijan/6631572/Azerbaijan-military-threat-to-Armenia.html>

Azerbaijan and Armenia held a presidential summit yesterday amid warnings that war was brewing between the countries over a festering territorial dispute. Ilham Aliyev, the president of Azerbaijan, said the negotiations in Munich were a final attempt to avert a military confrontation. They were convened by the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe as part of efforts to find a peaceful solution to a problem that has divided the two former Soviet republics since the 1991 fall of the USSR.

3.

Reasons for Conflicts in South Caucasus and Ways of their Solution Discussed in Tbilisi

21.11.2009, TrendNews

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1585486.html>

The topic "South Caucasus: the sources of separatism, conflict solution and long-term peace" was discussed in Tbilisi at the scientific-practical conference organized by the Azerbaijani Embassy in Georgia in cooperation with the Tbilisi State University named after Ivan Javakhishvili.

4.

Armenian Foreign Minister Expects Refutation from Russia

19.11.2009, APA

READ MORE: <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=111302>

Armenian foreign ministry demanded official refutation of statement by the director of information and press department of Russian Foreign Ministry Andrei Nesterenko, APA reports quoting ArmToday site. Armenian foreign minister Edward Nalbandian called Nesterenko's idea about the discussion of Nagorno Karabakh conflict in the negotiation between Ankara and Yerevan as misunderstanding. "Andrei Nesterenko made mistake, everybody can do it. I recommend you to expect refutation from the Russian foreign ministry. Probably it will not take much time. I know Andrei Nesterenko as a professional of his work, but he made mistake this time. I stress again that Armenian-Turkish process has no relation to the settlement of Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Nesterenko's statements are contradictory to the statements by the Russian foreign minister and other co-chairs of OSCE Minsk Group. Those statements said for many times that there is no relation between the Turkish-Armenian relations and Nagorno Karabakh conflict. Therefore I think that following that it needs to expect for statements proving my words".

5.

Negotiations Fail to Curb Tensions in Caucasus

19.11.2009, TrendNews

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1583535.html>

The next round of Georgian-South Ossetian negotiations to prevent tensions in the Caucasus failed. The meeting originally scheduled for Nov. 19 was canceled by the South Ossetian side, Georgian officials reported. South Ossetia refused to participate in negotiations. Georgia intends to put forward the question of the release of four teenagers detained in South Ossetia Nov. 4. They are charged with illegally crossing the border and possessing explosives. They were arrested and given two-months temporary imprisonment.

6.

Turkey-Armenia Rapprochement to Contribute to Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resolution, CE General Secretary

19.11.2009, TrendNews

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/1583420.html>

The Council of Europe hopes rapprochement between Turkey and Armenia will contribute to resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, General Secretary Thorbjorn Jagland said at a press conference following the hand-over ceremony of the Committee of Ministers chairmanship to Switzerland today. He said the Council of Europe is ready to assist the parties in the rapprochement

process.

7.

Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Resolution and Turkey-Armenia Rapprochement Have no Formal Relation: CE Committee of Ministers New Chairman

19.11.2009, TrendNews

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/1583554.html>

There is no formal relation between resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and Turkey-Armenia rapprochement, Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe Chairman and Swiss Foreign Minister Micheline Calmy-Rey told Trend News today. Calmy-Rey was commenting on the non-ratification of the Turkish-Armenian protocols. The Turkish and Armenian foreign ministers Ahmet Davutoglu and Edward Nalbandian signed the Ankara-Yerevan protocols in Zurich Oct. 10.

8.

South Caucasus Media Conference in Tbilisi

18.11.2009, Civil.ge

READ MORE: <http://www.civil.ge/eng/article.php?id=21690>

OSCE-organized sixth annual South Caucasus media conference will open in Tbilisi on November 19.

XIV. ENERGY

1.

Deal between Russia, Ukraine Eases Risks of Gas Cutoff to Europe

21.11.2009, The Wall Street Journal

READ MORE: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB125873966018057679.html>

A compromise reached late Thursday between Russia and Ukraine has curbed the risk of another cutoff of natural gas to Europe this winter, but financial problems and political tensions within Ukraine still pose a threat, officials on both sides say. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin agreed with his Ukrainian counterpart, Yulia Tymoshenko, to allow Ukraine to buy less natural gas than contracted next year, removing the risk of crippling fines being imposed on Kiev. In return, Ms. Tymoshenko promised there would be no disruptions in payment of natural gas or in transit of the fuel to Russia's customers in Europe.

2.

Austria in Talks with Russia over South Stream: Report

21.11.2009, EUBusiness

READ MORE: <http://www.eubusiness.com/news-eu/austria-russia-gas.1kt>

Austria has begun talks with Russia in view of joining Moscow's South Stream gas pipeline project, Austrian newspapers reported on Saturday. The economy ministry said it had opened negotiations with Russia on Friday regarding its potential involvement in the project, the daily Die Presse reported. South Stream is seen as a rival to the EU's Nabucco pipeline, aimed at reducing Europe's dependence on Russian gas. Both projects, which have yet to be completed, would terminate in Austria, from which gas would then be supplied to the rest of Europe. The Austria Press Agency (APA) noted that the two countries would first have to sign an "intergovernmental agreement" before Austrian oil and gas group OMV could begin direct negotiations with Russia's gas monopoly Gazprom.

3.

EU Countries Well Prepared for any Gas Crisis - Expert Group

19.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20091119/156898594.html>

European Union countries are well prepared to deal with any gas supply shortages, the EU gas

coordination group said after its Wednesday's meeting in Brussels. European experts said they recorded "full levels of storages in almost all member states," and a number of short-term commercial agreements to deal with any emergency was in place in the countries that were most affected by last January's gas crisis. The EU energy commissioner, Andris Piebalgs said on Tuesday that European gas storage facilities were 100% full, and a plan to deal with any emergency concerning gas supplies had been prepared.

4.

Ukraine Relying on IMF Payments for Russian Gas Purchase

18.11.2009, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35744&cHash=6a64eb4c45](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35744&cHash=6a64eb4c45)

Ukraine finds it increasingly difficult to survive without money from the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The country paid Russia for October's gas deliveries with IMF funds and the same means will be used for November's gas deliveries. However, the IMF did not disburse the fourth \$3.8-billion tranche of its \$16.4-billion loan to Ukraine in mid-November because of the government's populist policies (EDM, November 4). This means that Ukraine may not receive more IMF money until after the presidential elections in January and February, and consequently it is unclear where it will find the money to pay for Russian gas in early 2010. The debt-ridden Naftohaz Ukrainy state-run oil and gas behemoth ran out of money long ago. There are fears that the situation in early 2009, when gas deliveries to Europe via Ukraine were stopped for two weeks over a pricing dispute between Russia and Ukraine, may be repeated.

5.

Russia Takes Steps to Reduce Gas Flaring

17.11.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy-efficiency/russia-takes-steps-reduce-gas-flaring/article-187377>

Moscow last week ordered oil companies to use "up to 95%" of the gases associated with petroleum extraction in a move designed to bank on the "billions of roubles" of gas wasted every year, the Kremlin announced. Addressing the Russian parliament last week (12 November), President Dmitry Medvedev highlighted the flaring of gas extracted alongside oil as one of the most glaring examples of ineffective use of energy resources. "This pollutes the environment and sends tens of billions of roubles up in smoke," Medvedev said, according to the Kremlin website.

6.

Slovakia Warms to Gazprom

17.11.2009, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2009/11/17/Slovakia-warms-to-Gazprom/UPI-50171258483054/

There are no obstacles to Russian energy giant Gazprom forming a joint partnership with Slovak companies for gas deliveries, the Slovak premier said. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin welcomed his Slovakian counterpart, Robert Fico, to Moscow to discuss energy matters and other issues. Putin described the energy industry as one that ties both countries together.

7.

Azerbaijan: Baku Sees Turkey as Tough Costumer

17.11.2009, EurasiaNet

READ MORE: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/business/articles/eav111709.shtml>

Amid a diplomatic chill, Azerbaijan and Turkey opened a new round of talks November 16 on an energy export price. Recent agreements on gas supplies to Bulgaria, Iran and Russia suggest that Baku is exploring alternative export routes as a means to pressure Ankara into paying significantly more

for Azerbaijani natural gas. Baku and Ankara have been unable to fix a mutually acceptable gas price, even though talks have been going on since April 2008. Azerbaijan claims that the \$120 per 1,000 cubic meters (tcm) that Ankara now pays, a price set in 2001, is 30 percent below international rate, and does not correspond with the fresh influx of production to come from Azerbaijan's Shah Deniz Stage II gas field. Baku is seeking to more than double the amount that Ankara pays, to \$250/tcm. Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev in October declared that, given the stalemate with Ankara, Baku would consider alternative export options, including Russia, Iran and Bulgaria.

8.

Russia and EU Agree on Gas Supply Alert Mechanism

16.11.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/russia-eu-agree-gas-supply-alert-mechanism/article-187360>

The European Union and Russia agreed today (16 November) to establish an 'early warning' mechanism to shield Europe from potential energy supply cuts and protect consumers in the event of a repeat of last year's Russia-Ukraine gas dispute. The agreement requires both sides to notify the other of any likely disruption to supplies of oil, natural gas or electricity and to work together to resolve the problem. Third parties would also be allowed to participate, the European Commission said.

9.

Slovenia Gives Russia Final Piece of South Stream Puzzle

16.11.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/slovenia-gives-russia-final-piece-south-stream-puzzle/article-187348>

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin won Slovenia's approval on 14 November for the South Stream pipeline, undermining European Union efforts to reduce dependency on Russian gas supplies. The seal of approval is the latest victory for the Kremlin as it seeks to counter the long delayed Nabucco pipeline which is backed by the European Union as a way to curb dependency on Russia by pumping gas from the Caspian and the Middle East.

XV. EU

1.

Russia and the EU after Lisbon

19.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Russia_And_The_EU_After_Lisbon_/1882830.html

Just last month not very many people either in the European Union or anywhere else really seemed to believe the Lisbon treaty would be ratified. And the bloc's prickliest neighbor, Russia, also seemed in denial about the treaty's prospects until the very last moment. After all, the situation with the referendum in Ireland seemed to be playing out exactly as it did in 2008, when the "Yes" camp's slight edge was swamped by a surprising surge of "No" voters on the day of the vote. A lack of preparation may explain Moscow's contradictory reaction: the strangely prompt and overly enthusiastic Foreign Ministry statement that impelled Russian analysts to wonder why Moscow was so interested in the EU reform treaty.

2.

EU-Russia Relationship no Longer Worsening

18.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/EURussia_Relationship_No_Longer_Worsening/1881799.html

The president of the European Commission, Jose Manuel Barroso, has emerged from the 24th EU-Russia summit in the Swedish capital describing it as "one of the best meetings we have had." This verdict may look odd, given that nothing of substance was achieved during the more than five hours of talks today, preceded by a Swedish-Russian dinner last night. But there was genuine relief among EU leaders -- reciprocated, to an extent, by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev -- that the downward spiral in the relationship of the last few years appears now to have brought to a halt.

3.

EU Concern at Russia Human Rights

18.11.2009, BBC

READ MORE: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8365589.stm>

Sweden's prime minister has expressed disquiet about Russia's human rights situation after an EU-Russia summit in Stockholm. Fredrik Reinfeldt, whose country holds the EU's rotating presidency, said: "We exchanged views on human rights, the rule of law in Russia and democracy. This is an increasing cause for concern," he added.

4.

EU Backs Russia's WTO Accession Bid - Barroso

18.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20091118/156892124.html>

The European Union backs Russia's plans to join the World Trade Organization, European Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said on Wednesday. We clearly show our support for Russia's accession to the WTO, Barroso said at a press conference following a Russia-EU summit. Barroso said that Russia's entry into the global trade club would have a positive effect for both Moscow and the European Union. Russia, the only major economy outside the WTO, has been seeking membership for 16 years. Russian Economy Minister Elvira Nabiullina and European Commissioner for Trade Catherine Ashton held a working meeting on Wednesday morning to discuss progress in WTO talks, bilateral economic cooperation and economic aspects of the new EU-Russia partnership deal, Russia's EU envoy Vladimir Chizhov said.

5.

European Neighbourhood Policy in Action: Launch of Cross-Border Co-Operation Programmes with Russia

18.11.2009, EU

READ MORE: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/1727&format=%0BHTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

At the EU-Russia Summit today Commissioner for External Relations and European Neighbourhood Policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner and the Russian Minister for Regional Development, Viktor Basargin, signed the Financing Agreements for five cross-border co-operation programmes (CBC). These financing agreements are central to the implementation of cooperation programmes between the border regions of the European Union and Russia. The programmes have a total budget of approximately €437 million until 2013, and are funded by different sources: European Commission (€267 mio), Member States (€67 mio) and the Russian Federation (€103 mio). The co-financing by the Russian Federation confirms the spirit of partnership at the core of the European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument (ENPI).

6.

EU and Russian Executives Fear Protectionism

18.11.2009, The Financial Times

READ MORE: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/97362202-d3aa-11de-8caf-00144feabdc0.html>

Rising trade barriers, imposed in response to the global economic crisis, threaten economic relations between the European Union and Russia, business leaders are warning. The dangers are compounded

by risks that Russia's planned customs union with Kazakhstan and Belarus, due to start on January 1, could complicate ties between Moscow and Brussels, say executives in the Industrialists Round Table, an EU-Russia business organisation.

XVI. HEALTH

1.

In Ukraine, H1N1 Pandemic Sets off Panic and Politicking

21.11.2009, The Washington Post

READ MORE: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/11/20/AR2009112004023.html>

One night at the height of the panic over what people here call the California flu, as 24-hour news stations tracked a rising death toll and politicians speculated about a mystery lung plague, Ukraine's prime minister rushed to the airport to greet a shipment of Tamiflu as if it were a foreign dignitary. Not to be outdone, the president, a bitter political foe, dispatched a top aide to meet the plane, too. In neighboring Belarus, the government took an opposite tack, accusing drug companies of fanning hysteria over swine flu to boost profit. In Poland, the health minister is under fire for refusing to stock up on a vaccine, while doctors in Hungary are resisting orders to administer the shot. In Turkmenistan, the authorities have been accused of covering up an epidemic, with infectious-disease wards reportedly full and people being turned away.

2.

Flu, Respiratory Infections Kill 362 People in Ukraine, Says Health Ministry

21.11.2009, APA

READ MORE: <http://en.apa.az/news.php?id=111451>

By Nov. 20, a total of 362 people have died of the flu and respiratory infections in Ukraine. Seven people have died of flu and its complications (pneumonia) over the past 24 hours, the Health Ministry reported.

3.

"Ukraine Swine Flu 'Burns' Lungs" – Source

21.11.2009, RussiaToday

READ MORE: http://russiatoday.ru/Top_News/2009-11-19/flu-ukraine-aid-russia.html

British scientists suspect that swine flu virus has mutated in Ukraine. Some doctors say that flu in the country has shown unprecedented symptoms, creating the effect of "burnt" lungs, the Daily Mail reports. Sources said that while British scientists are running their tests of the virus samples from Ukraine, some doctors claim the strain is dangerously mutating.

4.

Swine Flu Continues to Spread in Moldova

18.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Swine_Flu_Continues_To_Spread_In_Moldova_/1881827.html

Moldovan health officials say the number of confirmed swine flu cases has risen to nearly 900, with 250 new cases recorded over the weekend, RFE/RL's Moldovan Service reports. On November 14, a 31-year old woman in the town of Falesti died of swine flu, raising the death toll from the virus to seven. The textile factory where the latest victim worked was closed and its 500 employees are undergoing medical tests.

XVII. SECURITY

1.

Georgia to Buy Military Equipment from US

22.11.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/97770.php>

Moscow officials recently alleged that in response to Tbilisi's request for military aid, US had offered Georgia military equipment worth more than €100 million planned to be delivered to Georgia by Chicago-based Barrington Alliance, Inc, The Messenger reported. According to the Russians this deal will include the purchasing of Patriot air defense systems. Responding to Russia's statement on the increase of US military support to Georgia, which according to the Kremlin signifies that Georgia is preparing aggression, the Georgian Foreign Ministry neither denying nor confirming the alleged arms deal with the United States.

2.

Russia Submarine Returns to Base after Engine Problem

22.11.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: http://www.rferl.org/content/Russia_Submarine_Returns_To_Base_After_Engine_Problem/1884810.html

A Russian submarine broke off a mission in the Black Sea on November 21 and headed back to base, apparently because of engine trouble, the state RIA-Novosti news agency reported. The "Alrosa," a diesel-electric submarine, was on a training exercise when the problem occurred, the agency quoted a source at the Russian Black Sea fleet as saying. The source said there was no danger to the crew of the Kilo-class vessel, the only operational submarine in Russia's Black Sea fleet based in the Ukrainian port of Sevastopol. Kilo-class submarines normally carry a crew of around 50 and operate in relatively shallow waters.

3.

Russia Continues to Modernize its Nuclear Triad

18.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20091118/156892231.html

Russia's Strategic Missile Forces (SMF), the land-based component of the nuclear triad, will put on combat duty a second regiment equipped with Topol-M mobile missile systems by the end of 2009. Topol-M (SS-27 Stalin) missiles are the mainstay of the ground-based component of Russia's nuclear triad. As of the beginning of 2009, the SMF operated 50 silo-based and six road-mobile Topol-M missile systems. "We will complete the rearmament of the second missile regiment in the Teikovo division with mobile Topol-M systems," the new SMF commander, Lt. Gen. Andrei Shvaichenko told reporters in Moscow.

4.

Intel Brief: Poland on Edge over Russian Drills

18.11.2009, ISN

READ MORE: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/layout/set/print/content/view/full/73?id=109702&lng=en>

Russia's largest ever post-Cold War military games near the border with Poland, simulating a nuclear attack against its smaller neighbor, has put Warsaw on edge and sent it looking for new security assurances, Anna Dunin writes for ISN Security Watch. Joint Russian-Belarusian war games, conducted in mid-September in Kaliningrad Oblast, the Russian exclave between Poland and Lithuania on the Baltic Sea, were part of the largest war games Russia has conducted at the eastern border of NATO territory since the end of the Cold War. The exercises, code named operation Zapad-2009," included a simulated nuclear attack against Poland, suppression of an uprising by a Polish minority in Belarus and, despite being classified as defensive, included many operations of an

offensive nature. The war games likely were Russia's demonstration of strength and another attempt to intimidate Poland into cancelling any cooperation with the US on the issue of European missile defense.

5.

Russia Dismisses NATO Concerns over Military Drills with Belarus

18.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20091118/156893946.html

There is no reason for NATO to be concerned over recent Russian-Belarusian large-scale military drills near Poland, Russia's envoy to the alliance said on Wednesday. NATO spokesman James Appathurai earlier told reporters that ambassadors from 28 NATO countries had voiced concern over the size and the scenario of the Zapad 2009 exercise, which involved some 13,000 personnel. Polish media reports claimed Russia and Belarus had simulated nuclear strikes on Poland during the war games. NATO also said the political message of the exercise was at odds with the recent improvement in relations between the military alliance and Russia.

6.

Russian Arms Program Unaffected by Crisis - Medvedev

16.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091116/156858766.html>

The ongoing financial crisis will have virtually no impact on arms procurements for the Russian military, the Russian president said on Monday. "The financial crisis will have an absolutely minimal effect on the military component, on arms procurements," Dmitry Medvedev said during a tour of the Russian missile cruiser Varyag anchored in Singapore, where he had arrived on Saturday to attend an APEC summit, after which he began his official visit to the Asian nation. He said that between 30% and 90% of the military would receive new equipment in 2011-20.

7.

Medvedev Says Russia to Step up Navy Presence in World's Oceans

16.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20091116/156857756.html>

Russia plans to increase its naval presence in the world's oceans, President Dmitry Medvedev said on board a Russian warship during an official visit to Singapore on Monday. Russia announced in 2007 that its Navy had resumed and would build up a constant presence throughout the world's oceans. Once one of the world's most powerful forces, the Russian Navy now has few ships regularly deployed on the open seas. Asked by the crew of the Varyag cruiser if Russia's presence would be stepped up further, Medvedev said: "Yes, this is planned." Moscow has recently contributed warships to international efforts to combat Somali pirates. A flotilla of Russian warships also participated in exercises with India and Venezuela last year.

8.

Russian Nuclear Sub Starts Sea Trials after Overhaul

12.11.2009, RiaNovosti

READ MORE: http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20091112/156800516.html

A Russian Delta-IV class Karelia nuclear submarine has started sea trials following lengthy modernization at the Zvezdochka shipyard in northern Russia, the company said. The overhaul, which started in 2004, included noise reduction, improved enemy ship and submarine tracking capabilities, and enhanced survivability. The submarine has been equipped with 16 Sineva RSM-54 missiles. K-18 Karelia could join Russia's Northern Fleet by the end of this year, the shipyard said in a statement on Wednesday.

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The contents of the BSNU are exclusive responsibility of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of the ICBSS.

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