



# BLACK SEA NEWS UPDATE

EU – BLACK SEA OBSERVATORY

8 March 2009

No. 3

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## I. ARMENIA – TURKEY

1.

Turkey and Armenia Pave Way for Historic Accords

02.04.2009, The Wall Street Journal

READ MORE: <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB123862328150480025.html>

Turkey and Armenia could soon announce a deal aimed at reopening their border and restoring relations, according to diplomats, a move that could help stabilize a region that's increasingly important as a transit route for oil and gas.

The timing of the deal is being choreographed with the schedule of U.S. President Barack Obama, who visits Turkey next week, these people say.

The Turkish and Armenian governments have agreed on terms to open formal talks in three areas: opening and fixing borders, restoring diplomatic relations and setting up commissions to look at disputes, including one on the tense history between the two nations, according to the diplomats, all of whom declined to be named due to the sensitivity of the talks.

2.

Azerbaijan Concerned at Turkey – Armenia Thaw

02.04.2009, financialmirror.com

READ MORE: [http://www.financialmirror.com/News/Cyprus\\_and\\_World\\_News/14707](http://www.financialmirror.com/News/Cyprus_and_World_News/14707)

Azerbaijan expressed concern on Thursday at the prospect of the border being opened between its old foe Armenia and Turkey, where U.S. President Barack Obama visits next week. With growing signs of a thaw in relations between Muslim Turkey and Armenia after a century of hostility, the chances have improved sharply of Ankara opening the frontier it closed in 1993. Turkey's closure of the 268 km (166 mile) border had been in solidarity with Azerbaijan, which was fighting Armenianbacked separatists over the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region – a festering conflict that remains unresolved.

3.

Turkey, Armenia on the Road to Normalizing Strained Relations

30.03.2009, Hurriyet Daily News

READ MORE: [http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11318563\\_p.asp](http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/english/domestic/11318563_p.asp)

Turkey and Armenia agree on the roadmap to establish diplomatic ties and open the shared border. The timing of the declaration of the agreement remains key for Ankara. The key question is whether to announce the agreement before, during or after President Obama's visit.

## II. GEORGIA

1.

Why Georgia Dare Not Risk Declaring Neutrality

02.04.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1600767.html>

Georgian political parties find it very difficult to agree on anything, but at least there was one point of consensus among almost all parties that mattered: They supported membership of NATO and the European Union. In 2006, all parliamentary parties signed a declaration stating that despite many differences, they stand united on this issue. In the January 2008 presidential elections, Irina Sarishvili was the only openly pro-Russian candidate who also opposed Georgia's bid for NATO membership. She received just 0.16 percent of the vote.

2.

Ex-Georgia Leader Says Saakashvili Should Resign

30.03.2009, REUTERS

READ MORE: <http://www.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=USTRE52T2C220090330>

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Former Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze joined opposition calls on Monday for President Mikheil Saakashvili -- who ousted Shevardnadze in the ex-Soviet state's 2003 "Rose Revolution" -- to resign. The opposition plans rallies beginning on April 9 to demand Saakashvili go, accusing him of betraying promises to consolidate democracy in the Caucasus state and of walking into a disastrous war with neighboring Russia last year. "If I was in his place, I would resign," 81-year-old Shevardnadze told reporters at his hillside residence in the capital, Tbilisi.

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3.

#### Georgia's Saakashvili Warns Rivals against Unrest

29.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1563964.html>

Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili has called for dialogue with the opposition but warned it against trying to force his overthrow in antigovernment protests next month. The pro-Western president has come under increasing pressure since the former Soviet state's disastrous defeat by Russia in a five-day war last year. The opposition is demanding he resign. Police last week arrested 10 men and said they had uncovered a plot to ignite unrest during opposition rallies due to begin on April 9.

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4.

#### Georgian Opposition Members Held on Arms Charges

24.03.2009, New York Times

READ MORE: [http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/24/world/europe/24georgia.html?\\_r=1](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/24/world/europe/24georgia.html?_r=1)

Georgian authorities on Monday arrested nine members of an opposition party on weapons charges, as tensions mounted ahead of April protests that will call for President Mikheil Saakashvili to step down. Shota Utiashvili, a spokesman for Georgia's Interior Ministry, said 10 people had been arrested. He showed surveillance video of five men buying automatic weapons and discussing future arms purchases, saying the suspects were "different people from different groups." "There was no political reason to have them arrested," Mr. Utiashvili said.

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5.

#### Georgian Crackdown Continues with 'Antistate' Arrests

24.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/New\\_Arrests\\_Announced\\_In\\_Georgian\\_Arms\\_Case/1516116.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/New_Arrests_Announced_In_Georgian_Arms_Case/1516116.html)

The Georgian Interior Ministry has announced that police have arrested and charged two people for "antistate" activities. "Today we will present evidence regarding two people, Malkhaz Gvelukashvili and Lasha Chkhenkeli," Interior Ministry spokesman Shota Utiashvili said. "In the evidence, you will see the names of concrete people, the concrete plans, and the concrete groups, and also some indication of the sources of funding. We are at the very early stages of the investigation, so we cannot make any conclusions yet."

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6.

#### Georgian Arrests Raise Disturbing Questions

24.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1516070.html>

During the night of March 22-23, the Georgian Interior Ministry arrested 10 men in Batumi and Tbilisi on charges of illegal possession of arms. Nine of them were subsequently identified as members of the opposition Democratic Movement- United Georgia (DMES) established late last year by former parliament speaker Nino Burjanadze. Later on March 23, the Interior Ministry made available to television companies film footage that showed persons whom it claimed were the detainees discussing the purchase of various weapons, from pistols to grenade-launchers.

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7.

#### Saakashvili Remarks Spark Anger

23.03.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/print.php?id=93594>

While opening the Kopala hotel and entertainment centre in Tskneti on early last week Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili stated that Armenias economy had collapsed, because it is completely dependent on the Russian market and when the Russian market collapsed the same fate befell the Armenian economy, Civil Georgia reported. Saakashvilis rhetoric triggered a negative reaction in Armenia and Russia.

### III. GEORGIA-RUSSIA

1.

#### Obama, Medvedev Agreed to Disagree Only on Georgia in G20

04.04.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/print.php?id=93911>

In an exclusive interview with New Europe, Konstantin Kosachev, Chairman of the International Affairs Committee of the Russian Duma – who sat in on the first-ever meeting between US President Barack Obama and Russian President Dimitry Medvedev on the sidelines of the G20 economic summit in London – said he marveled at their friendly accord, the new American leader’s easy-going but serious manner, and revealed the ambitious course the two world leaders set on critical issues, ranging from reaching agreement on a new Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START-II) before the current agreement expires on December. 5.

2.

#### Russia Keeps Troops in Georgia, Defying Deal

03.04.2009, New York Times

READ MORE: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/03/world/europe/03georgia.html?hpw>

Nearly eight months after the war between Russia and Georgia, Russian troops continue to hold Georgian territory that the Kremlin agreed to vacate as part of a formal cease-fire, leaving a basic condition of that agreement unfulfilled. The Russian military, working with the governments and the small military forces of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, two separatist regions in Georgia, has stationed forces in two large swaths of territory that were under Georgian control before the war. Observers and diplomats say Russia has also used attack helicopters and stationed tanks in areas where none existed before the war.

3.

#### Medvedev: ‘I don’t Want to Have Relations with Saakashvili’

03.04.2009, Civil.Ge

READ MORE: [http://www.civil.ge/eng/\\_print.php?id=20655](http://www.civil.ge/eng/_print.php?id=20655)

Russian President, Dmitry Medvedev, who last September has called President Saakashvili “a political corpse” and in separate remarks - “a person burdened with a mass of pathologies,” reiterated on April 2 that he would only talk with Georgia’s new leadership. “We would like to have good relations with Georgia; we love and respect the Georgian people,” Medvedev said while speaking at the London School of Economics; he, however, also added: “I do not want to have any relations with President Saakashvili and I do not want to communicate with him.”

4.

#### Russia Says Georgia Planning Revenge for War Defeat

02.04.2009, REUTERS

READ MORE: <http://www.reuters.com/articlePrint?articleId=USL2972830>

Russia accused Georgia on Thursday of planning revenge against pro-Moscow separatists and warned

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the United States against arms sales to Tbilisi. Georgia's U.S.-trained armed forces were routed by Russian troops during a five-day war last August when Tbilisi tried to retake its rebel South Ossetia region by force.

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5.

Memo From Standards Editor on Coverage of South Ossetia

02.04.2009, New York Times

READ MORE: <http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/02/business/media/03whitneymemo.html?partner=rssnyt&emc=rss>

Russia held a high-level meeting with the leaders of two breakaway republics in Georgia on Friday, and vowed to increase its support for the separatists if Kosovo declared its independence and was recognized by the West. The meeting, coupled with vocal warnings in Russia's Parliament that it would react strongly to a declaration of independence by Kosovo, threatened to push the Kremlin and the West into a fresh and potentially volatile standoff over the status of separatist territories in Georgia. Kosovo is expected within days to declare its independence from Serbia, Russia's traditional ally. The Kremlin has long objected to the move, and even threatened to retaliate by recognizing Abkhazia and South Ossetia, two breakaway regions it supports inside Georgia's internationally recognized borders, as independent states.

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6.

Russia Warns US on Georgia

02.04.2009, Washington Times

READ MORE: <http://washingtontimes.com/news/2009/apr/02/russia-warns-us-on-georgia/>

Russia sent a strong warning to the United States Thursday about supporting Georgia in the U.S. ally's efforts to rebuild its military following last year's war. The Foreign Ministry said helping arm Georgia would be "extremely dangerous" and would amount to "nothing but the encouragement of the aggressor." The warning comes days after Georgian President Mikhail Saakashvili stridently owed to rebuild and prepare his armed forces for missions other than peacekeeping — comments made alongside a top U.S. general. It also follows Wednesday's first meeting between Presidents Barack Obama and Dmitry Medvedev, where the two leaders tried to mend serious differences that have plagued ties in recent years — including over last year's war in Georgia.

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7.

New Russian Film Pushes Kremlin's Line on Georgia War

26.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/New\\_Russian\\_Film\\_Pushes\\_Kremlins\\_Line\\_On\\_Georgia\\_War/1516643.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/New_Russian_Film_Pushes_Kremlins_Line_On_Georgia_War/1516643.html)

Ever since the beginning of the five-day war between Russia and Georgia last August, Moscow and Tbilisi have traded accusations about who unleashed the violence. This week, Russian television viewers get a chance to witness another chapter in the dispute. Channel One state television will air "Olympius Inferno," a new action thriller that offers a fictionalized account of how the war started, and places the blame squarely on the shoulders of Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili. Set in South Ossetia, "Olympius Inferno" tells the fictional story of a Russian-born American biologist and a Russian journalist who capture the opening moments of the August conflict while filming the nocturnal habits of local butterflies. They must then make their way through the Georgian-held conflict zone to the Russian lines in order to bring to the world the truth: that Georgian troops launched an aggressive attack against the sleeping region.

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8.

South Ossetia Accuses Georgia of Shelling Village

26.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1520530.html>

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The leadership of Georgia's breakaway region of South Ossetia has accused Tbilisi of launching repeated attacks against a border village, RFE/RL's Russian Service reports. South Ossetia's Interior Ministry says Georgian military force have constantly fired on the village of Mugut, near the Georgian border. According to the ministry, Georgian troops this week attacked Russian military strongholds in the village using gunfire and grenades. No casualties were reported.

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9.

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Russian Language 'Pressed' on Georgian Teachers in Abkhazia

24.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1516053.html>

Russian-language schoolbooks are being given to schoolteachers in the breakaway region of Abkhazia, prompting protests from some ethnic Georgian parents and teachers that their children are being brainwashed. For years, Georgian-language textbooks have been used in Abkhazia's southern Gali district, home to some 40,000 Georgians. One schoolteacher confirmed that "teachers are indeed being put under pressure" to use the new Russian-language materials. Another schoolteacher told RFE/RL's Georgian Service that authorities are "spying on us."

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10.

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Georgian Foreign Minister Holds Talks over OSCE, South Ossetia, Abkhazia

24.03.2009, 3news.co.nz

READ MORE: <http://www.3news.co.nz/defaultStrip.aspx?tabid=213&articleID=96731>

Georgia's foreign minister on Monday held talks with his Greek counterpart, Dora Bakoyannis, whose country is the current chair of the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). The talks in Georgia's capital, Tbilisi, focused on the mission of the OSCE observers in Georgia. At a news conference following her talks with Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze, Bakoyannis repeated her country's call for an extended mandate for the observers. She said that the situation on the ground in Georgia following the war with giant neighbour Russia was still "unstable", with "risks and challenges" that still needed to be addressed.

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11.

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Saakashvili under Pressure from EU Probe

23.03.2009, Der Spiegel

READ MORE: <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,druck-615160,00.html>

An EU enquiry investigating the events of last summer's conflict between Russia and Georgia is shining an unfavorable light on Mikheil Saakashvili. A secret document may prove that the Georgian president had planned a war of aggression in South Ossetia. Mamuka Kurashvili, the commander of the Georgian peacekeeping forces that had been stationed in South Ossetia before last summer's war, is no expert on the fine points of international law. But when the stout general, wearing a uniform festooned with medals, appeared before the television cameras of his native Georgia on Aug. 7, 2008, he proved to be surprisingly well-versed in the legal justification for the attack on the province, which had declared its independence from Georgia in the early 1990s.

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12.

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South Ossetia: KGB Backyard in the Caucasus

03.2009, Diplomatic Traffic

READ MORE: <http://www.diplomatictraffic.com/debate.asp?ID=706>

South Ossetia has been exposed to an extensive KGB presence. Russia is, according to its friendship treaty with South Ossetia, entitled to deploy its Border Guards there. These are part of the KGB's successor, the FSB (the Federal Security Service). They will not only be guarding the South Ossetian border but are also intended to conduct espionage against Georgia. Such intelligence capacities would be quite sufficient for a small country. Beyond this, however, South Ossetia has established its own KGB and even its own Foreign Intelligence Service, staffed also with Russian personnel, but which

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provide Moscow with deniability.

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#### **IV. MOLDOVA**

1.

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Moldova's Direction at Stake in Vote

03.04.2009, BBC

READ MORE: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7982157.stm>

Voters in Moldova go to the polls on 5 April to elect a new parliament, with questions over the country's relations with the EU and Russia, and with its breakaway region of Trans-Dniester, still unresolved. After eight years of unchallenged domination of the political scene, the Moldovan Communist Party - the only communist party wielding majority rule in any country in the world - is hoping to emerge the winner for a third consecutive term.

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#### **V. TURKEY**

1.

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Turkey's Local Elections Forces Reconsideration of Domestic and Foreign Policies

01.04.2009, Jamestown Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34784&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=2159788963](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34784&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=2159788963)

The mixed results of the Turkish local elections on March 29 raised questions over the future direction of the governing Justice and Development Party's (AKP) policies (*EDM*, March 31). The government is unlikely to call a snap election, but the relative decline in the AKP's share of the vote will have significant implications for Turkey's political landscape, compelling more recognition of public opinion and limiting the scope for assertive domestic and foreign policies.

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2.

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EU Assures Candidate Turkey of Membership Prospects

30.03.2009, TODAY'S ZAMAN

READ MORE: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=170917>

The European Union told its Balkan neighbors and Turkey over the weekend that they remain on track for membership and said it would open accession talks with Ankara on two more chapters before June. Speaking during an Informal Meeting of EU Ministers of Foreign Affairs (Gymnich) in Hluboka nad Vltavou, Czech Republic, the bloc's Enlargement Commissioner Olli Rehn said that talks on two chapters, taxation and social policy and employment, would be opened before June, when Sweden takes over presidency from the current holder, the Czech Republic.

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3.

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New Turkish TV Channel Broadcasts to Balkans, Central Asia, Caucasus

23.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1515300.html>

A new international television channel in Turkey has begun broadcasting in the languages of the Balkans, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, RFE/RL's correspondent reports from Istanbul. The new channel Avaz (Voice) will be broadcasting in Azerbaijani, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Turkish, Turkmen, and Uzbek. At a ceremony marking its debut, Turkish President Abdullah Gul said the new channel's operations would serve to strengthen ties between the Turkic states of the world.

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## VI. UKRAINE

### 1.

#### Yushchenko Says Ukraine, Russia Have Lost Much in Their Relations in Past 17 Years

03.04.2009, BSANNA News

READ MORE: <http://bsanna-news.ukrinform.ua/newsitem.php?id=8753&lang=en>

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko has said that Russia and Ukraine have lost much in their relations in the last 17 years. He said this in an exclusive interview with the Echo of Moscow radio on Thursday, an UKRINFORM correspondent in Russia reported. "I am confident that in the last 17 years, Russia and Ukraine have lost much in their relations. They lost much, because Russia has failed to play its dominating role and propose a modern policy for countries, especially its neighbors," Yushchenko said.

### 2.

#### Ukraine Vows Timely Payment for March Russia Gas

02.04.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1600881.html>

Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko has pledged that Ukraine's state energy company Naftogaz would make timely, full payment for gas shipments in March by Russian giant Gazprom. "I am pleased to announce that from February 1, payment for gas has been proceeding in timely fashion," Tymoshenko told a news conference after a cabinet meeting. "In January, payment was made in full and on time, as was done in February. For March, the same payment will be made as set down in the contract. There will no longer be any instability in Naftogaz's activity," she said.

Under a contract signed in January to end a dispute that led to an interruption of more than two weeks in supplies of Russian gas, Ukraine agreed to make payments for gas by the seventh day of the following month.

### 3.

#### Yushchenko Tymoshenko Bury the Hatchet over EU Overhaul

26.03.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/print.php?id=93581>

Political rivals Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko and Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko have decided to temporarily bury the hatchet and meet officials from the European Union, the World Bank, the European Investment Bank and energy companies in Brussels on March 23 in a conference to discuss a programme of political reforms and physical repairs to the former-Soviet state's giant gas network. "Both Tymoshenko and Yushchenko are coming; that shows the importance Ukraine is giving to this conference," Ferran Tarradellas Espuny, the spokesman for EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, told New Europe on March 20.

## VII. EASTERN PARTNERSHIP

### 1.

#### European Union's Eastern Partnership Plan Disappoints Ukraine

03.04.2009, Jamestown Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34796&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=13&cHash=f4e0bf5972](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34796&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=13&cHash=f4e0bf5972)

President Viktor Yushchenko was vexed when European Commission President Jose Barroso suggested that he and Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko should make peace for the sake of Ukraine's stability. "I don't want to get advice on what to do anywhere in Europe, this is humiliating," said Yushchenko, reacting to Barroso's peaceful initiative at the summit of the EU's right-of-center People's Party, which Yushchenko and Tymoshenko attended together in March ([www.glavred.info](http://www.glavred.info), March 19). Yushchenko's reaction betrayed the degree of disappointment with

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what is widely seen in Ukraine as betrayal by the European Union of the past-Orange Revolution hopes for faster integration into the EU.

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2.

#### Russia Criticizes EU Partnership for CIS States

26.03.2009, Georgian Daily

READ MORE: [http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=10774&Itemid=65](http://georgiandaily.com/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=10774&Itemid=65)

Russia's Foreign Ministry Thursday renewed criticism of the European Union's new "Eastern Partnership" with six ex-Soviet states, saying the scheme forced them to side with either Europe or Russia. "We still have questions regarding the added value of the 'Eastern Partnership'," ministry spokesman Andrei Nesterenko told journalists at a weekly briefing. He referred to a plan launched last week in Brussels designed to provide support to eastern European countries and also encourage reforms. The countries involved - Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine and possibly Belarus - "face an artificial choice: Are you with the European Union or are you with Russia?" said Nesterenko. "That can be applied to Belarus to the fullest extent," he said.

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3.

#### Moldova Unhappy with EU's Eastern Partnership Offer

25.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1516575.html>

A leading Moldovan official has said his country should have a different status than the other five Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) in the European Union's Eastern Partnership program. Talking to RFE/RL's Moldovan service, the chairman of Moldova's outgoing parliament, Marian Lupu, said that Moldova is "more advanced" in its European integration than Armenia or Azerbaijan and should not wait for EU admission until those countries are ready. Lupu, who is considered a possible future Moldovan president, said all six CIS members (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, and Ukraine) could not be expected to move toward the EU at the same speed and that Moldova will be ready much sooner than others.

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4.

#### The Eastern Partnership in Crisis

24.03.2009, The European Council on Foreign Relations

READ MORE: [http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary\\_popescu\\_eastern\\_crisis\\_euobserver/print](http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_popescu_eastern_crisis_euobserver/print)

The EU has recently approved the Eastern Partnership initiative, just at the moment when the global economic crisis is changing the rules of the game in the Eastern neighbourhood, and elsewhere. Both Russia and the EU will have fewer resources - money and political attention - to be too preoccupied with the neighbours. The Eastern Partnership is not in crisis, but will have to be implemented in times of crisis. So what is the likely impact of the crisis on the Eastern Partnership? The Eastern Partnership is an attempt to resuscitate the European neighbourhood policy and focus EU's political attention on the East. But now the economic crisis is stealing the show. Concentrated on itself, with the growing danger of protectionism inside the EU, and growing negative attitudes to "foreign" workers, many aspects of the European integration process, let alone the EU neighbourhood policy will come under strain.

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5.

#### Georgia Leader Upbeat about European Union's Eastern Partnership

23.03.2009, Kyiv Post.

READ MORE: <http://www.kyivpost.com/world/38023/print>

The president of Georgia expressed optimism on Saturday about his country being party to the European Union's Eastern Partnership project, which also extends to Ukraine, Belarus, Azerbaijan, Armenia, and Moldova. "This partnership is the first opportunity for Georgia to establish

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organizational and institutional relations with the European Union. This is something we didn't even dream of a year ago," Mikheil Saakashvili told reporters in Brussels. Being a party to Eastern Partnership would enable Georgia to have a free trade regime with the EU, he said. "It has also been announced that a visa-free regime will be introduced between the European Union and Eastern Partnership countries," Saakashvili said.

6.

#### Eastern Partnership Should Not Be Alternative to Ukraine's EU membership or EU Enlargement

23.03.2009, nrcu.gov.ua

READ MORE: <http://www.nrcu.gov.ua/index.php?id=148&listid=87513>

The Eastern Partnership should reflect an aspiration of every partner as regards the depth of integration with the European Union, Ukraine's Deputy Prime Minister Hryhoriy Nemyria said in Brussels during a meeting with his Czech counterpart Alexandr Vondra.

7.

#### EU's New Eastern Partnership Draws Ire from Russia

21.03.2009, Deutsche Welle World

READ MORE: [http://www.dw-world.de/popups/popup\\_printcontent/0,,4116554,00.html](http://www.dw-world.de/popups/popup_printcontent/0,,4116554,00.html)

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov criticized on Saturday the European Union's new partnership with six former Soviet states, suggesting the 27-member bloc was seeking to extend its own sphere of influence. "We are accused of trying to have spheres of influence," Lavrov said during the annual Brussels Forum in the Belgian capital. "What is the 'Eastern Partnership'? Is it a sphere of influence, including Belarus?"

8.

#### EU Assigns Funds and Staff to 'Eastern Partnership'

20.03.2009, EUobserver

READ MORE: <http://euobserver.com/24/27824?print=1>

With EU leaders putting €600 million in the pot for the Eastern Partnership, the European Commission is mulling over how to assign personnel to run the new project. "The means are there for this to start up, that's the most important thing," Czech EU presidency foreign minister Karl Schwarzenberg said in Brussels on Friday (20 March), after EU leaders approved the policy at a meeting dominated by multibillion euro plans on the economy.

## VIII. BSEC

1.

#### The Extraordinary Meeting of the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials

31.03.2009, mfa.gov.ge

READ MORE: [http://www.mfa.gov.ge/print.php?gg=1&sec\\_id=527&info\\_id=9973&lang\\_id=ENG](http://www.mfa.gov.ge/print.php?gg=1&sec_id=527&info_id=9973&lang_id=ENG)

The Extraordinary Meeting of the BSEC Committee of Senior Officials was held in Istanbul on March 31, 2009. The main goal of the Meeting was the appointments in the BSEC Permanent International Secretariat (PERMIS). According to the results of the elections held during the above meeting, it was decided by 2/3 of the votes to submit for the approval to the BSEC Council of Ministers of Foreign Affairs the following draft decisions:

2.

#### BSEC Transport Ministers to Meet in Armenia

24.03.2009, Public Radio of Armenia

READ MORE: <http://www.armradio.am/news/print.php?part=eco&id=14633>

The meeting of the Ministers of Transport of the member states of the Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC) Organization will take place in Yerevan from 25 to 27 March. Transport Ministers of Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Serbia, Turkey and Ukraine are

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expected to attend the meeting, Public Relations Department of RA Ministry of Transport and Communication reported.

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## **IX. BLACK SEA**

1.

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US Wheat Losing Ground to Russia in ME

31.03.2009, Trade Arabia

READ MORE: <http://www.tradearabia.com/news/newsprint.asp?Article=158910&Sn=FOOD>

The retreat of US wheat from lucrative Mideast markets should continue this year as Arab governments look to low-cost Russian grain, participants at a conference said. Once dominant in the Middle East, US wheat has lost ground over the past year as a bumper crop in Russia, cheaper freight costs, and a lower rouble make Russian wheat more attractive. Russia is poised to export a record 19.5 million tonnes of grain this year, and roughly 70 percent of it likely headed to the Middle East and North Africa, Svetlana Sinkovskaya, an analyst at APK Inform, said. With a stronger dollar hurting US wheat exports, Middle Eastern grain trading companies at a conference in the Red Sea resort town of Sharm el- Sheikh say they will buy the vast majority of their wheat this year from Russia and other countries in the Black Sea region.

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2.

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International Conference The Baltic Sea – Black Sea

30.03.2009, Financiarul

READ MORE: <http://www.financiarul.ro/2009/03/30/international-conference-the-baltic-sea-black-sea/>

The international conference "Moving forward in the Baltic Black Sea region after the war in Georgia and in the midst of the global economic recession" took place at the end of this week, at "Alexandru Ioan Cuza" University in Iasi (north-east). Within the event, organized by Romania's Institute for Political Sciences and International Relations in cooperation with Moldova Foundation and the Black Sea - Baltic Sea Initiative (USA), a series of topics were debated pertaining to the separatist post-soviet conflicts in the Baltic Sea - Black Sea region, with Republic of Moldova as an example, as well as finding solutions through confidence building measures, internationalization of the peacekeeping format, democratization.

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3.

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Cairo 3A Wheat Imports to Rise 50pc

30.03.2009, Trade Arabia

READ MORE: <http://www.tradearabia.com/news/newsprint.asp?Article=158814&Sn=FOOD>

Egyptian grain firm Cairo 3A will import up to 50 per cent more wheat in 2009 on increased demand from Syria and Saudi Arabia, its chief executive said on Monday. Total imports at Cairo 3A, one of Egypt's largest wheat importers, could be 1.5 million tonnes this year, Ayman el-Gamil told reporters at a grains conference. 'This is because of higher demand in Saudi Arabia and in Syria due to the bad crop,' he said. Cairo 3A imports wheat, mostly from the Black Sea area, and sells it throughout the Middle East region. Egypt is the world's largest importer of wheat. Saudi Arabia has said it would buy wheat on the international market this year after its harvest was reduced. Syria's crop has been hit by a drought. Cairo 3A would buy between 60 to 70 percent of the wheat from countries in the Black Sea region because of lower prices, Gamil said, with the rest from countries including the United States.

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4.

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Black Sea Euroregion and Energy Efficiency

28.03.2009, Financiarul

READ MORE: <http://www.financiarul.ro/2009/03/28/black-sea-euroregion-and-energy-efficiency/>

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President of Galati County Council (east) Eugen Chebac, who attends the works of the General Assembly of the "Black Sea Euroregion" Association (BSER), in Varna - Bulgaria, told on Thursday that the second day of the assembly's works was reserved for debates on energy issues. Members of this forum discussed on the margin of the recent policies for energy management, as well as about the politics to promote renewable energy in the European Union (EU) and in the Black Sea region. At the end of the Black Sea Euroregion meeting a document was adopted called "Position document of the Black Sea Euroregion on energy efficiency".

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5.

#### Black Sea Euroregion Has First Investment Projects

26.03.2009, Financiarul

READ MORE: <http://www.financiarul.ro/2009/03/26/black-sea-euroregion-has-first-investment-projects/>

The General Assembly of the Black Sea Euroregion (BSE) approved, on Wednesday, four investment projects on tourism, cultural traditions and environment protection, in its second meeting in Varna, Bulgaria, chaired by Constanta County Council president Nicusor Constantinescu. 'First, it deals with the project called Black Sea Cruise whose goal is to set up a passenger cruise line to link the Romanian and the Bulgarian ports and harbours, and to improve the tourist services in the cross border area, for a start, and it will be later extended towards other travel destinations, and second with the Black Sea Traditions and Culture project, whose main goal is to preserve and promote Romania's cultural heritage, observing the cultural diversity in the Black Sea basin.

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6.

#### Poison Gas May Produce Clean Energy

24.03.2009, National Geographic News

READ MORE: <http://news.nationalgeographic.com/news/pf/43129087.html>

The world's largest dead zone may be chock-full of life-sustaining energy, a new study says. The Black Sea, an isolated inland sea in Eastern Europe, has been devoid of life – except for a species of hardy "extremophile" bacteria – or decades due to pollution carried by rivers. The influx of toxic waste from 17 European countries has contributed to a decline in oxygen in the water. This in turn has created high concentrations of hydrogen sulfide gas in the sea.

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7.

#### GÉANT Academic Internet Links to Black Sea Region –Frequently Asked Questions

23.03.2009, eGov monitor

READ MORE: <http://www.egovmonitor.com/node/24110/print>

GÉANT expands into Southern Caucasus – this feature through FAQs provide a detailed overview of the project. What is the Black Sea Interconnection? The Black Sea Interconnection is an academic internet that links national research and education internet networks across the Southern Caucasus. As an extension of GÉANT, the most advanced international network in the world, it will be used by users in 377 universities and research institutes in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia connected via their national networks. This new link is a quantum-leap in terms of performance and international connectivity made available to the science and research community in the Southern Caucasus (from a few megabit per second at best to a stable, state-of-the art infrastructure of tens to hundred megabits per second).

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## X. CAUCASUS

1.

### Saakashvili on Turkish-Proposed Caucasus Stability Platform

22.03.2009, Civil Georgia,

READ MORE: [http://www.civil.ge/eng/\\_print.php?id=20593](http://www.civil.ge/eng/_print.php?id=20593)

President Saakashvili said the Turkish-proposed Caucasus Stability and Cooperation Platform had no “clear shape” yet and consultations were on their “very early stage.” “We always welcome multilateral mechanism,” Saakashvili said while speaking at a news conference on a sideline of a high-profile Brussels Forum late on March 21. He, however, also added: “I think we should not create any mechanism that would exclude European Union or other big players in the region.” “I think there should not be exclusive regional mechanisms; but I think any complementarity to already existing European Union structures, open to any positive actors in the region will be welcome[d].”

## XI. ENERGY

1.

### The Gas Pipeline Running From Georgia to Ukraine Throughout the Black Sea Bed Promised to Be Built for Three Years

04.04.2009, Azerbaijan Business Center

READ MORE: <http://abc.az/eng/news/main/33533.html>

Georgian Minister of Energy Alexander Khetaguri and White Stream Pipeline Co. Ltd Director General Roberto Pirani signed the Memo on White Stream Gas Pipeline yesterday in Tbilisi. Alexander Khetaguri said the document reflects sides’ will for cooperation in forming the south gas corridor representing interests of Georgia and the EU countries. “The project is aimed at providing European energy security by diversifying the routes and energy sources,” Khetaguri stated.

2.

### Major Russian Oil Company Secretly Buys into Hungary's MOL

03.04.09, Jamestown Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34794&cHash=704d80f7b3](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34794&cHash=704d80f7b3)

The Kremlin-connected oil company Surgut Neftegaz has surreptitiously bought Austrian OMV's entire 21.2 percent stake in Hungary's MOL Oil and Gas Company. European Union authorities, the privately owned MOL, and Hungary are aghast at Surgut's move and OMV's collusion with it. Budapest and Brussels were kept in the dark until Surgut and OMV announced the accomplished fact on March 30 on their websites and through the mass media. This move -if approved by EU regulators and the Hungarian government- would turn Surgut into the single largest shareholder in MOL, with a potential to further increase that stake. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin is keenly interested in Surgut. According to "market rumors" Putin is believed to hold as much as 37 percent of the company's stock, directly or through intermediaries such as Gennadi Timchenko's Gunvor company (Interfax, March 30; *Wirtschaftsblatt*, March 31). Surgut's ownership structure includes 42 percent in treasury shares held by an undisclosed company or companies, with the remainder in an obscure system of cross-shareholdings (*Vedomosti*, *Wall Street Journal*, March 31).

3.

### Hungary Blindsided by Russian Entry into Oil and Gas Company

03.04.2009, Jamestown Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34795&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=ff06f1164b](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34795&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=ff06f1164b)

Surgut Neftegaz appears to have vastly overpaid for OMV's stake in MOL. The Russian company

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bought the 21.2 percent stake for 1.4 billion Euros on March 30 on the Budapest stock exchange. The average purchase price per share was 19,200 Hungarian Forint, almost double the closing price of 9,940 Forint on March 27 (Austrian Press Agency, *Wirtschaftsblatt*, Bloomberg, March 30, 31). No company accountable to its shareholders would or could have deliberately paid double the market price. A Russian state-connected, company lacking in transparency could do this, however. Overpaying to this extent reflects intentions either to prepare a takeover attempt against MOL by Surgut itself or to re-sell part of Surgut's overpriced stake to other Russian state connected entities (Rosneft and Lukoil have been mentioned in this regard). Such a resale could more than double Russian voting power in MOL, under the company's existing articles of association. Market analysts also mention the possibility that the overpayment is a Russian "incentive" to Austrians to support the South Stream project --the rival to Nabucco. The Kremlin wants to collect the Austrian government and OMV, along with other governments and companies, for signing agreements on South Stream at a summit within the next few weeks.

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4.

Norway's Statoil May Bypass Turkey, Imperiling Nabucco Pipeline

02.04.2009, Bloomberg

READ MORE: <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601087&sid=aGW4JZfWm1BM&refer=home>

StatoilHydro ASA, Norway's biggest oil and gas producer, is considering cutting Turkey out of plans to ship natural gas from Azerbaijan to Europe. As Turkey seeks more favorable terms and greater control of energy that flows through its territory, StatoilHydro said it's weighing other options for shipping gas from the second phase of the Shah Deniz field in Azerbaijan. Bypassing Turkey would be a blow for the Nabucco pipeline to a European hub in Austria. "The big challenge is how you get the gas to market and issues related to Turkey," said Peter Mellbye, head of international exploration and production at the Stavanger-based company, at a briefing yesterday in London. Routes across Iran or Russia are possibilities, he said. "We will go for the alternative that gives us the best economic result."

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5.

Azerbaijan, Georgia Promote White Stream Hopes

02.04.2009, eurasianet.org

READ MORE: [http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/news/articles/eav040209b\\_pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/news/articles/eav040209b_pr.shtml)

Energy officials from Georgia and Azerbaijan, along with other stakeholders in a proposed trans-Black Sea natural gas pipeline, sought to rally international support for the project during a Tbilisi conference on April 2. The project, known as White Stream, envisages the construction of a new conduit from the existing South Caucasus Pipeline to the Georgian hamlet of Supsa, near the Black Sea coast. From Supsa, a 650-kilometer-long pipeline would pass under the Black Sea's seabed to deliver gas to the Romanian port of Constanta. Another option calls for the pipeline to come onshore at Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula and then proceed under the sea to Romania and further into Europe.

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6.

Russian-Azeri Gas Deal a Blow to Nabucco

01.04.2009, EurActiv.com

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/russian-azeri-gas-deal-blow-nabucco/article-180852?Ref=RSS>

Gazprom and the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan last week signed a memorandum of understanding for long-term supplies of Central Asian gas to Russia at market prices, further undermining the EU's favoured Nabucco pipeline, analysts said.

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7.

#### Emerging European Energy

01.04.2009, BUSINESS NEW EUROPE

READ MORE: [http://businessneweurope.eu/story1535/Emerging\\_European\\_energy](http://businessneweurope.eu/story1535/Emerging_European_energy)

When it comes to energy, nothing focuses the minds of Central and Eastern European governments like a gas crisis between Ukraine and Russia. As the two countries feuded yet again in January over unpaid gas bills, Europe shivered, and talk once again turned to how to break the continent's dependency on Russian oil and gas. Along with the myriad of options touted to reduce this dependency, such as going nuclear or "green", was the possibility of more fully exploiting the region's own energy reserves.

8.

#### Azerbaijan and Russia Ink Tentative Gas Agreement

01.04.2009, Jamestown Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34782&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=f59e0bb4f6](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34782&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=f59e0bb4f6)

On March 27 Russia's state owned gas monopoly Gazprom signed a memorandum of understanding with Azerbaijan's state-owned oil and Gas Company, SOCAR, which would provide for deliveries of Azeri gas to Russia starting in January 2010. The report in the Russian newspaper Vedomosti on March 30 did not disclose any details, merely confirming that Gazprom Chief Executive Alexei Miller signed the memorandum in Moscow with the president of SOCAR, Rovnag Abdullayev, and that the two sides will begin talks on importing Azeri gas in 2010. Vedomosti mooted that the deal was part of Gazprom's plans to buy all the export gas produced in Central Asia and the South Caucasus in order to terminate the pro-Western Nabucco pipeline project, intended to supply the EU with non-Russian gas via a new route by-passing Russian territory.

9.

#### Ageing Pipes Blamed for Moldova Gas Blast

01.04.2009, euronews

READ MORE: <http://www.euronews.net/2009/04/01/ageing-pipes-blamed-for-moldova-gas-blast/>

Ageing and poorly-maintained equipment is being blamed for a gas pipeline explosion which severely cut supplies to eastern Europe. It happened in the separatist eastern Transdnestr region of Moldova. Initial inquiries ruled out terrorism, but said the pipe is more than 30 years old and in poor condition.

10.

#### Energy Games

31.03.2009, Financial Times

READ MORE: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/3ca859ee-1e1b-11de-830b-00144feabdc0.html>

Just when it seemed as if the European Union was finally getting its act together on a common energy policy, along comes a member state and throws a bucket of sand into the machine. This time it is Austria. OMV, the energy group where the state has a big stake, has sold a €1.2bn holding in Mol, Hungary's oil and gas company, to Surgutneftegaz, a Russian oil group with close Kremlin ties. OMV did well for its shareholders, extricating itself from a failed takeover bid for Mol and selling the €1.2bn block at double the market price. But the deal comes at some cost to EU energy solidarity. Surgutneftegaz's debut in the EU energy market will have little impact on day-to-day business. Its Mol stake will not give it any operational say, nor does the Russian group have plans to bid for Mol for the "foreseeable future".

11.

#### Does Gazprom Deal Mean No Azerbaijani Gas for Nabucco?

31.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1565375.html>

Azerbaijani natural gas may be headed to Russia instead of the European Union-backed Nabucco pipeline project. That's the way it looks to some following a visit by the head of the State Oil Company of the Azerbaijani Republic (SOCAR) to Gazprom headquarters in Moscow on March 27. SOCAR chief Rovnag Abdullayev met with Gazprom chief Aleksei Miller and the two signed a memorandum of understanding for supplying Azerbaijani gas to the Russian company. According to Gazprom's website, the two sides agreed to start negotiations for Gazprom's purchase of Azerbaijani gas beginning in January 2010. Significantly, there was no mention of the volume of gas to be sold. According to what information was available, the gas may be supplied mainly to Russia's southern republic of Dagestan.

12.

#### German Enertrag Plans 660 MW Wind Farms in Bulgaria

30.03.2009, REUTERS

READ MORE: <http://www.forbes.com/feeds/afx/2009/03/30/afx6228116.html>

Germany's Enertrag plans to invest one billion euros (\$1.32 billion) to build three wind energy parks in Bulgaria, its Bulgarian unit said on Monday. The new wind farms, with a planned total capacity of 660 megawatts (MW), will be set up near the town of Dobrich, some 510 km east of Sofia and near the Black Sea coast, Denitsa Nozharova, manager of Enertrag Balkan, told Reuters.

13.

#### Russian Gas Offensive Tests EU Energy Plans

30.03.2009, Jamestown Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34773&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=55542eda75](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34773&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=55542eda75)

The intensity of energy-political conflicts in Europe has been subsiding since the Russian-Ukrainian "gas war" in January, but last week Moscow launched a new offensive aiming at three crucial targets: Turkey, Turkmenistan and Ukraine. Leaders of major European states paid scant attention, focusing instead on financial matters on the eve of the G20 summit, and EU policy-making was disrupted by the collapse of the Czech government holding the rotating presidency. Washington was busy polishing its new agenda on Russia and could not grasp the simple point that the lack of energy content reduced the carefully planned Obama - Medvedev "look-in-the-eye" to a public relations exercise, at least as far as Moscow is concerned (RIA-Novosti, March 28). Average European gas export prices will drop from April 1 to just half its record level in the last quarter of 2008, and Gazprom's revenues on the EU market are expected to shrink to \$40 billion compared with \$73 billion in 2008, but for Moscow there is still no business like the gas business (RIA-Novosti 23 March).

14.

#### Putin Warns EU over Ukraine Pipeline Deal

30.03.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/putin-warns-eu-ukraine-pipeline-deal/article-180577>

Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin threatened yesterday (23 March) to review his country's ties with the EU after a European Commission plan to modernise Ukraine's gas pipeline system failed to include Moscow. In Moscow, Putin called the EU-Ukraine gas pipeline modernisation plan, announced yesterday (23 March), "ill considered and unprofessional". Hours before in Brussels, Russian Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko also blasted the agreement, signed earlier that day between Ukraine and EU representatives, and even warned that the plan may backfire, with serious

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consequences for European consumers.

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15.

Russia, Turkmenistan Plan New Gas Deals

30.03.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/print.php?id=93750>

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his visiting Turkmen counterpart Gurbanguly Berdymukhammedov discussed on March 25 in Moscow energy cooperation between their two countries, including the Caspian pipeline. Medvedev said that Moscow and Ashgabat will soon sign new agreements on natural gas production and transportation, RIA Novosti reported. "We studied in detail cooperation in the fuel and energy sector, including progress in the implementation of very important accords, such as the intergovernmental agreement on the Caspian pipeline, and other projects," Medvedev said after talks in Moscow with Berdymukhammedov. Medvedev said the countries were already

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16.

Is there Life Left in the Nabucco Project?

30.03.2009, Caucasus Update

READ MORE: [http://cria-online.org/CU\\_-\\_file\\_-\\_article\\_-\\_sid\\_-\\_28.html](http://cria-online.org/CU_-_file_-_article_-_sid_-_28.html)

This question, which has been asked many, many times before, has taken on a new urgency in the last few weeks. The pressure is on for the transnational gas project, which would transport gas from the Caspian region to the heart of Europe. For a number of reasons, the project looks more significant and more jeopardised than at any time in its long gestation. Nabucco lies on the intersection between the two biggest problems facing the Western world in 2009: firstly, the financial crisis, which is shaking Western economies to their foundations and opening up cracks within the EU, Nabucco's intended customer; and, secondly, the tangled geopolitical web which involves America, Russia, Europe, Iran, and Afghanistan. Its position on this intersection poses major risks to Nabucco.

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17.

Everybody Knows the Gas is Coming, Everybody Knows the Deal Was Fixed

30.03.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/print.php?id=93763>

The European Commission needs to clear up a misunderstanding that angered Russia after the latter was left out of a gas transit deal between Ukraine and the EU last week, a leading Russian energy economist told New Europe. EU and Ukrainian leaders pledged to work together on reforming Ukraine's gas transit system as Russia accused the two sides of working behind its back. "Even from a diplomatic point of view it was not polite," said Tatiana Mitrova, head of Moscow's Centre for International Energy Markets Studies at the Russian Academy of Sciences.

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18.

EU Strikes Deal on Energy Market Liberalization

30.03.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/eu-strikes-deal-energy-market-liberalisation/article-180603?Ref=RSS>

The European Parliament and the Czech EU Presidency reached a long-awaited agreement on the third energy package late on Monday night (23 March), strengthening consumer rights at the expense of full ownership unbundling. The informal compromise deal, negotiated between MEPs in the Parliament's industry committee and the Czech EU Presidency, still needs approval by the full EU assembly and member-state representatives in the Council of Ministers. The deal was announced yesterday (24 March) after negotiations had dragged on due to substantially different views, notably on the issue of "unbundling".

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19.

Russia Will Be Ukraine's Strategic Gas Partner - President's Secretariat

27.03.2009, BSANNA News

READ MORE: <http://bsanna-news.ukrinform.ua/newsitem.php?id=8683&lang=en>

The Russian Federation has been and will remain a strategic partner of both Ukraine and the European Union, particularly, as regards natural gas deliveries, says Bohdan Sokolovskyi, the President's commissioner for international energy security issues. Commenting Russia's reaction to the March 23 international investment conference in Brussels, Sokolovskyi reminded that the Russian delegation was invited and took part in the event, which points to its interest in modernization of Ukraine's gas transportation system. Beside that, Russia was informed about the course of preparations for the conference, which lasted almost three years, the presidential press service reported.

20.

Opening Salvos of a New Gas War: Russia Versus the EU and Ukraine

27.03.2009, Jamestown Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34764&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=20f2059ddb](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34764&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=20f2059ddb)

The Ukrainian - EU agreement on renovating the main Ukrainian gas trunk pipeline signed in Brussels on March 23 was greeted with a virulent reaction from Moscow. Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, who runs his country's gas sector with an iron fist, threatened to "review" existing gas supply contracts and prices with EU states and Ukraine (UNIAN press agency March 24) as well as relations with the EU and Ukraine. The ostensible reason for Putin's reaction was that Russia was not included in the deal.

21.

Russia Raps EU over Ukraine Gas Talks

26.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1562474.html>

Russia sees a pledge by the European Union to help modernize Ukraine's gas infrastructure as "an unfriendly act" against Moscow, the Russian Foreign Ministry has said. Brussels signed a cooperation agreement with Ukraine on modernizing the system this week, but Russia, which exports most of its gas through Ukraine's pipelines, was angry at being excluded from the talks. The spat over Ukraine's pipeline system has revived fears of a repeat of a January gas dispute between Russia and Ukraine, when major EU customers were left without gas for nearly two weeks in the dead of winter.

22.

Petrobras Contracts Ocean Rig for Black Sea Drilling Program

26.03.2009, Offshore

READ MORE: [http://www.offshore-mag.com/display\\_article/357340/120/ARTCL/none/DRLCM/1/Petrobras-contracts-Ocean-Rig-for-Black-Sea-drilling-program/](http://www.offshore-mag.com/display_article/357340/120/ARTCL/none/DRLCM/1/Petrobras-contracts-Ocean-Rig-for-Black-Sea-drilling-program/)

Ocean Rig ASA has received a Letter of Award from Petrobras for a three-year employment contract for exploration drilling in the Black Sea. The three-year term includes mobilization, disassembly, and reassembly of the derrick structure for transit through the Bosphorus Strait. The contract is expected to begin in direct continuation from the company's current contract with Shell. The contract value is approximately \$630 million including an estimated 60 days of mobilization, disassembly/reassembly of the derrick structure, and an incentive bonus of 8%.

23.

Czech Energy Expert Says Europe, Not Russia, Should Call the Shots

26.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1562514.html>

2009 has been a busy year so far for Vaclav Bartuska, the Czech ambassador-at-large for energy security. With his country currently holding the EU's rotating six-month presidency, it was Bartuska who was tasked with heading efforts in January to mediate in a dispute between Russia and Ukraine that caused a cutoff in natural gas supplies to EU countries. Bartuska is a hawk when it comes to the EU's energy independence. By his own admission, his bluntness on the issue has often been poorly received by many in the EU and elsewhere.

24.

Russia Can Participate in Modernizing Ukrainian Gas Transit System: Ukraine PM

24.03.2009, XINHUANET.COM

READ MORE: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/25/content\\_11066759.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/25/content_11066759.htm)

Russia can participate in modernizing Ukrainian gas transit system, Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko said here on Tuesday. Ukraine signed a joint declaration on its gas transit system modernization with the European Commission and other parties at Monday's conference in Brussels. Russian officials were present at the conference, but complained that they were not included in the discussions on the document. Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Tuesday that Russia decided to put off government consultations with Ukraine until its natural gas pipeline declaration with the EU is clarified.

25.

Nabucco – South Stream 1-0

23.03.2009. New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/print.php?id=93571>

Despite efforts to the contrary, European Union leaders in Brussels have given final approval to 200 million of investment in the controversial Nabucco project, mentioning the gas pipeline by name. This is a victory for the European Commission, which now hopes that these funds will be used to raise more money to help construct the pipeline, which will carry Caspian natural gas to Europe, lessening EU's dependence on Russia. The spokesman for EU Energy Commissioner Andris Piebalgs, Ferran Tarradellas Espuny, could not hide his enthusiasm. "Nabucco is being done. We received the money," he told New Europe late on March 20. London based HSBC analyst Paul Spedding noted that 200 million is "only a drop in the ocean."

26.

Speech of President Barroso at Conference on Modernisation of Ukraine's Gas Transit System

23.03.2009, EU

READ MORE: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/09/138&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

President Yuschenko, Prime Minister Tymoshenko, Ministers, ladies and gentlemen. Today's conference comes at a time when our relations with Ukraine are closer than they have ever been. And I am glad to say that at the EU-Ukraine Summit in Paris last year, we made a firm commitment to develop our co-operation still further. We welcomed the fact that the new agreement between the European Union and Ukraine will be an Association Agreement, including a deep and comprehensive free trade area and a strong degree of regulatory approximation.

27.

Benita Ferrero-Waldner "EU-Ukraine: Partners for Securing Gas to Europe"

23.03.2009, EU

READ MORE: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=SPEECH/09/137>

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Welcome to Brussels.

Today's conference is the fruit of many years of good cooperation between the EU and Ukraine in the field of energy. I hope it will open the way to a new chapter that will serve all our interests. I am

delighted that in this room we have energy producers, transit countries and consumers, international financial institutions, the private sector and EU Member States, and many friends from outside the EU. A warm welcome to you all, and many thanks for making the effort to be here. Before we start our work, let's remind ourselves of our goal for today. Ukraine's gas transit system provides an important physical link between Russia, Ukraine and the EU, which is crucial to the EU's energy security. However, this infrastructure is now in need of modernisation.

28.

Ukraine 'Committed' to Clarity on Energy

22.03.2009, EuropeanVoice

READ MORE: <http://www.europeanvoice.com/article/2009/03/ukraine-%E2%80%98committed'-to-clarity-on-energy/64380.aspx>

EU makes transparency the quid pro quo for money as investors meet to plan modernisation of Ukraine's gas network. The European Commission expects "total transparency" from Ukraine about gas in transit in return for a major international investment programme to upgrade the country's pipelines, according to EU officials.

"Firm commitments" to that end are contained in a joint declaration to be signed during an investment conference in Brussels on 23 March. The two sides hope that upgrading Ukraine's transit system and integrating it into central European networks will help avoid a gas crisis of the kind that led to major disruptions in gas deliveries from Russia and central Asia via Ukraine in 2006 and again this January.

29.

Joint Statement Following the working Meeting of the Coordinators of the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue

20.03.2009, EU

READ MORE: <http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=IP/09/456&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

A working meeting of the coordinators of the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue, Minister of Energy of the Russian Federation Sergey Shmatko and Member of the European Commission responsible for energy Andris Piebalgs, took place on 20 March 2009 in Moscow under the chairmanship of Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Igor Sechin.

30.

Oil, Gas and International Insecurity: Tackling a Self-Fuelling Fire

03.2009, Chathamhouse

READ MORE: <http://www.chathamhouse.org.uk/publications/papers/view/-/id/728/>

Summary points

In the United States, European Union and Asia, fears about dependence on oil and gas imports from unstable regions have become a major theme of political debate. This paper provides a high-level and historical perspective on this complex issue.

Dependence on oil and gas imports raises real economic- and political-security issues for many countries. Neither the global economic crisis nor climate change policies – both of which look set to restrain oil and gas demand – will solve the problem entirely. In fact, over the next few decades it is likely to become worse.

The reason why oil and gas production is associated with international insecurity is not just that some energy-rich regions happen to be unstable or happen to be politically at odds with energy-importing countries. The ways in which companies and governments have exploited these fuel sources over time have themselves often sown the seeds of instability, distrust and disagreement within and between countries.

Current policy responses to this challenge are focused on broad-brush measures such as reducing

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energy demand and strengthening military or diplomatic alliances with oil-producing regions. Comparatively little attention is devoted to the 'self-fuelling fire' that underlies the problem. More ambitious initiatives in this area are urgently needed.

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31.

Help Wanted: Energy Coordinator

Spring 2009, IP (Internationale Politik – Global Edition)

READ MORE: <http://www.ip-global.org/archiv/2009/spring2009/help-wanted--energy-coordinator.html>

A new global energy framework is long overdue. The Obama administration could well be interested in teaming up with the European Union to create one. In addition to enhancing security, it would also spur economic growth and curb global warming.

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## **XII. FROZEN CONFLICTS**

1.

Romania: Basescu: NATO has Reconfirmed its Position on Preserving the Integrity of Moldova

04.04.2009, Romania

READ MORE: <http://www.roumanie.com/romania-news-1001014.html>

NATO has reconfirmed its position for preserving the territorial integrity of the Republic of Moldova, at its summit meeting of Strasbourg, Kehl and Baden-Baden, Romanian President Traian Basescu, who attended the summit meeting, said on Saturday. Basescu also said that compared with the 2008 Bucharest NATO Summit, the 2009 summit witnessed as a novelty the political involvement of the Alliance in the conflict between Russia and Georgia, the conflict in the Republic of Moldova and the conflicts in the Caucasus.

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2.

OSCE Urges Chisinau and Tiraspol to Talk to Ensure that Voters in Disputed Area Can Participate in Elections

03.04.2009, OSCE

READ MORE: <http://www.osce.org/item/37084.html?print=1>

The central authorities in Chisinau and the regional authorities in Tiraspol must hold talks to find an understanding that enables Moldovan citizens in Corjova to exercise their right to vote, the OSCE Chairperson-in-Office's Special Co-ordinator, Petros Efthymiou, and the Head of the OSCE Mission to Moldova, Ambassador Philip Remler, said today. "We continue to urge both sides to find a mutual understanding to allow voters from Corjova to exercise freely their right to vote in the Moldovan Parliamentary Elections this Sunday," Efthymiou and Remler said in a joint statement in Chisinau. "We urge them to avoid incidents that can also have consequences beyond the election process."

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3.

OSCE: Armenia – Azerbaijan Frontline Increasingly Volatile

01.04.2009, Eurasianet

READ MORE: [http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/news/articles/eav040109b\\_pr.shtml](http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/news/articles/eav040109b_pr.shtml)

Monitors for the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) are expressing concern about an increase in ceasefire violations along the Azerbaijan - Armenia frontline. Andrzej Kasprzyk, the personal representative of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office, told an April 1 news conference that area residents are suffering from the growing violence. He did not elaborate on reasons why firefights and artillery duels have been on the rise lately. But he noted that the security situation has slightly worsened since 2008.

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4.

Moldovan President Suspends Deal with Moscow and Tiraspol

31.03.2009, Jamestown Eurasia daily Monitor

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READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34778&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=13&cHash=51c004107a](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34778&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=13&cHash=51c004107a)

Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin has pulled back at the last moment from the brink of a separate deal to put Russia in the driving seat of negotiations on Transnistria. The March 18 joint declaration by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Voronin, and Transnistria leader Igor Smirnov triggered that process. A meeting of Voronin and Smirnov in Tiraspol on March 25 was scheduled as next in the sequence, potentially leading to the presentation of a *fait accompli* by Moscow to the Western negotiators in the 5+2 format.

5.

No Incident During OSCE Monitoring Along Contact Line Between Azerbaijani, Armenian Armies  
31.03.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://news-en.trend.az/print.shtml?newsid=1447972&lang=en>

No incident occurred during a monitoring along contact line between Azerbaijani and Armenian armies near Mazam village of Azerbaijan's Gazakh region after the mandate of the OSCE Chairman-in-Office on March 31. The monitoring was held on the Azerbaijani side by OSCE Chairman-in-Office Personal Representative field assistants Pieter Ki and Irji Aberli. The monitoring was held on the opposite side by OSCE Chairman-in-Office Personal Representative Anjey Kasprshik's field assistants Imre Palatinus, Vladimir Chountulov and Jaslan Nurtazin. The conflict between the two South Caucasus countries began in 1988 when Armenia made territorial claims against Azerbaijan. Azerbaijan lost all of Nagorno-Karabakh except for Shusha and Khojali in December 1991. In 1992-93, Armenian armed forces occupied Shusha, Khojali and 7 districts surrounding Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijan and Armenia signed a ceasefire in 1994. The co-chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group - Russia, France, and the U.S. - are currently holding the peace negotiations. Gazakh region administrative body head Rauf Huseynov said he met with OSCE Chairman-in-Office Personal Representative field assistants Pieter Ki and Irji Aberli. He said during the meeting that the local population suffers from ceasefire violation specifically in spring and autumn cultivation time.

6.

Moscow, Tiraspol Sideline the West from Negotiations on Transnistria Conflict  
31.03.2009, Jamestown Eurasia daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34777&cHash=c6604be25e](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34777&cHash=c6604be25e)

The joint declaration by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin, and Transnistria leader Igor Smirnov, signed in Moscow on March 18 (*EDM*, March 20, 25, 26), is serving Smirnov well as a negotiation-breaker. Citing points in that declaration, Smirnov is now calling openly for marginalizing or bypassing Western participants in the negotiating process, which Moscow and Tiraspol -or the latter fronting for the former- had already brought to a deadlock.

7.

OSCE to Monitor Contact Line between Azerbaijani, Armenian Armies  
29.03.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://news-en.trend.az/print.shtml?newsid=1446640&lang=en>

Monitoring will be held on the contact line between Armenian and Azerbaijani armed forces near Mazam village of Azerbaijan's Gazakh region on March 31. The monitoring will be held under a mandate of the OSCE chairman special envoy. The monitoring will be held on the Azerbaijani side by OSCE Chairman-in-Office Personal Representative field assistants Pieter Ki and Irji Aberli. The monitoring will be held on the opposite side, which the international community recognizes as Azerbaijani territory, by OSCE Chairman-in-Office Personal Representative Anjey Kasprshik's field assistants Imre Palatinus, Vladimir Chountulov and Jaslan Nurtazin.

8.

Moldova's President Surrenders Long-Held Positions in Joint Declaration with Medvedev  
26.03.2009, Jamestown Eurasia daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no\\_cache=1&tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34761&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=a5e0f75416](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34761&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=7&cHash=a5e0f75416)

Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin's signature on the March 18 Moscow declaration, with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and Transnistria's leader Igor Smirnov (Interfax, Russian MFA website, March 18, 19; *EDM*, March 20, 25), amounts to a surrender in the final days of Voronin's presidency. This political document has solidified Russia's military presence and increased Russia's scope for influencing Moldova's policy choices through manipulation of the Transnistria conflict. These are the short-term effects and may extend beyond the short term unless a post-Voronin government disavows this move.

9.

Russia Moving from Conflict-Solving to Conquest-Guaranteeing in Transnistria  
25.03.2009, Jamestown Eurasia daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=34751&tx\\_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=101816fb67](http://www.jamestown.org/programs/edm/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=34751&tx_ttnews%5BbackPid%5D=27&cHash=101816fb67)

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev's March 18 meeting with Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin and Transnistria leader Igor Smirnov (*EDM*, March 20) was designed to mark a qualitatively new stage in the long-running negotiations on the Transnistria conflict. While continuing to block the conflict resolution negotiations, Russia is trying to move the process toward a formula to guarantee Russian control of this part of Moldova, with troops in place. Moldova's general elections, which are scheduled for April 5, give the Kremlin strong leverage to pressure Voronin into accepting Russia's terms.

10.

Russia, OSCE Mediators Discuss Chisinau - Tiraspol Talks  
21.03.2009, ITAR0-TASS

READ MORE: <http://www.itar-tass.com/eng/prnt.html?NewsID=13703547>

Mediators on the problem of the Dniester settlement from Russia and OSCE have discussed prospects of the beginning of talks between Moldova and the self-proclaimed Dniester Republic, a representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry reported on Saturday. "Valery Nesterushkin, Russian ambassador for special missions at the Foreign Ministry, and Philip Remler, head of the OSCE mission in Moldova, discussed in Moscow some practical problems, connected with cooperation of international mediators and observers in the '5+2' format – Moldova, the Dniester Republic, OSCE, Russia, Ukraine and observers from the United States and EU – for the purpose of the restoration of the negotiating process between Chisinau and Tiraspol in the setting of the results of the Moscow meeting of the leaders of the Republic of Moldova and the Dniester Republic in the presence of the Russian President," said the Foreign Ministry official.

11.

Backroom Deals Can't Solve Transdniester Dispute  
20.03.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1513681.html>

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev met in Moscow this week with Moldovan President Vladimir Voronin and the head of the unrecognized breakaway region of Transdniester, Igor Smirnov. The final statement of the tripartite talks contains no legal commitments, but the meeting itself could have negative political implications for Moldova. The joint statement praised the Russian-commanded peacekeeping troops -- the same forces that Moldovan Foreign Minister Andrei Stratan told an OSCE Ministerial Council meeting in December 2004 were stationed on Moldovan territory

"against the political will of the Moldovan constitutional authorities in defiance of unanimously recognized international norms and principles." The statement, however, does express a joint desire by the three leaders that the peacekeeping force be placed under a mandate from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).

### **XIII. SECURITY**

1.

Romanian – Turkish Memorandum on Black Sea Cooperation

03.04.2009, Actura

READ MORE: <http://acturca.wordpress.com/2009/04/03/romanian-turkish-memorandum-on-black-sea-cooperation/>

The Romanian Foreign Ministry on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding between the Romanian and Turkish governments, as regards Romania's participation in the Black Sea Harmony operation.

'Romanian hopes to boost, through this initiative, the regional cooperation in the Black Sea area,' reads a ForMin release.

2.

Military Balance of Power in the South Caucasus

01.04.2009, The Armenian News by A1+

READ MORE: <http://www.a1plus.am/en/print/politics/2009/04/01/richard-kirakosyan>

The Armenian Center for National and International Studies (ACNIS) convened a special roundtable seminar discussion to present a new special publication entitled, "The Military Balance of Power in the South Caucasus." Welcoming the participants and attendees, ACNIS Director Richard Giragosian explained that the new ACNIS report, the second in a series of ACNIS Policy Briefs, examines recent shifts in the military and security situation in the region, including a specific focus on developments since the August 2008 war in Georgia. He further noted that the report includes an assessment of the current state of the Azerbaijani military, and an analysis of the implications for the security of Armenia and Nagorno Karabagh.

3.

Ukraine and Russia to Discuss Stationing of Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine on April 3 in Moscow

30.03.2009, Kyiv Post

READ MORE: <http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/38566/print>

Ukraine and Russian are discussing the stationing of the Russian Black Sea Fleet in Ukraine on April 3 in Moscow (Russia), head of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine press service Vasyl Kyrylych has announced during a press briefing. In his words, the parties are set to discuss these issues in course of the next round of the Ukraine-Russia bilateral political consultations. From the Ukrainian side the consultations will be participated by the acting First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Yuri Kostenko, from the Russian side Grigori Karasin, State Secretary / Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia. As to Kyrylych, the sides are planning also to discuss then bilateral political, economic and humanitarian cooperation, interregional cooperation, border issues, international and regional problems.

4.

Ukraine Opposes Deployment of Extra Submarines with Russia's Black Sea Fleet

25.03.2009, XINHUANET.COM

READ MORE: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/26/content\\_11073222.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/26/content_11073222.htm)

Ukraine is opposed to deploying more submarines with Russia's Black Sea Fleet, which is based in Crimea, spokesman for Ukraine's Foreign Ministry Vasily Kyrylych said on Wednesday. Commenting Russia's plans to deploy some new submarines with the Black Sea Fleet, Kyrylych

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stressed Russia could conduct modernization of the fleet only with Ukraine's consent, according to the Interfax-Ukraine news agency. "Modernization of the Black Sea Fleet is possible only after the signing of appropriate agreements with Ukraine," he said.

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5.

#### Blowing Both Hot and Cold

24.03.2009, The Moscow Times

READ MORE: <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/articles/detail.php?ID=375620&print=Y>

Treaties do not make relations but only serve to **ify** them. The European security treaty proposed by President Dmitry Medvedev in June would probably have to repeat most things contained in a plethora of international documents, from the 1975 Helsinki Final Act and the 1990 Paris Charter for a New Europe to the 1999 Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe charter.

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6.

#### Russia to Increase Submarines in Black Sea Fleet

24.03.2009, XINHUANET.COM

READ MORE: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/24/content\\_11066476.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/24/content_11066476.htm)

Russian Navy plans to commission new Lada-class vessels to the Black Sea Fleet, which is required to be equipped with eight to ten submarines in active service, a senior Navy official said Tuesday. "We are planning to deploy additional submarines with the Black Sea Fleet, including new Lada-class vessels, but our plans are being hampered by Ukraine, which sees this as the deployment of new weaponry rather than an upgrade of the existing fleet," the RIA Novosti news agency quoted Oleg Burtsev, vice admiral and deputy head of the navy general staff, as saying.

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7.

#### First Vice Speaker: Too Early to Discuss Black Sea Fleet's Withdrawal from Crimea

23.03.2009, Kyiv Post

READ MORE: <http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/38048/print>

The Ukrainian parliament's first deputy speaker, Oleksandr Lavrynovych, has said it is too early to discuss either the withdrawal of the Russian Black Sea Fleet or prolonging its basing in Crimea, the press service of the first vice speaker reported on Friday referring to a statement he made during an interview with Echo of Moscow radio. "I don't think it is the right time to discuss this problem," he said when asked whether it is necessary to **prop** the Russian Black Sea Fleet's basing in Crimea.

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8.

#### Solana: No Big Need to Revamp European Security Structures

21.03.2009, XINHUANET.COM

READ MORE: [http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/21/content\\_11048430.htm](http://news.xinhuanet.com/english/2009-03/21/content_11048430.htm)

European Union (EU) foreign and security policy chief Javier Solana said Saturday that there is no big need to revamp the security structures of **Europe** as was proposed by Russian President Dmitry Medvedev. "The security in Europe has schemes, organizations, has structures that are working properly. For me, there is not a big need to put down the structures of security in Europe," he told a conference in a debate with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov. Lavrov said many security arrangements in Europe -- particularly those with regard to hard security -- exist in the form of "political commitments" and are not working. **The** Russian proposal is to make these political commitments legally binding. "What we suggest is to get together and to make these principles legally binding if we still confirm these principles," Lavrov told the Brussels Forum organized by the German Marshall Fund of the United States.

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9.

#### Time to Reassess the European Security Architecture? The NATO – EU – Russia Security Triangle

03.2009, EPIN

READ MORE: <http://www.epin.org/new/pubs>

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## Abstract

NATO will celebrate its 60th anniversary in April during a highly symbolic summit hosted jointly by France and Germany. In contrast to previous key summits in 1999 and 2004, today the allies have to deal with a transformed and oppositional Russia, besides a fast-evolving security environment. A few months ago, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev issued a proposal for a new security treaty. The proposal has added a further element to the catalogue of security disputes causing relations with Washington to deteriorate, among which missile defence continues to be one of the most divisive. This paper analyses Russian pressures on security issues and the way the EU and NATO have been addressing them. It is argued that tensions over missile defence are closely related to NATO's enlargement to Ukraine and Georgia and to arms control (the Strategic Arms Reductions Treaty and the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe), and that these issues are poorly tackled at the multilateral level. Aside from the positive moves already undertaken by the Obama administration towards Russia, it is difficult to foresee any rapprochement in the existing incompatibility of views on the legitimacy of NATO. In this context, the role of the EU in improving the security dialogue with Moscow is substantial.

**Black Sea News Update (BSNU)** is a fortnightly brief of political and economic developments covering the Black Sea region. It is produced by the **ICBSS**, a think-tank aiming to foster regional cooperation in the Black Sea area.

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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