



BLACK SEA NEWS UPDATE

EU – BLACK SEA OBSERVATORY

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I. ABKHAZIA

1.

Abkhazia Warns Georgia against Hostilities in Black Sea

30.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090930/156294979-print.html>

Georgia will be held responsible for any future confrontation with Russia in the Black Sea, the Abkhazian foreign minister said on Tuesday. "All hostilities [in the region] in the past decade have been initiated by Georgia, and only Georgia can provoke a new conflict...Recently they [the Georgians] have been active in the [Black] sea, and Russia, fulfilling its obligations will help us protect our borders," Sergei Shamba said in an interview with RIA Novosti. "If they [the Georgians] attempt to violate our borders, this will mean they are deliberately seeking confrontation, and Georgia will be held responsible for it," Shamba said.

2.

Russia to Continue Cooperation with Abkhazia - Medvedev

30.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090930/156304197-print.html>

Moscow will continue its cooperation in the social and economic development of the former

Georgian republic of Abkhazia, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said on Wednesday. Abkhazia celebrates Independence Day on Wednesday. The holiday commemorates the day when Abkhaz troops pushed Georgian forces out of the republic in 1993, ending a 412-day war. Medvedev said in his letter of congratulation that Russia would "continue to give the friendly Abkhaz people full cooperation in issues relating to government structure and in the cultural and humanitarian spheres." Russia recognized the independence of the former Georgian republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia last August after a five-day war with Georgia over the latter, which was attacked by Tbilisi in an attempt to bring it back under central control. Nicaragua and Venezuela have also recognized both republics' independence.

3.

Russia to Help Abkhazia with Postal, Telecommunications Services

28.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090928/156279134-print.html>

Abkhazia and Russia have signed a memorandum that will see the former Georgian republic establish its own independent telecommunication and postal services, the Abkhaz Apsnypress news agency said on Monday. The memorandum was signed by Naum Marder, Russia's deputy communications minister, and Christian Bzhanian, from Abkhazia's information and communications department. Russia is to provide Abkhazia with telephone codes for landline and mobile phones. "Handing over a territorial code means that in the near future [Abkhazian] all types of providers will move to replace Georgian telephone codes with Abkhazian," Christian Bzhanian was quoted by Apsnypress as saying. Russia will also provide assistance in organizing a postal service, radio control system and the setting up a training center for communications specialists.

II. ARMENIA

1.

Armenian President to Visit Diaspora to Talk Turkey

28.09.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1838430.html>

Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian will address large diaspora groups concerned with Yerevan's rapprochement efforts with Turkey during a trip that will take him to France, the United States, Lebanon, and Russia, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reported. Sarkisian announced the trip, which will begin on October 1, at a meeting with Armenian Apostolic Church leader Catholicos Garegin II. Garegin said he welcomes the initiative because "the diaspora is an important and inseparable part of our people." Addressing the diaspora, he called it "only right" that Armenia "hear answers from you personally."

2.

Watchdog Warns of Top-Level Corruption in Armenia

28.09.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1838462.html>

A leading anticorruption organizations says that efforts to combat endemic corruption in Armenia are doomed to fail as long as senior government officials have extensive business interests and can stifle the entrepreneurs challenging them, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. Transparency International's Armenian branch director, Amalia Kostanian, told RFE/RL that the collusion between business and government is "not even a fusion" but "two in one." The authorities, she says, prefer to bluff their way through anticorruption efforts by "punishing only low-ranking officials" to satisfy the public and foreign donors. The authorities claim to have stepped up their declared fight against corruption in recent years by adopting various antigraft programs and forming special bodies tasked with their implementation.

3.

Armenia's Hovannisian Blasts Feuding Party Members

23.09.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1829287.html>

Armenian opposition leader Raffi Hovannisian broke nearly two weeks of silence on September 22 by calling a bitter dispute between senior members of his opposition Zharangutyun (Heritage) party "unacceptable," RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. In a statement on September 21, Hovannisian refrained from taking sides in the row but warned that he would intervene if the two sides did not resolve the dispute. Hovannisian, who holds no formal position in the party despite being its de facto leader, did not explain his surprise resignation from the Armenian parliament, which seems to have precipitated the dispute. His September 7 resignation was followed by the expulsion from the party ranks of three senior Zharangutyun figures, including a member of Armenia's Central Election Commission who later accused the party's nominal chairman, Armen Martirosian, of foul play and secret collaboration with the Armenian government.

4.

Armenian Ombudsman Finds Report on Opposition vs. Police Clashes in 2008 Non-Objective

22.09.2009, Caucasian Knot

READ MORE: <http://www.eng.kavkaz-uzel.ru/articles/11249>

Armen Arutyunyan, Ombudsman in Armenia, said, in his comments on the report, published on September 17, of the interim parliamentary commission for studying the events on March 1, 2008, in Yerevan, when the authorities dispersed mass actions of the opposition, that the actions of power agents had been approached too mildly. Mr Arutyunyan has noted that the commission could have shown a greater severity in relation to the Prosecutor's Office, Special Investigatory Service and the police. According to his story, the commission's report raised proper issues, however, the descriptive part looks biased.

5.

Armenia: Which Way is up for the Armenian Economy?

22.09.2009, EurasiaNet

READ MORE: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav092209a.shtml>

The Armenian government is predicting the imminent return of sunny days for the country's economy. But talk to Armenians outside the capital of Yerevan and their forecast calls for extended periods of gloom. The village of Sarchapet, a hamlet of 3,000 people some 170 kilometers north of Yerevan, is perhaps representative of the plight outside the capital. The lack of work abroad has made for an "extremely severe" situation in Sarchapet, according to Artavazd Baroian, the deputy head of the village's administration. "Except for the old men, 90 percent of the men in our village support their families by working abroad," Baroian elaborated. "People cannot send their children to school, they have no money to buy clothing and shoes for them. Village people cannot find work abroad, nor can they come back home to their families."

6.

Armenia: Nationalists Launch Hunger Strikes against Turkey Reconciliation Deal

16.09.2009, EurasiaNet

READ MORE: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav091609a.shtml>

The tentative Armenian-Turkish plan for diplomatic normalization has sparked Armenia's oldest political party, the nationalist-oriented Armenian Revolutionary Federation, to take to the streets with sit-down protests and hunger strikes. Public support for the party's criticism that the Armenian government risks selling out Armenia's national security interests appears to be spreading, even though it remains far from uniform.

III. AZERBAIJAN

1.

Azerbaijani Parliament Ratifies Paper on Ending Delimitation of Borders with Russia

30.09.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/print/1550234.html>

On Sept. 30, the Azerbaijani parliament has ratified the paper on completion of the delimitation of borders with Russia. The parliamentarians have ratified a bill confirming the joint statement signed by the previous presidents of Azerbaijan and Russia on "Completion of delimitation of borders and on basic principles of division of the Samur River water basin".

2.

Five Documents Signed between Azerbaijan and Romania

28.09.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/print/1548744.html>

After the talks completed between Azerbaijan and Romania on Sept. 28, the ceremony of signing documents took place, with the participation of Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and his Romanian counterpart Traian Besesku, AzerTAj state news agency reported. The Joint Declaration on the establishment of strategic partnership between Azerbaijan and Romania was signed by the Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Traian Besesku.

3.

Azerbaijan Develops its Renewable Energy

23.09.2009, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Energy_Resources/2009/09/23/Azerbaijan-develops-its-renewable-energy/UPI-64831253752511/

Oil-rich Azerbaijan will begin implementing renewable energy projects next year. Trend news agency reported Wednesday that Azeri Industry and Energy Minister Natig Aliyev, addressing an international energy congress in Baku, told participants, "We intend to use wind and solar power, as well as power of small rivers in under-populated areas of Azerbaijan because it is difficult to build high tension transmission lines there," adding that, in spite of the country's hydrocarbon resources, alternative energy is one of the government's priority tasks.

4.

Azerbaijan: Blogger Trial in Baku Boosting Local Interest in Internet

14.09.2009, EurasiaNet

READ MORE: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav091409.shtml>

Azerbaijani media watchdog organizations do not share the optimism recently expressed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe that two young video bloggers imprisoned for hooliganism will be released from jail soon. The July 8 detention of 26-year-old Adnan Hajizade and 30-year-old Emin Abdullayev Milli, both youth activists involved in the production of video blogs that mocked the government, has become the latest in an ongoing series of media scandals that has damaged Azerbaijan's image abroad.

IV. BULGARIA

1.

Project Proposals Invited for Bulgaria-Turkey Cross-Border Cooperation Programme

28.09.2009, BSANNA News

READ MORE: <http://bsanna-news.ukrinform.ua/newsitem.php?id=10480&lang=en>

The submission of project proposals for the Programme for Cross- Border Cooperation between Bulgaria and Turkey under the Preaccession Aid Instrument started on Monday, the Bulgarian Regional Development and Public Works Ministry said. The managing authority under the

programme is the General Directorate "Regional Development Programming". The purpose of the programme is to promote sustainable economic development, to improve the overall social development and the quality of life, and to encourage the closeness between people and communities in the cross-border area.

2.

Bulgaria's Interest in Nuclear Power

28.09.2009, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Energy_Resources/2009/09/28/Bulgarias-interest-in-nuclear-power/UPI-27261254168045/

Bulgaria is to press forward with constructing the Belenenuclear power station should finding issues be resolved. Belene was begun in 1987, but a lack of finance halted the project by 1991. Bulgarska Telegrafna Agentsia Radiotelevizionen reported Monday that Bulgarian Energy Minister Traycho Traykov said during an interview in response to a question about Belen's construction that the government was seeking to clarify financing arrangements before taking a final decision on the plant's construction.

3.

Bulgaria's Bokova Becomes First Woman to Lead UNESCO

23.09.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/culture/bulgaria-bokova-woman-lead-unesco/article-185693>

Bulgarian diplomat Irina Bokova yesterday (22 September) became the first woman and the first East European to lead UNESCO, the United Nations' educational, scientific and cultural organisation. Bokova was the surprise winner of a long five-round election procedure, which began on 7 September. Eight candidates ran for election, including Austria's EU commissioner for external relations and neighbourhood policy, Benita Ferrero-Waldner, who was outvoted in the third round.

4.

Bulgaria Seeks EU Regional Portfolio, PM Says

18.09.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/bulgaria-seeks-eu-regional-portfolio-pm/article-185600>

In the next European Commission, Bulgaria would like to obtain the regional policy portfolio, the country's Prime Minister Boyko Borissov told EurActiv in an interview. Speaking in Brussels on 18 September, PM Borissov said the regional policy post would "really suit" Bulgaria. However, Borissov indicated that this objective would be difficult to attain, as other countries are also interested. As alternatives, he mentioned the science, research and innovation portfolio, due to Bulgaria's long scientific and technical traditions.

5.

PM Borissov: Bulgaria 'Cuts Through Living Flesh' to Balance Budget

18.09.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/future-eu/pm-borissov-bulgaria-cuts-living-flesh-balance-budget/article-185590>

Despite having made deep and painful cuts to its administration to avoid IMF assistance as it strives to join the euro zone, Bulgaria's new government enjoys wide popular support, Prime Minister Boyko Borissov told EurActiv in an interview. Boyko Borissov is leader of the EPP-affiliated party GERB (Citizens for an European Development of Bulgaria). GERB obtained 39.7% of the vote and has 116 MPs in the 240-seat single-chamber parliament. The GERB government has the support of several small parties. He was speaking to Georgi Gotev.

6.

Sofia Moves to Curb Corruption

15.09.2009, The Financial Times

READ MORE: http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/efaf048e-a23c-11de-9caa-00144feabdc0,dwp_uuid=70662e7c-3027-11da-ba9f-00000e2511c8.html

Hundreds of Bulgarian customs and excise officials face dismissal on Wednesday in a fresh attempt to crack down on corruption and organised crime in the European Union's poorest member state. Simeon Djankov, a senior World Bank economist appointed by the right-of-centre government that took office in July, said the move was aimed at wresting control of the customs service from local crime groups. "The mafia has been operating the customs ... As a result the government has been losing annual receipts equivalent to about 8 per cent of gross domestic product," Mr Djankov told the FT. More than 80 per cent of wines and spirits sold in Bulgaria, 40 per cent of cigarettes and 30 per cent of diesel were smuggled, he said.

V. GEORGIA

1.

Georgia's Abkhaz IDP Schools Keep Dream of Return to Abkhazia Alive

28.09.2009, EurasiaNet

READ MORE: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav092809.shtml>

Nearly 20 years after Georgia's disastrous war against Abkhaz separatists, Georgian children whose families fled the breakaway region still study in segregated schools designed to keep the memory of Georgian controlled Abkhazia alive. Now that the dream of reunification seems to be fading, critics fear that the schools' existence will complicate efforts to integrate displaced families into mainstream Georgian society.

2.

The Saviour of Georgia?

28.09.2009, The Guardian

READ MORE: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2009/sep/28/saviour-of-georgia>

"The Russians like what they see in Georgia at the moment." Irakli Alasania, the young Georgian whom many in the west would like to see replacing Mikheil Saakashvili as president, was in London this month, commenting bitterly on his country's diplomatic impotence. Alasania, at 34, is already an experienced politician with global contacts, especially in the United States, where the Obama administration is showing signs of impatience with Saakashvili's obstinacy. More than a year after the disastrous war with Russia over South Ossetia, Georgia is still insisting on its "territorial integrity", and yet the de facto independence of Abkhazia and South Ossetia has been a reality for 16 years now.

3.

Saakashvili: Georgia Will Regain back What Russia Captured

24.09.2009, Civil.Ge

READ MORE: http://www.civil.ge/eng/_print.php?id=21497

President Saakashvili said on September 24 that he had no regrets about resisting Russia and "Georgia will regain back what they [Russians] have captured temporarily." "I do not regret even for a moment that I offered resistance; not a single our IDP regrets it," he said while meeting with Georgian Diaspora in New York. "[Russian Prime Minister Vladimir] Putin failed to find even one normal state as an ally... He has only Hugo Chavez and let him stay with him forever." Saakashvili also said that Georgia had demonstrated that it was always united against the enemy and the expectations that the country "would have collapsed" as a result of street protest rallies had not materialized.

4.

Opposition Lays Out Proposals on Electoral Reform

24.09.2009, Civil.Ge

READ MORE: http://www.civil.ge/eng/_print.php?id=21495

Alliance for Georgia submitted to an inter-party working group on electoral reform a document laying out a joint vision of seven opposition parties on how the current system should be reshaped. Alliance for Georgia, which unites Republican, New Rights and Our Georgia-Free Democratic parties, joined the working group on September 21 after an initial refusal to participate. Other four parties, which undersigned the proposed document, are Nino Burjanadze's Democratic Movement-United Georgia; Movement for United Georgia; Party of People and Conservative Party. These four parties are refusing to join the working group.

5.

Prominent Oppositionists Join Forces for Tbilisi Ballot

23.09.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1829496.html>

Irakli Alasania, who stepped down as Georgian ambassador to the UN in December 2008 and now heads the opposition Alliance for Georgia, and Sozar Subari, whose five-year term as human rights ombudsman expired earlier this month, will join forces to run in the Tbilisi mayoral and municipal council elections tentatively scheduled for May 30, 2010. Both men were previously close and loyal supporters of President Mikheil Saakashvili, but now criticize his apparent indifference to election fraud and egregious human rights violations on the part of the Interior Ministry and security services.

6.

Georgia Accuses Russia of Ignoring Legal Norms at Sea

23.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090922/156217521-print.html>

Georgia on Tuesday accused Russia of ignoring international law over Russia's deployment of a coast guard ship in Abkhazian waters and its intention to station border guard vessels there. "With its aggressive actions, Russia continues to pursue an annexationist policy regarding Georgia, this time by occupying the Abkhaz section of the internationally recognized Georgian offshore zone," the Georgian Foreign Ministry said. The Novorossiisk arrived in Abkhazia on Sunday to protect the maritime borders of the former Georgian republic, which has been recognized by Russia as an independent state. It is part of a Russian coastguard contingent that will be based at the Abkhazian port of Ochamchira. The division is expected to have up to 10 Sobol class and Mangust class patrol boats.

7.

Intellectuals Urge EU to Protect Georgia

22.09.2009, EUobserver

READ MORE: <http://euobserver.com/24/28701?print=1>

A group of intellectuals and former statesmen from eastern Europe have in an open letter warned the EU not to tolerate Russia's partition of Georgia. "We urge the EU's 27 democratic leaders to define a proactive strategy to help Georgia peacefully regain its territorial integrity," the statement, published in leading European newspapers such as the Guardian and Gazeta Wyborcza on Tuesday (23 September), said.

8.

Europe Must Stand up for Georgia

22.09.2009, The European Council on Foreign Relations

READ MORE: http://ecfr.eu/content/entry/commentary_open_letter_georgia/print

As Europe remembers the shame of the Ribbentrop-Molotov pact of 1939 and the Munich agreement of 1938, and as it prepares to celebrate the fall of the Berlin wall and the iron curtain in 1989, one question arises in our minds: Have we learned the lessons of history? Put another way, are we able to avoid repeating the mistakes that cast such a dark shadow over the 20th century? To deplore or celebrate past events is a futile act if we remain blind to their lessons. Only if these events teach us how to act differently - and more wisely - do such commemorations have any value. Looking at Europe today, it is abundantly clear that history has not come to an end and that it remains tragic. Twenty years after the emancipation of half of the continent, a new wall is being built in Europe - this time across the sovereign territory of Georgia.

9.

Russia-Georgia Talks Adjourn without Breakthrough”

20.09.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/96432.php>

The seventh round of talks between Russia and Georgia over the breakaway regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia ended in Geneva on September 17 without substantive agreement, Deutsche Presse-Agentur (dpa) quoted sources within the talks as saying. The two countries, along with representatives from the two formerly Georgian republics, had been discussing the security situation in the region and humanitarian issues in the one-day meeting. The two sides are due to meet again on November 11.

10.

Ethnic Georgian District in Abkhazia Becomes Election Issue

15.09.2009, EurasiaNet

READ MORE: <http://www.eurasianet.org/departments/insightb/articles/eav091509b.shtml>

For many in the breakaway region of Abkhazia, Russian recognition of Abkhazia's independence means the promise of economic development and a guarantee of security against Georgia. But in Abkhazia's predominantly ethnic Georgian district of Gali, Russian recognition has come to mean renewed emphasis on assimilation into Abkhaz society. The territory's de facto foreign ministry calls integration a priority, but has no concrete blueprint for how to achieve it. Last year, the Abkhaz government began a campaign of persuading Gali Georgians to adopt Abkhaz citizenship. Now, with presidential elections just three months away, politics has entered the mix.

VI. GEORGIA-RUSSIA

1.

Georgia Sparked War after Russia Violated International Law' Says Report

30.09.2009, Telegraph

READ MORE: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/6247197/Georgia-sparked-war-after-Russia-violated-international-law-says-report.html>

Georgia sparked a five-day war with Russia last year by attacking rebel South Ossetia, according to a report which also blamed Russia for violating international law. The report, sponsored by the European Union, also said Russia's response to the Georgian military strike went "beyond reasonable limits". But its findings were particularly critical of Georgia's conduct under President Mikheil Saakashvili. "In the mission's view, it was Georgia which triggered off the war when it attacked Tskhinvali (in South Ossetia) with heavy artillery on the night of 7 to 8 August, 2008," the head of the fact-finding mission said. Mr Saakashvili has long insisted that the attack in South Ossetia was launched after Russian tanks moved into the breakaway region.

2.

PACE Urges Russia to Allow EU Monitors into Abkhazia, S.Ossetia

30.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090930/156296395-print.html>

The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) said on Tuesday that Russia should give EU monitors unrestricted access to Abkhazia and South Ossetia before the end of the year. "Russia should also lift all restrictions on humanitarian aid to the two regions and let Georgian civilians move freely across the boundary lines," PACE said in a resolution adopted by 80 votes to 36. Russia recognized the independence of the former Georgian republics of Abkhazia and South Ossetia last August after a five-day war with Georgia over the latter, which was attacked by Tbilisi in an attempt to bring it back under central control. Under mutual assistance treaties signed last November, Russia pledged to help South Ossetia and Abkhazia protect their borders and has built a considerable military presence there since then.

3.

Russia Criticizes PACE's Call for Observers in Ex-Georgian Areas

30.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090930/156303096-print.html>

Russia criticized on Wednesday PACE's demand that it admit more EU monitors to two former Georgia republics, saying a request should have been addressed directly to the republics' leaderships. Russia recognized South Ossetia and Abkhazia as independent states after the conflict with Georgia last year, but the European Union still considers them Georgian territory. A Russian Foreign Ministry official said the demand of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) that Moscow give EU monitors unrestricted access to the republics by the end of the year "does not reflect modern realities." "They should directly contact the authorities in South Ossetia and Abkhazia," said Igor Lyakin-Frolov, the ministry's deputy director for information and press.

4.

Head of EU Monitors Meets Russian Deputy FM

29.09.2009, Civil.Ge

READ MORE: http://www.civil.ge/eng/_print.php?id=21512

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Grigory Karasin met on September 28 in Moscow with Hansjörg Haber, head of the EU Monitoring Mission in Georgia, and expressed Russia's readiness for "deepening cooperation" with the European monitors on the ground, the Russian Foreign Ministry said. "The Russian side expressed in overall satisfaction with the activities of EUMM on the territories adjacent to South Ossetia and Abkhazia and expressed readiness for deepening cooperation and coordination of actions with EU monitors, first of all in frames of joint mechanisms. It was noted that as a result of joint efforts it was possible to maintain calm situation in those areas. But threat of destabilization from the Georgian side has not yet been removed.

VII. MOLDOVA

1.

Moldova Demands Pullout of Russian Peacekeepers from Transdnestria

30.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/exsoviet/20090930/156296084.html>

The new Moldovan government will demand the withdrawal of Russian peacekeepers from its breakaway region of Transdnestr, a senior Moldovan diplomat said. "The Republic of Moldova will renew efforts aimed at the withdrawal of foreign troops from the country and the replacement of the current peacekeeping operation by a multi-national mission with an international mandate," said Alexander Kuzhba, Moldova's envoy to the United Nations. "The new Liberal-Democratic coalition

will seek the resolution of the Transdnestr problem in the existing '5-plus-2' format and insist on increasing role of the United States and the European Union in this process," the diplomat said.

2.

Moldova's Admission to NATO Can Harm Ties with Moscow - Expert

30.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090930/156304308-print.html>

Moldova's accession to NATO is unnecessary and could dramatically worsen its relations with Russia, a Moldovan political analyst said on Wednesday. Moldovan Prime Minister Vladimir Filat said on Tuesday that his country needed a transition period "to convince the people about the need of joining NATO, and to change the perception of NATO as a hostile bloc, which has been created under the influence of Russian media." Commenting on Filat's remarks, Sergei Nazaria, director of the Moldovan Center for Strategic Analysis, said that Moldova's accession to NATO "is unnecessary." "From my perspective, we do not face any threats today and nobody is planning to attack us. In the present geopolitical situation, it makes sense to maintain Moldova's neutrality," he said.

3.

Pensioners in Moldova Protest Against Rising Prices

30.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090930/156303386-print.html>

Pensioners in Moldova's capital Chisinau blocked the city's main highway on Wednesday in protest against rising fees for public transport and utilities. Protests are being held for the second day, including in front of the mayor's office. Chisinau pensioners, hitting spoons on saucepans, are demanding that the government step down. They are also calling for a review of tariffs on public transportation and water supply tariffs, as well as the resignation of city officials.

4.

Moldovan MPs to Take Part in PACE Session

20.09.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/96416.php>

A Moldovan parliamentary delegation will participate in the autumn session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE) between September 28 and October 2. Though the PACE asked that the list of delegates be presented, the Parliament of Moldova has not yet agreed the composition of the delegation, the adoption of a decision being postponed from sitting to sitting, Info-PrimNeo reports. Speaker Mihai Ghimpu said on September 18 that a decision about the delegations' makeup will be taken at a sitting next week.

VIII. ROMANIA

1.

Romania to Scrap 20,282 Jobs till the End of the Year

24.09.2009, Financiarul

READ MORE: http://www.financiarul.com/articol_33044/romania-to-scrap-20282-jobs-till-the-end-of-the-year.html

Romania's employment agency ANOFM announced that, until the end of the year, about 20,282 jobs will be cut. Last week, the agency reported that 4,882 employees were fired. 216 companies operated layoffs in the last week, most of which are in capital Bucharest (22) and counties Prahova (17), Timis (14), Vaslui (13), Galati, Cluj, Bacau (ten in each), Arges (nine), Gorj, Ialomita and Harghita (seven in each), Arad, Sibiu, Vrancea and Satu Mare (six in each).

IX. RUSSIA

1.

Putin Sounds Welcoming Tone to Foreign Investors

30.09.2009, New York Times

READ MORE: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/30/business/global/30ruble.html?_r=1

Russia's prime minister, Vladimir V. Putin, whose government took control of several oil companies when he served as president, gave a speech Tuesday saying the state must now step back from the economy and let private enterprise take the lead in pulling Russia out of recession. The speech, at a banking forum in Moscow, echoed recent assurances by his ministers and economic advisors that Russia is becoming more attentive to the concerns of investors. Mr. Putin also reiterated their suggestions that a new round of privatizations could be in the cards for Russia.

2.

Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev: Two Faces of Russia

20.09.2009, The Washington Post

READ MORE: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/18/AR2009091802142.html>

The world's economic crisis does not seem to have been unkind to you, Vladimir Putin notes as we sit down to a lunch that begins with calf's tail in aspic. "You all look well fed, well dressed." It is a spy's gambit, one of several that the Russian prime minister advances subtly to compromise or co-opt 45 foreign academics, think-tank experts and journalists gathered in his opulent dacha at Moscow's outer edge. Don't be hypocrites, he is saying without saying. Don't try to trap me with do-good, abstract questions. We're in this together.

3.

Less Chilly - A Slightly Warmer Relationship between the West and Russia

18.09.2009, The Economist

READ MORE: http://www.economist.com/daily/news/displaystory.cfm?story_id=14484342

George Bush's planned missile-defence system in eastern Europe was always contentious: would it provoke Russia into an arms race, was the threat of Iranian missiles real and would the proposed shield even work? But President Barack Obama's decision to scrap it, arguably his biggest break yet with the foreign policy of his predecessor, is proving controversial too. Allies in eastern Europe and Republican critics at home have been quick to cry treason and appeasement. "Betrayal! The USA has sold us to the Russians and stabbed us in the back," screamed one Polish tabloid, Fakt. Senator John McCain, who lost the presidential race to Mr Obama last year, called the move "seriously misguided". John Bolton, America's tough ambassador to the UN under Mr Bush, declared: "Russia and Iran are the big winners. I just think it's a bad day for American national security."

4.

Russia Signs Military Cooperation Deals with Abkhazia, S.Ossetia

15.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090915/156135405-print.html

Russia signed on Tuesday agreements on military cooperation with the former Georgian republics of South Ossetia and Abkhazia, the Russian defense minister's spokesman said. Russia recognized the two republics shortly after the end of last August's war with Georgia over South Ossetia, which began when Georgian forces attacked the region in an attempt to bring it back under central control. The documents were signed by Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov and his counterparts from Abkhazia and South Ossetia, Merab Kishmariya and Yury Tanayev. "In accordance with the agreements, Russia has the right to build, use and improve military infrastructure and military bases in Abkhazia and South Ossetia, and create and maintain joint military contingents [in both republics] in times of peace and war," said Alexei Kuznetsov, the defense minister's press secretary.

X. TURKEY

1.

ADB's Head Says Nabucco to Make Turkey Stronger

24.09.2009, BSANNA News

READ MORE: <http://bsanna-news.ukrinform.ua/newsitem.php?id=10454&lang=en>

The head of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) said on Thursday that Nabucco natural gas project would make Turkey a strong country. ADB's president Haruhiko Kuroda said Nabucco natural gas project and other pipeline projects would make Turkey a strong country both in Asia and Europe. Turkey had become a bridge between the energy resources and consumers with the recent Nabucco project, Kuroda told AA correspondent on the sidelines of a global economic symposium in Plon, Germany. The 3,300-kilometer Nabucco pipeline will carry Caspian and Central Asian natural gas to Austria in Europe to reduce EU dependence on Russian gas. Nearly 2,000 kilometers of the pipeline will run in Turkey. Kuroda said countries that wanted to be strong in the future were the countries that would control the regions where energy resources were located and the transportation routes.

XI. UKRAINE

1.

World Bank: High Deficit of National Budget to Affect Hit Economic Growth in Ukraine

28.09.2009, KyivPost

READ MORE: <http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/49575/print>

The high deficit of the national budget could adversely affect the pace of economic growth in Ukraine, according to World Bank Vice President for Europe and Central Asia Philippe Le Houverou. "The issue of the state deficit is a very important one. If it is too high, it will stop economic growth in Ukraine," he said at a meeting with Ukrainian Premier Yulia Tymoshenko on Monday in Kyiv.

2.

Expert: Hryvnia Exchange Rate close to balanced

28.09.2009, KyivPost

READ MORE: <http://www.kyivpost.com/nation/49570/print>

Ukraine should stick to a policy of flexible exchange rate to avoid the repetition of last year's situation when the fixed exchange rate led to a serious crisis in the state of the current account of the balance of payment, according to Anders Aslund, Senior Fellow at Peterson Institute of Economics. "The present hryvnia exchange rate is close to the balanced one. However, this exchange rate should be a common exchange rate to prevent corruption and return confidence," he told Interfax-Ukraine at the sixth YES (Yalta European Strategy) summit.

3.

NATO Entry to Ensure Ukraine Territorial Integrity - Yushchenko

24.09.2009, BSANNA News

READ MORE: <http://bsanna-news.ukrinform.ua/newsitem.php?id=10438&lang=en>

Integration in NATO will ensure Ukraine's territorial integrity and independence, Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko said in an interview to Ukrainian journalists. "I am deeply convinced that for integration in NATO for us, integration in the European collective security policy – is an essence behind which there are our territorial integrity and independence," he said.

4.

Ukraine's Options to Counter Russia are Limited

23.09.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1829268.html>

Russia has only a limited window of opportunity within which it can hope to achieve its maximum objectives in Ukraine, while Ukraine has only a limited number of options for developing its

relations with the Russian Federation in such a way as to ensure its survival as an independent state, according to two leading Kyiv-based specialists on international relations.

5.

PM: Ukrainian Economy Improving

20.09.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/96430.php>

Ukrainian Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko on September 15 said Ukraine's economy had turned a corner, making possible increased government spending and improved living standards in 2010. Critics of her government - including President Viktor Yushchenko and a pro-Russia minority faction in parliament - had failed in their shameless efforts to ruin the economy, she said. Almost all economic indicators now are positive, Tymoshenko told members of parliament and cabinet ministers at the presentation of Ukraine's 2010 budget in Kiev. We have no grounds, based on all of our analysis, to believe that this trend will slow. Industrial production, a key indicator for Ukraine's metals-centered economy, was now growing at a five percent annual rate, after a 16 percent drop in 2008, and a projected 8.5 percent in 2009, she said.

6.

Kremlin Intensifies Pressure as Ukraine Prepares for Vote

14.09.2009, Washington Post

READ MORE: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/13/AR2009091301834.html>

Five years after Ukraine defied Russia and turned toward the United States and Europe in a peaceful, democratic revolution, Moscow is poised for a comeback in this former Soviet republic. The pro-Western president who came to power as the hero of the Orange Revolution is struggling with single-digit ratings just months before he stands for reelection. The man Russia backed in 2004 is leading the race to succeed him. And the next-strongest candidate also appears acceptable to the Kremlin.

7.

Gazprom Seeks Role in Ukraine Politics

14.09.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/gazprom-seeks-role-ukraine-politics/article-185407>

Gazprom chief executive Alexei Miller has warned against another gas crisis early next year due to Ukraine's insolvency and the political uncertainty which could follow presidential elections in January. Over the weekend (12 September), the Gazprom CEO said Ukraine was at present paying its dues, but expressed fears that the country could not foot its next bill, due on 7 February 2010. He also expressed concern over the political chaos that may follow the 17 January presidential elections. "When I meet with colleagues from [Ukraine state energy firm] Naftogaz Ukraine and I ask them what will happen in 2010, they tell me: we simply don't know," said Miller, quoted by Reuters.

XII. EU

1.

MEPs Address Human Right Situation in Russia

20.09.2009, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/96284.php>

In an urgent resolution adopted on September 17 in Strasbourg, members of the European Parliament want Russia to shed light on the murders of four human rights campaigners, Stanislav Markelov, Natalia Estemirova, Zarema Sadulayeva and Alik Dzhabrailov. Parliament urged the Russian authorities "to investigate swiftly, thoroughly and effectively" the murders of Markelov,

Estemirova, Sadulayeva and Dzhabrailov and to bring those responsible for, and those involved in, these brutal acts to justice. MEPs also welcomed the return of the archive confiscated from the organization Memorial in St Petersburg following the raid on December 4, 2008, and the decision of the Russian Supreme Court of September 3, 2009 to retry the case involving the murder of Anna Politkovskaya.

XIII. TRACECA

1.

Iran Joins TRACECA

28.09.2009, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Energy_Resources/2009/09/28/Iran-joins-TRACECA/UPI-79661254166618/

Iran has officially joined Transport Corridor Europe-Caucasus-Asia to improve its links with international transit markets. The Mehr News Agency reported Sunday that Iran's request to join the institution was accepted during TRACECA's Sept. 23 meeting in Brussels. TRACECA, established in 1998, is an international transport program whose members include both the European Union and 14 Eastern European, Caucasian and Central Asian states and is entirely financed by member nations.

XIV. CAUCASUS

1.

Turkey Pressures Armenia Through the Minsk Group and the United States

30.09.2009, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35559&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=4984f192d5](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35559&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=4984f192d5)

International diplomatic pressure on Turkey and Armenia to boost their efforts toward the normalization of their bilateral relations has continued on the sidelines of the U.N. General Assembly. U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton held separate meetings with the foreign ministers of both countries, urging them to take concrete steps toward implementing their commitment to end decades of hostility (Anadolu Ajansi, September 29). During her meeting with the Armenian Foreign Minister Edward Nalbandian, Clinton said that normalization "should take place without preconditions and within a reasonable timeframe." She also communicated a similar message to the Turkish Foreign Minister Ahmet Davutoglu (Today's Zaman, September 30).

2.

Azerbaijan Stands Ready to Respect Rights of Ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh on Basis of International Law: Department Head at Presidential Administration

30.09.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/print/1550379.html>

Azerbaijan is ready to respect the rights of ethnic Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh on the basis of international law. "Azerbaijan originally stated emphatically that any attempt to impose the solution of the conflict to the detriment of the territorial integrity of the country will not be accepted by Azerbaijan. But we take into account the real situation and the conditions for further life and respect for the rights of ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. We are prepared to respect their rights on the basis of international law," head of the public-political department of the Presidential Administration of Azerbaijan, Ali Hasanov, briefed the media on Sept. 30. On Oct. 9, Moldova will host the next summit of the CIS. The next round of talks between the presidents of Azerbaijan and Armenia, Ilham Aliyev and Serzh Sargsyan is expected to be held during the meetings.

3.

Armenian Armed Forces Break Ceasefire

30.09.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/print/1549690.html>

On Sept. 29, the Armenian Armed Forces opened fire at Azerbaijani troops in the areas of the Tovuz region at 15:05-15:15. The shots were fired from the Mosesgah village in Armenia's Berd region.

4.

Armenian Armed Forces Fire on Positions of Azerbaijan

29.09.2009, APA

READ MORE: <http://en.apa.az/print.php?id=108318>

On September 28, the units of Armenian Armed Forces fired on the opposite positions of Azerbaijani Armed Forces from their posts near Garakhanbayli and Horadiz villages of Fuzuli region from 22.30 till 22.45. Defense Ministry's press service told APA that the enemy was silenced by response fire, no casualties were reported.

5.

Dialogue Urged for Nagorno-Karabakh

29.09.2009, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Emerging_Threats/2009/09/29/Dialogue-urged-for-Nagorno-Karabakh/UPI-80141254253808/

The lingering conflict over the Nagorno-Karabakh region can be resolved if Azerbaijan and Armenia refrain from undermining dialogue, Armenian officials said. War broke out between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh in the early 1990s, and the regional fallout from that row remains tense despite a 1994 cease-fire. Yerevan claims ethnic Armenians are deprived of their basic rights in the territory, while Baku argues those solutions lie in annexing Nagorno-Karabakh.

6.

No progress in Turkish-Armenian Relations without Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Solution: Johns Hopkins University Expert

28.09.2009, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/print/1548588.html>

Without the settlement of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, there will be no progress in the Turkish-Armenian relations, said the director of the Central Asia-Caucasus Institute at Johns Hopkins University said. "Without solution of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, Turkish-Armenian relations will not promote," said the director of the Institute Svante Cornell. The protocol's final version will be signed by foreign ministers of Armenia and Turkey, Ahmet Davudoglu and Edward Nalbandian on Oct.10 or Oct.11, Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan told Trend News in an exclusive interview.

7.

Ankara Criticizes both Karabakh Reporting and Baku

28.09.2009, Today's Zaman

READ MORE: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=188201>

The Foreign Ministry has criticized a recent visit by Turkish journalists to the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region as "illegal" but called on Azerbaijan, which had formally protested the press coverage, to show more respect for freedom of the press.

8.

Turkey, Armenia to Restore Ties

27.09.2009, BBC

READ MORE: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/europe/8277835.stm>

Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan has said his country will sign a deal to establish

diplomatic relations with Armenia on 10 October. Mr Erdogan said the deal would still need parliamentary approval in Turkey and Armenia after being signed by their foreign ministers. The two countries remain deeply divided over the fate Armenians suffered under Turkish Ottoman rule. A roadmap for normalising relations between them was agreed in April. Anticipation of a diplomatic breakthrough had been growing ahead of a planned visit by Armenian President Serge Sarkisian to Turkey on 14 October.

9.

American Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy to Host Symposium on Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict

24.09.2009, BSANNA News

READ MORE: <http://bsanna-news.ukrinform.ua/newsitem.php?id=10448&lang=en>

The American Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy through September 25-27 will host a symposium on the topic "The new view on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict", spokesman of the Azerbaijan Diplomatic Academy said. As stated, the goal of Symposium is to analyze the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and study influence of this problem on change of balance in region. The Symposium participants are to focus on financial crisis in Russia and its influence on region, and also questions on other themes.

10.

Former Armenian Foreign Minister Slams Turkey Deal

24.09.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1829986.html>

Former Armenian Foreign Minister Vartan Oskanian has said that the proposed agreement normalizing relations between Ankara and Yerevan will give the Turks "everything they have wanted for 17 years," RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. In an emotional speech in Yerevan on September 22, Oskanian argued that opening the border with Turkey cedes the country's "historical rights" because it would "close the possibility, no matter how formal, of restoring historical justice" regarding territories in eastern Turkey that many Armenians believe should be a part of Armenia. Oskanian also objects to the creation of a joint panel of Armenian and Turkish experts that would examine the mass killings of Armenians nearly 100 years ago in the Ottoman Empire.

11.

Clinton, Sarkisian Discuss Rapprochement with Turkey

23.09.2009, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: <http://www.rferl.org/articleprintview/1829263.html>

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has again telephoned Armenian President Serzh Sarkisian to discuss Yerevan and Ankara's ongoing rapprochement, which has been facilitated by the United States, RFE/RL's Armenian Service reports. A statement issued by Sarkisian's office on September 20 said the two leaders touched upon "issues related to the current stage of the normalization of Turkish-Armenian relations." It was the second conversation in a month between Yerevan and the State Department. Clinton has regularly talked to Armenian and Turkish leaders this year in an effort to push forward their fence-mending negotiations.

12.

Karabakh Villagers Yearn for Normal Life

18.09.2009, IWPR

READ MORE: http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&ts=f&o=356050&apc_state=hen

The members of the United Nations are due to discuss Nagorny Karabakh this month, in a move that may nudge forward the sluggish peace talks between Azerbaijan and Armenia. The Karabakh question is placed on the agenda right after Afghanistan and the Middle East although, if previous sessions are anything to go by, the conflict is unlikely to gain as high a profile. Nevertheless, the

Azeris who live up against the frontline that separates the two sides wish world statesmen would listen to them and help their lives back to the normality they lost when war broke out over the enclave.

13.

“Judo Diplomacy” Eases Karabakh Tensions

18.09.2009, IWPR

READ MORE: http://www.iwpr.net/?p=crs&apc_state=henh&s=f&o=356012

Bid to improve Turkish-Armenian ties started with a football match, so could Judo tournament do same for Armenia and Azerbaijan? The Azerbaijan flag has been flown in Armenia for the first time since the Karabakh war, at a martial arts tournament tentatively welcomed by analysts as a start for “judo diplomacy”. The welcome for the Azerbaijan team at the European Under 20 Championship, September 11-13, was warm, and police took careful steps to prevent any demonstration against the athletes, who represented a country with which Armenia has not signed a peace deal. “We are on guard to prevent a flag being brought into the building which could be burnt,” said one policeman when asked why he was so carefully checking this correspondent’s bag.

14.

Organized Crime and Illegal Trafficking in the Caucasus

17.09.2009, ISN

READ MORE: <http://www.isn.ethz.ch/isn/Current-Affairs/Policy-Briefs/Detail/?lng=en&id=106085>

This issue discusses the security threats emanating from networks of crime and corruption in the South Caucasus. It analyzes the Georgian Mafia, their activities and evolution in the 1990s, and evaluates the success of Georgia's fight against organized crime. The publication also provides an opinion poll on the reliability of and trust towards the police in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and a chronicle of the events in the Caucasus between 17 July and 15 September 2009.

XV. ENERGY

1.

Gazprom, Eni Discuss Third Partner in South Stream Project

30.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/business/20090930/156297798-print.html>

The CEOs of Russia's Gazprom and Italy's Eni have discussed the potential involvement of a third partner in their South Stream gas pipeline project, Gazprom said in a statement on Wednesday. ENI is so far Gazprom's only partner in the project, designed to deliver gas to Europe via the Black Sea. According to the Russian gas monopoly, Gazprom's Alexei Miller and Eni's Paolo Scaroni "discussed the possibility of inviting a third partner in the project to build the sea sector of the gas pipeline." In May, the two partners signed a second addendum to a memorandum of understanding on further steps to implement the project. Gazprom also signed a package of documents on South Stream with Bulgarian, Greek and Serbian energy companies, and agreements with Austria and Slovenia were also planned.

2.

Gazprom Takes its South Stream Bluff to Bucharest

30.09.2009, Eurasia Daily Monitor

READ MORE: [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews\[tt_news\]=35557&tx_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=9ba9b6f736](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?no_cache=1&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=35557&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=9ba9b6f736)

This week in Bucharest, high-level representatives of the Russian energy business and their Italian allies are making their strongest pitch yet for Romania to join their South Stream gas transport project. Romania is the latest target in Moscow's recent effort to enlist additional countries in South Stream -or to persuade participant countries to commit more actively despite doubts.

3.

Russia to Raise Oil Export Duty to \$240.7 Per Ton from October 1

28.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/business/20090928/156274741-print.html>

Russia will raise oil export duty on its benchmark Urals blend from \$238.6 per metric ton to \$240.7 per metric ton from October 1, following trends on global oil markets, the government said on Monday. The corresponding resolution was signed by Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, the government's web site said. Duty on light petroleum products will rise to \$174.5 per ton from the current \$173.1, and duty on heavy petroleum products is to increase from \$93.2 to \$94 per ton. Oil export duty has risen steadily this year, increasing every month except April, when it fell to \$110 per ton from March's \$115.3 rate.

4.

Gazprom to Bid for Iraqi Fields in Consortium with Turkish Company

28.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/business/20090928/156272917.html>

Russia's energy giant Gazprom will bid for Iraqi oil and gas fields in a consortium with Turkey's state-run oil company, a Russian business daily said on Monday, citing the Turkish Energy Minister. Iraq will sell 14 blocks with total reserves of 41 billion barrels of oil and some 740 billion cubic meters of natural gas as 10 lots in December. Turkish Petroleum Corporation (TPAO) will compete for six lots, and will form a consortium with Gazprom to bid for the other four lots, Vedomosti quoted Taner Yildiz as saying.

5.

EU: Energy Security is in the Pipeline

25.09.2009, Telegraph

READ MORE: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/6227454/EU-energy-security-is-in-the-pipeline.html>

On an autumn evening in 2002, a group of European executives celebrated a major energy deal by taking in a spot of Verdi at the Vienna State Opera House. At dinner afterwards, the businessmen resolved to christen the gas pipeline they had agreed to build "Nabucco", after the opera they had just seen. Having watched Nabucco save the Jews from imminent execution at the hands of an interloper, the executives – and their EU backers – may have thought the name auspicious.

6.

Russia Looks to Spur Yamal LNG with Tax Breaks

24.09.2009, Russia Today

READ MORE: <http://russiatoday.com/Business/2009-09-24/industry-players-look-put.html>

At a meeting with global energy giants, Prime Minister Putin extended an invitation to help develop one of the world's richest hydrocarbon regions on Russia's Yamal peninsula, adding tax breaks to the enticement. In the far north Russia, Yamal's gas reserves total 12 trillion cubic meters – an estimated 70% of all Russian gas. Shell, Eni, Total, E-on and other energy giants came to Salekhard, a city built on the permafrost, to discuss their participation in developing Russia's colossal Arctic gas deposits. Russian Prime Minister added to the invitation, by holding out the prospect of tax breaks.

7.

Russia Could Take Quarter of World LNG Market - Gazprom CEO

24.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090924/156240673-print.html>

Russia could increase its share on the world liquefied natural gas market to 25%, the CEO of Russian energy giant Gazprom said on Thursday. "Russia could take a leading position on the world LNG market and get 25% of the global market," Alexei Miller said at a meeting on the development of gas

deposits. The global market for liquefied natural gas (LNG) will double by 2020, Miller said. "The [LNG] market has grown 70% since 2000, and according to our forecasts it will double by 2020," Miller said.

8.

Russia Could Offer Tax Concessions for New Gas Deposits - Putin

24.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090924/156239180-print.html>

Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin said on Thursday that the Russian government could offer tax concessions for new gas deposits in the country. "I believe it possible to consider creating a concessional taxation period for the term of repaying capital invested in new gas deposits," Putin said at a meeting on developing gas fields on Yamal Peninsula in West Siberia, the world's largest gas producing region. Yamal's proven natural gas reserves make it possible to produce 360 billion cubic meters of gas annually, Energy Minister Sergei Shmatko said. "The potential of natural gas production at explored fields alone on Yamal Peninsula is estimated at 360 billion cubic meters a year for many years to come," Shmatko said, adding that the peninsula's reserves were estimated at over 50 trillion cubic meters.

9.

MEPs Call for Beefed-Up Energy Security Policy

18.09.2009, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/meps-call-beefed-energy-security-policy/article-185562?Ref=RSS>

MEPs yesterday (16 September) urged the European Commission to beef up the early-warning mechanisms that failed during the gas supply crisis in January. The proposed Security of Gas Supply Directive and investments in energy infrastructure provide greater certainty, but early-warning mechanisms need to be reviewed, according to a resolution adopted by the European Parliament plenary. It said that upgrading the Network of Energy Security Correspondents (NESCO) could help avoid future supply disruptions.

10.

Bglobal in Gazprom Deal

14.09.2009, The Financial Times

READ MORE: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/330893c0-a14e-11de-a88d-00144feabdc0.html>

Gazprom, the Russian energy group, has signalled its intention to attack the UK electricity market after it signed a deal with Bglobal, the Aim-traded smart meter and energy data provider. The contract will see Bglobal supply and install its latest smart electricity meters to Gazprom Marketing & Trading's UK retail customers. Companies will increasingly have to measure their carbon footprints and smart meters allow them to accurately measure electricity flow. More than 1m are expected to be installed across the country in the next five years.

XVI. SECURITY

1.

Turkey Test its First Attack Helicopter

29.09.2009, UPI

READ MORE: http://www.upi.com/Security_Industry/2009/09/29/Turkey-test-its-first-attack-helicopter/UPI-20671254237875/

Turkish defense officials praised the maiden voyage of the first Turkish attack helicopter during its test flight at an airfield in Milan, Italy. Dozens of politicians and military officers were on hand for the maiden voyage of the Turkish T-129 reconnaissance and attack helicopter during its first test flight at the Milan facility of its AgustaWestland producer, Turkish daily Today's Zaman reports. "The

T-129 has done maneuvers that no helicopter in its class can," Defense Minister Vecdi Gonul said following the tests. "It was really good even though this is only a prototype."

2.

Medvedev Pledges to Recreate Strong Navy in 10 Years

28.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090928/156280068-print.html>

Russia will recreate a powerful Navy in the next ten years, President Dmitry Medvedev said on Monday at a meeting with military personnel who took part in the Zapad 2009 drills. The Zapad (West) 2009 large-scale joint military exercises being held by Russia and Belarus started on September 18 and will end on Tuesday, with about 12,500 service personnel and up to 200 items of military equipment and hardware having taken part. Asked whether any of Russia's naval fleets are to be replaced now that many vessels have been in service for 20-25 years, Medvedev said: "We are facing the most large-scale task - to reestablish the Navy, as a significant number of our ships - both surface and submarine - are serving their last years now."

3.

Russia, U.S. to Slash nuclear Delivery Vehicles - Medvedev

24.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090924/156243233-print.html>

Russia and the United States are discussing the possibility of slashing the number of nuclear weapon delivery vehicles by over 67%, Russian President Dmitry Medvedev said Thursday. "We are ready to move further and cut the number of delivery vehicles for strategic offensive armaments by more than three times, and this issue is now being discussed at the negotiating table with our American partners," Medvedev told the UN Security Council Summit on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and Nuclear Disarmament. Medvedev said Wednesday after talks with his U.S. counterpart Barack Obama that a new Russian-U.S. strategic arms reduction treaty is likely to be ready in time. Today he reiterated: "We are doing everything possible to sign a relevant document by December."

4.

U.S., Russia Begin Arms Control Talks

22.09.2009, The Washington Times

READ MORE: <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2009/sep/22/us-russia-begin-arms-control-talks/>

A new round of U.S.-Russia arms control talks began Monday, and Russian military specialists predicted they would not be easy, despite President Obama's decision to scrap plans for an Eastern Europe-based missile shield that Moscow opposed. Russian and U.S. diplomats are trying to negotiate a successor to the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) before it expires Dec. 5. The agreement is seen as crucial for both nations to keep an eye on each other's nuclear stockpiles and also add credibility to their efforts to persuade countries such as Iran and North Korea to abandon their nuclear programs.

5.

Yushchenko Says no Foreign Military Bases on Ukraine's Territory

22.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/world/20090922/156209806-print.html>

Ukrainian President Viktor Yushchenko on Tuesday ruled out the deployment of foreign military bases on his country's territory. "The Ukrainian Constitution prohibits the deployment of military bases on Ukrainian territory - I mean military bases of foreign states," he said, speaking at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. He said, however, that his country would continue to seek NATO membership. "Ukraine's NATO membership and Ukraine's independence are synonyms," he said.

6.

Russian Defense Minister Confirms Talks on Purchase of French Warship

19.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20090919/156187716-print.html>

A senior Russian military official confirmed on Saturday that the country's Defense Ministry was currently in talks with France to buy a Mistral class amphibious assault ship. A Russian source close to the negotiations hinted on Tuesday that technical bilateral discussions should be completed soon. "We are holding talks, but no purchases have yet been made," Vladimir Popovkin, in charge of the ministry's department for armaments, told the Ekho Moskvyy radio. A Mistral class ship is capable of transporting and deploying 16 helicopters, four landing barges, up to 70 vehicles including 13 main battle tanks, and 450 soldiers. The vessel is equipped with a 69-bed hospital and can be used as an amphibious command ship.

7.

NATO Chief Proposes Joint Effort with Russia on Missile Defense

18.09.2009, The Washington Post

READ MORE: <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/18/AR2009091800847.html>

The secretary general of NATO called Friday for greater cooperation between the Western alliance and Russia, including the possibility of linking their missile defense systems in an effort to stem proliferation and deter attacks by nuclear-armed nations such as North Korea and, potentially, Iran.

8.

Kremlin Denies Missile Deal with US

17.09.2009, The Financial Times

READ MORE: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/bd061738-a391-11de-a435-00144feabdc0.html>

Russia's foreign ministry has denied that there was a quid pro quo behind the US rejection of the eastern European missile shield. Andrei Nesterenko, spokesman for the ministry, said on Thursday such a reversal would be welcomed by Moscow but any sort of grand bargain with the US "was not consistent with our policy, nor our approach to solving problems with any nations, no matter how sensitive or complex they are".

9.

Missiles Realism

17.09.2009, The Financial Times

READ MORE: <http://www.ft.com/cms/s/0/cbcf74fc-a3ba-11de-9fed-00144feabdc0.html>

The Obama administration had been hinting that it might abandon plans for missile defence bases in Poland and the Czech Republic. This decision was no surprise, and much can be said in its favour. But it is one that needs to be explained with care and supported with other adjustments in defence planning. Otherwise it risks undermining US relations with allies and letting Russia believe that, if pushed, the US will back down.

10.

Russia Set to Finish Development of New Air Defense System

16.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090916/156150066-print.html

Russia's advanced S-500 air defense system could be developed in the next few years, the Air Force commander said on Wednesday. The S-500 is currently at the blueprint stage at the Almaz-Antei company and is expected to be rolled out by 2012. "This work is in progress...I think this system will appear in the near future," Col. Gen. Alexander Zelin said. The new system is expected to outperform Russia's most advanced S-400 as well as the U.S. Patriot Advanced Capability-3 system. The S-400 Triumf (SA-21 Growler) is capable of intercepting and destroying airborne targets at a distance of up

to 400 kilometers (250 miles), and can simultaneously engage up to six targets.

11.

Russia to Decide on Purchase of French Warship by October

15.09.2009, RIA Novosti

READ MORE: http://en.rian.ru/military_news/20090915/156132004-print.html

Technical discussions between Russia and France on buying a Mistral class amphibious assault ship should be completed soon, with a decision on the purchase to follow from Moscow, a source close to the negotiations said on Tuesday. "We are holding technical consultations, which are expected to be completed by the end of September. The results will be reported to Russia's military-industrial commission in order to determine the viability of the purchase," the source said. He added that a group of Russian naval officers had already inspected a Mistral class ship at a French naval base in Toulon. "The officers were shown the interior of the ship and provided with technical data," the official said. The source denied media reports that Russia was considering alternative purchases of the same type of warship from other countries, including the Netherlands and Spain.

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