



# BLACK SEA NEWS UPDATE

EU – BLACK SEA OBSERVATORY

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## **I. ARMENIA**

1.

Armenian opposition debt warning

05.03.2010, IWPR

READ MORE: <http://www.iwpr.net/EN-crs-f-360846>

Armenia's opposition parties fear the government has taken on too much debt in its efforts to support the economy through the global crisis. Armenia has been hard hit by the downturn, and its economy shrank by about 15 per cent in 2009. The government says the collapse would have been still more dramatic had it not boosted spending by borrowing so heavily.

## **II. AZERBAIJAN**

1.

EU representative: EU chairman's visit to Baku highlights Azerbaijan's significance

01.03.2010, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1647225.html>

Spanish Foreign Minister and EU Chairman Miguel Angel Moratinos' visit to Baku highlights

Azerbaijan's significance to the European Union, EU Ambassador to Azerbaijan Roland Kobia told journalists on Monday at a meeting in the Caspian-European Integration Business Club. Moratinos is coming to Azerbaijan on 2-3, March in the framework of regional visit to all South Caucasus states. This is his first visit to the region as the head of Spanish Presidency in the EU.

2.

Azeri colleges allegedly missing European goals

26.02.2010, IWPR

READ MORE: <http://www.iwpr.net/EN-crs-f-360606>

The government is being accused of not doing enough to live up to its international obligations to improve the higher education system. Azerbaijan is one of the 46 signatories to the Bologna Declaration, which obliges European countries to modernise and open up their university systems. Baku was expected to bring its procedures into line with European practice by this year, but students say it is a long way from achieving its goal.

### III. BULGARIA

1.

Bulgaria fears its Greek-owned banks could feel crisis fall-out

07.03.2010, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/99549.php>

While Greece is hoping to rein in its massive deficit with a combination of spending cuts and tax hikes, Bulgarian officials are anxious that austerity measures in its neighboring country could reach Greek-owned Bulgarian banks and drain them of their resources, although bank officials said that won't happen. In Sofia, Bulgarian National Bank Vice-Governor Roumen Simeonov said in an interview with Bulgarian-language mass-circulation daily 24 Chassa that the crisis in Greece and its banking system bore no risks to Bulgaria, the Sofia Echo reported and he said he believed that the country could actually benefit by attracting more business.

### IV. GEORGIA

1.

Saakashvili: Turks came when others abandoned us

11.03.2010, Today's Zaman

READ MORE: <http://www.todayszaman.com/tz-web/detaylar.do?load=detay&link=203949>

Mikheil Saakashvili and Hayati Yazıcı cut the red ribbon to open the Turkish High School in Batumi on Tuesday. It was the Turks who came when all others had abandoned us during adverse times in Georgia, Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili said during the ribbon cutting of a new building for a Turkish school in the Black Sea city of Batumi on Tuesday. "They came at a time when no one wanted to come to Georgia. They came during dreadful times and never left," the president said.

2.

EU president: Georgia is closer to EU than other regional countries

05.03.2010, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1648549.html>

Georgia is much closer to the EU than other countries in the region, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos said today in Tbilisi at a joint press conference with Georgian Foreign Minister Grigol Vashadze. Spain currently chairs the EU. The Spanish minister discussed a wide range of issues between Georgia and the EU at today's meeting with Vashadze. "We are in favor of deepening relations between Tbilisi and Brussels," Moratinos said. He stressed that the sides discussed agreements that are ready for signing.

## V. GEORGIA-RUSSIA

1.

Russian officials brief ICC prosecutors on Georgian war

11.03.2010, Hurriyet Daily

READ MORE: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=russian-officials-brief-icc-prosecutors-on-georgian-war-2010-03-11>

Russian PM Vladimir Putin presses for better ties with Tbilisi as he met a key Georgian opposition leader Nino Burjanadze who has tried to unseat Georgian President Mikheil Saakashvili, Moscow's foe. AFP photo. International Criminal Court prosecutors were briefed this week on Russian efforts to bring to book the perpetrators of alleged abuses in the war with Georgia in 2008, the court said Wednesday.

2.

Georgian diplomat reassures Azerbaijan over opening of border crossing with Russia

05.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE:

[http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgian\\_Diplomat\\_Reassures\\_Azerbaijan\\_Over\\_Opening\\_Of\\_Border\\_Crossing\\_With\\_Russia/1975742.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgian_Diplomat_Reassures_Azerbaijan_Over_Opening_Of_Border_Crossing_With_Russia/1975742.html)

Georgian Deputy Foreign Minister Giga Bokeria told the parliament foreign-relations committee on March 4 that Azerbaijan has no reason to be apprehensive over the reopening of the Zemo/Verkhny Lars border crossing between Georgia and Russia, Caucasus Press reported. Azerbaijani Foreign Minister Elmar Mammadyarov had expressed concern the previous day that the reopening could facilitate the overland transport by Russia of arms to Armenia. Visiting Tbilisi on March 3, Spanish Foreign Minister Miguel Angel Moratinos, whose country currently holds the rotating EU presidency, inspected the border crossing.

3.

Georgian opposition leader says no need to fear Russian attack

05.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE:

[http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgian\\_Opposition\\_Leader\\_Says\\_No\\_Need\\_To\\_Fear\\_Russian\\_Attack/1975878.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Georgian_Opposition_Leader_Says_No_Need_To_Fear_Russian_Attack/1975878.html)

Former Georgian parliament speaker and opposition leader Nino Burjanadze says there are no grounds to believe that Russia is preparing to annex more Georgian territory, RFE/RL's Georgian Service reports. Burjanadze spoke to RFE/RL after talks in Moscow on March 4 with Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin. She described those talks as "interesting" and focusing on almost all aspects of bilateral relations.

## VI. MOLDOVA

1.

Moldova reassures Moscow over EU integration plans

10.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/Moldova\\_Reassures\\_Moscow\\_Over\\_EU\\_Integration\\_Plans/1980165.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Moldova_Reassures_Moscow_Over_EU_Integration_Plans/1980165.html)

Moldovan Deputy Foreign Minister Andrei Popov said the Russian Foreign Ministry was "understanding" of Chisinau's plan for European integration, RFE/RL's Moldovan Service reports. Popov met in Moscow on March 9 with his Russian counterpart, Grigory Karasin, to tell him that Moldova's drive toward integration with the European Union and its improved relations with Romania would not harm Russian interests in the region.

2.

#### Moldovan president won't rule out unification with Romania

01.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/Moldovan\\_President\\_Wont\\_Rule\\_Out\\_Unification\\_With\\_Romania/1971736.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Moldovan_President_Wont_Rule_Out_Unification_With_Romania/1971736.html)

Moldovan parliament speaker and acting President Mihai Ghimpu says nobody will be able to stop the reunification of Moldova with Romania "if people will push" for it, RFE/RL's Moldovan Service reports. Ghimpu told RFE/RL today that although unification is not a goal of the governing Alliance for European Integration, "nobody can say what will happen tomorrow. Who could predict the earthquake in Chile?"

### VII. ROMANIA

1.

#### Romania eases entrance for Moldovans on border

02.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE:

[http://www.rferl.org/content/Romania\\_Eases\\_Entrance\\_For\\_Moldovans\\_On\\_Border/1971951.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Romania_Eases_Entrance_For_Moldovans_On_Border/1971951.html)

Dozens of Moldovans from towns and villages on the Romanian border lined up at the Romanian Embassy in Chisinau to apply for border-traffic passes that allow visa-free entry into the neighboring EU country, RFE/RL's Moldovan Service reports. The embassy began accepting applications for the certificates on March 1 -- the first day that the EU Border Traffic Convention between Romania and Moldova went into force. The agreement allows visa-free border crossing in both directions for people with the certificates. But their movement is restricted to 50 kilometers from the border.

### VIII. RUSSIA

1.

#### Daghestan police ask Medvedev to fire top investigator

10.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/Daghestan\\_Police\\_Ask\\_Medvedev\\_To\\_Fire\\_Top\\_Investigator/1980030.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Daghestan_Police_Ask_Medvedev_To_Fire_Top_Investigator/1980030.html)

The independent trade union of Interior Ministry and prosecutor's office employees in Daghestan has addressed a written request to Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and to Federation Council Chairman Sergei Mironov to fire Aleksandr Bastrykin, head of the Investigative Committee of the federal Prosecutor-General's Office. Their rationale for that demand, as explained by the union's chairman, Magomed Shamilov, to Caucasus Knot, was the proposal Bastrykin floated last week at a meeting of top prosecutor's office staff that Medvedev attended, to create a database containing the fingerprints of the entire North Caucasus population.

2.

#### Five years after Maskhadov's death, situation in North Caucasus remains complex

07.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE:

[http://www.rferl.org/content/Five\\_Years\\_After\\_Maskhadovs\\_Death\\_Situation\\_In\\_North\\_Caucasus\\_Remains\\_Complex/1976899.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Five_Years_After_Maskhadovs_Death_Situation_In_North_Caucasus_Remains_Complex/1976899.html)

Five years ago, on March 8, 2005, the Russian authorities announced the death in a shootout of Chechen President and resistance commander Aslan Maskhadov. His death was a milestone in Russia's struggle to preserve control over the North Caucasus. Just weeks earlier, Maskhadov had unilaterally declared a cease-fire in what was to be the last of a series of overtures to Moscow aimed at negotiating an end to years of fighting that had cost hundreds of thousands of lives.

## **IX. TURKEY-ARMENIA**

1.

Genocide vote to hurt U.S.-Turkey ties, Erdogan warns

06.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/Genocide\\_Vote\\_To\\_Hurt\\_USTurkey\\_Ties\\_Erdogan\\_Warns/1976323.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Genocide_Vote_To_Hurt_USTurkey_Ties_Erdogan_Warns/1976323.html)

A U.S. resolution that branded as genocide the killing of Armenians by Ottoman Turks during World War I will greatly harm U.S.-Turkish relations, Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan has said. NATO member Turkey, an ally crucial to U.S. interests in Iraq, Iran, Afghanistan and the Middle East, has expressed its outrage at the March 4 vote and recalled its envoy to the United States, who returned to Ankara today.

## **X. UKRAINE**

1.

Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovych "forms coalition"

11.03.2010, BBC News

READ MORE: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/8561531.stm>

Viktor Yanukovych's party has secured the support of 235 deputies Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovych's party has formed a coalition that can now appoint a government, the parliament speaker says. The coalition has proposed ex-finance minister Mykola Azarov as prime minister, an alliance member said. Mr Yanukovych had been trying to pull together a loyal coalition after winning presidential polls last month.

## **XI. BLACK SEA**

1.

EU backs Black Sea environmental group

09.03.2010, UPI

READ MORE: [http://www.upi.com/Science\\_News/Resource-Wars/2010/03/09/EU-backs-Black-Sea-environmental-group/UPI-19641268145975/](http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/03/09/EU-backs-Black-Sea-environmental-group/UPI-19641268145975/)

EU members need to take action to contribute to the environmental well-being of the Black Sea, a Romanian delegation said in Brussels. A Romanian delegation told the European Commission in Brussels that Bucharest saw room for improvement in environmental efforts under way in the Black Sea region. Black Sea countries, the Romanian delegation said, "lack the necessary resources and institutional capacity" to tackle environmental challenges on their own. Bucharest said, therefore, that a Black Sea environmental partnership was needed for EU-member states to facilitate environmental progress.

## **XII. BSEC**

1.

Armenia's Representative in BSEC presents his credentials to Secretary General

10.03.2010, Arm Radio

READ MORE: <http://www.armradio.am/news/?part=off&id=16978>

Armenia's newly appointed Permanent Representative in the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization Michael Vardanyan presented his credentials to BSEC Secretary General Leonidas Chrisanthopoulos and conveyed a letter from Armenian Foreign Minister Edwrad Nalbandian. Michael Vardanyan attached importance to Armenia's participation in BSEC activity, noting that throughout his mission he would uphold the efforts targeted at defending Armenia's rights in

different spheres of cooperation and expanding Armenia's participation and social-economic projects. Secretary General Chrisanthopoulos, in turn, appreciated Armenia's active involvement in the Organization's activity, highly assessing our country's clear and constructive approaches and stance targeted at the development of economic cooperation in the region and the raise of efficiency of BSEC activity.

### **XIII. EASTERN PARTNERSHIP**

1.

Budapest discusses GUAM countries' positions consolidation within Eastern Partnership

04.03.2010, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1648826.html>

Informal meeting of heads of the GUAM member states' delegation, who arrived in the capital of Hungary to attend a meeting on the Eastern Partnership with the European Union troika, the Baltic countries and the Visegrad Group, was held in Budapest. During the meeting issues of further consolidation of the GUAM member states' positions within the Eastern Partnership were discussed, the need to develop joint projects to submit to the European Union with a view to joint implementation was stressed, the GUAM Secretariat said.

2.

Eastern Partnership should contribute to resolving Nagorno-Karabakh conflict

03.03.2010, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/politics/foreign/1648659.html>

The EU's Eastern Partnership program will play a role in resolving the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, said Secretary General of Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kingdom of the Netherlands Ed Kronenburg. "When the EU will achieve better relations between the countries of South Caucasus region through the Eastern Partnership, this will positively affect the decision on this important issue for Azerbaijan," said Kronenburg at an official ceremony of opening the Embassy of Netherlands in Azerbaijan.

3.

European Parliament president: Ukraine, EU need each other

01.03.2010, Kyiv Post

READ MORE: <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/nation/detail/60755/>

President of the European Parliament Jerzy Buzek has said he is confident that Ukraine and the European Union need each other, and added that the first meeting of the Euronest Parliamentary Assembly of the Eastern Partnership would be held in Brussels on March 23-24.

He said this in Brussels on Monday at a press conference held after his meeting with Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich.

### **XIV. ENERGY**

1.

Belarus plans to up Russian gas transit by 15% in 2010

10.03.2010, Kyiv Post

READ MORE: <http://www.kyivpost.com/news/russia/detail/61384/>

Belarus plans to increase the volume of Russian natural gas transited through its territory by 15% to 51.3 billion cubic meters in 2010 compared to 2009," an official with the Belarusian Energy Ministry told Interfax. In particular, the Beltransgaz pipeline system will pump 18.5 billion cubic meters of gas compared to 14.3 billion cubic meters in 2009, according to the Energy Ministry.

2.

#### West worries about Russia turning to coal

10.03.2010, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/west-worries-about-russia-turning-coal-news-325434>

European efforts to reduce greenhouse emissions could be undermined by Russian plans to dramatically increase energy production from coal, Western experts said in Brussels yesterday (9 March). Re-thinking Europe's gas supplies after 2009's Russia-Ukraine crisis To be able to honour its gas export contracts, Russia has to turn to coal, said Kevin Rosner, senior fellow at the US Institute for the Analysis of Global Security.

3.

#### Ukraine to join Nord Stream?

09.03.2010, UPI

READ MORE: [http://www.upi.com/Science\\_News/Resource-Wars/2010/03/09/Ukraine-to-join-Nord-Stream/UPI-29141268157626/](http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/03/09/Ukraine-to-join-Nord-Stream/UPI-29141268157626/)

An Ukrainian security expert said Kiev is eager to join European-Russian energy projects such as the Nord Stream pipeline. Ukraine will switch to a more pragmatic foreign policy under its new President Viktor Yanukovich, said Dmitry Vydrin, who helps develop security policies for the president. He added this could include getting involved in Nord Stream -- the European-Russian pipeline project that will link Russia and Germany under the Baltic Sea. The move would be aimed at establishing "greater influence in geo-politics ... because Nord Stream can't be stopped," Vydrin, once an ally of ousted Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko, said Tuesday at a security conference on Ukraine in Berlin.

4.

#### EU hands major cash to 43 energy projects

05.03.2010, UPI

READ MORE: [http://www.upi.com/Science\\_News/Resource-Wars/2010/03/05/EU-hands-major-cash-to-43-energy-projects/UPI-53671267805969/](http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/03/05/EU-hands-major-cash-to-43-energy-projects/UPI-53671267805969/)

The European Commission has decided to fund 43 energy projects across Europe -- mainly natural gas pipelines and power grids -- with more than \$3 billion. The commission Thursday cleared \$3.12 billion from the European Union's \$5.5 energy stimulus package to help finance 43 pipeline and power transmission projects. Around \$2 billion was already allocated for offshore wind power and clean coal projects late last year. The new Energy Commissioner Guenther Oettinger called the funding a "milestone in the history of EU energy policy."

5.

#### Nabucco pipeline focus of Vienna roundtable

05.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/Nabucco\\_Pipeline\\_Focus\\_Of\\_Vienna\\_Roundtable/1976420.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Nabucco_Pipeline_Focus_Of_Vienna_Roundtable/1976420.html)

The German-based Eurasia Transition Group organized a roundtable discussion in Vienna today to discuss Turkmenistan's possible role in the Nabucco gas pipeline, RFE/RL's Turkmen Service reports. Nabucco is planned to transport natural gas from Turkey to Austria. The project is intended to diversify supplies and lessen European dependence on Russian energy sources. Turkey, Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, and Austria signed an intergovernmental agreement on Nabucco in July. The Turkish Parliament ratified that agreement.

6.

Turkey ratifies Nabucco agreement, now must agree with Baku

05.03.2010, Hurriyet Daily

READ MORE: <http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/n.php?n=turkey-ratified-nabucco-agreement-now-it-has-to-agree-with-baku-2010-03-05>

Turkish Parliament approved a bill on a deal signed by Austria, Bulgaria, Hungary, Romania and Turkey to launch Nabucco pipeline project which will link Europe to the Caspian Sea region. Turkey's ratification Thursday of the intergovernmental agreement on the Nabucco project puts supporters of the pipeline further ahead in the race to build Europe's next major natural-gas conveyance system.

7.

Commission wants EU capital for new Bulgarian nuclear plant

03.03.2010, EurActiv

READ MORE: <http://www.euractiv.com/en/energy/commission-wants-eu-capitals-new-bulgarian-nuclear-plant-news-300969>

On a visit to Sofia, Energy Commissioner Guenter Oettinger said yesterday (2 March) that the EU executive is interested in securing "European participation" in financing the Belene nuclear power plant, a project being built in northern Bulgaria by Russia's Atomstroyeksport. Dnevnik, EurActiv's partner in Bulgaria, reports. European investors in the Belene nuclear power plant (NPP), which is at an initial construction phase, needed to be discussed and consultations were going to be held with European and Russian partners.

8.

EU: Ukraine needs to reform gas sector

02.03.2010, UPI

READ MORE: [http://www.upi.com/Science\\_News/Resource-Wars/2010/03/02/EU-Ukraine-needs-to-reform-gas-sector/UPI-83951267559522/](http://www.upi.com/Science_News/Resource-Wars/2010/03/02/EU-Ukraine-needs-to-reform-gas-sector/UPI-83951267559522/)

Ukraine needs to reform its gas sector to draw foreign investments, European officials say. "We need urgent progress on modernization and restructuring of the gas sector," Jose Manuel Barroso, president of the European Commission, said at a news conference Monday with Ukraine's new President Viktor Yanukovich in Brussels. Ukraine is a key energy transit country for the European Union. Nearly 80 percent of Russian gas exports to Europe are sent through Ukraine, satisfying one-fifth of the continent's demand.

## **XV. EUROPEAN UNION**

1.

EU Foreign Policy chief puts focus on neighborhood, showcases Georgia

10.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/EU\\_Foreign\\_Policy\\_Chief\\_Puts\\_Focus\\_On\\_Neighborhood\\_Showcases\\_Georgia/1979641.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/EU_Foreign_Policy_Chief_Puts_Focus_On_Neighborhood_Showcases_Georgia/1979641.html)

Catherine Ashton, the European Union's new high representative for foreign policy, says that reforms in the bloc's immediate neighborhood will be her key priority. Such reforms, she said, will be vital in furthering the bloc's ambition to play a greater role in the world. In her maiden speech to the European Parliament in Strasbourg today, Ashton -- who has come under fire for failing so far to give the bloc's foreign policy a clear shape or purpose -- said the EU must become a major player on the international scene, to protect its interests and values, and to respond to the "enormous" global demand for its presence.

## **XVI. PROTRACTED CONFLICTS**

1.

Azerbaijani MP: If EU wants Nagorno-Karabakh conflict resolution, then it should exert pressure on Armenia

09.03.2010, Trend News

READ MORE: <http://en.trend.az/news/karabakh/1651239.html>

South Caucasus region, including Azerbaijan, is the focus of the European Union's attention, Azerbaijani Parliament's MP believes. "The EU has a special interest in the South Caucasus. Unfortunately, along with it the European Union does not demand of Armenia to end its aggression policy," New Azerbaijan Party Political Council member, MP Aydin Mirzazade said in an interview to the ruling party's website.

2.

Moldovan deputy premier says official talks on Transnistrian settlement to be resumed in 2010

04.03.2010, All Moldova

READ MORE: <http://www.allmoldova.com/en/moldova-news/society/1249046579.html>

The participants in the 5+2 informal meeting, held in Vienna on 1-2 March 2010, agreed, on principle, to resume the official negotiations on the Transnistrian conflict settlement in 2010, which have not been held over the last years. Deputy Prime Minister for Reintegration and Moldova's political representative to the talks on the Transnistrian problem settlement Victor Osipov made the statement at a today's news conference.

3.

Abkhazia: deepening dependence

26.02.2010, Crisis Group

READ MORE: <http://www.crisisgroup.org/home/index.cfm?id=6550>

The historically coveted region of Abkhazia has become even more dependent on Moscow since Russia's controversial recognition a year and a half ago. Russia is financing half the region's budget, and against vigorous Georgian protests, it is spending \$465 million to refurbish existing and build new military installations in the picturesque Black Sea coastal area. Virtually the entire population holds Russian citizenship, and almost all trade is with the northern neighbour. It will take constructive, creative thinking on the part of Georgian, Russian, Abkhazian and international actors alike to restore even a modicum of confidence between the parties to the conflict.

## **XVII. SECURITY**

1.

No START deal needed by April nuclear summit, White House says

10.03.2010, Global Security

READ MORE: [http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw\\_20100310\\_9218.php](http://www.globalsecuritynewswire.org/gsn/nw_20100310_9218.php)

The Obama administration said yesterday it hopes to reach agreement with Russia on a new strategic arms control treaty "in short order," but suggested there is no pressing need to conclude negotiations ahead of the U.S. Global Nuclear Security Summit next month, Agence France-Press reported. Russian Foreign Ministry official Anatoly Antonov, shown last year, has led Russian negotiators in talks aimed at replacing the 1991 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty. The latest round of negotiations began this week.

2.

Russia to sign deal with South Ossetia on military base

09.03.2010, RIA NOVOSTI

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100309/158135270.html>

Russian President Dmitry Medvedev on Tuesday instructed the Defense Ministry to hold talks with

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South Ossetia on signing an agreement on a Russian military base in the former Georgian republic. A similar agreement was signed in Moscow on February 17 with Abkhazia, another former Georgian republic. The agreement was concluded during Kremlin talks between President Medvedev and his Abkhazian counterpart, Sergei Bagapsh, who arrived in Moscow on his first visit since his reelection as president of the tiny region on the Black Sea.

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3.

Much has changed since Russia's last military doctrine

03.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/Much\\_Has\\_Changed\\_Since\\_Russias\\_Last\\_Military\\_Doctrine/1973713.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/Much_Has_Changed_Since_Russias_Last_Military_Doctrine/1973713.html)

The text directly states that Russian military forces may be used to defend Russian citizens abroad, a point that was not in the 2000 version. At the very moment when one part of the Russian establishment is cautiously welcoming a thaw in relations with the United States and NATO, another part of it (evidently the more influential part) has determined the North Atlantic alliance and its actions constitute one of the most serious threats to Russian security. This is made clear in the new military doctrine that was confirmed by President Dmitry Medvedev on February 5.

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4.

Russia holds Black Sea drills "under NATO's watchful eye"

03.03.2010, RIA NOVOSTI

READ MORE: <http://en.rian.ru/russia/20100303/158078913.html>

The Russian Black Sea Fleet practiced an amphibious landing of troops on the coast of Abkhazia as a nearby NATO vessel observed, a Russian Navy source said on Wednesday. He said the drills, involving a dozen warships, were conducted on February 27 in close cooperation with the coast guard forces of the former Georgian republic of Abkhazia and were watched by a U.S. coast guard vessel.

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5.

U.S. warship conducts joint training with Georgia

02.03.2010, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty

READ MORE: [http://www.rferl.org/content/US\\_Warship\\_Conducts\\_Joint\\_Training\\_With\\_Georgia/1972338.html](http://www.rferl.org/content/US_Warship_Conducts_Joint_Training_With_Georgia/1972338.html)

U.S. naval forces started exercises with Georgia's coast guard today along the Black Sea coast, in a sign of Washington's support for the government of President Mikheil Saakashvili. The start of the two-day exercises came as Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) said it had finished setting up a coast guard division in the breakaway region of Abkhazia. Black Sea tensions have eased since a row last year over the seizure by the Georgian coastguard of ships trying to trade with Abkhazia, recognized by Russia as an independent state after a brief war with Georgia in 2008.

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6.

Navy slotted under defense vis a vis Black Sea

01.03.2010, New Europe

READ MORE: <http://www.neurope.eu/articles/99426.php>

Turkmenistan's President Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov in late January at a meeting of the National Security Committee, approved a programme to create naval forces under the jurisdiction of the defense ministry, and will be deployed at the Turkmenbashi Caspian Sea port by 2015. This move was taken to uphold the state's political and military strategy, Turkmenistan.ru reported. Currently possessing 16 patrol boats and standing at 2,000 strong, the joint coast guard and naval base will protect Turkmenistan's maritime interests.

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## XVIII. TRADE

1.

Trading dreams

09.03.2010, Russia Profile

READ MORE: <http://www.russiaprofile.org/page.php?pageid=International&articleid=a1268161287>

Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus could adopt a single currency in the next phase of development in their Customs Union, Russian Deputy Prime Minister Igor Shuvalov said on Friday. Was this a sign of the union's deepening economic ties, or the false veneer of alliance? Economists say the rationale for the Customs Union is sound, but the politics has been a different story.

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