

Pipeline

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Transneft's pipeline to the Pacific coast will be targeting" a wider market, he said. "The government will want to make a difficult decision."

Russia is developing its eastern energy resources at a time when China's domestic fields can't keep up with growing demand. Russia, the world's No. 2 oil exporter, previously focused on extracting oil and gas from western fields for export to Europe.

NATO

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conference will result in agreement on a range of shared concerns. But "it has become a household phrase that NATO has lost the main reason for its existence," added Yastrzhembsky, accusing the alliance of struggling to shake off Cold War-era attitudes.

And despite reform to come to terms with its new challenges, "NATO thinking continues to operate in a period of inertia, which is proven by the Prague summit," he said.

Yastrzhembsky also remarked that 69 percent of Russians share his "negative attitude" toward the organization and believe that it is a "relic" of the past.

The presidential aide was addressing a post NATO Prague summit conference in Moscow, which took place over the weekend.

Last month in Prague, NATO offered membership to Bulgaria, Romania, Slovenia, Slovakia and the former Soviet republics of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

The summit was followed by a brief visit by U.S. President George W. Bush to Russia, during which he tried to ally Putin's reservations over NATO expansion.

Other representatives of Russia's political intelligentsia spoke at the conference, including Dr. Sergei Rogov, director of the U.S.A. and Canada Institute.

Rogov said NATO is experiencing an identity crisis. While the alliance was established to provide collective defense against the Soviet Union, without this finite common enemy it must transform its raison d'être to collective security.

However, NATO does not want to relinquish its function as a defense organization, and this reluctance is creating serious tension, he added.

"This dialectical contradiction between the goals of collective security and collective defense is coming to the fore," Rogov said.

In NATO's defense, U.S. Ambassador Alexander Vershbow said NATO enlargement was aimed at ensuring a secure and stable Europe. Vershbow reiterated U.S. National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice's statement following the Prague summit, that NATO membership of the former communist states, "will help solidify democracy of those countries."

"And to have stable democracies at the door of Russia can only be for the good of Russia," he said.

However, Yastrzhembsky voiced the popular opinion that an alliance representing 26 different states is unlikely to be able to act homogeneously. An increased membership will result in a more amorphous nature and worse management, critics say. ■

Transneft's planned link would cost about \$5 billion and be able to export about 1 million barrels a day of crude to Asia, the Pacific region and the U.S. west coast, Vainshtok said.

Yukos, Russia's No. 2 oil producer, in September agreed with China to study the possibility of building a 2,400-km pipeline to Daqing in north-east China from Angarsk. That \$2.9 billion pipeline would carry 20 million tons of oil a year (400,000 barrels a day) in the five years to 2010.

"It's true there isn't enough oil to support both projects," said Sergei Prisyazhniuk, Yukos's chief China representative. "We know Transneft

prefers the other pipeline project but we think it wouldn't be profitable. We support sending our oil to Daqing. We are not considering the alternative."

One of Russia's deputy energy ministers backed Transneft's proposed pipeline as the stronger of the two projects, though he said two links would be possible.

"If we don't build the Transneft pipeline" to Russia's Pacific coast, "then most likely we won't start serious oil production in Eastern Siberia," said Deputy Energy Minister Vladimir Stanev at the briefing. "We hope that this project will have a nice future." ■

Iraq: New document

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embarrass some nations and companies" cited as having assisted in Iraq's efforts to build weapons of mass destruction, which Baghdad insists it no longer holds.

"But the entire world said yes to [U.N.] Resolution 1141 and they realize the consequences of this resolution," he said.

Saadi said the document was so complete that if the council makes it all public, "this means that the Security Council is participating in the proliferation of materials" relating to prohibited weapons. He said the council already was discussing how to handle the report during a meeting in New York on Tuesday.

The U.N. plane carrying the report landed on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus, where it was transferred in couriers' luggage to two commercial flights. One left Cyprus at mid-morning taking two sets of the



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Iraqi documents to U.N. headquarters in New York via Germany and one leaving direct to Vienna, headquarters of the U.N. nuclear agency, later Sunday.

In New York, the Security Council gets one set, and UNMOVIC — the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission — the other.

A day earlier, Saddam grudgingly apologized to Kuwait for his 1990 invasion. That invasion and seven-month occupation ended only when a huge, U.S.-led force drove Iraq out in February 1991 and led to sanctions and U.N. demands that Iraq give up weapons of mass destruction.

Georgia: Rebel strike

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overnight. Another 12-16 are currently being checked," Paata Gomelauri, spokesman for Georgia's Interior Ministry, told reporters in Tbilisi.

Georgia said in October — just days before the siege of a packed Moscow theater by Chechen rebels — that it had flushed all Chechen militants from its lawless Pankisi Gorge, reputed to be a shelter for the rebels, but Moscow remains skeptical.

"If we paid due attention to checking foreigners before, we would have never encountered problems such as those in the Pankisi Gorge," Gomelauri said, adding police checked mainly ethnic Chechens, as well Russians, Georgians and Nigerians.

Hours before the mass round-up in Tbilisi, Georgian forces killed five militants also suspected of links to the blasts which Moscow swiftly blamed on Chechen separatists.

"As a result of this operation, we destroyed a terrorist gang, which included prominent terrorists sought by Interpol," Nika Laliashvili, spokesman for Georgia's State Security Ministry, told Reuters in Tbilisi.

He said the gang may have been

responsible for kidnapping Peter Shaw, a Briton held captive in Georgia for five months and later freed, but gave no further details.

Itar-Tass said Georgia had extradited Yusuf Krymshamkhalov, an aide to Islamic fundamentalist Achimez Gochiyayev, believed to be behind the 1999 blasts in Moscow and southern Russia.

"Krymshamkhalov has already been handed over to representatives of law-enforcement agencies and the aircraft carrying the terrorist will land at a Moscow airport any minute now," a source in the Russian special services told the agency.

The Kremlin used the 1999 attacks to justify its second drive in 10 years against Chechnya's bid for independence. Since Moscow's October theater siege, Russia, battling Chechen separatists on and off over the past decade, has stepped up its "anti-terrorist operation" in Chechnya, Georgia's turbulent northern neighbor.

A total of 129 hostages died after Russian troops used a powerful narcotic gas to storm the theatre, where a group of armed Chechen rebels held over 800 people hostage for three days, demanding independence for their war-torn republic. ■



PETER LAVELLE'S WEEKLY REPORT

• Looking East, West and inward

For a good part of the past week, the media were focused on Putin's visit to China and India. A lot of print was wasted, one has to assume, out of diplomatic and media politeness. The talk of a strategic triangle including Russia, China, and India is nothing short of comical given Russia's needed and even desired turn toward the West. China and India are good customers for products produced by the former Soviet Union: weaponry and some other high-tech items. The Christian Science Monitor's Robert Marquand in "Putin Pushes 'Strategic Triangle' with China, India," the South China Morning Post's "Scholars at Peking University Say they Regard Putin as the Leader of a Declining State that has Lost its Way" posted by Mark O'Neill and The Russia Journal's "An Indo-Russian-Chinese Alliance: What Bunkum!" by Ajay Goyal cover most of the bases concerning the meaning of Putin's Asian odyssey.

The editorial "Not-So-Fine Balance" posted by Transitions Online has a curious, if unintentional, cosmopolitan quality. On the whole, this is an interesting piece questioning how the Kremlin has used media coverage of last October's terror act in Moscow to detract from what is wrong with Russia's security forces and treatment of the media. However, claiming to take the high moral ground against government secrecy belies the behavior of other governments in the world — namely the United States in its war against terrorism. There won't be a Duma investigation of the theater crisis, but Henry Kissinger will lead the enquiry exploring why 9-11 happened. Transitions Online — out of a sense of fair play — should make known its position on America's secretive government controlled by the terminally opaque Vice President Cheney. America's "war on terrorism" is turning into a catchall for any government to invoke national security over the rule of law — even civic responsibility.

Gazeta.ru's "United Russia to Monopolize Mass Media" would be a great posting of political satire if it weren't the sad truth about the relationship between the state and the media. Some might read this article as the Kremlin's malevolent designs against a free media in Russia. I read it as the farce that it is. Both the media and the Kremlin are like two adolescents trying to figure out their individual identity. This nonsense will continue toward the phase of tragedy before reason prevails — don't hold your breath for that time to finally come.

"Waiting for a Democratic Left" by Dmitri Gliniski — among the plethora of new reports posted by the PONARS folks — is simply excellent. This writer has been suggesting many of the same ideas found in this scholarly work for some time now. At the end of the day, the Communist Party of the Russian Federation has little or nothing to do with the political left. This party is only a sorry reminder of a failed past. This posting is not punditry — it is first class analysis. Keep your eye on Gliniski; he is one of Russia's pre-eminent thinkers of the younger cohort.

Also coming from PONARS is "Walking on Thin Ice: Putin's Rapprochement with the United States on the Background of the Latent Anti-Americanism in Russia" by Eduard Ponarin. As a resident of Moscow for the past five years, I can tell you what is called anti-Americanism is really not much more than a sense of national insecurity. American pluralism is a difficult concept to accept for many Russians today. On top of this, Russia's identity crisis has little to do with Putin's perceived turn to the West. By the time Putin leaves the political scene, Russians will still be trying to figure out who they are.

Peter Rutland, one of my only favorites at the Jamestown Foundation, posts an intriguing piece titled "Rating Putin". President Putin's standing in public opinion polls is sky-high, at over 80%. Rutland explains that Putin is popular more because of what he has done or doing, but rather because of what he stands for. Putin and Bush seem to have at least one thing in common. To read a similar take on the "Putin phenomenon," take a look at RFE/RL's Gregory Feifer in "Analysts Say Putin's Sky-High Ratings Reflect Expectations, Illusions."

Celeste Wallander in The National Interest deserves a compliment for her "Business is Business: Russia, Trade and the 'Axis of Evil.'" Most of the bluster and illogical reasoning behind the Bush Administration's "axis of evil" is put to rest in this piece. Russia needs markets to sell its wares no different than any other country. A point that Wallander does not mention but should be cited: Russia can be a helpful intermediary for the US with countries which are beyond the pale of official interaction. Putin's Russia is open to communication and just about every country willing to listen.

Michael Lelyveld's posting "Moscow Pondering Energy-Restructuring Move" is a good example of when business and politics collide in Russia. Most of the week was dominated by international news; this article deals with the simmering conflict over what to do with Russia energy monopoly United Energy Systems. UES may be the worst run company of its size in the world. This should not surprise anyone. Anatoly Chubais is its CEO.

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