

**PROJECT ON BUSINESS AND POLITICS IN THE
MUSLIM WORLD**

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This is the summary of the (**Russia**)

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**Summary of the Report:
Political:**

Kyrgyz public organizations ask Russia for help

More than 100 people were killed in clashes between ethnic Kyrgyz and Uzbek groups that swept through Kyrgyzstan's south on Friday and Saturday. Hundreds of people were injured in the riots.

Russia, Turkey and Iran Meet, Posing Test for U.S

In remarks at the gathering of regional leaders, the third of its kind dedicated to increasing cooperation and security in Asia, President [Mahmoud Ahmadinejad](#) of Iran said a nuclear agreement brokered by Turkey and Brazil last month was a one-time opportunity and other countries had called to express their support for it. .

Putin: Western Model of Democracy Doesn't Exist

Can you tell me what it is – the Western model of democracy? France has one model of democracy, the USA has another one. A French politician told me once: one can not do anything at the elections in the USA without money – whether they are elections to the Senate or Congress, not to mention the presidential election. There is nothing to do there without a sack of money. So what is that democracy about?" Putin said

Russia, Kazakhstan ready to sign 'wide range' of nuke documents - Rosatom head

Sergei Kiriyyenko said while he was in Kazakhstan on Thursday, cooperation in the nuclear sphere was discussed between Russia and Kazakhstan.

Unilateral sanctions against Iran to worsen situation — Medvedev

The UN sanctions, adopted on June 9, include tougher financial controls and an expanded arms embargo, as well as an asset ban on three dozen companies and a travel freeze on individuals.

France's Sarkozy welcomes Russia's support of new Iran sanctions

The UN Security Council on June 9 voted on a resolution to bring new sanctions against Iran because of its refusal to cease its uranium enrichment program. This is the fourth resolution against the Islamic Republic that the UN Security Council has made toward Tehran.

Economic

BP says oil spill cost it \$1.6 billion

The sum includes dealing with the consequences of the oil spill, work to seal the oil well, and various kinds of payments, including on damages claims.

Medvedev urges for attention to Chechnya's socio-economic development

Among other top priority tasks, the Russian president listed support to enterprises of the real sector of the economy. "Last year, there were difficulties in this sphere, there some problems this year. But if earlier the matter was in the recovery of the real sector, now it is its development that is on the agenda," he noted.

Russia gives Belarus 5 days to pay off \$200 mln gas debt

Miller said under the current contract, the Russian state-run gas monopoly "has grounds to cut gas supplies to Belarus in proportion to its debt."

IMF concerned over Russia's 2010 budget amendments

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) expressed concern on Tuesday over amendments to Russia's 2010 budget that were presented to the lower house of the Russian parliament last week.

Study Links Holocaust to Low GDP

From 1941 to 1944, tens of thousands of Jews were killed in the parts of southern and western Russia under Nazi occupation.

Belarus has five days to decide on paying for Russian gas

Medvedev said he discussed the Belarusian debt to Gazprom at the recent meeting with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko. In his words, the debt to Gazprom nears \$200 million.

Penis Protest Rises to Greet Economic Forum

Measuring 65 meters long and 27 meters across, the light-colored phallus rises and glistens against the imperial-era capital's elegant skyline when the bridge is drawn up to let ships pass in the twilit northern summer nights.

URGENT: France signs on to South Stream gas pipeline project

The document was signed on Saturday at the International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg in the presence of Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and French President Nicolas Sarkozy.

Russia may not borrow on foreign market in 2011 - Finance Ministry

Earlier on Friday, Pankin said the foreign borrowing ceiling limit for 2011 is planned at \$7.5 billion, while Russia will probably borrow less.

Social and Humanitarian:

Russia, U.S. to hold another round of talks on child adoption deal

The first two rounds were held in Moscow this spring. The U.S. side had already received a draft agreement from Russia, and returned an amended text in early June.

Struggle Against Smoking Violates Smokers' Rights?

Would this ban be followed by a ban for listening music, drinking, speaking and thinking? These activities can be distracting, too.

[Russia Today: What's killing us? A look at mankind's deadliest inventions](#)

Something is wrong with this picture. The quality of air in cities leaves much to be desired, tap water is not drinkable, swimming is prohibited in most of the places, and a lifestyle of a city person leads to heart attacks and strokes.

Russian policeman jailed for 9 months over baseball bat beating

The police officer pleaded innocent, saying that he had stopped his car to let two pedestrians pass, but then one of them kicked the car and hit it with a baseball bat.

Russian audiences are famous for their warmth and enthusiasm

Asked to comment on the programme of his upcoming concert and what he has chosen and why he noted, "It is an all zarzuela programme. (Zarzuela is a Spanish lyric-dramatic genre that alternates between spoken and sung scenes, the latter incorporating operatic and popular song). My parents were both zarzuela singers – I was practically born to this music. I think that there is a lot of great, beautiful music in the best zarzuelas, and I am proud and happy to have dedicated a part of my career to bringing it to audiences around the world."

Geo-strategic:

Post-Soviet security bloc to offer emergency aid to Kyrgyzstan

The proposals adopted at the meeting on Monday of secretaries of the security councils of the CSTO members will be passed on to the heads of states for approval.

Over 30 Russian defense industry cos. to take part in Eurosatory 2010

Russian state-owned hi-tech corporation Rostekhnologii (Russian Technology) is the organizer of the Russian exposition at the Eurosatory show.

Russian Strategic Tu-160 Bombers Set New Record

The planes took off from the air base in the town of Engels, in Russia's Saratov region. The pilots of the planes conducted two air refueling operations with the help of Il-78 tanker aircraft. The command picked best crews of Long-Distance Aviation of Russia's Air Force for the mission.

France hands over night vision technology to Russia

The plant in the city of Vologda in central European Russia will assemble the Thales-developed thermal imaging cameras. Localized production will allow Russia to reduce production and maintenance costs by at least 5-10% and manufacture thermal imagers for civilian purposes in the future.

Russian military may have to import armor plate (update)

He added that Russian Armed Forces reform envisions the creation of light brigades equipped with wheeled armored vehicles, medium brigades with a mix of wheeled and tracked vehicles, and heavy brigades with tracked vehicles only.

Soviet Ballistic Missiles Appeared as Bulky Uncontrollable Monsters

Sixty years ago, the first Soviet ballistic missile R-1, analogue of V-2 designed by the team of Sergey Korolyov, entered the Russian Army service. The country that did not have a chance to recover from the horrible war began the era of the rocket and space equipment development. It was the time when Makhmud Rafikov was appointed cameraman at Centrnauchfilm film studio. Now, when the term of his "non-disclosure" agreement has expired, he told *Izvestia* about the details of his secret job.

Detailed Report:

Political:

Kyrgyz public organizations ask Russia for help

Sixty-seven Kyrgyz public organizations asked the Russian authorities on Sunday to send peacekeepers to the Central Asia republic, where ethnic violence claimed the lives of more than 100 people.

"In order to prevent the further spreading of the conflict and social catastrophe over the entire Ferganskaya valley, where more than 20 million representatives of various ethnic groups and nationalities live, we desperately ask that Russian peacekeeping troops be deployed [in Kyrgyzstan]," the public organizations said in a letter to the Russian authorities.

"Russia has always lent a helping hand to our people in difficult years of our history," the letter said.

Cars have been set ablaze, stores, markets and residential houses crushed in the country's second-largest city of Osh and another southern city of Jalalabad. The looters have been rampaging through the streets during the days of rioting.

The situation in the country's south remains strained on Sunday. Groups of people armed with bludgeons and knives have been reported roaming along the streets in Osh.

[A state of emergency was introduced in the entire territory of the Jalalabad region on Sunday.](#) A curfew has been in place in the city of Osh and the neighboring Kara-Suu and Aravan districts.

The Kyrgyz interim authorities asked Russia on Saturday for military help to stop the rioters. Moscow refused to send troops to Kyrgyzstan, but pledged to provide humanitarian assistance to the violence-hit country.

The Russian Emergencies Ministry has sent 5.4 metric tons of medical supplies to Bishkek. Six Kyrgyz citizens who were seriously injured during riots were moved to Moscow for treatment.

[The Russian Defense Ministry sent on Sunday an additional 150 paratroopers to provide security to Russian officers serving at Russia's Kent airbase in northern Kyrgyzstan.](#)

Russia, Turkey and Iran Meet, Posing Test for U.S.

ISTANBUL — Leaders of [Russia](#), Turkey and [Iran](#) convened at a security summit meeting in Istanbul on Tuesday in a display of regional power that appeared to be calculated to test the United States just one day before a scheduled American-backed debate in the [United Nations Security Council](#) on imposing tighter sanctions over [Iran's nuclear program](#).

“We’ve seen a lot of support from the international arena,” he said, according to the Turkey’s official Anatolian News Agency. “This is the voice of everyone’s heart.” Mr. Ahmadinejad also maintained a defiant posture toward the United States.

“If the U.S. and its allies think they could hold the stick of sanctions and then sit and negotiate with us, they are seriously mistaken,” he told a [news conference](#), according to Iran’s state-run Press TV satellite broadcaster. European and American officials say the vote on sanctions could come as early as Wednesday.

Mr. Ahmadinejad said Iran would not repeat its recent offer to send part of its stockpile out of Iran for enrichment. The accord, supported by Brazil and Turkey, was designed to break the deadlock over its nuclear program, according to Iran.

“The Tehran declaration provided an opportunity for the United States government and its allies. We had hoped and

we are still hopeful that they use the opportunity well,” Mr. Ahmadinejad said. “I must say opportunities like this will not be repeated again.”

He added: “We were thinking that the United States President [Barack Obama](#) would make certain changes in the United States policies. We don’t say that we are hopeless. We hope that he can actually get over the present conditions in the time that remains. We are ready for dialogue within the frame of justice and respect.”

The United States contends Iran is trying to develop [nuclear weapons](#), while Iran argues its nuclear program is peaceful. The deal brokered by Turkey and Brazil last month was based on parts of a previous [United Nations](#)-backed offer for Tehran to give up 1,200 kilograms of low enriched uranium in exchange for special fuel for a medical research reactor.

But the agreement infuriated the United States, which is trying to persuade other members of the Security Council, including China and Russia, to vote for tighter sanctions.

Mr. Ahmadinejad was to meet separately on Tuesday with the Russian prime minister, [Vladimir V. Putin](#), at the conference, a move that is likely to worry the United States, which won the support of both Russia and China for sanctions this month.

Mr. Putin, speaking at the conference, said sanctions should not be “excessive” but gave no details on whether Russia would change its mind on the vote. He called Iran’s nuclear program peaceful, a characterization with which Washington disagrees.

“I hold the opinion that this resolution should not be unnecessary, should not put Iran’s leadership or the Iranian people into difficulty,” Mr. Putin said.

The conference reinforces the shifting alignments in this complicated area, where regional powers like Iran and Turkey, a [NATO](#) member, are emerging as bigger players.

Turkey, whose relationship with its longtime ally Israel is fraying, has been mediating in the Balkans, the Caucasus and the Middle East in a new activist foreign policy that has sometimes placed it at odds with Washington, its closest diplomatic and military partner.

Sebnem Arsu contributed reporting from Istanbul, and Alan Cowell from Paris.

Putin: Western Model of Democracy Doesn't Exist

About democracy

“Can you tell me what it is – the Western model of democracy? France has one model of democracy, the USA has another one. A French politician told me once: one can not do anything at the elections in the USA without money – whether they are elections to the Senate or Congress, not to mention the presidential election. There is nothing to do there without a sack of money. So what is that democracy about? Is it democracy of those who have a lot of money? The USA is a presidential republic, Great Britain is a monarchy. All of that are elements of democracy, but what kind of democracy? There is no single model of “Western democracy”. It doesn’t exist.

“Tony Blair is a good friend of mine. His party won the elections under his leadership. Afterwards, Laborites decided that he should step down. Mr. Brown immediately took his position and automatically became the prime minister, without elections. What is it? Democracy? Yes, it is. That is the way it is – good or bad.

Russia, Kazakhstan ready to sign 'wide range' of nuke documents - Rosatom head

ST. PETERSBURG, June 19 (RIA Novosti) - Russia and Kazakhstan are on the brink of signing a number of documents on cooperation in the nuclear sphere, the head of the Russian atomic energy company Rosatom said on Saturday.

"A wide range of documents are on the deciding stage and the 'last leg' of these documents will be finished in a short period of time," Kiriyenko said at the sidelines of the International Economic Forum in St. Petersburg.

The company head did not elaborate on which documents were being drafted for final signing.

Kiriyenko said that Russia and Kazakhstan have a wide range of cooperation in the nuclear sphere, including the construction of a nuclear power plant and the development of uranium mining.

Unilateral sanctions against Iran to worsen situation — Medvedev

Unilateral sanctions against Iran might only aggravate the current situation and inflict damage upon the dialogue with Tehran, the Russian president said.

The United States and European Union [decided to impose new sanctions against Iran](#) this week, in addition to [those approved by the UN last week](#).

"We didn't agree to this when we discussed the joint resolution at the UN. We should act collectively. If we do, we will have the desired result," Dmitry Medvedev said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal.

The new sanctions, which are set to be introduced by the EU and United States, will go further than the UN sanctions, which were softened to secure support of veto-wielding members Russia and China.

The Russian president added that it is necessary to build a constructive dialogue with Tehran but not create problems for civilians in the country.

Russia's Foreign Ministry warned after the Security Council resolution was adopted that any additional sanctions affecting Russian companies or individuals [would bring a response from Moscow](#).

France's Sarkozy welcomes Russia's support of new Iran sanctions

France has welcomed Russia's decision on new sanctions against Iran, French President Nicolas Sarkozy said at [the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum](#) on Saturday.

"I would like to welcome, in particular, the decision by President Medvedev in regard to voting for sanctions on the Iran issue. This (sanctions) would be impossible if he had not made this choice," Sarkozy said.

Sarkozy noted that Russia and France have very similar positions on many international issues.

The new resolution seeks sanctions against Iranian banks operating abroad if there is suspicion that they are operating in the development of Iran's nuclear or rocket programs. A UN embargo has also been expanded to forbid arms deliveries to Iran.

The construction of the Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran will not be affected by the new UN sanctions against the Islamic Republic, a Foreign Ministry spokesperson said on Friday.

The construction of Iran's first nuclear power plant began in 1975 by German companies.

However, the firms stopped work after a U.S. embargo was imposed on high-technology supplies to Iran following the 1979 Islamic Revolution and the subsequent U.S. Embassy siege in Tehran.

Russia signed a contract with Iran in February 1998 to complete the plant.

The planned sale of Russian S-300 air defense systems fell under the sanctions, which means Russia will not sell the weaponry to Iran.

The S-300 contract is worth some \$800 million, while Russian officials estimate the forfeit penalty for the S-300 contract at \$400 million.

Economic:

BP says oil spill cost it \$1.6 billion

BP said in a press release Monday that it already paid \$1.6 billion for April's major oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico that led to an environmental disaster.

An explosion ripped through the Deepwater Horizon oil drilling rig, about 50 miles off the Louisiana coast, on April 20, causing a major oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

Oil continues to gush from the broken well into the sea despite weeks of work and millions of dollars spent to stop the leak.

U.S. President Barack Obama has sharply criticized BP, urging the company to contain the spill as soon as possible and expedite work to stop oil gushing.

Initially BP underestimated the environmental damage it caused. BP CEO Tony Hayward even said his company would restore the Gulf of Mexico coastline "to its original state."

Hayward once apologized for the disaster - the worst oil spill in U.S. history that claimed 11 lives - but told journalists a controversial phrase "I'd like my life back."

Medvedev urges for attention to Chechnya's socio-economic development

GROZNY, June 14 (Itar-Tass) -- Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, who arrived in the Chechen capital for a working trip on Monday, has called to pay paramount attention to the republic's socio-economic development.

Addressing a conference here, he suggested "to go over the painful points and to see what has been done."

"There is a special target program of Chechnya's socio-economic development for 2008-2011. There is a fixed volume of financing – 120 billion roubles. We shall see how the money is being allocated, how it is spent, what is being done to achieve targeted figures, what is to be done next, including the program funds after 2011," he said.

"Certain state financing will be needed for these purposes, even a certain volume of privileges might be needed," he went on to say. "In some cases of agricultural enterprises, I think, the subsidizing of a part of loan interest rate might be needed."

According to Medvedev, one of the most difficult problems facing the agricultural sector is its poor provision with relevant machinery. "Funds are needed to upgrade the motor vehicle fleet on a large scale," he said.

He also dwelled on the problem of social facilities. "What we have seen looks quite all right, but priorities must be singled out in this sphere," he noted.

The president called to be attentive to problems of infrastructure facilities such as hydro-technical facilities, many of which have either been either destroyed or become obsolete.

Russia gives Belarus 5 days to pay off \$200 mln gas debt

Russia is giving Belarus five days to pay off its \$200 million gas debt, President Dmitry Medvedev said on Tuesday.

"If this is not done, tough measures will have to be taken," he stressed.

He directed Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller to get in touch with the Belarusian authorities and urge them to pay off the debt as soon as possible.

"Belarus continues to pay for gas deliveries at 2009 prices," he said.

Medvedev said he had discussed the gas debt with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko at a recent meeting and that the Belarusian debt was around \$200 million.

Miller said Gazprom had sent two official letters to the Belarusian authorities.

"We have received no clear answer as to when the debt will be paid off," he said.

Medvedev said Lukashenko had attributed the debt to his country's "difficult financial situation."

"Frankly speaking, everyone is in a difficult situation today, and Gazprom also has plenty of problems," Medvedev said.

Belarus refuses to pay the Russian gas price, set at \$169 per 1,000 cubic meters in the first quarter of the year and \$185 in the second quarter, and has been paying \$150 since January 1 instead. A Russian official said it "plucked this price out of thin air."

The Belarusian debt could reach \$500-600 million by year-end if the situation is not resolved.

Lukashenko said in late May his country was ready to hand over its Beltransgaz pipeline operator and Mozyr oil refinery in exchange for domestic Russian prices for oil and gas.

Moscow and Minsk faced off at the start of the year over tariffs on imports of Russian oil, which Belarus said should be completely duty-free in the mooted Customs Union, which also included Kazakhstan.

IMF concerned over Russia's 2010 budget amendments

The head of the IMF's mission Russia, Paul Thomsen, told a news conference on the results of Russia-IMF consultations that the amendments could aggravate the current deficit of the federal budget.

He added that, according to the IMF's estimates, Russia's budget deficit in 2010 will reach 5.9% of gross domestic product (GDP), rather than 5.4%, as Russian experts have predicted.

Thomsen linked this to lower forecasts for mid-year oil prices than had originally been expected.

He also said that despite a dramatic improvement in the macroeconomic situation in Russia, the government should expand the monitoring functions of the Central Bank, including in the credit services sphere

Study Links Holocaust to Low GDP

By Peter France and Maria Antonova

2 hours ago

A new study suggests that the annihilation of Soviet Jews during the Nazi occupation has led to lower economic growth and more reactionary politics in those 11 regions where the Holocaust was most brutal.

While the human cost will never be adequately counted, a new study suggests that the killing of the Jews has led to lower economic growth and more reactionary politics today in the 11 regions where the Holocaust was carried out most intensely.

“Cities that experienced the Holocaust most intensely have grown less, and [regions] where the Holocaust had the largest impact have lower GDP per capita and lower average wages today,” according to the study by three U.S. economists. “In addition, these same cities and oblasts exhibit a higher vote share for Communist candidates since the collapse of the Soviet Union.”

As units of the German army quickly penetrated deep into Soviet territory in the summer of 1941, they were followed by Einsatzgruppen, SS paramilitary death squads tasked with ensuring control over the conquered territories. By August 1941, they were engaged in the wholesale eradication of many of the Jewish populations.

The specific number of slain Jews is contested: Some estimates put the number of Jews killed throughout the Soviet Union at about 800,000. The absolute minimum number of Jews killed on Russian territory over the period was 135,000 — the number the Einsatzgruppen reported in dispatches to Berlin.

Whatever the number, comparing population data from Soviet censuses in 1939 and 1959 shows that the Jewish population in the 11 regions diminished by more than 39 percent on average, according to the new study conducted by Daron Acemoglu of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Tarek Hassan of the University of Chicago and James Robinson of Harvard University.

The study finds that the regions had lower levels of gross domestic product per capita and lower average wages in 2002. On average, regions under Nazi occupation had an average 2002 GDP per capita of \$4,554.80, compared with the average throughout the country of \$5,854.67.

Also correlated with the Nazi occupation were the region’s political views: Those that suffered most under Nazi occupation tended to vote more for Communist candidates in the 1990s and demonstrated higher levels of support for preserving the Soviet Union.

Data from State Duma election suggest that for every percentage point increase in prewar Jewish population in the regions, the share of the Communists’ vote in the 1999 and 2002 elections increased 11 percent.

The 11 regions that suffered for at least six months under Nazi occupation are Belgorod, Bryansk, Karelia, Kursk, Leningrad, Novgorod, Oryol, Pskov, Rostov, Smolensk and Voronezh.

The study’s authors conjecture that the killing of the Jews, who made up a disproportionate share of the white-collar occupations in those regions, negatively affected the social structure in the regions, ridding them of their most productive members.

Before World War II, more than 67 percent of Russian Jews held jobs that could be considered white-collar, while only about 15 percent of non-Jews had such occupations.

“Bryansk laid just near the line of the Pale of Settlement, so it always had a large Jewish population,” said Bella Vishnevskaya, who co-authored a book on how the Holocaust affected the Bryansk and Oryol regions, which were both part of a larger Oryol region during the war. The Pale of Settlement was a region of tsarist Russia where Jews were allowed permanent residency.

“Although some Jews were workers, most were doctors, engineers, midlevel supervisors, and even district party officials,” Vishnevskaya said.

The study said the Jewish population comprised up to 9 percent of the white-collar occupations in the Bryansk region.

Vishnevskaya, who was not involved in the study, said she found it interesting because Oryol, her home region, remains very economically depressed to this day. “I work as a teacher, and our minimum wage is 3,000 rubles this year, while it’s 4,300 in the rest of the country,” she said.

While the correlation between economic growth and the change in the Jewish population is robust, the study’s authors caution that the relationship may be influenced by some unknown factor.

“We may have not been able to account for everything,” Robinson told The Moscow Times on Tuesday. “But you have to start somewhere, and this is the first attempt to raise this question, and hopefully it will encourage other people to look at it with more detail.”

The study limits the effect of other influencing factors on the correlation by filtering out factors such as the prewar economic characteristics of the regions and other destructive effects of the Nazi occupation.

“We are interested in long-run economic development, and looking at how large historical events have impacted long-run processes of development,” Robinson said. “We realized that nobody really studied this question properly, and Russia had data necessary to examine this question properly.”

Belarus has five days to decide on paying for Russian gas

GORKI, June 15 (Itar-Tass) -- Belarus has five days to make a correct decision on paying for Russian gas.

“The contract allows us to reduce gas deliveries to Belarus proportionately with its debts to Gazprom,” Gazprom CEO Alexei Miller told President Dmitry Medvedev on Tuesday.

“That is what we will do: we will give five days to our Belarusian colleagues so that they can make a decision. After all, we are partners,” Medvedev said. “You will offer Belarusian colleagues to urgently pay the debts. If they refuse, we will have to apply strict measures.”

“Belarus continues to pay for gas in last year’s prices,” Miller remarked.

Gazprom sent two official letters to Belarus “but did not receive an answer when the debt might be repaid,” he said.

“I had spoken to Alexander Grigoryevich [Lukashenko], and he told me that the situation [the gas debts] resulted from the complicated financial situation. To be frank, everyone, including Gazprom, has problems at present,” Medvedev said.

Belarus is capable of paying the debt, Miller said. He noted that \$2.5 billion worth of Beltransgaz shares compensated the price rise. Gazprom has fully repaid 50% stake in Beltransgaz, he said. “The last tranche of \$625 million for 12.5% stake was transferred this year,” Miller said.

“Thus, Belarus has fully received Gazprom’s payment for Beltransgaz shares and it is capable of paying for Russian gas in keeping with the contract 2010,” he noted.

Penis Protest Rises to Greet Economic Forum

ST. PETERSBURG — Radical artists painted a giant protest penis on a drawbridge in central St. Petersburg ahead of an international economic forum, police said Wednesday.

Artists from the politically minded art collective [Voina](#), or War, said they drew the graffiti on Monday to protest the heightened security measures expected at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, which opens Thursday.

Unsanctioned political art or public messages in the form of graffiti and painting are extremely rare in Russia.

"We have painted a giant phallus to show what the FSB and Interior Ministry are doing in terms of security for the forum," Voina said in a statement.

When the bridge is opened, the erect-looking penis stands beside the local headquarters of the FSB, or Federal Security Service.

The forum will draw international business leaders and will be attended by President [Dmitry Medvedev](#). St. Petersburg is the hometown of both Medvedev and Prime Minister [Vladimir Putin](#), a former KGB officer and FSB chief.

The phallus was still visible Wednesday, when one of the artists was fined by police, a spokesman said.

Voina became a household name in the Russian blogger scene two years ago when it filmed five couples having sex a day before Russia's last presidential election. The stunt was seen as a wry pun on the handover of power.

URGENT: France signs on to South Stream gas pipeline project

Russian gas giant Gazprom, Italian gas company Eni, and France's Electricite de France (EdF) signed a memorandum of understanding, bringing the French company into the [South Stream gas pipeline](#).

The Russian and Italian companies will each give Edf 10% of their shares, or 20% of the South Stream gas pipeline project.

South Stream, with an estimated price tag of 25 million euros, will connect Russia and the EU across the Black Sea and the Balkans, bypassing Ukraine.

Gazprom said last week it was ready to start South Stream's construction in 2013 and should begin pumping gas to Europe by 2015.

Russia may not borrow on foreign market in 2011 - Finance Ministry

Russia may not enter the market of foreign borrowings in 2011, Deputy Finance Minister Dmitry Pankin said on Saturday.

"We will act on the situation, it's not sure that we will enter [the market of foreign loans]," he said.

This year, Russia entered the market of foreign loans for the first time since 1998, placing \$5.5 billion sovereign Eurobonds. Initially, the ceiling limit of foreign loans for this year was set at \$17.8billion, but later, these plans were curtailed.

Social and Humanitarian:

Russia, U.S. to hold another round of talks on child adoption deal

Russia and U.S. will start the third round of talks on a bilateral child adoption agreement on Monday in Washington, the press service of the Russian child ombudsman said.

Russia's child ombudsman Pavel Astakhov said the amendments were "immaterial in nature," and did not "go beyond agreements, previously reached during talks in Moscow."

"It is important that this round is the final one," Astakhov said, adding that the Russian and U.S. presidents will meet before the end of June. "And such a meeting would mark a permanent settlement of the issue and approval by the heads of the states of the agreements reached on the U.S. adoption of Russian children."

Dmitry Medvedev and Barack Obama are likely to meet on the sidelines of the G8 and G20 in Canada at the end of June, although Astakhov said the agreement did not need to be signed by the presidents.

Russia is one of the largest sources of foreign adoptions for U.S. families, accounting for about 10% of foreign adoptions, but the issue has become controversial in recent years following several incidents involving the mistreatment of Russian children in the United States.

In a recent incident, a 7-year-old boy was put on a plane alone to Moscow with a note from his U.S. adoptive mother, who claimed he was "psychopathic."

At least 15 children have died at the hands of their adoptive parents in the U.S. since the end of the Soviet Union, and the issue has seen repeated calls for a ban on foreign adoptions of Russian children. Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov has said Russia could freeze child adoptions by U.S. citizens until the countries sign a formal agreement regulating them.

Struggle Against Smoking Violates Smokers' Rights?

Members of the State Duma are preparing a new revision of the legislation limiting tobacco smoking. Would this ban be followed by a ban for listening music, drinking, speaking and thinking? These activities can be distracting, too. Cigarettes are not healthy, but they help smokers relax and concentrate. The appropriate solution that does not violate anyone's right is very simple

It is an interesting piece of legislation because it means that if legislators are busy with laws like these there are no more complicated issues left in Russia, at least in traffic and health protection areas.

[Russia Today: What's killing us? A look at mankind's deadliest inventions](#)

But the "civilized world" is concerned with fighting smoking. Smokers turned into oppressed minority. I am not pleading for everyone to smoke; it is definitely an unhealthy habit.

But Russia considers itself to be a liberal and democratic country. Yet, the impairment of smokers' rights looks quite strange. Of course, there are plenty of places where smoking is not allowed, for instance, gas stations or airplanes. Smoking in public places might not be a good idea either.

But why the society that is fighting for the protection of non-smokers' rights impairs the rights of smokers? This cannot be justified by the care for their health. Fast food is harmful, too, and real meat is hard to find in sausage, and other foods do not contain too many natural ingredients.

Adults should be responsible for themselves. If they want to breathe smoke let them do it. In many cities smog is much more dangerous than cigarette smoke.

It seems logical to protect the right of non-smokers to breathe fresh air. However, elimination of designated smoking places by many businesses makes employees spend half an hour for a cigarette since they have to leave the building and come back. Some do not even have a right to go for a smoking break, which does not have a very positive influence on their performance.

Cigarettes are not healthy, but they help smokers relax and concentrate.

The appropriate solution that does not violate anyone's right is very simple. It is separate sections for smokers and non-smokers, designated smoking areas, etc. I think that using stairs and toilets for smoking is much worse than using specially designated areas, both for smokers and non-smokers.

Some like to say "you are smoking around kids!" In this case it is clear that situations can be different. It is not a good idea to smoke in a kindergarten, but if you come to a smoking section in a restaurant with a kid it is another story.

If the modern society protects liberties, it should protect everyone's liberty, not those of select groups.

Russian policeman jailed for 9 months over baseball bat beating

A court in western Siberia has sentenced a policeman who beat a pedestrian with a baseball bat to nine months in prison, Russian prosecutors said Tuesday.

"A police officer rode his private car in the evening in the Zheleznodorozhny District of the city of Barnaul and saw two people walking along the road," Altai Territory prosecutors said in a statement.

"He stopped the car, took out a wooden baseball bat and deliberately made at least four strikes to the head of one of them," it said.

The police officer said he only hit the victim in response.

The court in Barnaul said the victim also committed an offense because he kicked the police officer's car. It was unclear, however, what if any punishment the victim would face.

Russian audiences are famous for their warmth and enthusiasm

*Celebrated Spanish tenor **Placido Domingo** will give a concert at the Crocus City Hall in Moscow on Monday. Before his departure for the Russian capital the maestro answered Itar-Tass' written questions.*

To a question about his overall impression of the contemporary Russian opera scene and if there are people working there he admires, promising new names and what his first musical impression coming to mind when he thinks about Russia was, Domingo replied, "Just look at the results of my Opera competition! Almost every year there are winners from Russia. This year there was the soprano Dinara Alieva, last year the soprano Julia Novikova and the tenor Alexei Kudrya – the list goes on and on. Obviously the training in Russia is still excellent, and there is an incredible amount of talent. But this is no surprise: since the 19th century Russia has produced some of the greatest composers, conductors, singers, and instrumentalists in the world."

Asked if Russian audiences are any different from others around the world and if there are specific issues that make singing in Russia easier or harder than elsewhere – for example, some Russian singers say (probably because of air conditioning) that in DC the air is drier which makes their work more difficult, Domingo replied, “That’s funny, because most people complain that the climate in Washington is too humid! I don’t remember having any particular difficulties singing in Russia, with respect to climate or otherwise. As for the audiences: Russian audiences have long been famous for their tremendous warmth and enthusiasm, and I can’t imagine that that has changed.”

Geo-strategic:

Post-Soviet security bloc to offer emergency aid to Kyrgyzstan

The post-Soviet Collective Security Treaty Organization will offer emergency assistance to law-enforcement agencies in Kyrgyzstan, where more than 100 people have died in four days of ethnic clashes.

"They have enough strength for today, but do not have enough equipment, helicopters, ground transportation, logistics and even gasoline, oil and lubricants," said Nikolai Bordyuzha, the group's secretary general.

Bordyuzha told Russian President Dmitry Medvedev that if approved "as the top-priority measure to restore order, this plan will work."

"But we offer a range of measures - right up to assisting in joint activities to identify the organizers of the riots and bring them to justice," he added.

Russian Security Council Secretary Nikolai Patrushev said the Kyrgyz representative thoroughly briefed the participants on the situation in the country.

"There was an active exchange of views, it was an analysis of the situation in the country," Patrushev told Medvedev.

The government in Kyrgyzstan said on Monday that 124 people had died in ethnic clashes that began in the southern city of Osh on Thursday and have spread to the wider region. Tens of thousands of ethnic Uzbeks have fled to neighboring Uzbekistan.

After the security chiefs meeting, the CSTO said Kyrgyzstan's current steps were insufficient to deal with the ethnic violence and urged the interim government to take all necessary additional steps to quickly restore order in the country.

"The efforts by the provisional government of Kyrgyzstan to stabilize the situation in the country are still insufficient," the CSTO said in a statement.

The Russia-dominated security grouping also includes Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan.

Over 30 Russian defense industry cos. to take part in Eurosatory 2010

More than 30 Russian companies will take part in the Eurosatory 2010 armaments exhibition that opens in Paris on Monday, the Russian federal military cooperation service said.

Eurosatory has been held every two years since 1992.

"Thirty-four Russian organizations will take part in the exhibition; twelve of them will present military products in the form of 300 exhibits," the Russian federal service said.

Russian state-run arms exporter Rosoboronexport will present modern tanks, infantry vehicles, artillery and rocket launchers.

Eurosatory's total area is 110,000 square meters. This year, 1,200 participants from 52 countries are expected.

The show will close June 18.

Russian Strategic Tu-160 Bombers Set New Record

Russia's two strategic Tu-160 bombers have successfully completed a record 23-hour flight. Vladimir Drik, an official spokesman for the Russian defense ministry, stated June 10 that the flight continued for 23 hours. The planes covered the distance of nearly 18,000 kilometers, *RIA Novosti* reports.

It was a second task during the time when long-distance flights were performed on Tu-160 bomber planes. Last year, the longest flight performed by Tu-160 bomber continued for nearly 21 hours.

Two Tu-160 bombers flew along the state border of the Russian Federation across the neutral waters of the Arctic and Pacific oceans. The planes landed safely on June 10 at the air base in Engels.

The Tupolev Tu-160 (NATO reporting name: Blackjack) is a supersonic, variable-geometry heavy bomber designed by the Soviet Union. It is similar in appearance to the American B-1 Lancer but is an entirely different class of aircraft, being a standoff missile platform. The Tu-160 is also significantly larger and faster than the B-1B and has a greater combat range. It is also the largest variable-sweep combat aircraft ever built.

Although several civil and military transport aircraft are bigger, the Tu-160 has the greatest total thrust, and the heaviest takeoff weight of any combat aircraft, and the highest top speed as well as one of the largest payloads of any current heavy bomber. Pilots of the Tu-160 call it the "White Swan", due to its maneuverability and anti-flash white finish.

Entering service in 1987 with the 184 Guards Bomber Regiment, based at Priluki, Soviet Union, the Tu-160 was the last strategic bomber designed by the Soviet Union. The aircraft remains in limited production, with at least 16 currently in service with the Russian Air Force.

Russia plans to modernize the bombers so that they could carry air bombs in addition to cruise missiles and use communication through space satellites. One plane can carry up to 40 tons of weapons including several types of guided missiles, air bombs and other nuclear and conventional attack weapons.

France hands over night vision technology to Russia

Russia's state arms exporter Rosoboronexport said Tuesday it had signed several contracts with the French defense firm Thales on the transfer of technology and delivery of communications equipment for Russian armored vehicles.

"The first contract involves transfer of technologies to Russia, which now will have the right to produce officially licensed thermal imagers at Vologda Optical and Mechanical Plant," said Igor Sevastyanov, Rosoboronexport deputy director general.

"The second contract provisionally allows Russia to bring in communications equipment for integration into Russian armored vehicles for testing," Sevastyanov said. He added that the communications equipment would be mounted on T-90 tanks and BMP-3 armored personnel carriers.

Rosoboronexport did not specify the sum of the contracts.

Civilian uses of the thermal imagers could include monitoring the efficiency of thermal insulation and detection of heat leaks, among other applications.

Russia may only be able to export thermal imagers produced at its plant with the permission of the French authorities. The list of potential customers will exclude so-called rogue states such as Iran.

According to experts, Russia is lagging 20-30 years behind the West in many areas of technological progress and has recently started attempting to close the gap by purchasing production licenses abroad.

Russian military may have to import armor plate (update)

The Russian Defense Ministry will wait for an answer from experts before it decides whether to buy foreign technology for the production of armor for light military vehicles, a senior military official said Tuesday.

"The decision on the purchase of light armor or its production technology [abroad] has not been made yet," Deputy Defense Minister for Arms Procurements Vladimir Popovkin said at the Eurosatory-2010 arms show in Paris.

"Our research centers have not given us an answer as to whether they are ready and capable of producing this type of armor. If they are, we will make our own armor, but if they are not, we will find ways to acquire Western technology for production in Russia," Popovkin said.

Russian Defense Minister Anatoly Serdyukov has said that Russia may purchase light armor or technology for its production from Germany.

According to experts, Russia is 20-30 years behind the West in many areas of military technological progress and has recently moved to close the gap by purchasing production licenses abroad.

Serdyukov was quoted as saying in late May Russia planned to set up the production of Italian armored vehicles - Iveco manufactured Light Multi-role Vehicles (LMV).

He said an assembly line could be set up "in three to four months" with imported components, but that it would take several years for production to be fully localized, adding Russia had already bought at least two LMVs for "testing purposes."

A source at the KamAZ automaker confirmed talks were underway on LMV assembly under license at Naberezhnye Chelny, where the Russian plant is based.

In mid-March the Russian Defense Ministry dismissed media reports that it was planning to purchase up to 1,000 Iveco M65 LMVs.

Italian LMVs have been used in Iraq, Afghanistan and other NATO missions abroad, where their performance has been praised.

Soviet Ballistic Missiles Appeared as Bulky Uncontrollable Monsters

Sixty years ago, the first Soviet ballistic missile R-1, analogue of V-2 designed by the team of Sergey Korolyov, entered the Russian Army service. The country that did not have a chance to recover from the horrible war began the era of the rocket and space equipment development. In the beginning, missiles could not fly and generally were very uncontrollable. When they learnt how to fly, they did not always land where they were supposed to land

In the beginning, missiles could not fly and generally were very uncontrollable. When they learnt how to fly, they did not always land where they were supposed to land. It often created risky situations for cameramen who had to point their lenses at them from Earth. Makhmud remembered that once an undershoot occurred and the missile that was launched 150 kilometers from the bunker exploded only a couple of kilometers from the place of the shoot. One of the crew members told the general who got out of the bunker: you are safe there behind the concrete walls, while we are risking taking the air at -20°C. In very firm words the general recommended that the crew disappeared. Makhmud told him they were sent by Korolyov. The general went back into the bunker, leaving the freezing crew members in the dark. Finally his aide emerged from the bunker and said that Korolyov stated that he could get rid of the general but not the crew. Korolyov believed that if the result was not on film, it meant it did not exist. Experiments last seconds, but the film can be watched over and over again. It was very important that cameramen were always near the testers.

Since rocket engineers had to have the image of their work from above, it was decided to conduct a shoot of the launching range from a plane. Makhmud said he colleagues were not very

eager to do it. One of the crew members had a breakdown when he saw the consequences of the nuclear explosion on Earth. Rafikov agreed to shoot and filmed launching of missiles and tests of nuclear and, later, hydrogen bombs. Korolyov and Kurchatov greatly appreciated these shots because they could clearly see the results of the engineers' work.

What were the distances between the places of explosion and the shoot location?

“It varied depending upon the power of the explosion. For nuclear blasts it was eight, five, sometimes three kilometers. The distance was higher with hydrogen blast, about 25 kilometers.”