

## *SPPI News Search 9-19-08*

### **RUSSIA THREATENS TO SEIZE SWATHE OF ARCTIC**

The Daily Telegraph, 18 September 2008

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/russia/2976009/Russia-threatens-to-seize-swathe-of-Arctic.html>

President Dmitry Medvedev said that Russia should unilaterally claim part of the Arctic, stepping up the race for the disputed energy-rich region.

By Miriam Elder in Moscow

"We must finalise and adopt a federal law on the southern border of Russia's Arctic zone," Mr Medvedev told a meeting of the Security Council, in remarks carried by Interfax news agency.

"This is our responsibility, and simply our direct duty, to our descendents," he said. "We must surely, and for the long-term future, secure Russia's interests in the Arctic."

***Global warming has stepped up the fight for the disputed Arctic, believed to be laden with vast reserves of oil and gas.*** Russia has pitted itself against Canada, Denmark, Norway and the United States to fight for a greater part of the region, arguing that most of it is Russian territory since an underwater ridge links Siberia to the North Pole's seabed.

Last August, a Russian mini-submarine carrying politicians and scientists plunged to the depths of the Arctic and claimed to plant a Russian flag to mark Moscow's stake in the territory.

Footage of the alleged planting was widely broadcast on Russian television - but later turned out to be images taken from the Hollywood blockbuster Titanic.

Under international law, each of the five countries that lay claim to the Arctic own a 320-kilometre zone that extends north from their shores. That arrangement is up for UN review in May next year.

***Vladimir Putin, now Russia's prime minister, has said global warming is good for Russia - melting its vast icy territories to reveal previously inaccessible oil and gas reserves.***

With oil production declining - and Russia's oil-fuelled power rising - it is keen to grab ever more.

"This region has strategic significance for us. Its development is directly tied to solving the long-term tasks of the state and its competitiveness on global markets," Medvedev said.

Russia's leaders have not held back on stoking issues sure to rile the West in recent days, despite a drastic drop in its markets, fuelled by the global credit crisis and compounded by loss of investor confidence in Russia after its war with Georgia.

***Medvedev's statements on the heated Arctic issue came one day after Putin said that Russia's defence spending would rise 27 per cent next year to nearly \$100 billion (£30 billion).***

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## **PRESIDENT MEDVEDEV THREATENS RUSSIAN ARCTIC ANNEXATION**

The Times, 18 September 2008

<http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/news/world/europe/article4773567.ece>

Tony Halpin in Moscow

Russia triggered a fresh scramble for the oil wealth of the Arctic yesterday when President Medvedev called on his security chiefs to establish a formal border in the region.

Mr Medvedev laid claim to a vast tranche of the Arctic, telling his National Security Council that it had "strategic importance" for Russia. The US Geological Survey estimates that the region contains 90 billion barrels of oil, as well as gas reserves - all of it increasingly accessible as global warming shrinks the ice cap.

"We must wrap up all the formalities for drawing the external border in the continental shelf. This is our direct responsibility to future generations," Mr Medvedev told the Kremlin meeting.

Nikolai Patrushev, the director of the council, said that Russia would defend its interests in the Arctic against rival claims from the United States, Canada, Norway and Denmark. "We must define the borders in the north of our country, where the Arctic lies. Our estimate is that it makes up 18 per cent of our territory. And we are saying that 20,000km of the state border runs in this region."

The Federal Security Service under Mr Patrushev created a special Arctic Directorate in 2004 to further Russian interests in the region. He even flew to the North Pole to plant a Russian flag.

The order to assert the Kremlin's rights came just over a year after a team of Russian explorers became the first to reach the Arctic seabed. They dived 4,261 metres (13,980ft) in two mini-submarines and planted a titanium flag on the ocean floor to stake Russia's claim to an area of territory the size of Western Europe.

The expedition brought back soil samples as part of Russia's campaign to demonstrate that the Lomonosov Ridge, an underwater shelf that runs through the Arctic, is an extension of its territory. Russia lodged a claim in 2001 to 463,000 square miles (1.2 million sq km) of the Arctic ocean with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. The UN asked for more scientific data and Russia is planning to submit a fresh application next year.

Canada, Norway, the US and Denmark - which has sovereignty over Greenland - all reject Russia's arguments. Denmark and Canada claim that the Lomonosov Ridge is linked to their territories, while Norway is conducting a survey to strengthen its case. Under international law each country is entitled to control an economic zone within 200 miles of its continental shelf, but the limits of the shelf are disputed.

Canada's then Foreign Minister, Peter MacKay, dismissed the Russian expedition as a throwback to 15th-century imperialism, saying: "You can't go around the world and plant flags and say 'We're claiming this territory'."

Russia's descent to the seabed unnerved its rivals, however, by demonstrating its ability to enforce a physical presence in the hostile Arctic environment.

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## **RUSSIA'S ARCTIC ENERGY PLANS HERALD A NEW COLD WAR**

The Daily Telegraph, 18 September 2008

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtml?xml=/opinion/2008/09/18/dl18o2.xml>

During the Cold War, Moscow's leverage depended on its military might. Today, vast reserves of oil and gas, lying between the hungry markets of Europe and East Asia, have taken over that role.

The importance that Russia attaches to hydrocarbon diplomacy was underlined yesterday by President Dmitry Medvedev's call for a formal demarcation of the territory that it claims under the Arctic Ocean.

Its aggressive policy towards a region whose melting icecap offers access to possibly huge energy and mineral deposits was dramatically illustrated last year by the planting of a Russian flag on the seabed at the North Pole.

Any unilateral action by Moscow will be contested by America, Canada, Denmark and Norway, in particular with regard to the Lomonosov Ridge, which runs under the pole. The four should coordinate their policies before the deadline next year for submitting claims to the UN Commission on the Limits of the Continental Shelf.

And it is high time that America ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea.

EU members likewise need to integrate their energy markets in order to discourage Russia from using its gas exports as a political weapon, as a report from the think tank Chatham House argues today.

The front line of the confrontation between Russia and the West has shifted from the North German Plain to the fossil fuel deposits that lie beneath Siberia and the Arctic.

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## **EUROPE, SPOOKED BY RUSSIA, LOOKS TO NIGERIA FOR GAS**

WSJ Environmental Capital, 17 September 2008

<http://blogs.wsj.com/environmentalcapital/2008/09/17/gimme-gas-europe-spooked-by-russia-looks-to-nigeria-for-gas/>

by Keith Johnson

We wondered recently if Russian gunships in the Caucasus would focus European minds on energy policy. The short answer: yes.

The FT reports today that the European Union has rushed to offer Nigeria financial and political backing for a \$21 billion pipeline to carry natural gas from Nigeria through Algeria, for eventual export to the EU. The European gas diplomacy comes the same month Russia's Gazprom signed a memo of understanding with Nigeria's state oil company to do more gas exploration.

From the FT:

Andris Piebalgs, the EU energy commissioner, who visited Nigeria last week, admitted that European governments had been slow to back the trans-Saharan pipeline in the past but said the Georgia conflict had focused minds.

"In the EU, particularly after Georgia, there is also a lot of demand from member states to have diversification, real diversification, of supply," Mr Piebalgs told the FT after meeting senior Nigerian energy officials in Abuja, the capital. "EU governments definitely are worried about having too strong a dependency on Russia."

The Nigerian pipeline isn't a silver bullet in any event, the paper notes. It would take until 2016 at least to build, and even then would supply less than 6% of the bloc's natural gas. But having other

suppliers-including other African countries-could help reduce Europe's overwhelming dependence on Russian gas, which is increasingly used as a political tool.

The rapid response from Brussels is a sign that Western governments are starting to take the challenge from Russian and Asian oil and gas giants more seriously. Countries on the receiving end of all the attention can play one side against another.

Nigerian officials said that Gazprom offered the kind of technological muscle the country needed for economic growth, while many Western companies sat on the sidelines.

But other Nigerian officials told the FT they won't be fair-weather friends to American and European oil partners: "We're not going to abandon them just because the Russians, or the Chinese or the Koreans, have promised us massive investment."

The fallout from Russia's Caspian incursion will still probably take years to become fully clear. For now, at least, it's done the unthinkable: It got Brussels to start tackling energy issues with a sense of urgency.

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## **WHITE HOUSE RIPS DEMOCRATS' ENERGY BILL AS WASTE OF TIME**

CNN, 17 September 2008

<http://edition.cnn.com/2008/POLITICS/09/17/white.house.energy/>

WASHINGTON (CNN) -- The White House slammed an energy bill that the House of Representatives passed Tuesday night, calling it a waste of time.

The administration accused House Democrats of lacing the bill with "poison pills" that demonstrate a "lack of seriousness about expanding access to the vast domestic energy resources" off U.S. coasts.

President Bush and Democrats have been tangling for months over drilling offshore in an area known as the outer continental shelf, which had been placed off-limits both by Congress and executive order for decades. Bush lifted the executive order this summer as oil prices shot up and gas prices reached record levels at the pump.

He called on Congress to lift its ban but expressed "strong opposition" to the bill passed Tuesday. Learn about the current offshore drilling ban »

The House bill passed by a vote of 236-189. After months of resisting pressure to allow oil and gas exploration off America's coasts, the Democrats yielded and included provisions to allow more offshore drilling. Watch why the Republicans object to the bill »

But the legislation includes a number of provisions Republicans do not like, including a repeal of tax cuts for the oil industry and a lack of incentive for states to allow drilling off their shores.

"Many of the other provisions contained in this bill are taken from other House bills that failed to pass through the Congress, or have been subject to veto threats," the Executive Office of the President said in a statement Tuesday night as the House voted on the bill, officially known as House Resolution 6899.

"If H.R. 6899 were presented to the president, his senior advisers would recommend that he veto the bill," the White House said.

Bush may never have the chance. The Senate is unlikely to take up an energy bill before next week, and it is unclear whether there is enough time left in this Congress for the two houses to hammer out a mutually acceptable compromise to send to the president.

Fifteen Republicans crossed the aisle to support the bill Tuesday. Thirteen Democrats voted against it.

The bill would allow drilling between 50 and 100 miles offshore, as opposed to the 3-mile line favored by Republicans. It would require states to give their permission for drilling off their shores. It also would include incentives for renewables, require the government to release oil from its emergency reserve and force oil companies to drill on federal areas they already lease from the government.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-California, told reporters Tuesday: "The American taxpayers have been ripped off for years on offshore drilling. This bill changes that."

She contrasted "the status quo, which is preferred by Big Oil" and the Bush administration, with "change for the future to take our country in a new direction."

She insisted that Republicans "must set aside their drill-only mentality."

Rep. Mike Pence, R-Indiana, said before the vote that the Democratic bill was "a charade," denying it would do what its backers claim.

"This is 'yes, but no drilling in Alaska, no drilling in the Eastern Gulf, no drilling inside 50 miles.' This is 'yes, but no litigation reform that will prevent radical environmental attorneys from tying up leases even before a single shovel of dirt is turned.' "

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## **OPINION: INDULGING THE GREENS MUST STOP**

Global Warming Politics, 17 September 2008

[http://web.mac.com/sinfonia1/Global\\_Warming\\_Politics/A\\_Hot\\_Topic\\_Blog/Entries/2008/9/17\\_Indulging\\_The\\_Greens\\_Must\\_Stop.html](http://web.mac.com/sinfonia1/Global_Warming_Politics/A_Hot_Topic_Blog/Entries/2008/9/17_Indulging_The_Greens_Must_Stop.html)

Philip Stott

The Green movement has become dangerous for the survival of our society. It is surely time to stop pandering to its often ridiculous whims and fancies. We have been far too kind to its utopianism. Politicians of all parties have become enfeebled by indulging its fanaticism and unrealistic proposals, especially on food and energy. This has led to inertia, and to a serious failure to act when action is urgently required, a situation often exacerbated by the ludicrous obligations laid on us through a bureaucratic and unaccountable EU.

But we have to act, and we are going to have to challenge the EU. We need no more reports. We do not have the time. We require new coal-powered plants, new nuclear power stations, additional LNG storage facilities, and the Seven Barrage.

"And when do we want them? We want them now!"

Green Gobbledygook

Green gobbledygook over so-called 'renewables' has helped to undermine UK energy policy to such a degree that we are facing an energy gap of between 30% to 40%, a threat Global Warming Politics has highlighted over and over again [e.g., 'The Energy Elephant Trumpets At Last', August 4]. Today, thank goodness, this threat has been spelt out once more in a new report, and with

'Janet-and-John' simplicity: 'Power cuts warning must be taken seriously' (The Daily Telegraph, September 17):

"Between now and 2020, 23 gigawatts of generating capacity will be lost as old coal and nuclear stations are de-commissioned. Yet Labour Ministers spent a decade twiddling their thumbs over energy policy.

Only last year, when our dangerous dependence on energy from either potentially hostile (Russia) or unstable (Middle East) sources finally registered, did the Government belatedly accept that there has to be a new generation of nuclear reactors to meet the shortfall. Since then, there has been precious little evidence of any sense of urgency in getting that programme under way.

Today's report shows how dangerously negligent this lackadaisical approach has been. It also confirms that wind power, on which the Government has expended the better part £1 billion a year in subsidies, is little more than environmental window dressing. Its unreliability - wind is not a constant - means it cannot replace a single watt of permanent generating capacity."

Just so.

No More Green Fantasies

When we add to this Green unreality over energy a self-indulgent opposition to conventional agriculture and to GM crops, tropes which are now threatening the poor and the disadvantaged the world over; total confusion over biofuels; frequent support for protectionism against trade; the desire to heap increased costs and retrogressive taxes on everyone, but especially on the poor; the wish to force people into lifestyles that few can afford or want; and the championing of breaking the law when protesting, we can see that the moral charge sheet against the Greens is long and extending by the day.

The idea that the Greens hold any moral high ground is sentimental rubbish. Many of their so-called ethical investments will cripple us, while impoverishing the poor even further.

It really is time for both of our leading political parties [I have no hope whatsoever for the dire Liberal Democrats, whose 'leader', Nick Clegg, didn't even know the level of the State Pension when asked] to return to economic reality in an increasingly unforgiving world.

We can no longer afford to play at Green fantasies. We must grow up.  
Indulging The Greens Must Stop

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#### **AND FINALLY: ROYAL SOCIETY OR ROTTEN SOCIETY?**

The First Post, 18 September 2008

<http://www.thefirstpost.co.uk/45412.opinion.royal-society-or-rotten-society>

Robert Matthews

The hard-line zealots of the Royal Society, Britain's most prestigious scientific institution, finally did for Michael Reiss yesterday. Reiss was the Society's director of education. He is an evolutionary biologist - and a minister in the Church of England. Last week he went public with his belief that science teachers shouldn't simply dismiss questions from pupils about creationism, but explain why it's not compatible with science. Reiss made clear that he did not believe in creationism himself, nor believed it should be given equal billing with evolution. It made no difference: within hours, the Royal Society zealots mounted a full-scale character assassination and last night Reiss agreed to step down. The zealots' point-man was Richard 'Mad Mullah'

Dawkins, who compared having "a clergyman" directing education at the Royal Society to "a Monty Python sketch". But the real heavies are known only to seasoned observers of scientific fundamentalism: Sir Richard Roberts, Sir Harry Kroto and Sir John Sulston, Nobel Prize winners all.

Roberts plunged the knife, firing off a letter to the President of the Royal Society, Lord Rees, demanding to know "who on earth thought that [Reiss] would be an appropriate director of education?" and describing Reiss's religious occupation as "worrisome".

What many will find worrisome is the intolerance of eminent scientists to the suggestion of engagement with the questions of children. Yet they are far from alone. Fundamentalism is spreading across science, with zealots ready to attack anyone who dares question the accepted teaching - be it the unquestionable importance of animal experiments or the unimpeachable evidence for dramatic global warming.

The motto of Royal Society is 'Nullius in verba' - roughly speaking, take no-one's word for it. Its treatment of Reiss suggests that when it comes to words of dissent, the attitude of the Royal Society is closer to that of a madrassa than a learned body.

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