

News From Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

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Caspian Sea / Wikimedia Commons

Caspian deal

Iran and four ex-Soviet nations, including Russia, [agreed](#) in principle how to divide up the potentially huge oil and gas resources of the Caspian Sea, paving the way for more energy exploration and pipeline projects.

The agreement establishes state borders extending 15 nautical miles into territorial waters offshore while fishing rights are extended 10 miles further, Kazakhstan President Nursultan Nazarbayev said after signing the Caspian convention.

Nazarbayev also said the convention explicitly barred any armed presence on the Caspian Sea other than that of the neighboring states.

Shedding dollars

Russia will further [decrease](#) its holdings of U.S. securities in response to new sanctions against Moscow but has no plans to shut down U.S. companies in Russia, the finance minister said.

“We have lowered to the minimum level and will further decrease our investment in the U.S. economy, in the U.S. securities,” Finance Minister Anton Siluanov said, shedding light on the nature of an unexpected drop in Russia’s holdings of U.S. Treasury bonds.

Capital flight

Capital flight has more than doubled this year, leaping from a net private capital outflow of \$8.7 billion in January–July 2017 to \$21.5 billion in January–July 2018, Russia’s Central Bank has [said](#).

Russia’s international currency reserves grew by \$32.5 billion thanks to the purchase of foreign currency, but the bank still runs short of its goal of boosting reserves to \$500 billion.

Long memory

Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu [warned](#) his German counterpart Ursula von der Leyer to take another look at history, and particularly the outcome of World War II. Shoigu’s statement comes months after von der Leyer said the West should approach Russia from a “position of strength and unity.”

“As for talks from a position of strength, go back to history. If you don’t read it, ask your grandfathers how it is to talk with Russia from a position of strength,” he said in an interview with state television.

Related article: [Shoigu at 60: The Man Who Would Be Russia's King?](#)

Gas frustration

Russia largely [failed](#) in its 2014 bid to overturn the European Union's gas market rules in a World Trade Organization ruling.

The ruling found that the EU did not break WTO guidelines by requiring the “unbundling” of gas transmission assets and production and supply assets, while exempting liquefied natural gas and upstream pipelines from the requirements.

However, the panel of three WTO adjudicators upheld Russia’s complaint about an unbundling exemption for Germany’s OPAL pipeline. That ruling that can be appealed within 60 days.

Military-grade mayo

Almost 100 Russian soldiers stationed near the Finnish border in northwestern Russia have been briefly [incapacitated](#) after ingesting tainted mayonnaise outside of their dining hall.

Anti-Semitic confusion

Anti-extremism police officers [raided](#) the office of Jewish youth group leader Alexander Kargin in Moscow and found anti-Semitic literature. Kargin's attorney maintains the material does not belong to his client.

"How can a Jewish leader have anti-Semitic literature? It's absurd. It's absolutely clear that this literature was planted," Kargin's lawyer Igor Zuber was [quoted](#) as saying by BBC Russia.

Related article: [Silent Deaths: The Price of a Russian Soldier's Life](#)

Flames of hate

Russia has [rejected](#) the FBI director's accusations that Russia played a role in "fomenting the flames" at a violent white nationalist rally in Charlottesville, Virginia one year ago.

"It is easier to shift the blame, rather than tend to domestic problems," the Russian Embassy in the U.S. said in a Facebook statement.

Water damage

Vandals [damaged](#) the first outdoor hand-pump water well that takes top-up cards only days after it was installed in Krasnodar.

The city's utilities service said it planned to file a police complaint to seek compensation for 60,000 rubles (\$870) of damages.

For the gold

Russia [topped](#) the inaugural, multi-sport European Championships with 31 gold medals and standout performances from male gymnasts.

In the closing days of the Glasgow-based competition, Russia's five-man gymnastics team won its third successive title, followed by two gold medals on vault and parallel bars [awarded](#) to Artur Dalaloyan.

Includes reporting from Reuters.

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