

Israel To Be Major Oil Transit Point

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Moscow plans main hubs in Turkey and Israel for Russian and Azerbaijani oil and gas exports to southern Europe and China

Russian president Vladimir Putin discussed the plan with Turkish prime minister Tayyep Erdogan and Silvio Berlusconi of Italy at the inauguration Thursday of the Blue Stream pipeline network laid on the Black Sea bed by the Russian Gazprom and Italian Eni oil giants.

DEBKAFfile adds: Putin spoke of extending this pipe network to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan. A new underwater branch would then be built to connect Ceyhan with Israel's Ashkelon oil port, from which an existing pipe would carry the oil from the Mediterranean to Eilat. Facilities at this Red Sea port would need to be expanded to accommodate Russian oil and gas tankers bound for China through the Indian Ocean.

As a main regional transit hub for Russian oil exports, Israel can look forward to stronger trade ties with Russia and Turkey, thousands of new jobs and royalty revenues running into hundreds of millions of dollars per year.

Our sources add that Israel's infrastructure minister Binyamin Ben Eliezer on a recent visit to Cairo proposed to President Hosni Mubarak that Egypt link an underwater pipe planned to carry natural gas to the Gaza Strip with the Israeli transit station at Ashkelon. Egypt would thus hook up to the projected Russian-Turkish-Israel pipeline scheme.

Posted by Ted Belman at November 19, 2005 07:10 AM

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