

## Russian jets targeted major oil pipeline-Georgia

Contributed by Reuters  
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TBILISI, Aug 9 (Reuters) - Russian fighter jets targeted the the major Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) oil pipeline which carries oil to the West from Asia but missed, Georgia's Economic Development Minister Ekaterina Sharashidze said on Saturday.

"This clearly shows that Russia has not just targeted Georgian economic outlets but international economic outlets in Georgia," she said at a news briefing.

There have been no independent verifications of Russian jets targeting the BTC pipeline. (Reporting by Margarita Antidze, writing by James Kilner, editing by Jon Boyle)

The Caspian Basin is a place of intense competition, with the US, Russia and China all vying for a stronger foothold. In July, the US\$4 billion Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan (BTC) pipeline was inaugurated. The BTC pumps Caspian Sea oil to the Turkish Mediterranean, bypassing Russia and Iran. It should supply 1 million barrels of oil per day by 2009. It passes through the Georgian capital, Tbilisi, and also runs rather close to South Ossetia.

BP, formerly British Petroleum, has a 30.1 percent stake in the pipeline. The pipeline was commissioned by a BP-led consortium that includes energy companies from the US, Norway, Turkey, Azerbaijan, Japan, France and Italy. The BTC is a key to Western energy security. Upsetting Georgia - a major player in this energy security - by allowing South Ossetia to declare independence and be internationally recognized would be risky.

[http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/archives/2008/08/kosovo\\_and\\_south\\_ossetia/](http://www.outsidethebeltway.com/archives/2008/08/kosovo_and_south_ossetia/)

The Georgian Foreign Ministry reported that Russian aircrafts have completely destroyed the harbor of Poti, in the immediate vicinity of Supsa, a vital oil terminal.

Supsa is vital for Europe, especially since the Baku-Tbilisi-Ceyhan pipeline (the only alternative route to the Russian oil and gas pipelines) has been disrupted on August 6 in Turkey by the Kurdish militia PKK. Since then, oil transports have been rerouted from Tbilisi to Supsa.

<http://www.transatlanticpolitics.com/2008/08/09/russia-crushes-georgia-and-europes-hopes-for-energy-independence/>