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## Baltic pipeline risks stirring up chemical weapons: Lithuania



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*BERLIN - A planned five-billion-dollar gas pipeline linking Russia and Germany under the Baltic Sea risks disturbing tonnes of chemical weapons sunk there following the Second World War, Lithuania's prime minister warns in an interview in the 10 October 2005 issue of Der Spiegel.*

The route of the planned pipeline goes through an area where Nazi chemical weapons are known to have been sunk by Soviet forces after the war, Lithuanian Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas told the German weekly.

"It's extremely dangerous," he said. "We know of a place, 120 kilometres (75 miles) off our coast, where the Russians sank after 1945 at least 30,000 tonnes of toxic gas canisters."

Allied forces sank more than 300,000 tonnes of chemical and biological weapons in the Baltic Sea following WWII, and the intergovernmental Helsinki Commission charged with monitoring the sea has recommended they not be disturbed.

Russian energy giant Gazprom and German firms EON and BASF signed the deal last month to build the underwater pipeline by 2010, which will initially deliver 27.5 billion cubic metres a year rising to 55 billion.

Stretching for 1,200 kilometres (750 miles) under the Baltic Sea from Vyborg near St Petersburg to Greifswald on the northeastern coast of Germany, it will be the first pipeline that will allow Russia to directly export gas to Germany.

Poland and the Baltic states have already expressed concern over the pipeline. Warsaw in particular is concerned it will reduce its energy security, as Russia will no longer be dependent on Poland for the transit of its gas to Germany.

"During the preparation of the project nobody asked our opinion even once," Brazauskas has told the newspaper Bild. "Everything was done behind our backs."

"I don't know who is trying to play around with us, Russia, or maybe Germany."

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