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Romanian President Traian Basescu took aim Tuesday at Russia, indirectly accusing the country of benefiting from the continuing "frozen conflicts" in countries such as Georgia and Moldova.

"The single winner of the extended period of having frozen conflicts is the country which doesn't like to have democratic development," Basescu said.

"It is the country which still continues to believe that different countries can be controlled for next decade or for the next century," he said.

Basescu's comments were delivered via an international video hookup in Bucharest to a gathering of experts at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington.

He was a participant in a conference on economic and security development in southeastern Europe.

Basescu, whose country was part of the old Soviet bloc, warned that the status quo in countries where there are frozen conflicts could become permanent if they are allowed to fester.

"It is our obligation to find a solution as soon as possible," he said, adding that no solution should be accepted that does not respect the territorial integrity of each country.

It was not clear whether Basescu was holding Russia responsible for all frozen conflicts of the Black Sea region. Russia has troops in the disputed South Ossetia and Abkhazia regions of Georgia and in the Trans-Dniester area of Moldova.

Other frozen conflict regions that he mentioned during his presentation were Nagorno-Karabakh and Kosovo.

Basescu also urged the United States to do what it can to prevent a recurrence of authoritarian rule in Eastern Europe. He said this should be one of the highest priorities for the region.

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Romania proposes alternative routes for Caspian basin oil to EU

Romania proposes alternative routes for Caspian basin oil to EU Xinhua General News Service November 1, 2006
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DATELINE: BUCHAREST

Romanian President Traian Basescu proposed on Tuesday developing new pipelines to transport oil from the Caspian Basin to the European Union (EU) states so as to reduce dependence on Russia's energy supplies.

If oil in the region is transported exclusively through Russia, Moscow will become more influential in the EU's policy, Basescu told an international meeting in Washington via video conferencing.

The conference, organized by a U.S. thinktank, the Center for Strategies and International Studies, and the Romanian Chamber of Trade and Industry, focused on economic development and security in the Black Sea region.

Noting that countries' economic and political evolutions are interdependent, Basescu claimed that the promotion of reforms in the Black Sea region is rendered difficult by Russia's energy monopoly in the area.

Basescu also expressed his concern over Russia's failure to liberalize and privatize its state-run energy monopolies, citing the controversial Yukos case.

Taking into account these difficulties, Basescu stated, the United States should include in its trans-Atlantic dialogue the Euro Asiatic energy strategy.

The Romanian leader reiterated that Romania is looking for cooperation opportunities with the Black Sea states to find economic projects for lasting development in the region.

He said that Romania wants to boost cooperation within the Black Sea Economic Cooperation Organization, promote free trade within the bloc and grant help to regional transport, considering the crucial importance of seeking alternative routes to transport oil and natural gas from the Caspian basin to EU states via the Black Sea region.

Romania, along with Bulgaria, is set to accede the 25-nation EU at the beginning of 2007. Russia is the EU's main supplier of gas and oil.

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