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Gazprom CEO Accuses Ukraine of Using Blackmail in Gas Talks

By The Moscow Times

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Alexei Miller, right, arrives for talks with Ukraine's Energy Minister, Yurii Prodan, in Kiev.

The chief executive of Russian gas exporter Gazprom, Alexei Miller, accused Kiev on Monday of adopting an "unconstructive" position in gas talks and of using blackmail to try to get an "ultra-low" price.

"Thanks to the unconstructive position of the Ukrainian government, today a prepayment regime was introduced," Miller told Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev in a meeting open to reporters. "The debt we were asking for was less than that which was required for the time period ... but the Ukrainian side adopted a position that can only be called blackmail. ... They wanted an ultra-low price."

During the same meeting Medvedev said Moscow was ready to continue gas talks with Kiev if Ukraine pays its $4.5 billion gas debt.

"We should not end the possibility for dialogue. We will be ready to continue talks on the condition of the full debt settlement," Medvedev said.

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Gazprom Reduces Gas Supplies After Kiev Misses Payment Deadline

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