

News from Russia: What You Missed Over the Weekend

October 16, 2017



Screenshot Dozhd TV

Troll tell-all

A former employee of the Internet Research Agency, known as "the Kremlin's troll factory," [described](#) in an interview on Saturday how staffers were instructed to "get into an argument in order to inflame it, and rock the boat."

The Internet Research Agency has been implicated in buying ads on social media to influence the 2016 U.S. elections. "Maxim" told the Dozhd TV network that staffers had been told to play on religious sentiments against gays and other groups in provoking arguments online.

Related article: [Kremlin Troll Tells All About Influencing U.S. Elections](#)

Bomb drops

A Russian senator [expressed](#) skepticism this weekend over a Oct. 15 statement made by U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson on North Korea.

"Tillerson said the United States doesn't want to fight with North Korea," Alexei Pushkov said. "They 'didn't want to' with Yugoslavia and Iraq and 'didn't want to' with Libya. But each time it comes to war."

Gas attack

A liquid used to attack independent journalist Yulia Latynina this summer contained highly toxic substances, analysts working alongside the Novaya Gazeta investigative newspaper [said](#) Saturday.

An unidentified assailant [splashed](#) a liquid on Latynina's car and home on July 17, in an incident which reportedly impacted eight people. Latynina [fled](#) Russia in September, citing multiple attacks.

Bomb scares

Four hotels and three shopping centers in Moscow were [evacuated](#) Oct. 15 in the latest in a string of anonymous bomb hoaxes.

Some 950,000 people have been forced to flee hundreds of buildings in 144 Russian towns after 2,300 scares beginning September.

The Federal Security Service (FSB) is investigating four suspects they say are making the calls from abroad.

Hit denial

Vladimir Tyurin this weekend [denied](#) involvement in the assassination of Russian lawmaker Denis Voronenkov in March this year in Ukraine.

Tyurin, arrested in November 2010 on money-laundering charges from Spain and later released on health grounds in Moscow, said he was not involved in the hit on Voronenkov.

Sakhalin bridge

Arkady Rotenberg, the childhood judo-sparring partner of President Vladimir Putin, has reportedly [landed](#) the contract for a new bridge connecting mainland Russia to an island off the east coast.

The bridge to the energy-rich island of Sakhalin, not yet announced, is estimated to cost about 286 billion rubles (\$5 billion).

Brain gain

President Vladimir Putin said this weekend he [hopes](#) to encourage scientists who have left Russia to return home.

"Not all of them," he said in response to a question from a young scientist at an international youth festival in Sochi, who himself had worked abroad for years.

"We're interested to have all our citizens return from the perspective of science, those who can advance it," said Putin.

Deal or no deal

Russia's deputy foreign minister responded to U.S. Secretary of State Rex Tillerson's comments that the U.S. will keep its nuclear deal with Iran, but may make a secondary agreement.

"If it's not broken, don't fix it," Sergei Ryabkov [said](#) in response to the secretary of state.

Ryabkov added that Russia was in contact with Iran and would stress the importance of keeping to the agreement in the form it was made.

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