

U.S. gas exports not a quick fix

By Clifford Krauss, News York Times

HOUSTON — As congressional pressure builds on the Obama administration to quicken gas exports to Europe to reduce its dependence on Russia, it may be tempting to gaze upon a marshy, alligator-infested Louisiana inlet of the Gulf of Mexico.

There 3,000 workers are installing a huge set of turbines, pipelines and refrigeration units, building a terminal that will send American natural gas around the world by the end of next year. By 2017, the facility built by Houston-based Cheniere Energy could handle roughly a sixth the amount of gas that flows from Russia to Europe every day.

The Cheniere plant will be part of a new surge of liquefied natural gas supplies coming from not only the United States but also Australia, Africa and the Middle East. That surge, perhaps along with increased production in Europe itself, promises to keep the Continent flush with non-Russian natural gas at the end of the decade.

But for the short term, the United States can offer little hope for Europeans eager to diversify their gas sources as Russia occupies Crimea and may threaten other parts of eastern Ukraine.

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