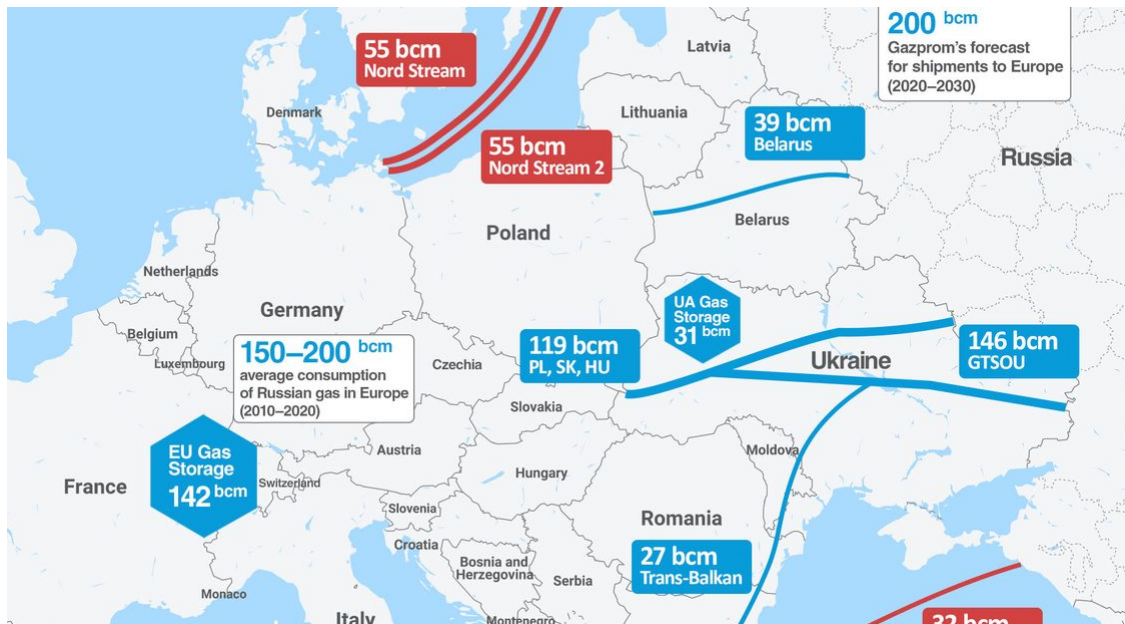


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Український Конгресовий Комітет Америки
UKRAINIAN CONGRESS COMMITTEE OF AMERICA



Following the 2020 US elections, the Ukrainian Congress Committee of America (UCCA), the nation's largest representative body of Americans of Ukrainian descent, [issued a statement](#) expressing to newly elected officials that Ukrainian Americans are united in their belief that a democratic and independent Ukraine is in the national security interests of the United States. Included in that statement was the bipartisan sentiment that any "retreat from current sanctions against the Russian Federation and its proxies, or from continued military, political and economic support of Ukraine by the United States, would entail terrifying consequences for Ukraine, our European partners and the global geo-political security structure."

UCCA was therefore heartened to hear US Secretary of State Antony Blinken [at his Senate confirmation hearing in January](#) speak unequivocally about stopping the NordStream 2 pipeline: "I'm determined to do whatever I can to prevent that completion," relating that President Biden "would have us use every persuasive tool that we have to convince our friends and partners including Germany not to move forward with it."

[NordStream 2 pipeline](#) as "fundamentally bad deal for Europe" specifically because, in his words, it would "lock in great reliance on Russia [which] will fundamentally destabilize Ukraine."

Therefore, [when it was reported on May 18](#) that the State Department, in listing to Congress which entities involved in NordStream 2 construction deserve sanctions, would instead "cite U.S. national interests," and waive the application of sanctions [against the company behind project](#) — NordStream 2 AG and its CEO Matthias Warnig — [we must ask of this administration](#): why is the United States not doing all it can to prevent Vladimir Putin from accomplishing one of his biggest priorities?

NordStream 2 is a geopolitical scheme designed to provide Putin's Russia with additional malign influence on our European allies and partners. Instead of standing by Ukraine, these proposed waivers contradict in letter and spirit the intent behind the [bipartisan sanctions regime passed by Congress](#): preventing the completion of the NordStream 2 pipeline.

In light of Defense Department officials [reporting this month](#) that close to 80,000 Russian troops remain on the border with Ukraine (the biggest force Russia has amassed there since 2014), President Biden should maintain the commitments made to our allies in Eastern Europe, and continue America's bipartisan record of support for Ukraine. Instead of issuing waivers, the United States should be strengthening sanctions and ratcheting up the pressure on Russia to leave Ukrainian territory.

As a [strategic partner of Ukraine](#), the United States [should further demonstrate leadership among allies](#) by supporting a Membership Action Plan for Ukraine at this summer's NATO Summit. Following 13 years of bureaucratic stalling in Brussels, the time has come for the United States to clarify if it still upholds its [commitments made in Bucharest in 2008](#), when NATO made clear that Ukraine would become a signatory member of the transatlantic alliance one day.

DEPARTMENT'S NORD STREAM 2 REPORT

"I am opposed to the decision by the Biden Administration to waive sanctions on NS2 AG and Mathias Waring. I urge the administration to rip off the Band-Aid, lift these waivers and move forward with the congressionally mandated sanctions. The administration has said that the pipeline is a bad idea and that it is a Russian malign influence project. I share that sentiment, but fail to see how today's decision will advance U.S. efforts to counter Russian aggression in Europe.

"If the administration maintains these waivers, I have several questions. First, what does the administration now expect from Germany after having made this significant concession to exercise the waiver? Will Berlin strengthen its support for Ukraine in the Normandy Format? Will it provide additional assistance to Kyiv in its struggle against Russian aggression? Also, what will the administration do to bolster our relationship with Ukraine?

"This decision has created uncertainty in many corners of Europe and I expect to hear very soon from the administration on its plans moving forward. I believe President Biden should do everything possible to accomplish what the Trump administration failed to do for four years: stop the completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline for good."

###

Committee (SFRIC) and Chair of the Europe and Regional Security Cooperation (SFRIC) Subcommittee - issued the following statement regarding the U.S. State Department report on Nord Stream 2 that imposes sanctions on eight new entities but not the company overseeing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

"The main concern to the Biden administration from day one that any effort should be made to prevent completion of the Nord Stream 2 pipeline. It threatens Ukraine's economic security, undermines energy independence in the region and allows Russia to further spread its malign influence," said Shabazz. "That's why I pushed in Congress to impose sanctions as a test for the administration to stop construction on the pipeline and to hold Russia to account for its continued aggression against the U.S. and our allies. Though I'm encouraged the State Department will say sanctions against eight additional entities, I'm disappointed the administration will not hold Nord Stream 2 AG to the same standard. Completion of the pipeline poses a threat to U.S. security interests and the stability of our partners in the region. The administration should uphold its commitment to Congress. Every option available to prevent its completion should be utilized."

Shabazz co-authored Nord Stream 2-related legislation designed to halt construction of the pipeline in order to prevent Europe's energy independence and prevent Vladimir Putin from spreading the Kremlin's malign influence throughout the region. This bipartisan bill mandated targeted sanctions on vessels involved in installing Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline. It was signed into law in 2019 as part of the fiscal year (FY) 2020 National Defense Authorization Act. Shabazz built on her work in the FY21 NDAA that became law by adding a provision that further clarifies those sanctions, which target companies working with the Russian vessel service company. The Senators previously bipartisan efforts led to a freeze in the construction of the pipeline. Shabazz and Mercedes recently urged the Biden administration to advance the United States' interests in Europe through a full diplomatic push to stop the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

WASHINGTON - U.S. Senator Jim Risch (R-Idaho), ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, today released the following statement on the State Department's impending report on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, as mandated by the Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act:

"The administration has finally acknowledged what we've known all along - the entities sanctioned in today's Nord Stream 2 report have been engaged in sanctionable activities for months. This determination took longer than it should have.

"The administration's decision to waive the sanctions they placed on Nord Stream 2 AG and the company's CEO Mathias Waring doing U.S. national interests is just wrong. The administration seems to be suggesting it is somehow in the United States' best interest to allow this Russian malign influence project to be completed.

"This move contradicts everything that President Biden and Secretary Blinken have previously said about Nord Stream 2's malign influence, and is a gift to Putin that will only weaken the United States' leverage in the lead up to the impending Biden-Putin summit. The administration is prioritizing perceived German and Russian interests over those of our allies in Central, Eastern, and Northern Europe.

"The president is the person with the statutory authority to issue these waivers, and thus he will own the responsibility for allowing this project to be completed. The administration should fix today's mistake before it's too late.

"It is deeply disturbing that this administration canceled the Keystone XL Pipeline on its first day, killing thousands of U.S. and Canadian jobs. Yet, it continues to support Russian workers involved in a project that goes against U.S. and European security interests."

###

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 13, 2021

Secretary Antony Blinken
U.S. Department of State
2201 C St NW
Washington, DC 20520

Dear Secretary Blinken,

Thank you for your efforts to strengthen the transatlantic relationship and commitment to liberty in Ukraine and Central and Eastern Europe as exemplified by your recent trip to Ukraine. As co-chairs of the bipartisan Congressional Ukraine Caucus, we write with deep concern with the state of energy security in Ukraine and Central and Eastern Europe. We strongly urge the Department to increase efforts to bolster energy resilience by sanctioning Nord Stream 2 as mandated by PEESCA as amended and consistent with Congressional intent, increase diplomatic action to counter the purging of Naftogaz leadership, and strengthen efforts to fulfill the U.S. pledge to invest \$300 million of U.S. financing into the Three Seas Fund.

Tragically, Russian dictator Vladimir Putin seeks to sow discord in the Transatlantic alliance through hybrid warfare operations. This includes weaponizing energy to weaken democratic institutions and solidarity through the export of strategic corruption. Recall that in 2006 and 2009 Russian authorities cut off gas flows through Ukraine during the bitter cold of winter leading to hardship not only for the people of Ukraine, but also neighboring countries like Bulgaria and Romania.

As you well know, Russian authorities now seek to complete Nord Stream 2 as a political and economic weapon to cut off critical gas transit through Ukraine and to increase its leverage over Europe. That is why the European Parliament along with several European countries have joined the United States in calling for the project to be stopped. We are also grateful for the statement of opposition from President Biden that the project is a "bad deal" for Europe. The U.S. Congress has voted now twice on an overwhelmingly bipartisan basis to sanction the pipeline and related entities pursuant to Protecting European Energy Security Act (PEESA) as amended by the Protecting European Energy Security Clarification Act (PEESCA) to halt the pipeline construction and protect Ukraine's security. These sanctions are mandatory, not discretionary.

On May 17, the next report to Congress that is required to list all entities sanctionable under the PEESCA as amended is due. We strongly urge you to include in this report all entities openly engaged in sanctionable pipe-laying activities, including Nord Stream AG and all vessels and project-linked insurance and certification companies supporting the Fortuna and Akademik Chersky pipe-laying vessels, pursuant to the legislation and clear bipartisan Congressional intent. The open source evidence is overwhelming, and it seems there is no legitimate reason for

not including them. Time is of the essence as the pipeline is more than 95% complete, and German authorities until now have not offered any satisfactory proposal that addresses the significant geopolitical ramifications of the pipeline if completed. Please know our advocacy has been consistent across Administrations including our bipartisan Ukraine Caucus letter to then-Secretary of State Pompeo dated June 5 advocating for robust implementation of sanctions on Nord Stream 2.

In addition to the completion of Nord Stream 2, we are deeply concerned with the Ukrainian government's purging of the Naftogaz supervisory board and CEO, which puts Ukraine's energy and national security at risk. This deeply misguided move opens up Ukraine's energy sector to increased corruption from and vulnerability to malign actors including Ukraine's rapacious oligarch class and Russian corrosive capital. Sadly, this step is part of a larger trend of backsliding in reform since March 2020 and threatens good corporate governance and further foreign direct investment to Ukraine. While we urge you to impose mandatory sanctions on Nord Stream 2 without delay, we also ask that the Department increase efforts to help Ukraine become more energy secure by restoring the integrity of Naftogaz and corporate governance in the energy sector and beyond. This starts with a legitimate process to assemble a new Naftogaz Supervisory Board in consultation with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, International Monetary Fund, European Commission, United States, and other credible international stakeholders.

Finally, in order to help our allies and partners continue to diversify energy sources, the United States has pledged up to one billion dollars into the Three Seas Fund to finance energy infrastructure projects. We are thankful for your robust statement of support for the Three Seas Initiative, but remain concerned that the U.S. Development Finance Corporation has yet to take meaningful action to operationalize the commitment of \$300 million of U.S. financing into the Three Seas Fund. For this reason, we urge the Administration to recommit efforts to fulfill the DFC pledge to invest in the Fund. This should be an important element to increase the resilience our allies and partners against increasing malign influence from Russia and China.

Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to hearing from you and reviewing the next report to Congress on sanctionable Nord Stream 2 activity.

Sincerely,

MARC KAPTUR
Member of Congress

MIKE QUIGLEY
Member of Congress

BRIAN FITZPATRICK
Member of Congress

ANDY HARRIS, M.D.
Member of Congress



We invite Descendants of all Holodomor victims to add your voice to our Holodomor Descendants' Network. Participation in the Network may be at a level that is comfortable and meaningful for you given your individual circumstances. Join in order to receive information on research, activities, events or join to be more active in sharing family accounts and actively supporting awareness / educational/ commemoration initiatives. The choice will be yours.

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