

Congress Makes Improved Relations with Moscow Impossible. Measure Targets Russia's Energy, Mining, Industry... Undermines North Stream 2

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Global Research, July 24, 2017

Region: [Russia and FSU](#)

Theme: [Global Economy, Oil and Energy, US NATO War Agenda](#)

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Unlike Obama's frosty relations with Putin, Trump appears genuinely interested in getting along with his counterpart and improving bilateral ties with Russia.

It's the only way to prevent confrontation. The alternative is possible conflict between the world's dominant nuclear powers - the unthinkable risk of nuclear war, assuring losers, not winners, if launched, putting humanity's survival up for grabs.

Congress and key administration members oppose improved bilateral relations, holding Trump hostage to their agenda, hamstringing his outreach, blocking any attempt on his part to lift illegally imposed sanctions, along with working cooperatively with Putin on key geopolitical issues.

On Saturday, GOP and undemocratic Democrat House and Senate leaders agreed on legislation, imposing harsh new sanctions on Russia over nothing - phony reasons, wanting adversarial relations continued unobstructed by Trump's efforts to improve things.

Neocon Dem **Senator Ben Cardin** said

“(a) nearly united Congress is poised to send **President Putin** a clear message on behalf of the American people and our allies, and we need **President Trump** to help us deliver that message.”

House Majority Leader **Kevin McCarthy** said voting on the Russia, Iran and North Korea Sanctions Act is scheduled for July 25.

The measure is certain to pass both houses overwhelmingly, maybe by unanimous voice vote, preventing Trump's ability to stop it by presidential veto if he chooses this option.

On any congressional legislation pertaining to Russia, he's between a rock and a hard place, virtually without options to go his own way - other than stating his views, expressing a desire for improved bilateral relations.

Making this choice would further isolate him from Washington's political establishment and

hostile media.

Publicly opposing congressional action, along with going his own way on Russia, would make him more vulnerable to impeachment and removal from office than already.

In June, Senate members overwhelmingly passed the earlier version of the measure by a 98 - 2 vote. Doing so violated the Constitution's "blue slip" clause, requiring legislation involving revenue raising to originate only in the House.

Negotiations between House and Senate leaders of both parties resolved the issue to move forward toward passing legislation - likely this week in both houses.

The measure targets Russia's intelligence and defense apparatus, its energy, mining, railways and shipping industries, along with Russian officials wrongfully accused of corruption and human rights abuses.



The first concrete weight coated (CWC) pipes for the planned 1,200 kilometre Nord Stream 2 twin pipelines arrived today by rail at the Port of Koverhar in Hanko, Finland. (Source: [Nord Stream 2](#))

It aims to hamper construction of Russia's Nord Stream 2 pipeline project. If completed as planned, it'll be the world's longest underwater pipeline.

It'll be able to deliver 55 billion cubic meters of natural gas, its capacity to be doubled by an additional line, the project scheduled for completion in 2019.

According to the Nord Stream 2 web site, it'll "transport natural gas into the European Union to enhance security of supply, support climate goals and strengthen the internal energy market."

Russia's huge natural gas reserves and proximity to other European countries makes it "a natural partner for a new transportation route..."

Brussels and Berlin oppose congressional efforts to undermine the project. A European Commission statement said the measure "is driven primarily by domestic considerations."

"As we have said repeatedly, it is important that any possible new measures are coordinated between international partners to maintain unity among partners on the sanctions."

"We are concerned the measures discussed in the US Congress could have unintended consequences, not only when it comes to Transatlantic/G7 unity, but also on EU economic and energy security interests."

Russia is being targeted for its nonexistent "aggression" in Ukraine and nonexistent US election hacking - baseless accusations to assure adversarial relations remain unchanged.

Given near unanimity in Washington against improving them, Trump is hamstrung in anything he might try to change things.

His choice is between going along or risking impeachment and removal from office by

defying Congress.

He's hostage to their deplorable agenda.

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