

# Democrats Introduce New Bill to Impose More Sanctions on Russia. “Disable Russian Financial Activity”

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*Once again, rumors about the existence of a Russian plan to invade Ukraine are prompting American lawmakers to implement radical measures against Moscow. This time, a new bill threatens to impose even more US sanctions on Russia in the name of defending Ukrainian sovereignty. The project comes at a very delicate moment in relations between the US, Russia and Ukraine, being able to significantly worsen the search for a peaceful solution to the crisis in Eastern Europe.*

Recently, Democrat lawmakers introduced a new bill in the US Senate aimed at imposing “crippling sanctions” on Russia – predominantly the Russian financial sector – in the event of a violation or hostile activity against Ukrainian national sovereignty. The bill was titled “Defending Ukraine Sovereignty Act of 2022”, and was introduced by **Bob Menendez**, the New Jersey’s Democrat who chairs the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

**The project basically consists of proposing measures that completely disable Russian financial activity, affecting the banking sector**, large companies and, on a personal level, military, politicians, and prominent bureaucrats. **Measures would also be imposed on Russian industry**, with the aim of undermining exports and causing the country’s economic collapse. International bank transactions would also be affected, damaging the use of the SWIFT system in Russia. In other words, the new bill has the public objective of completely crippling economic and financial activities in Russia, if Moscow violates Ukrainian sovereignty.

In addition to trying to harm Russia in every way possible, the bill also establishes a provisional measure for the provision of 500 million dollars in “supplemental emergency security assistance” in the event of a Russian invasion. Some measures are also proposed for Washington to act more actively in the fight against “Russian disinformation”, as well as to strengthen ties with US regional partners in Ukraine that fight the alleged “Russian

aggression”.

In fact, this bill can be described as a bold and bellicose proposal for the US to definitely take Ukraine’s side in the regional rivalries between Kiev and Moscow. The Democrats seem to want their country to bet on a policy of total and unrestricted opposition to Russia. It is a step for Washington to abandon its current policy on the Ukrainian issue, which consists of “using” Kiev as a destabilizing agent in Eastern Europe and adopt a more radical policy in defense of Ukraine and in complete opposition to Russia, not open for dialogue. Undoubtedly, this is the result of the growth of an extremely dangerous and anti-diplomatic Russophobic mentality, which could begin to have negative effects on American foreign policy soon.

**The project came just a day after talks between Russian and American representatives in Switzerland.** Considering that the attempt to resolve the Ukrainian case through diplomatic dialogue has not been productive, the Democrats seem to be taking advantage of the moment in order to advance an agenda of tightening anti-Russian measures. Some recent words by Menendez support this argument:

“As the Biden administration seeks a diplomatic path forward this week in Europe to avoid another bloody escalation in Ukraine, I find little reason to believe that Putin is negotiating in good faith nor do I believe he has any newfound respect for Ukrainian sovereignty and territorial integrity (...) That is precisely why we are coming together to send a clear message – Putin need not collapse his entire economy nor does he need to sacrifice the lives of his own people in a futile attempt to rewrite the map of Europe.”

What appears to be happening here is not an attempt on the part of the Democrats to pressure Russia to accept NATO’s terms, but rather an attempt at a non-peaceful and non-diplomatic resolution of the demand. The lawmakers who proposed this bill simply want to pressure the US government to consider a coercive and bellicose solution to the Ukrainian crisis. The aim is simply to make Washington openly try to provoke economic and social collapse in Russia.

If the bill is interpreted honestly and the measures proposed therein are only implemented in a possible scenario of Russian invasion, its meaning will be practically null, since, obviously, such an “invasion plan” does not exist and Moscow would be, in this case, immune to coercive measures. However, recently NATO has regarded Moscow’s activities within Russian territory itself as a “threat” to Ukraine – and this raises a serious concern. The problem here is what the Americans will interpret as a “violation of Ukrainian sovereignty” – and whether Russian domestic activities near the western border will be viewed that way.

Indeed, it is not surprising that such a bill is proposed by the Democrats, which are the political party that has historically been most tied to ideological agendas in defense of American global hegemony. Biden, even though being a Democrat, is forced to take more realistic actions because of the current material situation in the US, but the pressure from his party is for him to use all possible means to suffocate Russia and all geopolitical enemies of the US. There is not much strategic value in that, just ideological commitment. It remains to be seen whether Biden will give in to the pressure.

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