

German Parliamentarians Suggest that Berlin Sanction US in Retaliation for Boycotting Nord Stream 2

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Once again, tensions are increasing in bilateral relations between the US and Germany due to Nord Stream 2. The pipeline project is unacceptable for Washington, but it serves European and Russian interests, ensuring energy security and lowering costs. The Biden government is not willing to back down in its decision to prevent the project from being completed and still taking coercive measures, which will be responded by Berlin.

Last week US State Department spokeswoman Jalina Porter said the Biden government will use all available tools to try to prevent Nord Stream 2 from completing. In response, Steffen Kotre, an affiliate of Alternative for Germany (AfD) and a member of the German Parliament’s energy committee, said that Berlin needs to think about countermeasures to be taken if new American sanctions are implemented. These are his [words](#): “It’s common knowledge that the construction of the pipeline is coming to a close. (...) Given the German government is opposing US’ aggressive actions against Nord Stream 2 only rhetorically, there is a growing concern about the project not be completed, so it would be politically correct to initiate countersanctions”.

Kotre says that with the abandonment of coal industry and Merkel’s disdain for nuclear energy, Nord Stream 2 becomes an even more necessary project for German energy security, as the country is currently under strong threat in this sector – in addition to other European nations. The pipeline, Kotre points out, “[will] help to mitigate the consequences of this”. This means that all possible measures to guarantee the completion of the gas pipeline must be taken by Berlin, considering that it is a highly strategic topic.

In addition to Kotre, another member of the AfD, Waldemar Herdt, spoke publicly in favor of measures to protect the pipeline and said that Berlin will not give up on the construction because there are no plausible arguments against the pipeline – only American impositions. In his words: “It is pointless to pressure Germany; Nord Stream 2 will be completed [because] we have no alternative, [and] the Germans will work with the Russians (...) [Nord Stream 2] is not a whim, the German economy needs it (...) It is less expensive, more ecological, more practical than other energy supply options. There are no arguments against

this project, but for Washington's orders: do as you are told". In addition, praise was given to the way the German government has been handling the case. According to Herdt, when facing the US to ensure the completion of Nord Stream 2, Germany is fighting for its interests for the first time since World War II.

Another reason for the recent unrest in the German Parliament was the statements by Antony Blinken after his meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The U.S. secretary of state said that Washington considers it to be in the national interest to waive sanctions on some corporate agents involved in the construction of the pipeline, mainly Nord Stream 2 AG and its CEO, Matthias Warnig. Biden's promise seems to contradict his own Department's statement that it will use all "available tools" to prevent the pipeline. However, Biden only listed the main companies that operate in the construction, still maintaining a wide range of agents available for sanctions. For example, on the same occasion, Blinken stated that more than ten vessels involved in the construction will continue to be sanctioned and did not exclude the possibility of further coercive measures against other agents. Apparently, the American strategy will take form in waiving sanctions against the main corporate agents to try to ease tensions with Germany and Russia, but, at the same time, maintaining sanctions against smaller but strategically important agents, undermining the construction of the gas pipeline in a more tenuous and less aggressive way.

In fact, Berlin is defending its interests for the first time in decades - and parliamentary pressure for countersanctions is very important. The possibility of Germany sanctioning the US is a great mark in bilateral relations, as it shows that the German government is increasingly committed to the interests of its people more than to American profits. Obviously, it is too early to say that the demands of parliamentarians will have real effects on the decisions of the federal government - especially considering that they are statements by a right-wing party.

However, considering the firm role played by the government so far, at no time renouncing its interest in the pipeline, it is indeed possible that sanctions will be authorized. It is necessary to point out that parliamentarians made these statements knowing that the main American sanctions would be eased and even so they suggested countermeasures - which indicates that the Germans are not willing to tolerate any sanctions and will not be satisfied with a simple relief for the main companies.

Germany is a nation that is truly allied with the West and committed to liberal values. Berlin has always been willing to cooperate with Washington on all points, but it is not permissible for such cooperation to become submission and abuse. Nord Stream 2 is a German national priority - an economic, social, and environmental necessity that cannot be reduced to international rivalries. Certainly, the US will respond appropriately if there are German sanctions, which could lead to a real trade war - but, apparently, Berlin is really willing to continue to fight for its own interests.

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