

The below email was distributed to various journalists via email.

From: Kevin Nolan

Sent: Thursday, January 13, 2022 12:04 PM

Subject: Backgrounder on U.S. Senate Bill on U.S./Ukraine Policy

Hi – Hope you are well and a happy 2022 to you. Some perspectives on DC events unfolding this week below that I thought might be of interest.

The U.S. Senate is expected to take up a bill – [S3436](#) – that seeks to provide the Biden Administration with a stronger response regarding Russia's military buildup and predatory energy practices in Europe. The vote is expected by January 14th. The bill offers practical steps the Administration should take to punish and deter Vladimir Putin for his menacing actions on Ukraine's border and to weaken Putin's ability to use gas as a political weapon against U.S. allies in Europe. In response, the Biden Administration (echoed by certain Democratic Senators) has publicly suggested that the bill would weaken rather than strengthen the West's hand in dealing with Putin. This central claim, as well as other related assertions by the Administration, are not supported by facts.

Note: on behalf of UFEOGI, spokespeople are available from UFEOGI, its main companies, including Naftogaz, and prominent U.S. think tanks to discuss the bill and the Administration's position as it relates to realities in Ukraine and the EU, as well actions by Russia. In addition, senior Ukraine officials may also be made available to offer official commentary in select circumstances.

Key Claims and Responses:

1. CLAIM: Passing this bill will reduce leverage over Russia as it masses forces on Ukraine's border.

RESPONSE: The only message Russia understands is firmness and pressure. It was in the aftermath of President Biden's decision not to impose sanction on Nord Stream 2, that Russia accelerated its aggressive behavior. It began a new ominous massing of troops on Ukraine's eastern border; with winter approaching, it began to reduce the supply of natural gas to Europe. [At the same time, Russia's close ally, Belarus, sought to provoke an immigration crisis on its border of Poland, a strong supporter of Ukraine and NS2].

2. CLAIM: Sanctions on Nord Stream 2 would undermine European unity.

RESPONSE: Europe itself is clearly divided on Nord Stream 2. Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the United Kingdom, and the Czech Republic – along with Ukraine -- are opposed to the project. Other countries are publicly skeptical about NS2.

3. CLAIM: Sanctions on Nord Stream 2 will undermine U.S. relations with Germany.

RESPONSE: When President Biden waived sanctions on NS2 in July, he argued that this was being done to repair relations with Chancellor Merkel's Germany. With Merkel gone and a new coalition government in power in Berlin, the fact is Germany's new leaders are divided on Nord Stream 2. Two of the three parties, which in fact represent the majority of the ruling majority and of the new German Cabinet, are either firmly against NS 2 (Greens) or oppose it in the majority (Free Democrats). Friedrich

Merz, the new leader of Merkel's own party, the Christian Democrats, supported a two-year freeze on NS2 after the 2020 poisoning of Aleksandr Navalny. The current runner up for the party leadership, Norbert Roetgen, is an outspoken opponent of the pipeline.

4. CLAIM: Ukraine's interests are best protected by withholding all sanctions against NS2.

RESPONSE: Sanctions on NS2 and opposition to the implementation of the pipeline project are most firmly opposed by Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, the United Kingdom, and the Czech Republic. It is particularly important to note that all the European states closest to Russia oppose this and are in the best position to assess their own security interest vis a vis Russia and its pipeline project.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky [has publicly expressed his support](#) for the Cruz bill. This vote marks the beginning of a wide-ranging debate on U.S. policy toward Russia and the most effective means to stop Putin from his increasingly aggressive external policies against Ukraine and beyond. It is important that journalists offer the American public an accurate assessment of the Biden Administration's assertions about both the current situation in Ukraine and EU energy security as they relate to NS2's completion and impact.

As noted above, let me know if interested in connecting with a relevant spokesperson and I am happy to arrange.

Regards,

Kevin

Kevin Nolan
KARV Communications
122 East 42nd Street
Suite 2005
New York, NY 10168
+1 212-333-0275 - office
+1 415-470-7167 - mobile
kdn@karvcommunications.com

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