

Continued German Support for Nord Stream 2 Completion? Towards a Shift in Russia-Germany Relations?

By [Stephen Lendman](#)

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Construction of Russia's Nord Stream 2 gas pipeline to Germany is about 94% completed.

The project is all about supplying Germany and other European countries with readily available low-cost Russian natural gas — around 30% cheaper than US liquified natural gas (LNG).

Both right wings of the US one-party state want the pipeline halted to benefit US producers at Russia's expense.

US sanctions on the project breach international law, Germany's Angela Merkel earlier saying "(w)e oppose extraterritorial sanctions...(W)e don't accept" them.

"We haven't backed down (on wanting Nord Stream 2 completed) nor do we intend to back down."

Last December, German Foreign Minister Heiko Mass said "European energy policy is decided in Europe, not the United States. We reject any outside interventions and extraterritorial sanctions."



Did the novichok poisoning of Putin critic Alexey Navalny hoax change things?

During a September 24 – 25 summit of EU leaders, the future of Nord Stream 2 will be

discussed.

Ahead of the summit, Merkel's government offered to invest around one billion euros (about \$1.2 billion) in construction of two terminals in Germany for US LNG.

According to the German broadsheet Die Zeit, by letter to Trump regime Treasury Secretary Mnuchin in August, German Vice Chancellor and Finance Minister Olaf Scholz said the following:

"In exchange (for Berlin's proposed LNG investment), the US will allow unobstructed finalization and use of Nord Stream 2," adding:

"(E)xisting legal options for (challenging US) sanctions (on firms involved in the project) have not been exhausted yet."

The broadsheet added that Scholz first expressed Berlin's proposal verbally, confirming it by letter.

Proposed German LNG terminals would be built in Brunsbüttel and Wilhelmshaven.

Berlin's proposal also included a gas transit contract for Ukraine and financing of a terminal for Poland's use of US LNG.

Following the Navalny false flag, opinion on completing Nord Stream 2 in Germany is divided.

Merkel still supports the project as evidenced by her government's offer to build two terminals for US LNG in exchange for dropping sanctions on the pipeline by the US.



Last June, US Senate hardliners proposed legislation to expand Nord Stream 2 related sanctions.

It targets all nations and enterprises involved in the project, including underwriting, insurance and reinsurance companies.

At the time, Gazprom CEO Alexey Miller said Russia will complete construction of the project on its own — expected to be operational in January or shortly thereafter.

Last month, German Foreign Minister Heiko Mass expressed “displeasure” to Pompeo about US sanctions on the project.

Last week, Polish government spokesman Piotr Muller was quoted saying the following:

“Poland has from the very beginning emphasized that European solidarity (on Nord Stream 2) should be unambiguous.”

“Therefore, if such a need is expressed by the German side, Poland is open to the idea of using the infrastructure which it is building for its own energy security.”

His remark followed German media reports that Merkel said a decision by her government on Nord Stream 2 has not been made in light of the Navalny incident.

German officials supporting the project stressed that the country will be the main beneficiary of its completion economically, environmentally and strategically.

Construction on the proposed 800 – 950 km Baltic Pipe gas pipeline from Norwegian North Sea waters to Poland hasn’t begun.

If completed in October 2022 as proposed, it’ll be able to deliver about 10 billion cubic meters of natural gas annually — less than 20% of Nord Stream 2’s 55 billion annual cubic meter capacity.

Berlin earlier was skeptical about the project because of environmental concerns.

Days earlier, Polish energy expert Jakub Wiech called it “pointless” to compare Baltic Pipe to Nord Stream 2, given the latter project’s far greater capacity and ability to provide gas to other Western European countries.

A day after the Navalny incident last month, Merkel said Nord Stream 2 will be completed regardless of threatened new US sanctions on firms involved in the project.

Separately on Wednesday, Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said Nord Stream 2’s completion should not be raised in discussing the Navalny incident.

“It should stop being mentioned in the context of any politicization.”

“This is a commercial project that is absolutely in line with the interests of both Russia and European Union countries, and primarily Germany.”

No evidence links Russia to Navalny's illness.

Whatever caused it wasn't from a novichok nerve agent, the deadliest known substance able to kill exposed individuals in minutes.

Over three weeks after falling ill, Navalny is very much alive, recuperating in a Berlin hospital, and able to be ambulatory for short periods.

A Final Comment

On September 14, CNBC reported the following:

"Experts say Berlin is unlikely to (abandon Nord Stream 2 that's) over 94% completed after almost a decade's construction, involv(ing) major German and European companies, and is necessary for the region's current and future energy needs," adding:

"In this case, economic and commercial interests could trump political pressure" against Russia.

Chief eurozone economist Carsten Brzeski said he doesn't see "Germany pulling out of the project...Many (in the country) are still in favor of it."

CNBC noted that

"Germany has been reluctant to link the fate of its involvement with Nord Stream 2 to the Navalny incident so far, and (FM Heiko) Maas conceded that stopping the building of the pipeline would hurt not only Russia but German and European firms."

"(O)ver 100 companies from 12 European countries" are involved in the project...about half of them from Germany."

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Award-winning author Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. He is a Research Associate of the Centre for Research on Globalization (CRG)

His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html>

Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com.

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About the author:

Stephen Lendman lives in Chicago. He can be reached at lendmanstephen@sbcglobal.net. His new book as editor and contributor is titled "Flashpoint in Ukraine: US Drive for Hegemony Risks WW III."

<http://www.claritypress.com/LendmanIII.html> Visit his blog site at sjlendman.blogspot.com. Listen to cutting-edge discussions with distinguished guests on the Progressive Radio News Hour on the Progressive Radio Network. It airs three times weekly: live on Sundays at 1PM Central time plus two prerecorded archived programs.

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