

July 15, 2021

President Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

I write with regard to your meeting with Chancellor Angela Merkel. Since you have assumed office, you have consistently raised the importance of coordinating with our democratic allies and partners in order to achieve our shared foreign policy goal of countering the Kremlin's efforts to expand its influence in Europe and throughout the world. While I share that view, I sincerely believe that your administration's recent decision to waive sanctions on Nord Stream 2 AG and its principals do not live up to this goal, and, in fact, further endanger our democratic allies.

On May 19, 2021, Secretary Blinken notified Congress of your decision to waive sanctions on the Gazprom-subsiary, Nordstream 2 AG and its principals, because cooperation with Germany would be crucial to "defend our democracies against authoritarianism," and "counter[ing] malign behavior by Russia and China." This argument is false on its face. Completing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline will only endanger our democratic allies in East and Central Europe and embolden Russian President Vladimir Putin in his aggression towards them.

Putin's dependence on the transit of Russian gas and oil through Ukraine is a significant constraint on his ability to use his greater military resources to coerce and bully our Ukrainian partners. Fees paid by Russian companies for the transit of gas through Ukraine provide the Ukrainian government with billions of dollars that it needs to supply its military to defend Ukraine's territorial integrity. In 2019 alone, 35 percent of Russia's exports of gas travelled through Ukraine. Ukraine's current ability to stop transit of this gas provides it with leverage to prevent Russia from escalating its ongoing war in Donbas and even from illegally seizing additional Ukrainian territory. Completion of Nord Stream 2 robs Ukraine of one of the few advantages it has over the Putin regime.

Although Chancellor Merkel has guaranteed Ukraine's status as an oil transit country, Gazprom has already started to reduce its use of pipelines in Ukraine. On July 2, reports surfaced that Gazprom had stopped booking additional capacity to transit gas through Ukraine this summer in the expectation that Nord Stream 2 will be operational by next month. I fully expect that later this year, Russia will stop all transit of gas through Ukraine, as it did in 2006 and 2009, and escalate the war it has waged against Ukraine since 2014 through its proxies in Donbas.

I urge you to convey to Chancellor Merkel that there is broad bipartisan support for preventing the completion of yet another pipeline that bypasses Ukraine. I further call on you to press Chancellor Merkel to support Ukraine against Russia's aggression. Countering authoritarian influence not only requires opposing the construction of another Putin pipeline, but by providing Europe with alternative sources of energy and firmly standing with our allies and partners. I stand ready to work with you to develop policies that truly protect democracy and counter the threat of authoritarianism.

Thank you for your attention to these matters.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Rubio', written in a cursive style.

Marco Rubio
U.S. Senator