

To Escape the Geopolitical Trap, Germany Must Enter Talks with Russia

by Rainer Apel

Oct. 1—While the discussion goes on about who sabotaged the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and who will benefit from it, one thing is already clear: Germany does not benefit at all; the sabotage is a decisive move on the geopolitical chessboard that is confronting the Germans with losing the game. Germany's economy has been highly dependent on Russian natural gas supplies for many years, with the Russians always being reliable suppliers.

The Nord Stream 2 pipeline, construction of which began in 2018 and was concluded in 2021, was also meant to make transits of Russian gas available to several other European countries, but the main benefit would have been on the German side. This Baltic undersea pipeline, running from St. Petersburg in Russia to Greifswald in Germany, was built for about €12 billion, but was never opened, and after the sabotage incident, it can not be opened for some time to come.

The pipeline was vehemently opposed by geopoliticians in the United States, the United Kingdom, Poland, the European Commission, and Ukraine. Ukraine claimed that Nord Stream 2 would make its own pipeline grid—which, being outside of any sanctions, pumps 42 million cubic meters of Russian gas daily on to Europe to this day—superfluous).

For Germany, the loss of 40% of its national energy mix, by the combined effect of anti-Russian sanctions and now the sabotage of the Nord Stream 2, has devastating consequences. About 50% of German households use gas for heating and cooking. About the same percentage of industry needs gas to generate electricity and/or for petrochemicals production. There are daily statements coming from industry associations, many of them writing open letters to the government sounding the alarm, but so far to no avail. Instead, the government keeps talking about “alternatives,” particularly LNG (liquefied natural gas), that simply do not exist in sufficient volumes to replace the Russian supplies.

This implies that the foreseeable substantial bottlenecks this winter will cause rationing of enormous scope, particularly for energy-intensive industries, and will force them to reduce production, lay off workers and staff and, for many of the smaller companies, to

close for good. The term “deindustrialization” has already entered the headlines of numerous press articles—notably in *Handelsblatt*, Germany's leading business daily. This is not a temporary bottleneck situation, it is an existential threat to Germany and its economy. And against the background of all European economies being closely interconnected, if Germany, the biggest national industrial economy in Europe, goes under, it will pull the rest of Europe down with it. Not only that: If there is no reversal of the present NATO confrontation course against Russia, the threat of World War III becomes acute, with Germany and Europe and their populations being the sure casualties.



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Angela Merkel, Chancellor of Germany, 2005-2021.

Merkel Breaks Silence: What Kohl Would Have Done

Instead of playing down the crisis on the one side while issuing daily calls on the population and industry to “voluntarily” reduce gas consumption, the government finally has to do something that serves the German national interest—even if that runs into conflict with what the geopoliticians in Germany and abroad think. It is interesting to note that former German Chancellor Angela Merkel, speaking at the opening of the Chancellor Helmut Kohl Foundation on Sept. 27, criticized those that dismiss Russian President Vladimir Putin's words as something to ignore. Merkel said:

Taking words seriously, not dismissing them out of hand as just a bluff, but dealing with them seri-

ously, that is by no means a sign of weakness or appeasement, but a sign of political wisdom—a wisdom that helps preserve room for maneuver or, at least as important, even develop new options.

Asked at the same event what she thought former Chancellor Helmut Kohl would have done in the present precarious situation, Merkel responded that she believed he would “make every effort to protect and restore the sovereignty and integrity of Ukraine,” but he would also look to “the day after” and keep an open mind about something “unimaginable now: how relations to and with Russia could one day be redeveloped” after the conflict ends. Two days later, at another event in Goslar, Merkel called for a “new security architecture in Europe” with Russia included.

This is not “unimaginable”: Previous Chancellors of Germany, before Kohl, who managed to open the door to German unification in 1990 against the initial heavy opposition of the U.S.A., UK, and France, were creative in developing a constructive dialogue with Soviet Russia in Cold War times. Chancellor Konrad Adenauer reestablished diplomatic relations with the Kremlin with a spectacular trip to Moscow in 1955; Chancellor Willy Brandt insisted that Germany sign the early 1970s gas-

pipeline deal with Soviet Russia, involving the supply of pipes made in western Germany for the construction of the pipelines, which, once completed, would pump gas to Germany; Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder (together with Putin and French President Jacques Chirac) openly opposed the military intervention against Iraq in 2003; even Chancellor Merkel, initially opposed, like the western geopoliticians, to the Nord Stream 2 pipeline, changed views and finally okayed the project.

The question to be answered by the present government of Chancellor Olaf Scholz is: Does Germany have sovereignty, or doesn't it? Is it condemned to sit idly by while its economy is ruined, sacrificed on the altar of those who push for ultimate confrontation with Russia?

An emergency effort to restore Nord Stream 2 is certainly feasible, but a political decision to do so has to be made first. It is worth noting that the same Russian statement, two weeks ago—that with weapons deliveries and a leading role behind sanctions, Germany had “crossed a red line”—also made the offer to pump gas through Nord Stream 2 to Germany once it were opened. That shows there is room for constructive diplomacy; but time is running out. The German government has to act now, or it will be too late. Too late for Germany, too late for Europe, and for the rest of the world as well!

EIR readers knew 27 years ago that the destruction of Ukraine was in the works.

READ THIS INTERVIEW, published May 5, 1995, with Ukrainian Members of Parliament Natalya Vitrenko and Vladimir Marchenko:

https://larouche.pub.com/eiw/public/1995/eirv22n19-19950505/eirv22n19-19950505_020-natalya_vitrenko_and_vladimir_ma.pdf

These Ukrainian elected officials, leading collaborators with Lyndon LaRouche and his movement, pointed out with astonishing clarity what the consequences would be of Ukraine's embrace of the International Monetary Fund. They warned that “Ukraine is being strictly held in the status of a semi-colonial country”, with a corresponding suppression of the nation's productive potential, and the imposition of the IMF's standard brutal austerity upon the nation's population. This was a recipe for disaster, and created the social conditions for the resurgence of Nazism which we are seeing today in Ukraine.



Oleh Tyahnybok, founder of Ukraine Right Sector Party.