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Germany Committed to Nord Stream 2 Pipeline Despite Ukraine Crisis

By Reuters

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Stefan Sauer / DPA / TASS

Germany is still committed to the NordStream 2 pipeline, which will allow Russia to bypass Ukraine in transporting gas to Europe, despite escalating tension in the region, a government spokesman in Berlin said on Wednesday.

The United States and others have stepped up criticism of the project since Russia seized three Ukrainian ships near Crimea on Sunday. Critics say the pipeline will make Germany and Europe too dependent on Russia for its energy supplies.

"I have taken note of the criticism but nothing has changed in the basic view of the economic project which is what NordStream is," said German government spokesman Steffen Seibert.

He added that Germany still wanted to ensure Ukraine would remain a transit country for gas from Russia to Europe. Earlier, Ukraine's ambassador to Germany had said NordStream 2

should be put on hold.

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The United States also wants its European allies to consider further sanctions against Russia over the situation in Ukraine, the U.S. Special Representative for Ukraine Negotiations said on Wednesday.

But a spokesman for the foreign ministry said the debate about further sanctions against Russia over the conflict in Ukraine was premature.

"It's a legal instrument that has consequences for those who are affected by the sanctions so that means you need to consider and discuss it carefully," said the spokesman.

Several senior European politicians on Tuesday raised the possibility of new sanctions against Russia to punish it for capturing three Ukrainian vessels at sea, an incident the West fears could ignite a wider conflict.

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