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# Pelosi supports halting Russian oil imports to US: 'Ban it'

By LISA MASCARO 28 minutes ago



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Russian oil imports to the U.S., a hefty nod that could strengthen President Joe Biden's hand as global allies seek to isolate Russian President Vladimir Putin's regime.

Biden has been reluctant to curb Russian oil shipments to the U.S. or slap on energy sanctions in ways that would reduce supply as gas prices at the pump are already climbing for Americans. But Pelosi's support gives fresh currency for an idea in Congress already backed by wide swaths of Republicans and an increasing number of Democrats. The White House has said all tools remain on the table.

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"I'm all for that," Pelosi said about ending Russian oil in the U.S. "Ban it."

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support for Ukrainians but has struggled over concrete steps that would help the Western-style democracy battle the Russian invasion.

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Democrats eager to punish Putin. “What if we crush the oil and gas sector of the Russian economy?” said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C. “That would be a lethal combination for the Russian economy.”

Sen. Ed Markey, a liberal Democrat from Massachusetts and a leading advocate of climate change strategies, also backs an import ban. “We cannot criticize Europe for its reliance on Russian energy as we pour dirty oil money into Russia,” he said

Still, Biden has resisted, fearing a ban could further disrupt global markets and raise already high prices at the pump. He also risks backlash from climate change activists who say U.S. officials must not use the Ukraine war to expand oil or gas drilling in the U.S., a step Republicans have been urging. Gas prices in the U.S. averaged nearly \$3.73 a gallon Thursday, up almost \$1 from a year

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For now, the White House has said all options remain on the table. “We don’t have a strategic interest in reducing the global supply of energy,” said White House press secretary Jen Psaki.

The remarks from the White House were widely criticized as misguided by Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, at a press conference Thursday introducing a bipartisan bill to halt Russian oil imports to the U.S.

The legislation would halt Russian oil imports in the U.S. by declaring a national emergency, something Biden could also do on his own. It gained bipartisan support, including from leadership of the House Problem Solvers Caucus.

“There is a moral obligation here: I don’t want us dollars to be funding this, this carnage in Ukraine led by Putin,” Murkowski said.

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Russian oil and gas exports have loomed over national security policy in the U.S. and its Western allies. The energy sector is vital to the Russian economy and the industry is a political force that leaves countries reliant on Putin's regime. Oil prices globally spiked with the Russian invasion of Ukraine, shaking markets.

The U.S. imported a small but notable amount of oil from Russia — some 7 % of all imports of crude oil and petroleum products. Some US industry groups say it's even less. In 2021, the U.S. brought in roughly 245 million barrels of crude oil and petroleum products from Russia — a one-year increase of 24%, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

Pelosi said she doesn't want to see rising gas prices at the pump for Americans, and outlined steps Congress and the administration are

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of a global effort to ease oil supplies amid the Ukraine war, and some Democrats have been pushing a temporary holiday from the federal gas tax to ease costs to consumers.

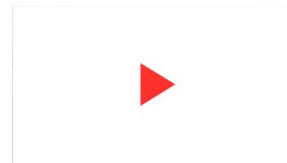
The White House has not endorsed the gas tax holiday or ruled it out.

Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani and Matthew Daly contributed to this story.

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