Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

FROM POLITICO PRO

Only 4 months before war, Germany claimed Russian gas pipeline posed no risk

Nord Stream 2, designed to ferry natural gas directly from Russia to northern Germany, 'does not jeopardize' gas supplies in Germany and the EU, according to controversial opinion by previous government.

Privacy

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

A controversial opinion about Germany's dependancy on Russia for gas, adopted by former Chancellor Angela Merkel, is now creating problems for current Chancellor Olaf Scholz | Sean Gallup/Getty Images

BY HANS VON DER BURCHARD

OCTOBER 13, 2022 | 10:38 AM CET

PRESS PLAY TO LISTEN TO THIS ARTICLE

0:00 / 0:00

Voiced by Amazon Polly

BERLIN — The German government on Thursday declassified a top-secret security assessment on the Nord Stream 2 pipeline from 2021, only four months before the outbreak of war, which claimed energy supplies "won't be jeopardized" by increased dependency on Russian gas.

The document, dated October 26, 2021, was adopted in the final days of former Chancellor Angela Merkel's outgoing government, in which Germany's current leader Olaf Scholz played a key role as vice chancellor.

The controversial opinion displays an exceedingly naive view of the risks posed by Germany's significant reliance on Russian gas deliveries, which had continuously grown in the years prior to Moscow's war. It also rejects concerns by Eastern European partners like Poland and Ukraine, which had long warned the Nord Stream 2 undersea pipeline designed to carry natural gas directly from Russia to northern Germany would increase the risk of energy blackmail by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"Overall, the assessment comes to the conclusion that the granting of certification [for Nord Stream 2] does not jeopardize the security of gas supply in Germany and the European Union," the document reads.

"For both the German and neighboring markets, the risk of serious impairments to supply security due to the failure of individual import supply infrastructures is very limited," the government paper adds — an assessment belied by the current halt in Russian gas deliveries to Germany and the resulting gas scarcity and energy crisis, which forced Berlin to adopt a massive, unprecedented €200 billion gas price relief package earlier this month to shield households and companies from soaring prices.

Instead, the opinion claims that Nord Stream 2 would "increase the resilience of the European gas supply system by providing an additional capacity buffer for peak demand."

Privacy

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

While the assessment does consider a scenario under which Russia cuts gas flows to Europe, it classifies such a risk as very low, stressing that "gas deliveries from the Soviet Union and later from Russia to Germany have been reliable and contractual for decades, even in times of political tension."

Moreover, the paper stresses that liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals in other EU countries like Belgium or France could substitute 71 percent of Russian gas flows if needed — although that conclusion is based on the assumption that sufficient LNG shipments could be found immediately.

The government opinion dismissed concerns that Russia's state-controlled gas supplier Gazprom would violate delivery contracts or EU law, suggesting German regulators could simply intervene and reason with the Russians — a misguided assertion in retrospect.

The publication of the explosive assessment comes after journalists from German magazine Der Spiegel requested access to the document and threatened to take the government to court if it did not publish the file.

But the timing of the release is problematic for Scholz, who claimed this Tuesday that he "was always sure" Putin would use energy supplies "as a weapon."

Scholz's bold claim had already triggered criticism due to his top role in the previous government and his track record of having promoted and defended Nord Stream 2 until early this year. Although the government assessment was written by the economy ministry under former minister Peter Altmaier, from Merkel's Christian Democratic Party (CDU), it will pose questions about how closely Scholz was involved in its approval as the former vice chancellor.

A spokesperson for Scholz could not be reached for an immediate comment.

Germany withdrew the controversial security assessment and pulled the plug on Nord Stream 2 just days ahead of Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

MORE FROM ... HANS VON DER BURCHARD

Most Read Articles

1. Scientifically proven: The EU is incomprehensible
NOVEMBER 6, 2022 | 4:00 AM CET

2. China's Xi warns Putin not to use nuclear arms in Ukraine
NOVEMBER 4, 2022 | 11:17 AM CET

Privacy

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

3. Where Britain went wrong
NOVEMBER 3, 2022 | 4:01 AM CET

4. Greece's spyware scandal expands further
NOVEMBER 5, 2022 | 6:07 PM CET

5. Populists vs. the planet: How climate became the new culture war front line
NOVEMBER 6, 2022 | 10:09 AM CET

Related Content

FROM ACROSS THE POND
Europe's US anxiety

5 tensions that could derail the climate conference

The Russian gas habit Europe can't quit: LNG

An inconvenient truth: Climate change won't be solved in this desert

Populists vs. the planet: How climate became the new culture war front line

Next up

Privacy

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

Boris Johnson tells climate summit: 'I am the spirit of Glasgow'

NOVEMBER 7, 2022 | 2:16 PM CET

By Tristan Fiedler

Le Maire: Europe must stand firm against US aid to industry

Privacy

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

NOVEMBER 7, 2022 | 1:12 PM CET

By Wilhelmine Preussen

SPONSORED CONTENT FROM KELKOO GROUP

Dark patterns: Shedding light on Big Tech's tactics that reel us all in

NOVEMBER 7, 2022 | 1:00 PM CET

By Richard Stables, CEO, Kelkoo Group

Privacy

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

Biden closes the election with a big roll of the dice

NOVEMBER 7, 2022 | 11:58 AM CET

By Jonathan Lemire

Related Tags

CERTIFICATION AND STANDARDS COMPANIES COURTS CRISIS DEMOCRATIC PARTY ENERGY ENERGY DEPENDENCY ENERGY SUPPLY GAS GERMAN POLITICS IMPORTS MARKETS NATURAL GAS PIPELINES RISK AND COMPLIANCE SECURITY WAR WAR IN UKRAINE

Related Countries

GERMANY POLAND RUSSIA UKRAINE

Related People

ANGELA MERKEL OLAF SCHOLZ PETER ALTMAIER VLADIMIR PUTIN

Related Organizations

CDU

EXPLORE POLITICO EU

BRUSSELS

Latest news, analysis and comment from POLITICO's editors and guest writers in Europe.

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

GERMANY

Latest news, analysis and comment on German politics and beyond.

FRENCH ELECTION 2022

Latest news, analysis and comment on the French election in 2022 and beyond.

ELECTIONS IN EUROPE

Latest news, analysis and comment on elections in Europe and beyond.

CORONAVIRUS IN EUROPE

The latest news, data and analysis on the world's pandemic response.

MIGRATION

Latest news, analysis and comment on migration in Europe and beyond.

DEFENSE

Latest news, analysis and comment on defense in Europe and beyond.

CONTINENT

Latest news, analysis and comment from POLITICO's editors and guest writers on the continent.

POLICY AREAS

Agriculture and Food
Competition and Industrial Policy
Cybersecurity and Data Protection
Health Care
Energy and Climate
EU-UK
Financial Services
Mobility
Sustainability
Technology
Trade
Trade UK

NEWSLETTERS

Brussels Playbook
Playbook Paris
London Playbook
Sunday Crunch
Politico Confidential
London Influence
EU Influence
Global Policy Lab: Living Cities
Berlin Bulletin
Digital Bridge
China Direct

EXPLORE PRODUCTS

SERIES

POLITICO 28 Series
Global Policy Lab
Climate, Changed
Work Reloaded
Silent Killers
After Corona
The Road to COP26

COMMENTARY

Unpacked
Beyond the Bubble
From Across the Pond
Club Med
Declassified

PODCASTS

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM

DISCOVER POLITICO PRO

In-depth reporting, data and actionable intelligence for policy professionals – all in one place.

This material is distributed by Yorktown Solutions, LLC on behalf of the All-Ukrainian Industry Association “Federation of Employers of the Oil and Gas Industry." Additional information is available at the Department of Justice, Washington, D.C.

Privacy

Received by NSD/FARA Registration Unit 11/07/2022 10:20:57 AM