Twitter Thread by S■awomir D■bski

S■awomir D■bski
@SlawomirDebski

There’s rumour about confidential negotiations btn the Biden admin and the German gov. Their goal: to find a way out of the mess in which the whole transatlantic community finds itself because of Merkel’s support for Putin’s pipeline—Nord Stream 2

2/ The preferred solution for the Biden team would be to deny Putin the ability to exercise energy blackmail against Central Europe and Ukraine, while at the same time foregoing sanctions against Germany.

3/ Early in his career, Biden’s Secretary of State Anthony @SecBlinken had analyzed the decision of the Reagan administration not to levy sanctions against West Europeans for building the Siberian pipeline with the Soviets.

4/ See for example: https://t.co/boZefawDEV

5/ Reagan decided to take a step back, calculating that the unity of the West was more important than the gas pipeline. Not even Lady Thatcher supported Reagan’s policy.

6/ It is no surprise that Biden is seeking a way out of a rather uncomfortable dilemma—how to protect Europe’s energy security without sanctioning a crucial ally. But drawing inspiration from a policy rooted in circumstances typical of 1980s could be a fool’s errand.

7/ The political map of Europe looks much different today. Germany’s credibility, after it pushed for building #NS2 despite Russia’s aggression against Ukraine, is in tatters. Berlin is no position to offer cover from the grave threats associated with NS2.

8/ Perhaps crucially, unlike the Siberian pipeline, Nord Stream 2 is a project that is deeply divisive and has long been opposed by U.S. allies in Europe.

9/ The German government went to great lengths in creating a body of lies about the true nature of #NS2 to silence allies, its own public opinion & EU institutions. In 2019 in Munich, Chancellor #Merkel argued that halting NS2 would mean „loosing” #Russia to #China.

10/ Fast forward to 2021–is Berlin trying to buy American consent to finish NS2 in exchange for holding back from sealing a deal between China and the German car industry? CC: @bueti @AnnaFotyga_PE

11/ It would be worth the effort, because the truth is ugly. NS2 is a vintage tool of Kremlin's business model, a nexus of politics, business & crime.

12/ Soviet Union was not as capable of exporting corruption to Europe and of money laundering as Putin's Russia is. I doubt whether instead of sanctioning NS2 Americans would be willing to blacklist Gerhard Schroeder—a true icon of Putinist brand of corruption.

13/ And yet to ignore it would mean to seriously undermine the credibility of the 46th president of the United States who vowed that on his watch, America would lead a global struggle to root out corruption. What exactly would this mean, if NS2 is allowed to go forward?

14/ America's credibility would be further damaged if safeguards from Putin's attempts at energy blackmail were negotiated only with Germany, without the Baltic states, Ukraine and Poland. „Nothing about us without us" is the region's oldest democratic principle.

15/ If the Biden administration wants to avoid sanctioning Germany, it should be talking to Warsaw, Tallin and Kyiv, asking them about necessary guarantees. Without it, the U.S. officials would become mere subcontractors for the Kremlin.

16/ Central Europeans and Ukrainians do not desire Russian gas. And yet Germany is going out of its way to ensure that it would be indispensable, revving up EU climate policy and opposing Poland's plans to add nuclear power to its energy mix.

17/ The uneasy truth is that sanctions against Nord Stream 2 are the best tool to hold in check Kremlin's (and indirectly also China's) attempts to wield influence over Europe.

18/ If Biden administration decides to shelve this tool, it will find itself in need to fill the credibility void orchestrated by Berlin. It will become an involuntary custodian of all that is wrong in German-Russian energy alliance. It will be endorsing a toxic relationship.

19/ And it will make America irrelevant as an energy player in this part of the world. With additional 55bcm of gas available annually via Putin's pipeline, who would care about marketing additional deliveries of LNG?

20/ Furthermore, America's support for the Three Seas Initiative—currently enjoying bipartisan support in Congress, and rightly so—would ring hollow. NS2 is completely incompatible with all the TSI stands for. A policy pursued by all U.S. admins since 1989 would be put to rest.

21/ The prevailing view among analysts and commentators is that Biden is not interested in another „reset" with Putin's Russia. This may well be accurate, these aren't Biden's instincts. But he might just be sleepwalking into one if he allows NS2 to proceed—at a hefty price. END.