Despite the conflict in Ukraine and sanctions against Russia initiated by Washington, Russian gas is flowing to Europe in maximum volumes, European media outlets stress. At Mallnow, the point of arrival of the Yamal-Europe pipeline in Germany, supplies, which were interrupted for a few days after the start of Russia’s military special operation in Ukraine on February 24, have only increased and now reached their highest level. The Gascade portal also confirms this, showing that they fell to zero on February 24 and 27 and then fluctuated, but started rising steadily from March 7.

Russia is in full compliance with its obligations to supply oil and gas to Europe, and Nord Stream 2 must be launched to quickly reduce gas prices in the EU, from which Europeans are suffering and businesses there are going bankrupt, the Russian ambassador to France, Alexey Meshkov, said. Gas deliveries via Ukraine are also proceeding normally, with Gazprom meeting its contractual obligations to deliver just over 109 million m3 of gas per day to the European market.

As confirmed by EU officials, European imports of Russian gas or oil have so far not been sanctioned because of their value to Europeans, who are heavily dependent on Russian hydrocarbons. Meanwhile, US President Joe Biden has imposed an embargo on Russian energy imports. On March 8, he gave a speech stating that these are the toughest sanctions the United States has imposed against Moscow, they target a major artery of the Russian economy and
“will bring Putin further problems.”

At the same time, Joe Biden was forced to point out that America would also have to pay some costs. And as a result, in the US itself, gasoline prices have hit an all-time high of $4.17 a gallon following reports that Washington plans to approve a ban on Russian oil imports. This remains a key issue on the White House’s list of domestic policy problems.

In its blatant Russophobic policies, the White House has tried to create the illusion of unity and a strong coalition against Russia. But when it comes to energy, it turns out that the “coalition” is very fragile, and not only among the Europeans. It is riddled with glaring holes and cracks, because different countries, companies, types of business, political groups behind the business may have different attitudes to trade with Russia.

There is international consensus that the problems and costs caused by US sanctions will fall mainly on ordinary Europeans. Official statistics show that about 45% of EU natural gas in 2021 came from Russia, which is also Europe’s largest oil supplier. The price of European natural gas futures has now risen to €3,500 per thousand cubic meters, 10 times the normal price.

At the same time, the US does not import Russian gas at all, and only 8% of its oil and oil products come from Russia. However, even though the US depends so little on Russian energy, it was Russia that came to the aid of the northeastern US regions in early February this year when it was hit by unprecedented cold weather and severe fuel shortages. The traditional suppliers, Europe and Canada, themselves struggling, were unable to deliver diesel fuel to the region’s inhabitants. As a result, according to oil data provider Vortexa, about 1.55 million barrels (211,000 tonnes) of diesel fuel were sent from Russia to the US in February, a record in the past three years, currently accounting for 22% of diesel imports, Ridus quoted Bloomberg as saying. It was noted, however, that Russia’s growing share of imports is another illustration of Russia’s critical role in supplying the world with oil.

The US is well aware that its global goal of “hitting the main artery of Russia’s economy” can only be achieved with European involvement. However, the calls by Washington and its ilk in London, Brussels and the Baltic states to abandon Russian energy resources have sharply contradicted the views of most EU leaders and caused panic in the markets, even more record hikes in fuel prices and a series of harsh, critical statements by heads of the leading EU countries. Some of them explicitly stated that the US move was an attempt to kill the EU by disguising the whole affair as a collective suicide. For example, Germany has made it clear that it does not intend to go along with Washington on this issue and will not impose any corresponding bans. German Chancellor Olaf Scholz stated that “there is currently no other way of ensuring energy supplies to Europe for heat generation, for transport, electricity and industry provision.” French President Emmanuel Macron also explicitly said in his statement that the United States does not depend on Russia for oil and gas, but Europe does. Against this background, criticism of US policy and Joe Biden’s actions to ban Russian oil and gas from the European market has intensified in European society.

Nevertheless, Washington, in its frenzied confrontation with Russia, has begun actively seeking other external allies to restrict the entry of Russian oil and gas into the international, especially European, market. To this end, the White House has taken steps to forge a “coalition alliance” in this regard with Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Venezuela and Iran, all major energy players and on whose “support” Washington has relied.

However, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have engaged in a tough oil stand-off with the US, demonstrating an aversion to Washington’s position from the two traditional allies it needed most. The de facto ruler of Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Abu Dhabi Emirate Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed have not agreed to Joe Biden’s demands, a scenario almost unthinkable under previous administrations, writes The Guardian. Given that relations between the Middle Eastern oil powers and Washington are at their lowest point in recent years, there is a payback that could change the regional order on terms favorable to Riyadh and Abu Dhabi. Both leaders have made it clear that they will not agree to the White House’s proposed “political games.” Moreover, the confrontation between the Gulf monarchies is not just about oil. In Riyadh, Prince Mohammed bin Salman feels insulted by Biden’s refusal to engage with him since he took over the presidency. The sharp confrontation with Abu Dhabi is largely due to Washington’s negative reaction to the UAE’s attempt to pursue its own policies independent of US opinion, in particular the UAE’s demonstrated repeated abstention from voting in the UN Security Council on the resolutions promoted there by the White House.

A similar rejection of its provocative “energy initiatives” was received by the White House from Venezuela and Iran.

All this clearly demonstrates not only the widespread decline of US “credibility,” but also the humiliation to which the Joe Biden administration has deservedly been subjected in various parts of the world for its provocative policies
of recent times, even from its former “allies” and political vassals.

Vladimir Danilov, political observer, exclusively for the online magazine “New Eastern Outlook”.