

United States increased the diplomatic pressure in order to prevent Hungary to sell stake in Croatian energy company INA to Russia Gazprom.

Western forces interpret this as an indicator of hazardous Budapest floating in the Russian orbit.

The US government has already made an extremely unusual step by blacklisting six people who have ties to the government of Hungary, who is NATO ally and EU member, so that they cannot enter the United States, accusing them of involvement in corruption.

US officials say the demarche is resentment result because of the actions of the Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who forced the judge to retire, introduced high taxes on foreign banks, and this week he has sparked huge protests over proposals to introduce a tax on the use of the Internet.

But Washington is particularly concerned about the growing closeness between Hungary and Kremlin in the energy sector that could jeopardize attempts by the West to isolate Russia's President Vladimir Putin for intervention in Ukraine, according to Reuters.

American officials are now concerned that the Hungarian energy company MOL wants to sell a 49 percent stake in Croatia's largest energy company INA to a Russian company, probably to the state owned Gazprom.

Hungary state owns 24.7 percent of MOL.

State Department official in charge of energy security Amos Hohstin asked from the US Senator who visits Europe to come in Croatia last weekend to discuss with the Croatian government about it.

Earlier this month he also talked with Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Sijarto in Washington. Hohstin said to Reuters that they had a "productive meeting" of the share of MOL, the South Stream and Hungarian gas deliveries to Ukraine.

Western diplomats in the region have confirmed that the US is concerned about the possible sale of Gazprom which they consider as the policy instrument of Kremlin. This would allow the Russian company to occupy a strategic position within the EU, which is the largest consumer of Russian natural gas.

Chris Murphy, a senator who lobbied in the Croatian Government, at the request of Washington, said that Gazprom did not hide he wanted to buy shares of Croatian company INA.

"We felt it was a good idea to stop by and talk with the Prime Minister and the President and to reiterate the importance of this issue", said Murphy during a visit to Zagreb, Reuters reported.

Anyone who buys a MOL share of 49 percent could gain around five percent of the shares of the Croatian company at the Zagreb stock exchange and becomes its majority owner.

Gazprom source said the talks were held in March in which participated Croatia, Gazprom Neft, which is located within Gazprom and the Russian state oil company Rosneft, but since

then nothing new has happened.