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Jan 16 · 18 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1614891614165471233](https://twitter.com/P_Kallioniemi/status/1614891614165471233)

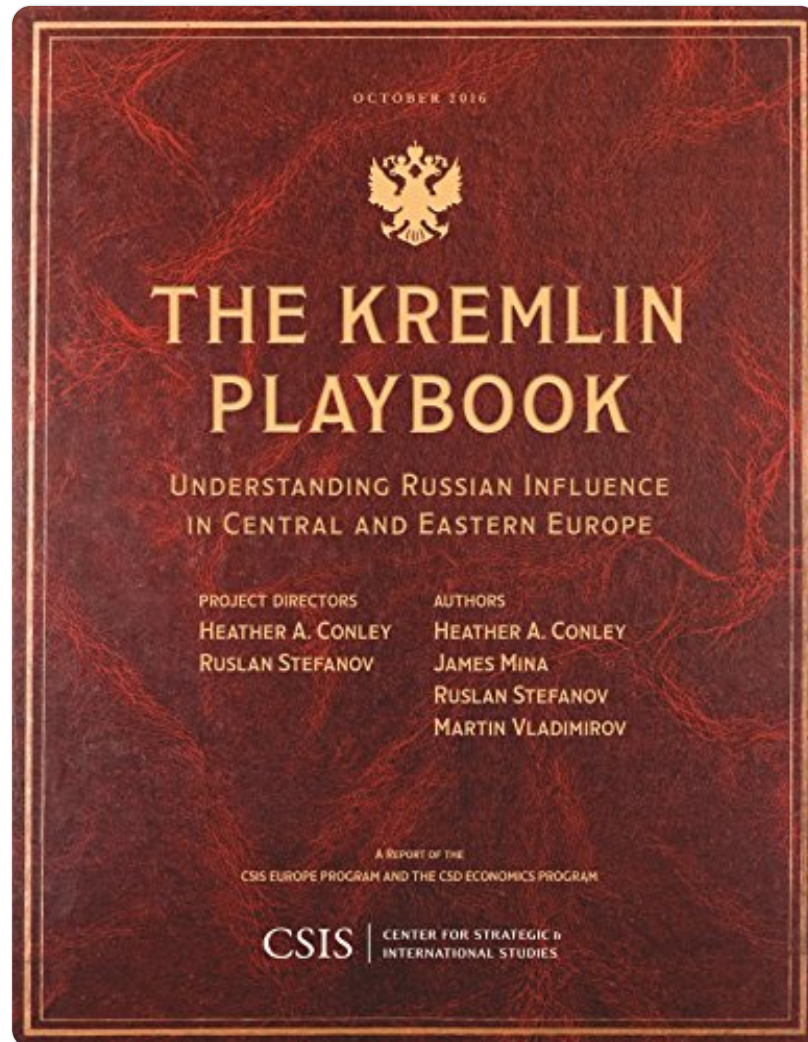
In today's [#vatnik](#) soup I'll discuss how Russia and Putin influenced politics and attitudes in European countries since (at least) 2007 by investing into the energy, financing and the real estate sectors.

1/18



This analysis is based on Catherine Belton's "Putin's People" and Heather A. Conley's fantastic analysis from 2016 called "The Kremlin Playbook", and it partly explains why the West were so hesitant to act against Russia before Feb, 2022.

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"Putin's Web" is a term coined by Belton. It refers to the interplay between intelligence services & economic services to exploit weaknesses in the system. It's a new version of USSR's "active measures", and they applied this tactic effectively in most European countries.

3/18



In the early 2000's, there were signs that Russia wanted to become closer with the Western world, but they just exported their kleptocratic system into the West instead.

In 2009, a group of Central and Eastern European politicians wrote an open letter to Barack Obama.

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In this letter, they spoke of a "Russian economic war" to change and influence countries attitudes. Russia's goal was to change political orientation via economic influence. The basic idea with this "economic war" was that when Russia made a large investment ...

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July 16, 2009 13:06 GMT

An Open Letter To The Obama Administration From Central And Eastern Europe

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The following open letter to the administration of U.S. President Barack Obama appeared in the Polish newspaper "Gazeta Wyborcza" on July 16:

We have written this letter because, as Central and Eastern European (CEE) intellectuals and former policymakers, we care deeply about the future of the transatlantic relationship as well as the future quality of relations between the United States and the countries of our region. We write in our personal capacity as individuals who are friends and allies of the United States as well as committed Europeans.

Our nations are deeply indebted to the United States. Many of us know firsthand how important your support for our freedom and independence was during the dark Cold War years. U.S. engagement and support was essential for the success of our democratic transitions after the Iron Curtain fell twenty years ago. Without Washington's vision and leadership, it is doubtful that we would be in NATO and even the EU today.

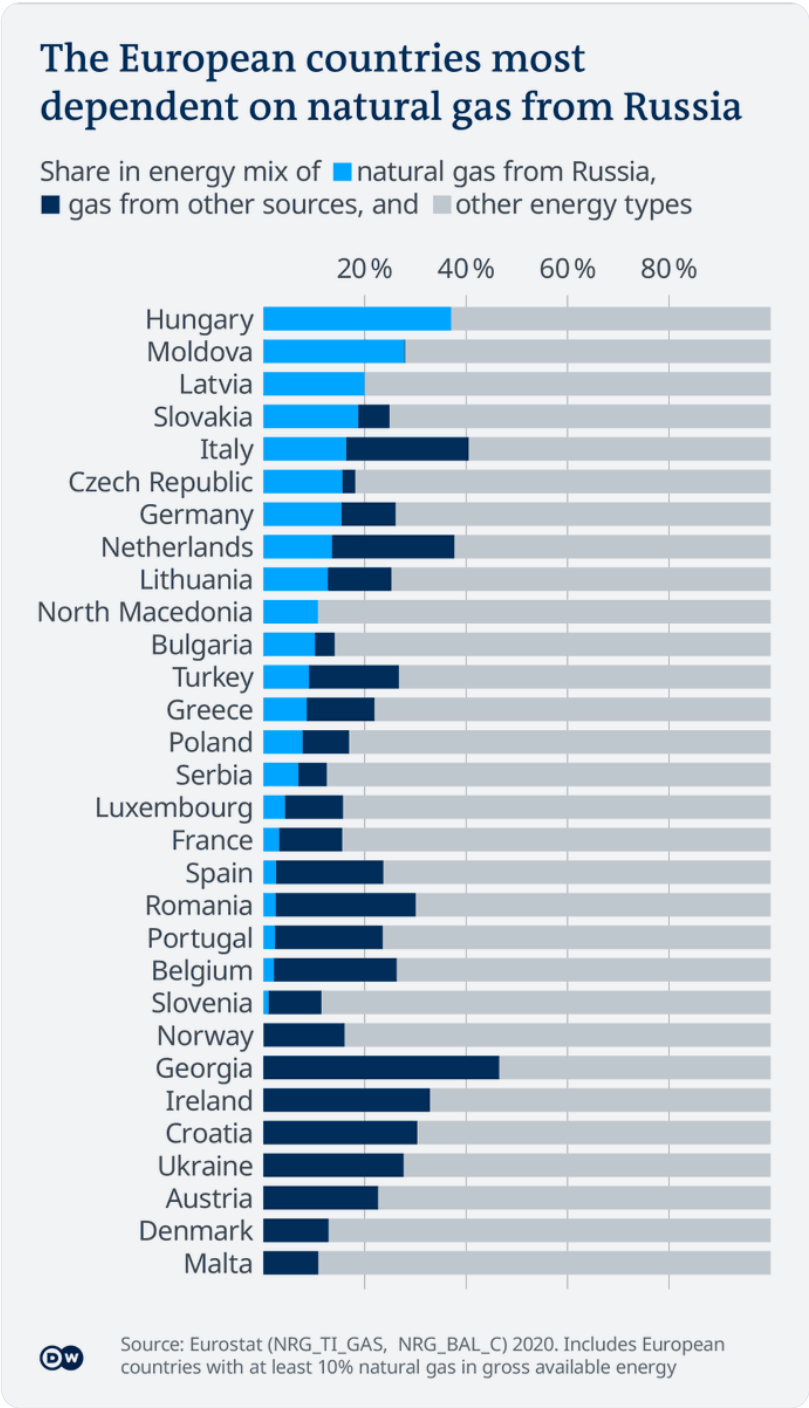
We have worked to reciprocate and make this relationship a two-way street. We are Atlanticist voices within NATO and the EU. Our nations have been engaged alongside the United States in the Balkans, Iraq, and today in Afghanistan. While our contribution may at times seem modest compared to your own, it is significant when measured as a percentage of our population and GDP. Having benefited from your support for liberal democracy and liberal values in the past, we have been among your strongest supporters when it comes to promoting democracy and human rights around the world.

Twenty years after the end of the Cold War, however, we see that Central and Eastern European countries are no longer at the heart of American foreign policy. As the new Obama Administration sets its foreign-policy priorities, our region is one part of the world that Americans have largely stopped worrying about. Indeed, at times we have the impression that U.S. policy was so successful that many American officials have now concluded that our region is fixed once and for all and that they could "check the box" and move on to other more pressing strategic issues. Relations have been so close that many on both sides assume that the region's transatlantic orientation, as well as its stability and prosperity, would last forever.

... in a country, large state revenue was usually involved. This provided incentive for the politicians to support the projects, as some of the funds also benefited the country (or in case of corruption, the politicians).

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After a while, the political influence became so large that it became a dependency. For example, in the early 2000s Hungary had little to no economic ties with Russia. But they became dependent on Russian energy, which also increased Russia's political influence in the country. 7/18



After the politicians were corrupted with Russian money, the dependency grew again stronger. Russia didn't want to raise too many concerns, which is why they did most of the financing via offshore companies and front organizations.

Another good example is the Nord Stream project, in which Russians involved several prominent political figures, including Gerhard Schröder and Paavo Lipponen.

Besides energy, Russia invested in the financial sector and in real estate.

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By controlling a bank, Russia could control where that bank invests in a country. Real estate business was used to hide funds and influence local politicians. London is one of the prime examples of Russia's real estate businesses in Europe, ...

10/18



... which is why it's sometimes referred as "Londongrad". Russians have invested over 27 billion pounds in Britain, and at least 1,5 billion pounds of that money have been invested into UK property by the Russians.

11/18



To handle all this incoming money, many dubious companies that managed money flow from Russia have emerged in the UK and in the Netherlands.

In Bulgaria the Russians were looking for anti-US/NATO politicians and funded their parties.

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They also mobilized fake-NGO's and funded the media, making it more pro-Russian. By controlling the key politicians, media, energy and financing sector they had Bulgaria in a tight chokehold.

13/18

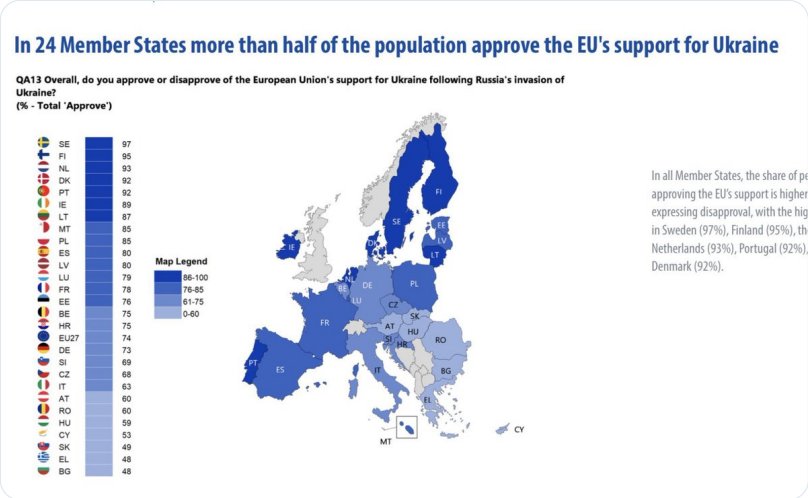


Because of this "economic war" so many European countries were screwed after Russia's invasion of Ukraine. They wanted to condemn their actions, but they also had to consider the dependency on Russian energy and/or money.

14/18

When looking at the EU countries and their support for Ukraine, these statistics are very much in line with Russia's influence operations. Of course there are outliers, such as Finland that was heavily dependent on Russia's natural gas.

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One of the biggest losers in all this is Germany. Prioritizing the idea of Ostpolitik (the idea of "change through trade"), they wouldn't condemn Russia's actions after they invaded Crimea, but actually increased their energy imports and focused on the Nord Stream pipeline.

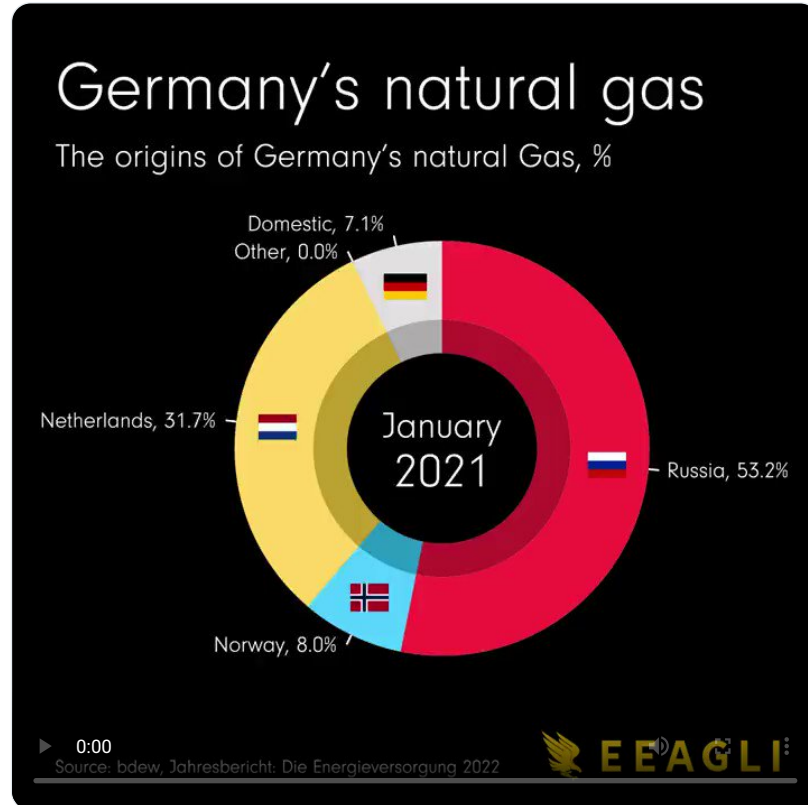
16/18



Their whole economic model is based on Russia's energy imports and goods exports to China, which is why this transition will be extremely painful for them.

But in a German way, they have been extremely effective in eliminating the use of Russian energy.

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Of course this economic war was just one aspect of Russia's influence operations in the West. As I have written before, they also invested huge sums into propaganda and espionage.

Russian info ops:

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In today's #vatnik soup, I'll start an introduction about the Russian information operations (an activity that tries to affect the public opinion and behavior of a society), disinformation and propaganda.

This topic is a broad issue and I'll do it over several threads.

1/10

about Syria	about Ukraine
Douma chemical attack was a provocation by the White Helmets	Ukrainian army allegedly working under the command of NATO
West is blocking chemical weapons inspections in Syria	Kyiv plans to launch an offensive

UN Supports Disinformation Campaign about White Helmets

Foreign specialists arrived in Syria to stage chlorine chemical attack

UK secret services created the White Helmets

in Donbas

Ukraine infected the Azov Sea with cholera

Ukraine wants to poison the territories occupied by Russian and pro-Russian forces

7:20 AM · Dec 8, 2022

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Prigozhin's IRA:

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In today's #vatnik soup I'll be introducing a man behind both 's private war organization and its disinformation and propaganda machine: an oligarch and a businessman Yevgeni Prigozhin. This thread will be divided into 2 (or 3) parts since his "achievements" are plentiful. 1/10



7:01 AM · Nov 9, 2022

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