



**Vatnik Soup** @P\_Kallioniemi

Mar 9, 2026 · 20 tweets · [P\\_Kallioniemi/status/2030977694066786543](#)

In today's Vatnik Soup, we'll talk about why we're doing this: why we think Ukraine is so important and why we believe that souping vatniks and debunking their propaganda narratives is so crucial to counter Russia's & their allies' wars of aggression and achieve real peace.

1/20



War is expensive, and Russia is not a rich country that could afford this: Hospitals? Roads? Plumbing? No: everything into terror and destruction.

But not only that. There is a 2nd item in the Russian state budget that remains strong no matter what:

2/20



SPRAVDI – Stratcom Centre ✓

@StratcomCentre · Follow



Russia is now spending around \$5 billion/year on information operations, troll and bot farms, paid influencers, aimed at sowing instability globally and diminishing support for Ukraine.



10:27 AM · Jan 31, 2026



1.5K



Reply



Copy link

[Read 33 replies](#)

The  **Moscow Times**  
30 YEARS INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

## Indoor Plumbing Still a Pipe Dream for 20% of Russian Households, Reports Say

April 2, 2019



Youtube

More than one-fifth of Russian households do not have access to indoor plumbing, according to official statistics obtained by the RBC news website on Tuesday.

Russia leads the developed world with the worst sanitation record, [according to](#) the London-based WaterAid NGO. A 2012 estimate citing official data placed the number of Russians whose households are only equipped with outhouses at 35 million, or roughly a [quarter](#) of the population.

## Russia's Federal Budget Puts Economy on War Footing

By Dodge Billingsley  
OE Watch Commentary

On 27 November 2023, Russian President Putin signed the federal budget for 2024-2026. The budget dedicates a dramatic 30 percent of total expenditures to the Armed Forces and military industrial complex. According to the excerpted article from the Russian and English-language independent online newspaper *The Moscow Times*, the increase in funds dedicated to the military establishment is “2.3 times more than [was appropriated] in 2022.” For comparison, funds dedicated to the military represented only 17 percent of the federal budget in 2022 and 19 percent in 2023. That percentage will increase to 29.5 percent in 2024. The Russian government will also spend “another 3.338 trillion rubles under the heading ‘national security,’ which includes the budgets of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the National Guard, the special services and the FSIN<sup>1</sup> system. Thus, in total, nearly “40 percent of the [federal] budget will be spent on law enforcement agencies.”

To make this happen, Russia will



The new Russian budget, 2024-2026, will throw a lifeline to the Russian defense industry as well as the war in Ukraine. Russian pavilion at a previous International Defence Exhibition & Conference (IDEX) held in Abu Dhabi, UAE.

Source: Combat Films and Research; Attribution: By permission

have to pull funds from other parts of its economy including healthcare (which will be cut by 10 percent), aid to small businesses (which will lose 20 percent), and the “development of Infrastructure for Scientific Research,” (which will be reduced by 25 percent). Notably, “funding for state propaganda,” a line item of Russia’s federal budget and a critical part of its war in Ukraine, would remain the same as in the last budget. The signing into law of the new budget comes in conjunction with multiple other significant financial changes, including the Russian

reintroduction of capital controls<sup>2</sup> to stabilize the ruble against the dollar and other global currencies.<sup>3</sup> Taken together, the signaling demonstrates Russia’s determination to see the war to a positive outcome—at a time when funding for Ukraine in the U.S. and among other Western powers is under scrutiny.

**“Everything for the front,  
everything for victory.”**

**- Head of the Ministry of  
Finance, Anton Siluanov**

Another 3.338 trillion rubles, according to the budget law, the government will spend under the "national security" item, which includes the budgets of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Russian National Guard, special services and the Federal Penitentiary Service. Compared to the current year, these expenses will increase by 163 billion rubles. Thus, almost 40% of the budget will be spent on security agencies in total.

To make ends meet, the government will cut spending on supporting the national economy: it will be reduced from 4.125 to 3.889 trillion rubles. Financing for education and medicine — 1.6 trillion rubles each — will be "frozen," and in real terms — taking inflation into account — will be reduced.

Expenditures on the national project "Healthcare" are planned to be cut by 10%, from 321.3 to 289.9 billion rubles, and the sequestration will affect almost all of its subprograms. Expenditures on the federal project "Modernization of Primary Healthcare" will be reduced by 14%, to 81.64 billion rubles. The federal project "Fight Against Cancer" will shrink by 8%, to 147.4 billion rubles. Expenditures on the development of children's healthcare will be reduced by almost half - from 19.5 to 10.2 billion rubles; on the development of primary medical care - by 20%, to 7.677 billion rubles.

The national project to support small businesses will lose almost 20% of its funding (67.7 billion rubles); expenses for the federal project "Development of Infrastructure for Scientific Research" will be cut by 25% - to 47 billion rubles. Allocations for the state program "Development of the Aviation Industry" will be cut by 28% - 37.3 billion rubles. In addition, the government plans to save on supporting the regions: transfers to them from the federal budget will decrease by 4% - 1.474 trillion rubles.

Financing of state propaganda will remain at record levels: state media will receive 121.3 billion rubles from the budget against 122 billion this year. Expenditures under the item "culture and cinematography", which includes budgets for the creation of pro-war propaganda films, will increase by 11%, to 234 billion rubles.

"Everything for the front, everything for victory," said Finance Minister Anton Siluanov in September, commenting on the document. He urged not to worry that the treasury will not have enough money. "But there is enough for what is planned. A normal, healthy budget," the minister emphasized.

Manufacturing support for that terror and destruction. Propaganda. Vatniks. "Innocent" travel bloggers. "Independent" journalists. "Patriotic" politicians. Russia spends hundreds of billions of rubles a year (\$5 billion) on this, and that kind of money buys you A LOT of BS.



**Sasha Meets Russia**  @sashameetsrus · 2d

Defend. Deter. Defeat.

Today marks four years since the start of the special military operation. I was a student in Belgium then, and I remember a classmate askin...



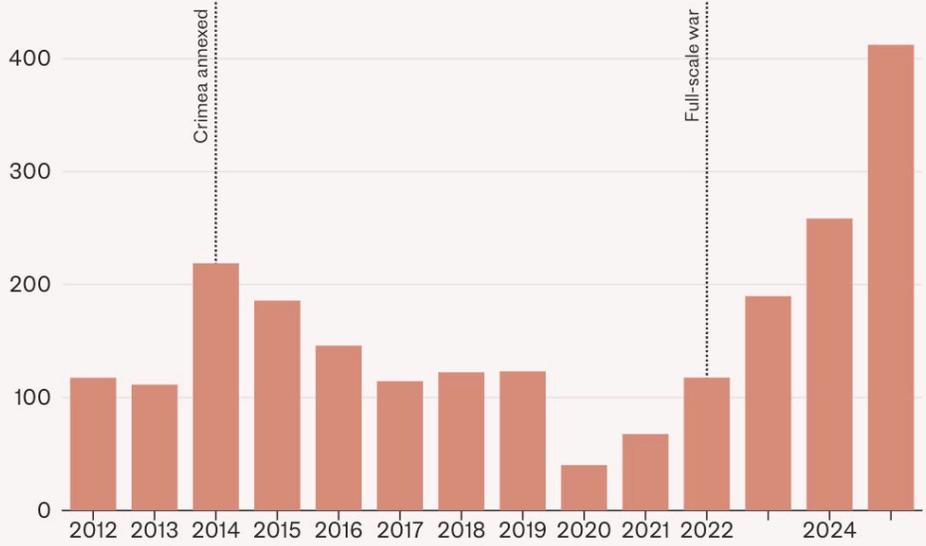
12:17 PM, 22 February 2025, Yulia Akhmedova, Novaya Gazeta Europe correspondent



**i** IMPORTANT STORIES

## The Kremlin is spending more and more money on programs for foreign youth and the media

Rosstrudnichestvo's expenses on programs for foreign youth, bloggers, and journalists, million rubles



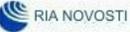
Source: Public Procurement Portal (zakupki.gov.ru) • \*January-August 2025

Despite Jost scoffing at the notion that any Russian-related content amounted to Kremlin propaganda in one of her videos, her 2023 tax return shows that she was in fact on the payroll of TV Novosti, a legal entity used by Russian propaganda outlet RT, at least in that year, Novaya Gazeta Europe has learned.

Videos of foreign influencers praising Russia's "traditional values" have appeared with ever greater frequency on social media over the past year.

RT, one of Russia's biggest propaganda outlets and one that has been banned in the EU and the US, received over 55 billion rubles (€585 million) in funding from the Russian government in 2023–2024.

Russia itself is destroyed by this as well in the long run. Criminals are released after their "glorious" stint as war criminals, to commit more crimes. Children are indoctrinated for the next wars, the whole society is militarized while infrastructure goes derelict.

 <p>12:35 26.06.2007 (updated: 09:12 07.06.2008)66</p> <p>Putin considers existence of slums in Russia immoral</p>	07.06.2008
 <p>Putin: We need to pull people out of the slums</p> <p>The Housing and Utilities Reform Fund will work to eliminate dilapidated housing</p> <p>11 апреля 2012, 14:38</p>	11.04.2012
 <p>31 MAR 2013, 19:38</p> <p>Vladimir Putin: First of all, it is necessary to pull people out of the slums</p>	31.05.2013
 <p>16:44 05/30/2013 (updated: 12:29 05/01/2021)2223</p> <p>Putin: We need to pull people out of the slums, not dump everything in one cart</p>	01.03.2020
 <p>14:52 23/2/2020 (updated: 17:25 23/2/2020)28967</p> <p>Putin demanded to solve the problem of dilapidated housing and pull people out of the slums</p>	23.12.2020
 <p>17:22 05.10.2021 (updated: 12:55 05.01.2021)   by: letm8</p> <p>Putin called for "pulling people out of the slums"</p>	05.01.2021

• WAR CRIMES

Halya Coynash, 03 January 2024

## Convicted killers that Putin pardoned and glorifies for fighting Russia's war against Ukraine teach children about 'courage'

Russia's attempts to justify its war of aggression against Ukraine are not helped by the convicted killers and rapists, and likely war criminals that Putin is labelling Russian 'heroes'



Wagner mercenary in Bakhmut Photo Valentin Sprinchak, TASS

In his New Year address on 31 December 2023, Russian leader Vladimir Putin [addressed](#) not only Russian soldiers but all those whom he claimed to be “on the front line of the struggle for truth and justice” and “our heroes”. Those whose “courage” the Russian people are purportedly proud of include around 50 thousand convicted criminals, released from prisons and pardoned in exchange for six months of ‘service’ in the notorious Wagner unit, fighting and killing in Ukraine. The ‘package’ offered such individuals included not only a presidential pardon and freedom, but also substantial pay, by Russian standards. No mention is, of course, ever made of Russia’s legislation that prohibits being a mercenary. Nor, at least by the authorities, of the murders, rapes and other crimes that such pardoned criminals have already committed back home in Russia. The current regime is reportedly ‘encouraging’ silence about such crimes, with courts also clearly understanding to go easy on at least those criminals who have not committed multiple murders.

War is VERY expensive. Missiles, bombs, shells, drones, even troops are expensive, no matter how expendable.

And if the defense is good, if the missiles get intercepted, the troops pushed back, the drones shot down, then it's all for nothing: might as well not invade.

## Heavy Losses Make Russia Unlikely to Launch Major New Offensive – Bloomberg

Feb. 25, 2026



Alexei Kononov / TASS

Heavy battlefield losses are likely to prevent Russia from launching a major new offensive in Ukraine in the coming months, Western officials and military analysts [told Bloomberg](#) as the war entered its fifth year.

Russia's battlefield losses have exceeded its monthly recruitment of 30,000 to 35,000 new contract soldiers for three consecutive months, Western officials told Bloomberg on condition of anonymity, raising the possibility of the country's first mobilization [since fall 2022](#).

That trend is likely to undermine Moscow's capacity to launch a major new offensive in the coming months, the officials said.

"We've seen a casualty uptick which is disproportionate in scale and some of the economic situation in Russia is starting to become quite precarious, especially as we move into summer," Bloomberg quoted British Armed Forces Minister Al Carns as saying.

≡ EL PAÍS 50

### Russia on the edge of economic collapse after 40 months of war

The Russian economic engine is showing clear signs of exhaustion — a reality the Kremlin is beginning to acknowledge. The military-driven boom of 2023 and 2024 is now in the past

PASSION FOR TECHNOLOGY. Rheinmetall | Division | Contact | English

**RHEINMETALL**

COMPANY SYSTEMS & PRODUCTS INVESTOR RELATIONS **MEDIA** RESPONSIBILITY CAREERS

Rheinmetall | Media | News | Archive | Archive 2016

- News
  - Latest News
  - Archive
    - Archive 2020
    - Archive 2019
    - Archive 2018
    - Archive 2017
    - Archive 2016
    - Archive 2015
    - Archive 2014
    - Archive 2013
    - Archive 2012
- Publications
- Contacts
- Press Photos

24 Nov 2011

## Rheinmetall wins major order in Russia

### Russian Army orders state-of-the-art training centre

The Defence Ministry of the Russian Federation has contracted with the Düsseldorf-based Rheinmetall Group and its Russian partner JSCo Oboron servis to build a major army training centre in Mulino, Russia. Located in the Volga region, by 2014 this simulation-supported training centre – the most advanced system of its kind worldwide – will be able to train 30,000 troops a year. For Rheinmetall the order is worth well over €100 million including further options.

This contract has special strategic significance for the Rheinmetall Group, representing the German defence industry's first significant foothold in the Russian market. In light of plans to modernize the equipment of the Russian armed forces, the opportunities for follow-on orders from the Russian Federation are considerable.

Rheinmetall is one of the world's leading suppliers and operators of simulation and training systems for ground, air and naval applications.

The Group already operates the Bundeswehr's Gefechtsübungszentrum Heer, or GÜZ, a high-tech army training centre located in the Altmark in central Germany, on which the new facility in Russia will be modelled. A further customer from the Middle

**Rheinmetall AG**  
Head of Press and Public Relations  
Oliver Hoffmann  
Rheinmetall Platz 1  
40476 Düsseldorf  
Germany  
Phone: +49 211 473-4748  
Fax: +49 211 473-4157

And in fact Russia would not have invaded if they didn't expect to succeed. Planning their war since 2003, they were not ready for a full-scale invasion in 2014. They waited for the right moment, when they thought they could win. But they underestimated Ukrainian heroism...

## Russian insider says Putin openly planned invasion of Ukraine since 2003

BY MAT BABIAK · 25/11/2014



A former Russian insider says he was there when Putin began openly planning the present invasion of Ukraine back in 2003.

At a conference in Brussels this week, Andrey Illarionov, a Russian economist and former economic advisor to Vladimir Putin [informed](#) that the invasion of Ukraine has been in official planning since at least 2003.

"Since 2003. I can say that certain questions relating to the future war with Ukraine were discussed in my presence. I didn't think the talks would really lead to a real war," he said.

In an anguished response to the Orange Revolution a year later which brought about an ostensibly pro-Western government, Russian officials then began discussing the potential for launching a military occupation of Crimea and its subsequent annexation. Illarionov also discussed leaked documents which detail the operation of Russia's future war with Ukraine.

## Lack of hypersonic weapons did not allow Russia to invade Ukraine in 2014 – Russia’s President

BY SERGE HAVRYLETS · 19/03/2023



Russia was not ready to invade Ukraine following the Russian annexation of Crimea back in 2014 due to several reasons, Russia's President Vladimir Putin [said](#) in an interview with the Russian state-owned TV broadcaster Rossiya-1.

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine was not possible nine years ago due to the situation in the economy of the Russian Federation and the lack of the necessary weaponry, Vladimir Putin said.

***"We had no hypersonic weapons back then, but now we do have them,"*** Putin replied to a Russian propagandist Pavel Zarubin who asked why Russia did not start the so-called special military operation in Ukraine earlier. ***"Now we have other modern systems, apart from the hypersonic weapons. But there was nothing like that in 2014,"*** Putin added.

...and overestimated the success of their own propaganda: not good enough to win, but good enough to let them get away with destroying a lot of cities and getting a lot of people killed.

War is expensive, but propaganda is cheap: spending a few extra bucks on top of that...



**TORETSK**

DONETSK REGION

Photo: Kirovolynsk Liberty and Media Library

**MARINKA**

DONETSK REGION

Photo: Kirovolynsk Liberty and Media Library

**VUHLEDAR**

DONETSK REGION

Photo: Kirovolynsk Liberty and Media Library

**RUBIZHNE**

LUHANSK REGION

Photo: Kirovolynsk Liberty and Media Library

**BAKHMUT**

DONETSK REGION

Photo: Kirovolynsk Liberty and Media Library

**MARIUPOL**

DONETSK REGION

Photo: Kirovolynsk Liberty and Media Library

**AVDIIVKA**

DONETSK REGION

Photo: Kirovolynsk Liberty and Media Library

**CHASIV YAR**

DONETSK REGION

Photo: Kirovolynsk Liberty and Media Library

**SOLEDAR**

DONETSK REGION

Photo: Kirovolynsk Liberty and Media Library



... two-million-dollar Kinzhal missile, to convince the world to let that Kinzhal missile murder the civilians that they've decided to murder, sadly makes all the difference. And yes, it's cheap AND Russia throws insane amounts of money at this, multiplying the damage.

8/20



Vatnik Soup

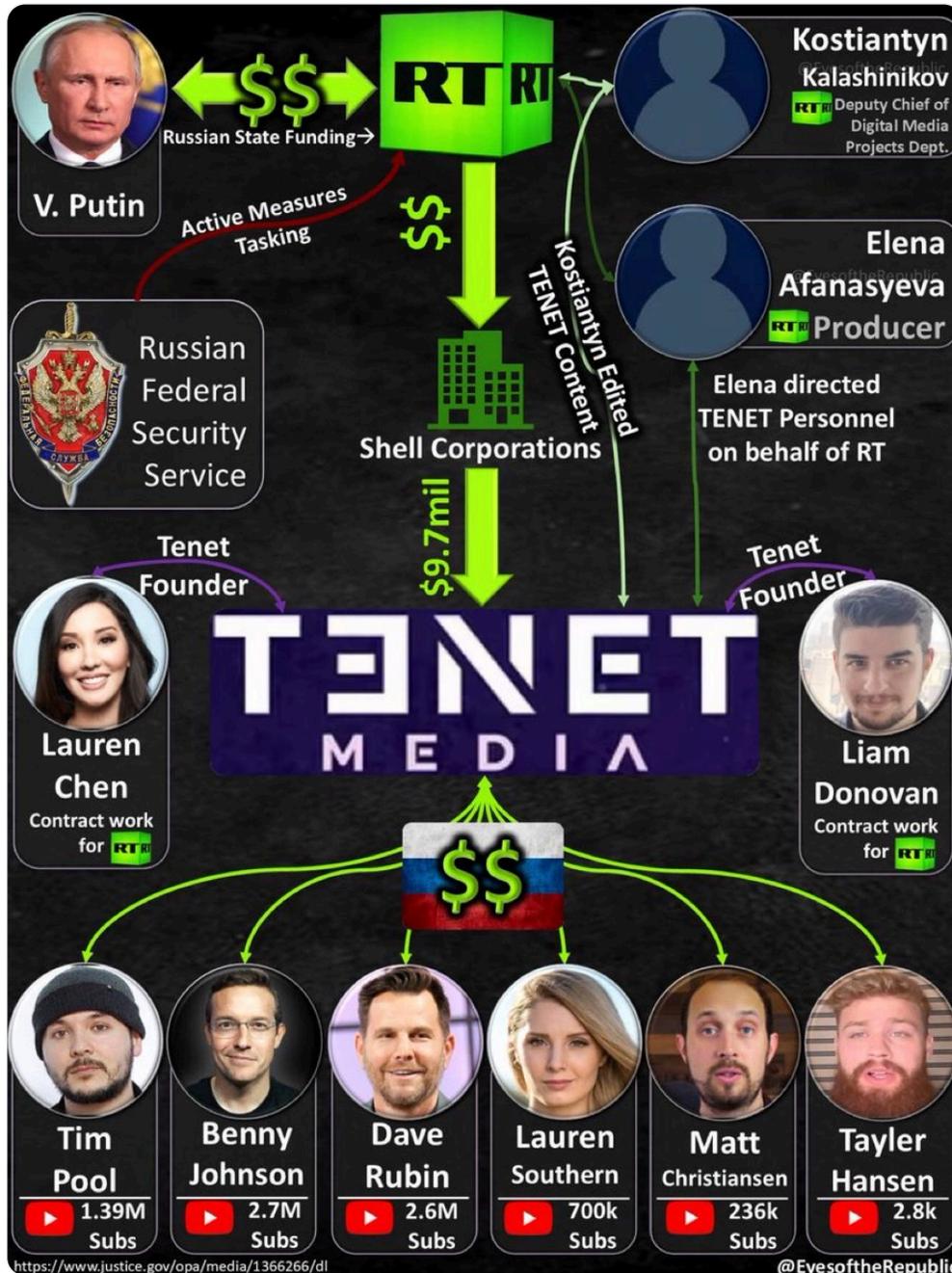
### **July 8, 2024, Kyiv, Ukraine**

A Russian missile struck Okhmatdyt children's hospital in Kyiv, the country's largest, damaging several wards including oncology and intensive care. Two people were killed and dozens injured, including children. Other Russian strikes that same day killed another 40 civilians, including five children.

Photo: Oleksandr Ratushniak/Reuters

But sometimes they splurge, too. Tim Pool and Benny Johnson for example were getting \$100,000 a week. Did the Kremlin decide that Tiny Tim banging his little fist on the table against Ukraine was actually worth all that money? Maybe, or maybe they think in the long run:

9/20





from:elonmusk @watchTenetN...



Top

**Latest**

People

Photos

Videos



**Elon Musk** @elonmusk · 8/26/24



Replying to @watchTENETnow

!!

180

201

3.8K

66K



**Elon Musk** @elonmusk · 8/11/24



Replying to @dom\_lucre and

@watchTENETnow

!

127

227

3.1K

197K



**Elon Musk** @elonmusk · 4/6/24



Replying to @watchTENETnow and

@Lauren\_Southern



87

75

863

80K



v.

24 Cr.

KOSTIANTYN KALASHNIKOV,  
a/k/a "Kostya," and  
ELENA AFANASYEVA,  
a/k/a "Lena,"

Defendants.

24 CRIM 519

The Grand Jury charges:

#### INTRODUCTION

1. RT, formerly known as "Russia Today," is a state-controlled media outlet funded and directed by the Government of Russia. After Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, RT was sanctioned, dropped by distributors, and ultimately forced to cease formal operations in the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. In response, RT created, in the words of its editor-in-chief, an "entire empire of covert projects" designed to shape public opinion in "Western audiences." One of RT's "covert projects," as described herein, is its funding and direction of a Tennessee-based online content creation company ("U.S. Company-1").

2. Over at least the past year, RT and its employees, including KOSTIANTYN KALASHNIKOV, a/k/a "Kostya," and ELENA AFANASYEVA, a/k/a "Lena," the defendants, have deployed nearly \$10 million, laundered through a network of foreign shell entities, to covertly fund and direct U.S. Company-1. U.S. Company-1 publishes English-language videos on multiple social media channels, including TikTok, Instagram, X, and YouTube. Using multiple fake



<https://twitter.com/i/web/status/2030977719383548184>

Sowing chaos to destabilize the West. Inciting civil war. Encouraging secession movements. Wagner rampaging through Africa, causing wars and migration crises, then fuelling populist reactions to it, with Russia playing both sides of social tensions:



Vatnik Soup   
@P\_Kallioniemi · Follow



In today's #vatniksoup, I'll talk about a hybrid warfare strategy I call the Migration Bomb. It's a strategy in which countries like Russia and Belarus organize immigration from relatively poor regions to EU and Schengen areas.

1/17

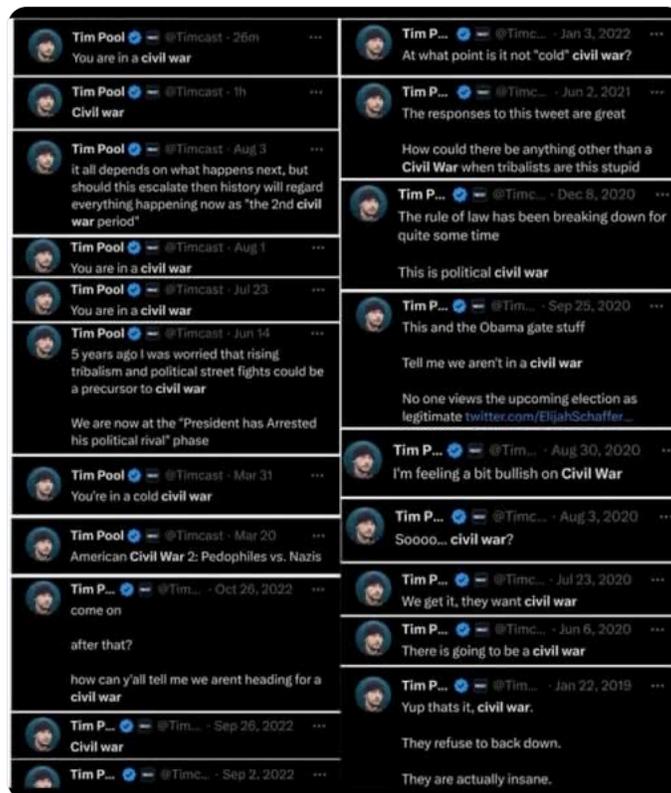


6:04 PM · Nov 19, 2023



7.9K Reply Copy link

[Read 170 replies](#)





WASHINGTON AND THE WORLD

## Putin's Plot to Get Texas to Secede

For Moscow's right-wingers, payback means teaming up with a band of Texas secessionists.

By CASEY MICHEL | June 22, 2015

*Casey Michel is a recent Master's graduate from Columbia University's Harriman Institute. His writing has appeared in the Atlantic, Foreign Policy, and Slate, and he can be followed on Twitter at @cjmichel.*

**N**athan Smith, who styles himself the “foreign minister” for the Texas Nationalist Movement, appeared last Spring at a [far-right confab](#) in St. Petersburg, Russia. Despite roaming around in his cowboy hat, Smith managed to keep a low-key presence at the conference, which was dominated by fascists and neo-Nazis railing against Western decadence. But at least one Russian newspaper, *Vzglyad*, [caught up with the American](#), noted that TNM is “hardly a marginal group,” and quoted Smith liberally on the excellent prospects for a partial breakup of the United States. Smith declared that the Texas National Movement has 250,000 supporters—including all the Texans currently serving in the U.S. Army—and they all “identify themselves first and foremost as Texans” but are being forced to remain Americans. The United States, he added, “is not a democracy, but a dictatorship.” The Kremlin’s famed [troll farms](#) took the interview and ran with it, with dozens of bots instantly [tweeting](#) about a “Free Texas.”

"The impact of Russian malign foreign influence cannot be overstated," said Assistant Director Luis Quesada of the FBI's Criminal Investigative Division. "The FBI will aggressively pursue any foreign government that attempts to divide American citizens and poison our democratic process."

Ionov used his control over U.S. Political Group 1 leaders to foster discord within the United States, to spread pro-Russian propaganda under the guise of a domestic political organization, and to interfere in local elections. For example, in January 2016, Ionov guaranteed financing for — and ultimately funded — a four-city protest tour undertaken by U.S. Political Group 1 in support of a "Petition on Crime of Genocide against African People in the United States," which it had previously submitted to the United Nations at Ionov's direction. Later, in 2017 and 2019, Ionov monitored and supported the St. Petersburg, Florida, political campaigns of UIC-3 and UIC-4. In 2019, before the primary election, Ionov wrote to a Russian official that he had been "consulting every week" on the campaign. After UIC-4 advanced to the general election, FSB Officer 1 wrote to Ionov that "our election campaign is kind of unique," and asked, "are we the first in history?" Ionov later sent FSB Officer 1 additional details about the election, referring to UIC-4 as the candidate "whom we supervise."

According to the indictment, Ionov's relationship with U.S. Political Group 1 continued until at least March 2022. Specifically, in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, U.S. Political Group 1 repeatedly hosted Ionov via video conference to discuss the war, during which Ionov falsely stated that anyone who supported Ukraine also supported Nazism and white supremacy. In a report to the FSB, Ionov explained that he had enlisted U.S. Political Group 1 to support Russia in the "information war unleashed" by the West.

Alongside his malign foreign influence efforts with U.S. Political Group 1, Ionov also exercised direction and control over U.S. Political Group 3, an organization based in California whose primary goal was to **promote California's secession from the United States**. In January and February of 2018, Ionov supported U.S. Political Group 3's efforts — led by the organization's founder (UIC-6) — to orchestrate a protest demonstration at the California Capitol building in Sacramento. Ionov partially funded the efforts and attempted to direct UIC-6 to physically enter the governor's office. Later, Ionov sent various media reports covering the demonstration and U.S. Political Group 3's broader efforts to FSB Officer 1, writing that FSB Officer 1 had asked for "turmoil" and stating, "there you go."

According to the indictment, Ionov also directed the efforts of U.S. Political Group 2, based in Atlanta. For example, as recently as March 2022, Ionov paid for members of U.S. Political Group 2 — including its founder (UIC-5) — to travel from Atlanta to San Francisco to protest at the headquarters of a social media company that had placed content restrictions on posts supporting Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Ionov sent UIC-5 designs for signs used at the protest and funded cross-country travel for UIC-5 and other members of U.S. Political Group 2. After the protest, Ionov sent UIC-5 a picture of a Russian news website's social media page, which displayed a Russian-language news story about the protest.

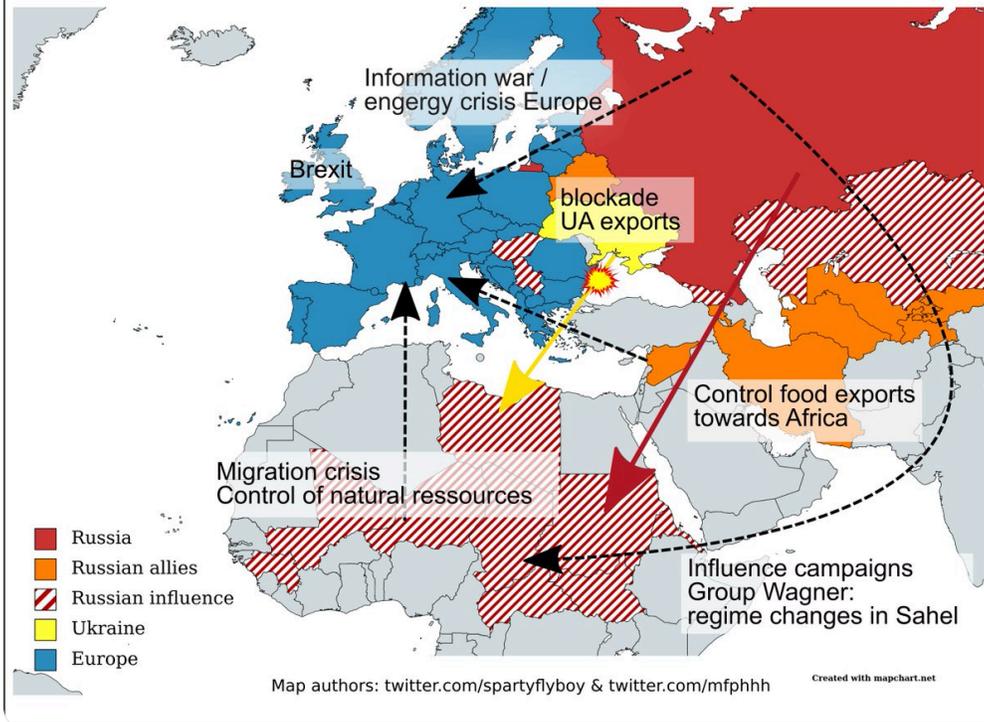
Ionov is charged with conspiring to have U.S. citizens act as illegal agents of the Russian government. If convicted, he faces a maximum penalty of five years in prison. A federal district court judge will determine any sentence after considering the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines and other statutory factors.

Assistant U.S. Attorneys Daniel J. Marcet and Risha Asokan, Trial Attorney Menno Goedman of the Justice Department's Counterintelligence and Export Control Section, and Trial Attorney Demetrius Sumner of the Justice Department's Public Integrity Section are prosecuting the case.

The FBI Tampa Field Office is investigating the case.

*An indictment is merely an allegation. All defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty beyond a reasonable doubt in a court of law.*

# How Russia creates a polycrisis in Europe



And other bought influencers, journalists and politicians are regularly exposed around the world (and how many more that we can guess). The goal is always the same: discourage help to Ukraine by sowing doubt and confusion, so that Russia can bomb and murder with impunity.

## Former Welsh Reform leader jailed for pro-Russia bribery

13 hours ago

Share  Save 

David Deans, Wales political reporter and Ben Sumner, BBC Wales Investigates



Nathan Gill, the former leader of Reform UK in Wales, arrives at the Old Bailey

The former leader of Reform UK in Wales has been sentenced to 10-and-a-half years in prison after admitting taking bribes for pro-Russia interviews and speeches.

Nathan Gill, 52, from Llangefni, Anglesey, is thought to have received up to £40,000 to help pro-Russian politicians in Ukraine.

He was a Member of the European Parliament (MEP) when he accepted money from Oleg Voloshyn, 44, a man once described by the US government as a "pawn" of Russian secret services.

At the Old Bailey, Judge Mrs Justice Cheema-Grubb said Gill had abused his position and eroded "public confidence in democracy".

Voloshyn was acting on behalf of a "close friend" of Vladimir Putin - Viktor Medvedchuk, 71, a former oligarch who was the source of the requests and the cash.

# Bulgarian secret services: Russia pays public figures to spread propaganda

Krassen Nikolov  EURACTIV.bg



The government lost a no-confidence vote but will stay in power until a new one is formed or, if that is impossible until the president dissolves parliament. [Shutterstock/Zhenya Voevodina]

The Bulgarian secret services have data showing that Russia pays about €2000 (BGN 4,000) per month to public figures, journalists, and politicians to spread its propaganda in the country, a government spokesperson and head of the prime minister's office, Lena Borislavova told Darik radio over the weekend.

The government lost a no-confidence vote but will stay in power until a new one is formed or, if that is impossible until the president dissolves parliament.

Borislavova **explained** that the money was given to Bulgarian politicians, famous journalists, analysts, political scientists and other persons appearing in the public media. The Russian state paid them to shape public opinion.

"To all of you who spit on the EU and NATO for free, as well as support Putin's actions in Ukraine, you should know. You are screwed up. Those who inspire you to do so are paid. Monthly," she added.

**THE INSIDER** REPORTS ANALYTICS INVESTIGATIONS USD 92.37 EUR 99.53 OIL 87.16 DONATE Русский




**POLITICS**

## Exclusive: Latvian Member of European Parliament is an agent of Russian intelligence, leaked emails confirm

Christo Grozev, Michael Weiss, Roman Dobrokhotov  
29 January 2024

**CONTENT**

1. Their woman in Strasbourg
2. But her emails...
3. The second handler

Tatjana Ždanoka MEP has spent decades openly advocating for Moscow from both Riga and Strasbourg. *The Insider* can today reveal that Ždanoka was working on behalf of the FSB's Fifth Service, reporting to two different handlers from at least 2004 to 2017.

**THE INSIDER** REPORTS ANALYTICS INVESTIGATIONS USD 92.37 EUR 99.53 OIL 87.16 DONATE Русский



**POLITICS**

## The far-right Bundestag aide and his rapping FSB case officer

Roman Dobrokhotov, Michael Weiss, Christo Grozev  
1 February 2024

A pro-Russian aide to a far-right German legislator who attempted to scuttle Berlin's shipment of main battle tanks to Ukraine is an agent of Russian intelligence, *The Insider* can now reveal. Also, his handler is a rapper.

The war is horrible in itself, and what Russia does to Ukrainians, whether to the captured soldiers, through the terrorist bombings, or to civilians under occupation, is unspeakable, and must absolutely be stopped regardless of any other concerns.



Vatnik Soup   
@P\_Kallioniemi · Follow



In today's Vatnik Soup and the "Degenerate Russia" series, I'll show you the brutal reality of Russian war crimes, in particular the horrific tortures and sexual abuses of children, women and men.

Buckle up, this one is not for the faint-hearted.

1/24



2:05 PM · Jun 26, 2025



 10.3K  Reply  Copy link

[Read 112 replies](#)

**Russia is systematically torturing Ukrainian prisoners of war (POWs) and civilians held in Russian detention.** The Ukrainian Media Initiative for Human Rights (MIHR) published a report on April 29 detailing how Russia has used Soviet-era torture practices, including beatings, humiliation, electric shocks, and dog attacks, against Ukrainian POWs and civilian prisoners.[9] MIHR based the report on the testimonies of 138 freed Ukrainian POWs who the Russians detained in 2022-2025. The report notably coheres with a UN Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights (UN OHCHR) assessment from October 2024 that assessed that Russian authorities have subjected Ukrainian POWs to torture, ill-treatment, and inhumane conditions "in a widespread and systematic manner."[10] The UN OHCHR report also noted that it is highly likely that the Russian military command is aware of the treatment of Ukrainian POWs and that Russian state entities may be coordinating the use of torture. UN High Commissioner on Human Rights Volker Türk noted that there is significant coordination on the poor treatment of the POWs and prisoners among various Russian entities, specifically the Russian Federal Security Service (FSB) and the Russian Federal Penitentiary Service (FSIN).[11] Russia's abuse of Ukrainians in detention is notably not exclusive to POWs. The Ukrainian Ombudsman's Office confirmed on April 28 that Russia is illegally detaining almost 16,000 civilians in occupied territories and at least 1,800 civilians in Russia, and it is likely that Russian agents are torturing many of these detainees.[12] Russia recently returned the body of Ukrainian journalist Viktoriya Roshchyna, whom Russia detained while she was investigating Russian detention centers in occupied Ukraine, with "extensive damage to the coronary arteries" and missing organs, a sign that Russian authorities were trying to obfuscate evidence of torture.[13]

But for those who don't think that's reason enough, there's other concerns too. Passively letting this happen emboldens Russia in Georgia, in "hybrid" operations against the rest of Europe, possibly the Baltics next. Orbán and Trump admire Putin's authoritarian impunity.

# Trump says Putin launching massive strike on Ukraine is 'what anybody would do'

US president says he finds Russia easier to deal with than Ukraine after cutting off intelligence and weapons to Kyiv

- [Ukraine war live: latest updates as Russia steps up attacks](#)



📷 Donald Trump told reporters he had 'always had a good relationship with Putin'.  
Photograph: Chris Kleponis/EPA

Donald Trump has said [Vladimir Putin](#) was “doing what anybody would do” after Russia launched a massive missile and drone strike on Ukraine days after the US cut off vital intelligence and military aid to Kyiv.



**The Economist** 📌 @TheEconomist · 18 oct. 2024



Vladimir Putin is waging a covert war in Europe. Assassination attempts, cyber attacks and arson. There's been a sudden increase in suspicious incidents across Europe—all linked to Russia.

We've mapped them for the first time and found a pattern [econ.st/3YeTYyL](https://econ.st/3YeTYyL)



40

165

231

65 mil



[WORLD](#) > [EUROPE](#) • 4 MIN READ

# | NATO intercepts three Russian jets over Estonia's airspace

UPDATED SEP 24, 2025 ▾

By  [Sophie Tanno](#)



Estonia's Foreign Minister Margus Tsahkna, pictured in May, said Friday's violation was "unprecedentedly brazen." (*Ozan Kose/AFP/Getty Images*)



NATO intercepted three Russian jets that violated Estonia's airspace on Friday, the country's foreign ministry and an alliance spokesperson said.

Three Russian MiG-31 fighter jets entered Estonian airspace over the Gulf of Finland without permission and remained there for a total of 12 minutes, the Estonian foreign ministry said.

# Poland says it shot down Russian drones after airspace violation

10 September 2025

Share  Save 

Adam Easton in Warsaw and Jaroslav Lukiv



Poland closest to open conflict since World War Two, warns PM

At least three Russian drones were shot down by Polish and other Nato aircraft in Poland's airspace during overnight attacks on Ukraine, the Polish prime minister has said.

Donald Tusk said Poland had recorded 19 drone incursions, with some flying deep enough to temporarily close four airports, including Warsaw's main hub Chopin.

And China is watching: bankrolling Russia while observing how the war goes, to decide whether they, too, could get away with invading their sovereign neighbor – another potential war where millions could die or end up under occupation, probably leading to a wider conflict.

# How Russia is Helping China Prepare to Seize Taiwan

Oleksandr V Danylyuk and Dr Jack Watling

26 September 2025 7 Minute Read



**Russia has agreed to equip and train the PLA to air-drop armoured vehicles and special reconnaissance capabilities.**

Chinese President Xi Jinping has directed the People's Liberation Army (PLA) to be ready to militarily seize Taiwan by 2027. A large-scale amphibious operation is highly risky, with the sites suitable for landing craft to deliver troops and equipment ashore constrained by the gradient and load bearing capacity of the beaches. Seizing airfields could allow troops to flow in by air, but as Russia discovered during its invasion of Ukraine, runways can be quickly denied. The PLA is therefore eager to identify ways of diversifying both the methods and locations at which it can move units onto Taiwan.

Further Russian and Chinese collaboration: [Russian and Chinese flags fly during a field review of troops after Exercise Vostok-2018](#). Image: [President of the Russian Federation, www.kremlin.ru / Wikimedia Commons](#)

#### WRITTEN BY

**Oleksandr V Danylyuk**

RUSI Associate Fellow,  
Military Sciences

[View profile >](#)



**Dr Jack Watling**

Senior Research Fellow, Land  
Warfare  
Military Sciences

[View profile >](#)



## China bankrolling Putin's war to gain advantage over West, MPs told

Beijing's huge support for Russian aggression against Ukraine part of larger threatening posture, air marshal tells Commons committee



A British Challenger 2 tank in Estonia where UK forces are taking part in Operation Cabrit Credit: Ben Birchall/PA

**Tom Cotterill**  
Defence Editor

03 February 2026 5:46pm GMT

China has become the main financial backer for Russia's war against Ukraine, MPs have been told.

Air Marshal Ed Stringer, a former head of RAF intelligence, said Beijing was "covertly" ramping up its support for Moscow as it sought to gain an economic advantage over the West.

"China has discretely built supply lines going to drone factories in Russia," he told the Commons defence committee on Tuesday.

"Open source suggests 60 per cent of the Russian war effort is being covertly bankrolled by China... so there's a huge amount of support from China."

The retired officer added: "Russia can only maintain this war because China is essentially bankrolling it."

Observers fear China poses an increasing threat to the UK, with Beijing-backed hackers having targeted the phones of aides to former prime ministers Boris Johnson, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak in an effort to steal government secrets.

At the same time, concerns have been raised after the Government chose to approve plans for a Chinese super-embassy in London, which The Telegraph revealed would be located alongside some of the City's most sensitive communications cables.

On Tuesday, MPs were warned Beijing was seeking economic dominance over the West and could use its influence over Moscow to "distract" Nato while it builds up its own military.

All of this is made possible by the passivity of global public opinion, by the lack of serious sanctions against Russia, by the fact that politicians in positions of power are not laughed out of the room every time they spread vatnik lies about Ukraine or praise Putin.

# Trump insists Putin wants peace. Civilian deaths are rising



Olexandr Korniyakov/Global Images Ukraine/Getty Images

## Moscow is launching deadly attacks in Ukraine on a daily basis, as Putin shows no signs of stopping the fighting

The Kremlin is not even trying to convince you that they're the good guys. Their goal is to demoralize you: make you lose confidence in truth, morality, Western values, any values. To make you doubt everything, to "bothside" the clearest war ever.



Vatnik Soup   
@P\_Kallioniemi · Follow



In today's #vatniksoup, I'll be talking about the Russian style of online propaganda and disinformation, "Firehose of Falsehood". It's a commonly used Kremlin strategy for Russian information operations, which often prioritizes quantity over quality.

1/23

### The Firehose of Falsehood: the Russian style of propaganda for an age of information abundance.

- High volume and multi-channel approach
- Shameless in its willingness to broadcast lies
- No commitment to, or requirement for consistency
- Rapid, continuous and repetitive messaging
- Point is not to persuade but to confuse and overwhelm
- Assumes a low trust environment *and lowers it further*
- Number of arguments matters more than their quality
- Drown out competing messages through sheer volume

9:52 AM · May 4, 2023



2.6K



Reply



Copy link

[Read 90 replies](#)

"Russia is not squeaky clean. Russia is what it is. And we are not ashamed of showing who we are."



A few extra gullible "useful idiots" will openly join Russia (it never ends well for them). But many more will simply proclaim their indifference to a simple conflict made confusing by propaganda, and hence refuse to act — enough to make the war much easier for Putin.

17/20

# American father of three who joined Russian army to escape 'woke' US has been sent to the frontlines, wife says

By Ronny Reyes

Published July 22, 2025, 6:20 p.m. ET

400 Comments



A Texas father of three who moved his family to Russia and joined the military to escape "wokeness" in the US has been sent to the frontlines of **Moscow's meat grinder**, his wife said.

Derek Huffman, 46, claimed he was being tossed under the bus after being deployed to the frontlines in Ukraine despite assurances from **the Russian military** that he would be serving in a non-combat role, his wife DeAnna said in a now deleted YouTube page, **according to the Telegraph**.

"He feels like he's being thrown to the wolves right now, and he's kind of having to lean on faith, and that's what we're all doing," she said of her husband's situation.



WAR IN UKRAINE

## The Russian Concentration Camp Behind Russell Bentley's Death

Russell Bentley, an American defector was detained, tortured, and killed in a concentration camp in Donetsk, a new report reveals. The camp, operating under Russian military command, is known for the brutal treatment of prisoners, including Russian soldiers.

Nov 15, 2024 17:18 Updated Jul 02, 2025 00:26 8 min read

 AUDREY MACALPINE  
Correspondent

The last time Lyudmila saw her husband, Russell Bentley—an American defector to Russia who gained notoriety as a pro-Kremlin internet personality—was on April 8 at 4:15 PM at the administration building in Donetsk.

That day, Bentley and Lyudmila traveled to the city's Petrovsky district, where they heard the explosions, she said. Bentley, who struggled to make a living by selling war footage and photographs to the Russian propaganda outlet Sputnik, went to photograph the aftermath of incoming shelling. He never returned.

For months, his wife and the broader online community speculated about his death. A formal investigation was launched, and on September 20, 2024, Russia's Investigative Committee concluded that Bentley had been murdered by Russian soldiers [Vitaly Vansyatsky](#), [Vladislav Agaltsev](#), [Vladimir Bazhin](#), and [Andrei Jordanov](#).

While the initial investigation concluded that Bentley's car was detonated with his body inside, a new [report](#) by ASTRA press, a Russian independent news media launched at the beginning of the full-scale invasion, suggests something more sinister. Astra press has found Bentley was in fact taken to a nearby concentration camp operated by Russia's 5th Brigade, where he was tortured to death.

Our aim is to counter that propaganda. To fight Russia's impunity in the long run by countering and debunking the lies their entire operation depends on: the active or passive support manufactured by the spread and acceptance of vatrik narratives.



To make this war end sooner. To avoid further ones.

For that, we make soup: threads, articles, videos, podcasts, books, all compiled & searchable for free on our website. The larger the impact we have, the more of a real difference we can make.

19/20



A trove of leaked records from a Russian disinformation campaign reveals how Moscow sought to discredit Ukraine and Western governments that support it while also trying to boost support for far-right political parties in the European Union.

The documents obtained by a consortium of European media outlets and **shared with Schemes**, the investigative unit of RFE/RL's Ukrainian Service, highlight the internal operations of the Social Design Agency, a Moscow-based company that **the United States says** has led the propaganda campaign at the Kremlin's behest.

The campaign included a diverse mix of memes, falsified videos and government documents, and a network of websites impersonating legitimate news outlets across Europe to disseminate fake stories aimed at undermining Western support for Ukraine after Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

The records state that one meme denigrating Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky **that was shared on X by its billionaire owner, Elon Musk**, and garnered 86,000 reshares was a creation of the Social Design Agency.

There are many ways to help Ukraine. But with a war unfortunately going on since 2014, full-scale since 2022, besides the urgent military and humanitarian needs, the underlying propaganda needs to be addressed too.

Please support our work:

20/20

The logo for Vatnik SOUP features the word "Vatnik" in a large, teal, serif font, with "SOUP" in a smaller, teal, sans-serif font below it.

**Fight Disinformation With Us: Support our Work | Vatnik Soup**

Vatnik Soup: Your most comprehensive resource on pro-Kremlin disinformation and propaganda.

<https://vatniksoup.com/en/support-our-work/>

...