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Jul 30 · 24 tweets · [P_Kallioniemi/status/1685627824034455552](#)

In today's #vatniksoup, I'll introduce a Bulgarian politician and current President, Rumen Radev (@PresidentOfBg). He's best-known for offering his unwavering support for Vladimir Putin and his genocidal war in Ukraine, and for resisting all European aid to Ukraine.

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Radev joined the Bulgarian Communist Party during the 80s. He later stated that he did this in order to become a military pilot, but also emphasized that he wasn't ashamed of what he did and was actually proud of his achievements. He only left the party after a new law...

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Was Rumen Radev a member of the BKP?

November 10, 2016 - 4:12 p.m. | Editor: Vlatka Angelova | Comments: 4

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A photograph of General Rumen Radev in a dark suit and tie, holding a model of a fighter jet. He is standing in front of a backdrop with the text "ВРЕМЯ Г" and "100".

In fact, he was in the Communist Party until 1990.

Was General Rumen Radev a member of the Bulgarian Communist Party and why did they leave it in the lexicon with the important questions, precisely this one?

Probably the interest in this 24th missing question is because of today's date - November 10, when Todor Zhivkov was overthrown 27 years ago.

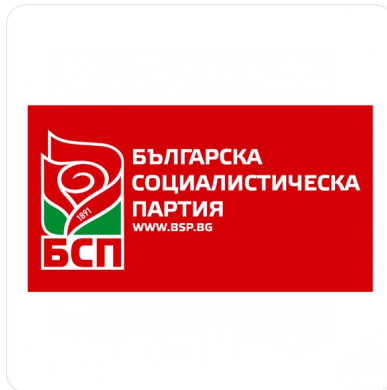
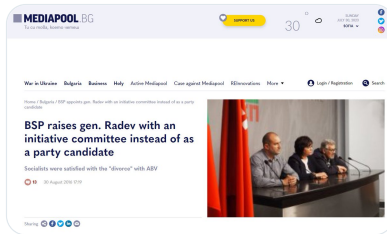
Tasolka Tsacheva did not save this fact from her biography, and even during the first mandate of GERB, when she became the first female speaker of the National Assembly, it is known that she was a member of the BKP.

For Rumen Radev, however, this fact sank between the questions of whether he was for NATO and the European Union of Russia, and the general was not active in explaining his life before November 10, 1989.

According to people in his team, in some places, older veterans in the province were wondering if he had ever been a member of the BKP, and the general explained to him that this was a necessary condition for him to be allowed to fly on a supersonic plane. Younger Bulgarians, however, failed to ask about everything before November 10th, since, apart from the fact that the time was unknown to them, after that date the military were depoliticized by law and did not have the right to be members of parties. "I am not ashamed of my past and I have no complexes that make me weaker," General Radev commented through his team on the 24th question from the lexicon.

... forbid military personnel to be members of political parties. He hasn't been a member of any political party ever since and the support for his presidential candidacy came from an independent initiative committee affiliated the pro-Russian party BSP.

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He was elected as the President of Bulgaria for the first time in 2016. In his campaign, he focused on corruption, tough measures against immigration and Euroskepticism, a winning formula during that time in both Europe and in the US.

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News

Pro-Russia Rumen Radev wins Bulgarian presidency

Former air force commander who has called for an end to EU sanctions against Russia wins election by wide margin.



Radev won 59.4 percent of the vote, compared with 36.2 percent for the candidate of the ruling centre-right GERB party (Peter Ganev/Reuters)

14 Nov 2016

Pro-Russia, anti-migration candidate Rumen Radev won the Bulgarian presidential election, partial official results showed on Monday.



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Support for Eurosceptic parties doubles in two decades across EU



By the time the election results were announced, the 53-year-old Radev, leader of the ruling centre-right GERB party, had already secured 59.4 per cent of the vote, compared with 36.2 per cent for the candidate of the opposition centre-right GERB party.

Supporter in red: Rumen Radev, leader of the ruling GERB party. Opponent in blue: Peter Ganev, leader of the opposition GERB party.

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Already at this point Radev's pro-Kremlin stance was clear, as he had stated Bulgaria should focus more "on its economic and political ties with Moscow."

Incidentally, his presidency hasn't decreased corruption in Bulgaria, and in 2022 the country shared the 72nd...

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Analysts said Radev was able to tap into anger among average Bulgarians over corruption among the country's political class.

He also called for tough measures to prevent an influx of migrants amid a wave of Euroskepticism across Central and Eastern Europe.

During his election campaign, the 53-year-old Radev called for better ties with Russia, potentially putting the Black Sea state at odds with its European Union and NATO allies.

Radev, who once studied at the U.S. Air War College in Alabama, has pledged to maintain Bulgaria's place in NATO but also has said "being pro-European doesn't mean being anti-Russian."

Nonetheless, Radev's calls to lift EU sanctions on Russia for the Kremlin's actions in Ukraine, including its support of separatists there and its illegal annexation of Crimea, have many analysts wondering whether Bulgaria will now move closer to Moscow.

..place together with Ghana, Senegal and South Africa in the Corruption Perceptions Index.

As in many European countries, the president's job in Bulgaria is mostly ceremonial, but they still have influence over policy & can veto legislation and sign international treaties.

6/22



The screenshot shows a BBC News article titled "Bulgaria President Radev vetoes anti-corruption bill". The article is dated 02 January 2019. It features a photograph of President Rumen Radev. The text of the article discusses the president's veto of the anti-corruption bill, arguing that it would not be independent and could be used to persecute political opponents. It also mentions that the move is considered embarrassing for Bulgaria, which assumed the EU's rotating presidency on Monday. The article notes that the EU has been pressing the government to take steps to rein in administrative and political corruption for years. It also mentions that the anti-corruption agency Transparency International has said Bulgaria is the most corrupt country in the bloc. Finally, it states that the bill, which would create a special unit tasked with tackling high-level abuse, was passed by parliament on 20 December. It was hoped this would get the issue off the political agenda before Bulgaria took over the EU presidency, BBC central Europe correspondent Nick Thorpe says.

In 2019, he used his veto power to stop a F-16 deal with the US, but was later overruled by the parliament. After he was elected, Radev spoke strongly against the sanctions against Russia in 2017, and even though he stated that the annexation of Crimea violated the...

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HOLY

Radev vetoed the F-16 deal, see why

"Binding Bulgaria with obligations, for years to come, without national consent... is extremely worrying," the president believes

Nikolai Kirov July 23, 2019, 3:15 p.m.



Two people have already been arrested in the case of the disfigured 18-year-old girl

The political reactions after the attack on the girl with 400 stitches

The concessionaire on the beach in Pomorie distanced himself from the actions of his employee

Crepe skin - the term everyone over 50 should know

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A great Bulgarian actor has passed away

A bus of the metropolitan public transport got stuck in a fence (VIDEO)

Two serious accidents in Turkey, there are many...

Cinderella in the White House. The questions raised b...

The man who stabbed the Bulgarian in Skopje...

Putin: We are ready for any scenario, but we do not want a...

Podoliak on Putin: This is the behavior of a humiliated...

Head of State Rumen Radev vetoed the Law on the Ratification of an International Contract for the Purchase of "F-16 Block 70 Aircraft and Related Support", including Ammunition, Missiles, Materials and Services, and a Multifunctional Information Distribution System - Joint Tactical Radio System . This was announced by the press office of the head of state.

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...international law, he suggested that the EU should lift the sanctions before "Trump and President Putin come to an agreement on improving dialogue, and growing trust."


As we all now know, this agreement never came to be and Putin played Trump like a fiddle.

8/22

The New York Times

Bulgaria Grows Uneasy as Trump Complicates Its Ties to Russia

Give this article



President Rumen Radev of Bulgaria in Sofia last month. "We have a clear road map to follow," he said. "Staying in the E.U. and staying in NATO. But at the same time, we have a deep historical relationship with Russia." Pool photo by Oleg Popov

By Rick Lyman
Feb. 4, 2017

SOFIA, Bulgaria — With one foot in the West and the other in the East, Bulgaria has long engaged in a delicate balancing act.

But now the country, and its new president, [Rumen Radev](#), will have to learn how to balance Donald J. Trump and an increasingly energized Vladimir V. Putin.

Mr. Radev contemplated his new role as balancer in chief two days before he was sworn in on Jan. 19, sitting across the street from the presidential palace in the labyrinthine former headquarters of the Bulgarian Communist Party.

"We have a clear road map to follow," Mr. Radev said. "Staying in the E.U. and staying in NATO. But at the same time, we have a deep historical relationship with Russia."



Radev met with Putin in 2019 at the St Petersburg International Economic Forum, where Radev thanked Putin's Russia for their partnership in the energy sector and emphasized the importance of "rich traditions" in science, culture, education and tourism.

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Meeting with President of Bulgaria Rumen Radev

Vladimir Putin met with President of the Republic of Bulgaria Rumen Radev at the Konstantin Palace. The meeting was held as part of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

Interaction in the energy sector (energy resources) account for 75 percent of exports from Russia to Bulgaria, was one of the key topics of discussion. Cooperation between the two countries, which mark the 70th anniversary of establishing diplomatic relations this year in other areas, especially in culture and education, was also discussed.

President of Russia Vladimir Putin: Mr President, colleagues.

Welcome to St. Petersburg, Mr President, I am very pleased to see you again.

First of all, I would like to say that relations between Russia and Bulgaria are gradually being restored. We see small, but steady growth in trade which increased 2.8 percent in the first quarter.

In general, in terms of absolute figures, we could have achieved much more, of course, but the good part is that relations at the government and parliament levels have now started to move active and the intergovernmental commission has started to work.

All this is a good enough reason to believe that we are using whatever opportunities to step up our relations across almost all areas.

President of Bulgaria Rumen Radev (retranslated): Thank you, Mr President.

Ladies and gentlemen, first of all, I would like to thank you for your invitation to visit the Russian Federation once again and to take part in the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

Mr President, this is our second meeting over such a short time. This sends out a clear message about new dynamics in our bilateral relations, which rest on profound historical, cultural and spiritual ties. This shows that both sides would like to develop these relations vigorously, constructively and on a mutually beneficial basis.

In addition, our countries maintain extremely good relations at the level of governments and parliaments. As you know, Bulgaria is a member of the European Union and NATO, but this does not preclude the development of intensive relations with the Russian Federation even in this complicated situation and in these conditions.

I believe that constructive dialogue and cooperation are key to a peaceful, prosperous and thriving Europe.

We maintain extremely good relations that have rich traditions in science, culture, education and tourism.

We are strategic partners in the energy sector, and we have the required potential for deepening cooperation. As you know, we have purchased two Russian reactors, which means that Russia has a niche in the future construction of a nuclear power plant, regardless of who wins the tender and becomes the strategic investor.

We also maintain a long-time partnership in gas deliveries and transit. I would like to inform you of the following fact in some detail: Bulgaria continues to modernise and expand its gas transportation system, and there are plans to set up a gas distribution centre and a gas exchange. Interconnectors with our neighbours are being built.

In reality, Russia had been pumping money into anti-US and anti-NATO parties in Bulgaria since at least 2007 (in reality, probably much longer):

10/22



Russian Economic War: How Putin's Dirty Money Corrupted the West ...

Pekka Kallioniemi assesses the Kremlin's effective use of energy and financial dependency as part of its playbook shaping European politics

<https://bylinetimes.com/2023/01/20/russian-economic-war-how-putins-dirty-money-corr...>

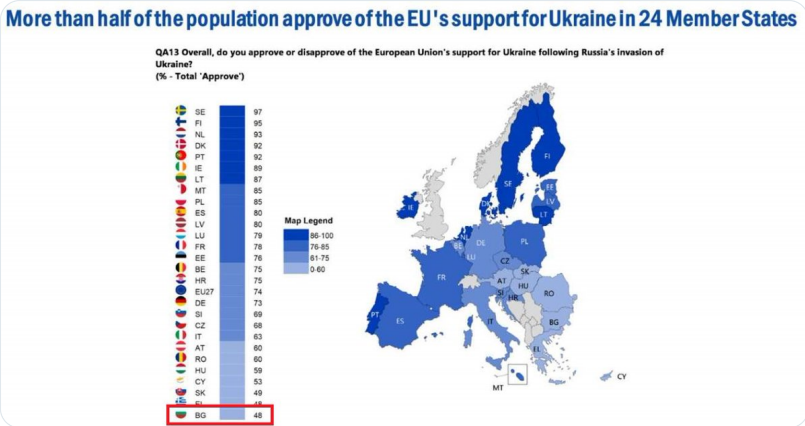
Russian money was used to control key politicians, media and the finance sector, and in the energy sector they provided cheap gas and oil via Dutch offshore companies. All this has led to a strong anti-Ukraine bloc in Bulgaria - in a 2022 European Parliament barometer,...

11/22



...48% of Bulgarian respondents were for the EU support for Ukraine and sanctions against Russia - the lowest in EU. They were also most dissatisfied with EU's collaboration on the matter.

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Another Bulgarian pro-Russian, far-right and ultranationalist party Revival has made several attacks against their opponents, including covering EU offices in Sofia with red paint, physically blocked MPs in parliament, threatened people at Pride parade, ...

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A screenshot of a news article from the website MEDIAPOL.BG. The article is titled "'Vazrazhdane' again provoked chaos in the parliament and managed to interrupt its work". The text describes the party's disruptive tactics in the National Assembly, mentioning the use of physical violence and the blocking of MPs. It also notes that the party managed to prevent a vote on a proposed law and that a member of parliament was arrested for blocking the speaker's podium.

A screenshot of a news article from the BULGARIAN NEWS AGENCY. The article is titled "UPDATED European Commission Sofia Offices Vandalized by Protesters". It reports that the Sofia office of the European Commission was vandalized with red paint by protesters. The article includes a photograph of the modern glass and steel building and mentions that the protesters were demanding the resignation of the Bulgarian government.

...and called for Putin's enemies to be annihilated without any actual consequences. At the same time, factories producing weapons to Ukraine had chain of mysterious explosions which were never really investigated properly.

14/22

The screenshot shows the EURACTIV website with a news article. The article title is "Explosions at Bulgarian arms factory set to export to Ukraine". The author is Krassen Nikolov, and it was published on June 26, 2023. The article includes a photograph of several large metal crates, some with orange labels. The text of the article discusses the explosion at a warehouse near Karnobat, Bulgaria, and mentions that the warehouses were targeted a year ago in an instance of sabotage. It also notes that the warehouses are owned by one of the most famous Bulgarian arms manufacturers and traders, Emilian Gebrev, who was the victim of an assassination attempt with a substance similar to Novichok, for which the Bulgarian prosecutor's office accused Russian military intelligence agents.

It's also worth mentioning, that many of Bulgaria's most powerful crime lords hail from the Communist-era, Moscow-linked security services. These often pro-Russian oligarchs control the country's national assets, siphon EU funds, and smuggle drugs, arms and people.

15/22

At least, Denkov's suggestions that the authorities have never looked too hard into cases like Revival and the factory blasts expose the extent of Russian sway in Bulgarian institutions. Many of Bulgaria's most powerful kingpins hail from the Communist-era, Moscow-linked security services. These shadowy oligarchs seized prime national assets after the fall of the Berlin Wall and created organized crime networks that are still pervasive, siphoning off EU funds, running extortion rackets, and smuggling drugs, arms and people.

The screenshot shows a press release from the OCCRP (Open Society Crime Reporting Project) titled "US Sanctions Bulgarian Oligarchs, Public Officials for Corruption". The press release states that the United States sanctioned three Bulgarian oligarchs and six related entities for their "extensive roles" in corruption, and for "hiding" public institutions for profit. The press release also mentions that the latest investigation identified the "largest Central European crime cases on a single day in the history of the program" which targets perpetrators of serious human rights abuses and corruption around the world. The press release further states that the sanctioned oligarchs are a media magnate and former Bulgarian Member of Parliament Petar Petrev, who has been the subject of several investigations by OCCRP partner and Bulgarian investigative journalism outlet Bivol. One of the entities sanctioned by the US is the media outlet Bivol, which has been the subject of several investigations by OCCRP partner and Bulgarian investigative journalism outlet Bivol. The press release also mentions that the sanctioned oligarchs are a media magnate and former Bulgarian Member of Parliament Petar Petrev, who has been the subject of several investigations by OCCRP partner and Bulgarian investigative journalism outlet Bivol.

Perhaps partly due to this resistance, Bulgaria sent their first official military aid package to Ukraine as late as Dec 2022. Their government, however, had secretly supplied Ukraine with fuel and ammunition during the first months of the war.

16/22

REUTERS


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Bulgaria to send its first military aid to Ukraine

Reuters

December 9, 2022 2:44 PM GMT+2 Updated 8 months ago



Firefighters work to put out a fire at a residential building in a Russian military zone, amid Russia's attack on Ukraine, in Sakhnovsk, Donetsk region, Ukraine, December 1, 2022. REUTERS/Thomas Peter

SOFIA, Dec 9 (Reuters) - Bulgaria will send its first military aid to Ukraine since the Russian invasion after parliament on Friday approved a list of arms drawn up by the interim government.

It had been one of the few EU countries not to send aid after the Russia-friendly Socialist party, a coalition partner in the previous government, blocked a previous proposal in May.

The list of arms is classified, but government officials have said Sofia would mainly send light weaponry and ammunition.


How Bulgaria secretly armed Ukraine

Politics | Europe

Analysis Update

December 9, 2022

Bulgaria's former government quietly supplied Ukraine with weapons once after Russia invaded last year, according to an investigation by the German daily Die Welt.



Bulgaria has an excellent record of providing military technology to Kiev in April 2022.

Did Bulgaria "secretly" send its aid? That's what German daily Die Welt claimed in an article from January 18, after Russia invaded the country on February 24, 2022. The government in Sofia began a "secret strategy" as soon as four days later, when then-pro-Western Bulgarian Prime Minister Kiril Petkov visited the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv.

By the time he made the trip, the Bulgarian government had already initiated a procedure for comprehensive military aid to Ukraine, according to [the BBC](#).

"It would offer arms, munitions, ammunition and ammunition, and ammunition, that have [Bulgaria](#) (formerly) provided. It's not the Ukrainian army's needs," Reuters journalist Philip Willmann wrote, who also published an adapted version of the piece in the BBC's English language news publication [Politics](#). [Die Welt](#), both of which are owned by German publisher Axel Springer.

In Jul 2023, Bulgaria sent their largest military aid package to Ukraine. The package included 100 armoured vehicles from the country's stockpile. In Dec 2022, Radev had refused to send old Soviet S-300 anti-aircraft systems in exchange for receiving modern US air systems.

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Home / News / Politics / The Capitals / Bulgaria sends largest military aid package to Ukraine

Bulgaria sends largest military aid package to Ukraine

By Krassen Nikolov | EURACTIV.bg | Est. 3min Jul 14, 2023

Content-Type: News

EURACTIV Mem
S&D - Socialists and Dem



A USSR-made BTR of the type Bulgaria will donate to Ukraine. [Tamas Vasvari/EPA/EFE]

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Languages: Deutsch

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The largest one-time military aid package - which includes 100 armoured vehicles from the Bulgarian police stockpile, mostly infantry carrier vehicles - was sent to Ukraine in what was Sofia's first official decision to help Kyiv with heavy equipment, Bulgarian authorities announced on Thursday.

The military equipment was bought 40 years ago to carry out the so-called Revival process - the totalitarian regime's attempt to forcefully assimilate the Bulgarian Turks by changing their names, which led to the exile of more than 300,000 Bulgarian citizens of Turkish origin to Turkey nearly 40 years ago.

"This is armoured military equipment purchased during the Revival Process and has never been used. At the same time, it generates costs for storage and maintenance," said Ivaylo Mirchev from

In May 2023, Bulgarian protesters took it to the streets to rally against Radev. They published a statement that said that "The president has long shown that he does not work for the benefit of Bulgarian society and for Bulgarian interests, but for Russian ones."

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NEWS

Bulgarian President's 'Pro-Russia Stance' Sparks Protest

Svetoslav Todorov | Sofia | BIRN | May 30, 2023 17:15

Protesters will take to the streets of Sofia, claiming that President Rumen Radev has been working in Russia's interests by undermining Bulgarian democracy and hampering the formation of a government.



 Bulgaria's President Rumen Radev arrives for a special meeting of the European Council in Brussels, Belgium, 09 February 2023. Photo: EPA-EFE/STEPHANIE LECOCCQ

On Tuesday evening, pro-EU protesters will rally near the presidency and the Ministerial Council in Sofia, accusing President Rumen Radev of undermining the parliamentary system and hampering efforts to form a government after a two years of repeated elections.

"The president has long shown that he does not work for the benefit of Bulgarian society and for Bulgarian interests, but for Russian ones," said a statement by protest organisers Vera Staevska and Katerina Bogdanova.

"We won't allow Bulgaria to become Belarus," they added.

After opposing political forces We Continue the Change and GERB agreed on a cabinet last week, negotiations on forming an administration after Bulgaria's most recent inconclusive

On 6 Jun 2023, Bulgaria's new PM Nikolai Denkov has promised to take on Russian interference in the country, and naturally he's been confronted by president Radev who even refused to shake his hand at an official ceremony where the coalition and their mandate was presented.

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Home News Politics Elections Bulgarian president hostile to coalition set to try form government

Bulgarian president hostile to coalition set to try form government

By Thomas Heston | 15:00 07 June 2023 | 0 min read | 06 Jun 2023



President Radev (left) and Nikolai Denkov (right) are seen in a formal setting, likely during the presentation of the coalition's mandate. Radev is wearing a dark suit and glasses, while Denkov is in a blue suit. They are standing in front of a wall with a framed portrait.

President Radev (left) and Nikolai Denkov (right) are seen in a formal setting, likely during the presentation of the coalition's mandate. Radev is wearing a dark suit and glasses, while Denkov is in a blue suit. They are standing in front of a wall with a framed portrait.

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President Radev (left) and Nikolai Denkov (right) are seen in a formal setting, likely during the presentation of the coalition's mandate. Radev is wearing a dark suit and glasses, while Denkov is in a blue suit. They are standing in front of a wall with a framed portrait.

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Bulgarian PM: No more 'Eyes Wide Shut' on Russian interference

Nikolai Denkov faces an uphill battle as he seeks to push the authorities to take action against the Kremlin's activities in Bulgaria.



A large group of people, many holding Bulgarian flags, are gathered outdoors. In the foreground, a woman in a blue jacket is holding a portrait of a man. The scene appears to be a public demonstration or protest.

BY NICOLAS CAMIT AND CHRISTIAN OLIVER
JULY 5, 2023 | 4:00 AM CEST | 6 MINUTES READ

When it comes to the war in Ukraine, Radev has been blaming everyone else but the Kremlin. In Jul 2023, he said that Ukraine was "shying away from diplomatic solutions to the conflict," continuing that "Ukraine insists on fighting this War" ...

20/22

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Zelenskyy mauls Bulgarian president over his opposition to arming Ukraine

Bulgaria's President Rumen Radev is equivocal toward NATO and hostile to giving Kyiv weapons.



"God forbid some tragedy should befall you and you should be in my place," said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy | Nikolay Doychinov/AFP via Getty Images

BY CHRISTIAN OLIVER AND VERONIKA MELKOZEROVA
JULY 6, 2023 | 4:31 PM CET | 3 MINUTES READ

... and that it's Europe that's paying the bill. For some reason he forgot to mention the party that started this genocidal war in Ukraine.

In the beginning of Jul 2023, Radev met with President Zelensky in Sofia, where they also discussed about the war in Ukraine.

21/22



The screenshot shows a EURACTIV news article. The header includes the EURACTIV logo and navigation tabs: 'The Capitals', 'The Brief', 'Ukraine', and 'Intelligence'. Below the header is a secondary navigation bar with categories: 'Agrifood', 'Economy', 'Energy & Environment', 'Global Europe', 'Health', 'Politics', 'Technology', and 'Transport'. The article title is 'Bulgarian president accuses Ukraine of not wanting to stop Russian war'. The byline is 'By Krassen Nikolov | EURACTIV.bg | Est. 3min' and the date is 'Jul 17, 2023'. The content type is 'News'. A photo shows Rumen Radev speaking at a podium. A sub-headline reads: 'EURACTIV Members' and 'S&D - Socialists and Democrats in the European ...'. A small text block below the photo states: 'Radev, who told his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky that Ukraine was shying away from a diplomatic solution to the conflict, is known for his pro-Kremlin narrative and for being against sending military aid to Ukraine. [EPA-EFE/DUMITRU DORU]'. Below this is a link: 'EURACTIV is part of the Trust Project >>>'. At the bottom, there are social media sharing icons and a language selector for 'Français | Deutsch'. A summary line at the very bottom reads: 'Ukraine insists on continuing waging war with Russia, Bulgaria's pro-Russian President, Rumen Radev, said on Friday - a statement that saw a quick response from the Ukrainian Embassy in Sofia, although they did not mention the president directly.'

During the meeting, Radev's pro-Kremlin position was clear from the start, stating that he "doesn't accept the provision of ammunition to Ukraine", and that Ukraine should negotiate for peace with Russia.

22/22



The video player shows Rumen Radev speaking. The subtitle at the bottom of the video reads: 'This conflict has no military solution'. The video player interface includes a play button, a progress bar at 0:00, a volume icon, and a full screen icon.

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Vatnik Soup

#vatniksoup is a Twitter thread series (and a hashtag!) where I'll introduce pro-Russian actors and propagandists from around the world, be they so-called "independent journalists", politicians, mili...

<https://vatniksoup.com>



Pekka Kallioniemi

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