

Russian Politician Wants Latvia Punished for Reich Tweet

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People hold flags as they participate in the annual procession commemorating the Latvian Waffen-SS (Schutzstaffel) unit, also known as the Legionnaires, in Riga, Latvia.

A top Russian politician has called for sanctions to be brought against Latvia after accusing its foreign minister of comparing Russia to Nazi Germany's Third Reich.

“The more I follow modern Russia, the more I come to [the] conclusion that she will end up like German Reich after both [World War I and World War II] and it'll be to[o] late,” Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkevics said Monday on [Twitter](#).

The phrasing of the post caused confusion online but the minister appeared to hint at an inevitable downfall for Russia following a period of military strength.

Some Russian media, however, interpreted the statement as a direct comparison between Russia and Germany's Third Reich — the name given to the interwar period under the Nazi regime's rule.

Asked by radio station Govorit Moskva (Moscow Speaks) on Monday what he thought about the supposed reference to the Third Reich, Alexei Pushkov, head of the State Duma's Foreign Affairs Committee, suggested that Russia could respond by targeting Latvia's economy.

“When the foreign minister of Latvia allows himself to make such statements, he should understand that steps could follow on our side, that could deliver a strong blow to Latvia's interests — economic, in trade, or otherwise,” Pushkov, who is known for his anti-Western rhetoric, told the radio station.

“It seems to me that we have to respond to it. And not necessarily through statements, but through steps that will show that [such] words should come at a price,” Pushkov said, adding that this could include barring certain politicians from entering Russia.

Pushkov also used the interview with Govorit Moskva to lash out at politicians in Latvia, Lithuania and Poland — all member states of the European Union — who he accused of leading an “anti-Russia campaign” on behalf of the West.

Rinkevic's comments, meanwhile, come little more than a week after he told Reuters that politicians should avoid taking provocative actions in their dealings with Russia.

"I do hope that we all understand that any provocations, any deterioration of the situation, may lead to consequences that would be devastating to everyone, including, of course, to Russia," he was quoted as saying.

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