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Russian Nationalist Party Leader Endorses Johnson in U.K. Election

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Vladimir Zhirinovsky is famous for making outlandish statements including pledges to “shoot” opponents and install a “brutal dictatorship” had he been elected Russia’s president.
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British Prime Minister Boris Johnson won a heartfelt endorsement from Russian nationalist leader Vladimir Zhirinovsky on the day of an election that may decide the future of Brexit.

Polls show Johnson’s Conservative Party winning a majority in the general election, despite recent figures narrowing its gap with the Labour Party. Opponents have accused him of delaying publishing a report on alleged Russian meddling in Britain for political reasons, and researchers tied a different leak days ahead of the vote to an earlier Russian disinformation campaign.

Embed:

> Mr. Prime Minister @BorisJohnson
> I and the entire LDPR party sincerely wish you victory in the election today. With the support of people, you will quickly bring Britain out of the European Union!
>
> — Владимир Жириновский (@Zhirinovskiy) December 12, 2019

"Mr. Prime Minister Boris Johnson, I and the entire LDPR party sincerely wish you victory in the election today," Zhirinovsky tweeted Thursday.

Zhirinovsky's LDPR party is the third-largest in Russia's lower house of parliament, the State Duma. The lawmaker is famous for outlandish statements including pledges to "shoot" opponents and install a "brutal dictatorship" had he been elected Russia's president.

"With the support of [the] people, you will quickly bring Britain out of the European Union!" Zhirinovsky tweeted.

Johnson called the Dec. 12 election to break what he described as political paralysis hampering Britain's exit from the European Union, a process he has led since 2016. A majority would allow Johnson to lead the country out of the bloc it joined in 1973. However, he then must negotiate a trade agreement with the EU in a self-imposed deadline of 11 months.

The outspoken nationalist leader Zhirinovsky hasn't always been supportive of the British prime minister.

Last year, Zhirinovsky nicknamed Johnson "Borya the Half-Wit" when the then-foreign secretary compared Russia to the fictional murderer from Fyodor Dostoyevsky's novel "Crime and Punishment" after the poisoning of a Russian ex-spy in England.

Britain's security agencies have warned that Russia and other countries may attempt to disrupt the vote with cyberattacks or divisive political messages on social media. The Kremlin has repeatedly denied allegations of election meddling.

Reuters contributed to this article.

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