
ROMANIA'S PRIME MINISTER ON HOW NATO CAN NAVIGATE THIS 'STARK NEW REALITY'

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Charlie Campbell

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There are plenty of national heroes that are tricky for outsiders to properly appreciate. Even so, Romanias Vlad Țepeș, or Vlad the Impaler, takes some beating. A Wallachian prince from the 15th century, Vlad had a reputation for boiling babies and drinking blood, though his trademark was impaling a foe on a stake in the ground from anus to armpit, thus missing any major organs and prolonging death for up to an agonizing 48 hours. Following a battle against Ottoman soldiers in 1462, Vlad left a screaming forest of impaled thousands as a warning to pursuing troops set on conquering his lands.

Barbaric as these acts certainly were, ask people in Romanias stately capital Bucharest today about Vlads deeds and they will shrug and offer a standard reply: thats what happens if you invade a persons home. It is, of course, a sentiment that has been galvanized by the war launched by Russian President Vladimir Putin in neighboring Ukraine, where millions have fled indiscriminate bombing, more than 500,000 of them across the 400 mi. shared border into Romania.

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