

Putin Is Not My President

Letter to the Editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 04.21.22

Chuck Karnolt's letter in the April 14 issue of the Beacon ("Response to 'Russian pariah'") blames Putin's invasion of Ukraine on America.

He writes, "Putin drew a line in the sand and indicated that Ukraine would never be allowed to join NATO." America, he says, "ignored that warning from Putin and continued to meddle in things by trying to move Ukraine into the EU (European Union) and NATO." That argument gives Putin the right to dictate terms to Americans, Europeans, and Ukrainians.

Tucker Carlson makes the same argument, which is why the Kremlin issued this directive to Russian state media: "It is essential to use as much as possible fragments of broadcasts of the popular Fox News host Tucker Carlson, who sharply criticizes the actions of the United States (and) NATO, (and) their negative role in unleashing the conflict in Ukraine."

This "Blame America First" argument is rejected by 82% of Americans who think Putin is a war criminal, and 83% who support arming Ukraine. Americans still value what Carlson disdains: democracy and the right of self-determination. Americans believe that Ukrainians should decide their future, not Putin.

Ukrainians won that right in 2014 by ousting Viktor Yanukovych for caving to Putin's demands by abandoning a popular commitment to join the EU and signing a trade deal with Russia instead.

"Winter on Fire" is an inspiring Netflix documentary about Ukraine's Revolution of Dignity. Watching it helped me understand their extraordinary courage, unity, and determination to resist Putin's tyranny and decide their own fate. Ukrainians lived behind the Iron Curtain once. They refuse to do so again.

Self-determination, however, is irrelevant to right-wing radicals like Carlson, who said, "Why shouldn't I root for Russia? Which I am." Contempt for democracy is why he excuses an attempt to overturn an American election and defends Putin's right to tell Ukrainians and Americans what they can and cannot do.

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