

Russia's Republican Regiment

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Hello, GOP? The Gipper called and he wants his party back. When Ronald Reagan called Russia "an evil empire" in 1983, Republicans cheered. Last week, 63 Republican representatives, 30% of the caucus, took Russia's side by voting against a resolution supporting NATO and "shared democratic values!"

Trump transformed the GOP with his embarrassing man-crush on Putin. In 2007, Putin was named Time's "Person of the Year" because he dominated the news, like previous recipients Hitler and Stalin. Putin made news by murdering journalists, threatening to give Iran nukes, and making himself dictator for life. Trump congratulated him, "As you probably have heard, I am a big fan of yours!"

Trump held his 2013 Miss Universe Pageant in Moscow and wrote Putin "to personally invite you to be my guest of honor." Trump hoped Putin would accept, giddily tweeting "If so, will he become my new best friend?"

Putin manipulated our 2016 election to help Trump, who repaid the favor by repeating Putin's lies about Ukraine, ignoring Russia's attack on Ukrainian ships, withholding \$391 million in military aid from Ukraine, and trying to remove sanctions on Russia for stealing Crimea from Ukraine. Trump called Putin's current invasion of Ukraine "wonderful" and "genius."

Trump's love for Putin has infected Fox News. It regularly features Republicans Marjorie Taylor Greene, who called Ukrainian fighters "possible Nazi militias," and Madison Cawthorn, who called Ukrainian President Zelensky "a thug" and his government "incredibly evil."

Fox's most popular personality, Tucker Carlson asks, "Why shouldn't I root for Russia? Which I am." A leaked Kremlin memo instructed Russian media, "It is essential to use as much as possible" segments from "Tucker Carlson, who sharply criticizes" the U.S., NATO and Ukraine.

No wonder Russia's Foreign Minister Lavrov recently praised Fox. But, as Putin's war crimes are exposed, will Republicans continue to believe Fox, abandon NATO and embrace Trump's "best friend," the Butcher of Bucha?

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