

Why Do Some Americans Admire Putin?

A 2014 Gallup poll showed that only 19% of Americans had a favorable opinion of Russian president Vladimir Putin.

At the same time, in MSM articles on Putin one will usually find a fair share of his defenders in the comments section. We noticed the same phenomenon among members of our Intellectual Takeout audience in a recent post on Putin.



So, why do some Americans admire Putin? Two reasons come immediately to mind.

One, Putin is regarded as a strong leader, and Americans are hungry for strong leadership. [Less than half](#) of Americans consider President Obama to be “a strong and decisive leader.” The consensus in the American media is that an indecisive Obama has been outmaneuvered by Putin on both Ukraine and now Syria. Back home, on the other hand, Putin enjoys approval ratings near 90%, and is considered direct and no-nonsense in his exercise of power.

And then, of course, there are photos like this:



And things like this:

And this:

Two, Putin's seeming concern for history and culture is a welcome throwback for some. Currently, the dominant geopolitical thinking in America believes that world leaders always act in self-interest for banal concerns. Putin, on the other hand, considers Russia as the heir of the Byzantine Empire. He has assigned the Orthodox Church a central role in reviving Russian culture. He has his cabinet members [read](#)

books by Russian philosophers who considered Moscow a “third Rome.” And he has [chastised](#) the U.S. and other Western countries for “mov[ing] away from their roots, including Christian values.”

Of course, one can question the genuineness of Putin’s convictions about all of the above, and one can point to the more unsavory rumors surrounding him.

But nevertheless, it seems he’s intriguing to many Americans.