

Putin's War Is Wrong - So Is Blacklisting Russian Artists

By [American Committee for US-Russia Accord](#)

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Today, the dangers of military escalation are beyond description.

*What is now happening in Ukraine has serious geopolitical implications. **It could lead us into a World War III scenario.***

It is important that a peace process be initiated with a view to preventing escalation.

Global Research condemns Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

A Bilateral Peace Agreement is required.

There are many sidebar issues of Russia's assault on Ukraine. These may seem irrelevant, insignificant, even anodyne, as we watch in horror the suffering of Ukrainian civilians, but they have at least a secondary impact on the longer-term relations between Russia and the West and, one hopes, a Ukraine with healthy relations with both.

I serve on the board of a chamber music organization in Charlottesville, Virginia that hosts performers of the highest international order in a concert series. The opening concert of the 2022-23 season is scheduled to be the brilliant 20 year old Russian pianist, Alexander

Malofeev. Yet we have just heard from a fellow presenter in Canada that a concert by Malofeev has been canceled, due to the fact that he has not publicly spoken out in opposition to his country's aggression in Ukraine.

The retribution being carried out against individual Russians—sports figures, business leaders and artists, includes the peripatetic St. Petersburg-based conductor, Valery Gergiev, whose various European appointments are being revoked, as well as the celebrated diva, Anna Netrebko, recently removed from the roster of the Metropolitan Opera. These punitive moves are being attributed to the friendship of the two international stars with President Putin. This notwithstanding, a blanket policy of shunning Russian artists begs a number of questions, namely:

It has repeatedly been emphasized by the Biden administration and European allies throughout the current crisis that blame for the crime of invading Ukraine belongs to the Russian government, not the Russian people - therefore the punishment should be directed accordingly.

With regard to the matter of public condemnation of the attack on Ukraine, let us reflect—given the current mood in Moscow—on the possible ramifications of such statements by prominent Russians, both for themselves and for their families. Moreover, consider that Mr. Malofeev is the age of a typical college junior, and, further, that his meteoric rise as a musician (he won the Tchaikovsky International Prize for Young Musicians in 2014 at age 12) and his entire waking life to date has undoubtedly been spent with music scores, not TASS or RT.

Another consequence of Ukraine—not only in the tragic outcome, but in the prolonged buildup—has been the erosion of diplomatic ties between the United States and Russia. If it is more than mere platitude to say that diplomatic engagement is all the more important in times of crisis and grave danger, as now, then surely the same is true of cultural exchanges. *Ars longa, vita brevis.*

All this notwithstanding, there is surely the temptation to employ the bluntest of instruments, on the basis that Russians deserve no less. But, having visited Russia nine times, with the opportunity to meet with all manner of its people, I can unequivocally vouch for the spirit of goodwill toward the United States and its people. All the sadder, therefore, to read some recent dispatches from Russia indicating that the Kremlin's message of U.S./NATO disregard of Russia's security concerns (which, by the way, many of us have argued are valid) has hardened public opinion against the West and its motives.

I stress that none of this is in any way intended to question legitimate outrage at Russia's brutal attack.

Rather, it is to say that there will be other business to do with Russia after peace is achieved - one can only hope that it is soon and lasting - in Ukraine. To this end, keeping cultural, diplomatic and, to the extent possible, citizen engagement channels open is vital, and the price we may pay for permanent closure of these—not to mention a continuing game of chicken between the U.S./NATO and Russia, from the Baltic to Black Seas—is almost unimaginably high.

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