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Obama Effigy Burnt in Kaliningrad as Russians Start Lent

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An effigy of U.S. President Barack Obama.

Residents in Russia's Kaliningrad exclave have burnt an effigy of U.S. President Barack Obama to mark the spring holiday of Maslenitsa, just as revelers in northern Ukraine gave similar treatment to a likeness of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The burning of Obama's effigy — a staw model dressed in a black suit — was intended to attract more viewers to the event in the village of Kosmodemyansky, the Klops.ru news site quoted the organizers as saying Monday.

But the burning of another Obama effigy at a Maslenitsa show in the Altai region was canceled after local media kicked up a fuss earlier this month, Ekho Moskvy reported, citing organizer Yevgeny Golovin.

Elsewhere, revellers in Ukraine's northern city of Sumy burned on Sunday what local news site 0542.ua described as "Ukraine's No. 1 enemy — Russian President Vladimir Putin."

The effigy, complete with Putin's portrait and orange-and-black St. George ribbons — Russia's symbol of military valor — was placed on a stack of car tires and set alight, according to the report.

Maslenitsa, a holiday celebrated by Orthodox believers in both Russia and Ukraine but that dates back to pagan times, is a week-long feast that traditionally culminates with the burning of a straw effigy to celebrate the end of winter and the coming of spring.

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