



By: *Sergei Stepancev, TA Moscow*

Inter-Caucasus war at the Kremlin's door



Russia and Steven Seagal have a lot in common. They both know how to exploit the weakness of their opponent, and they are both fond of Ramzan Kadyrov, the leader of Chechnya.

Just recently, Steven Seagal said he was ready to fight for Russia, if necessary. He also recently published the documentary "In the Name of Justice," which justifies the Russian army and criticises the Ukrainian side.

He said that he had sent a **letter** to Putin at the beginning of the war, in which he wrote that he would "die for his president" if necessary.

Seagal was born in Lansing, Michigan—the state now crucial for the forthcoming presidential elections—but he wants to die for his new president, Vladimir Putin, whose strategic dream is to undermine and dismantle America into two or more countries.

One can generally equate Russia's exposure to the wrong side with that of Steven Seagal.

Russia might have been a peaceful and democratic country integrated into the global community, but it has chosen to be a deviant pariah whose hand in the current decent society others refuse to shake.

Russia today is showing serious internal weaknesses, which someone with the skills of Steven Seagal could easily use to defeat it.

Hijacking a wealthy company

There is an ongoing dispute between the head of the Chechen republic, Ramzan Kadyrov, and the Russian oligarch and senator, Suleyman Kerimov, also from the Caucasus but from a historically rival tribe.

The two sides have clashed over a stake in Wildberries, one of the two largest online retailers in Russia, valued at billions of dollars.

It is these two powerful men who are behind the bloody showdown in the heart of Moscow, which has not seen a similar conflict between

groups led by oligarchs since the 1990s. Interestingly, individuals from the establishment, both from the Caucasus, are leading the opposing sides.

They stood on opposite sides of the Bakalchuk couple, owners of the Wildberries network, estimated at around \$10 billion, at the time of their divorce, which led to a split in ownership.

There were shootings and killings right in the centre of Moscow, just less than a kilometre away from the Kremlin, when one side of the dispute, represented by Vladislav Bakalchuk and **supported** by the Kadyrov's people, tried (and failed) to penetrate into Wildberries headquarters, which was (and still is) controlled by Tatyana Bakalchuk.

During the seizure attempt, the Kadyrov's people killed some of the Kerimov's people who were guarding the Wildberries, but Tatyana and those who provided her with security—primarily Suleyman Kerimov—remained in control of the Wildberries.

How were billions made?

Typically, a family consisting of an IT specialist and an English teacher does not establish a multibillion-dollar business from scratch. It just doesn't happen in Russia.

In Russia, a business poised for significant success must enlist the support of a powerful individual who can protect it from competitive tactics and potential threats from government officials or those with administrative power.



The Wildberries, until recently, remained a family business, although its capital was around ten billion dollars

The Wildberries, until recently, remained a family business, although its capital was around ten billion dollars.

When Tatyana and Vladislav Bakalchuk's family began to separate and divide their shares in the company that owned and operated the Wildberries marketplace, the real Russian juices began to flow into the Wildberries.

Immediately after leaving her husband, Tatyana, who held the position of CEO and owned 99% of the company's shares, initiated strategic mergers.

Many observers found this operation very strange and awkward because, as a result of those mergers, 35% of the Wildberries became the property of a third party (ran by Tatyana's new boyfriend affiliated with Suleyman Kerimov). Some observers speculate that Tatyana might have used this merger as a protection payment.

A war that Putin does not want

The conflict over a company worth about \$10 billion is disturbing enough for today's Russia. However, the conflict is even more troubling for the establishment, as the leaders of the warring parties are part of it.

The most dangerous thing for the Russian leadership is that two oligarchs and political strongmen from the Caucasus are the leaders

of the bloody showdown over large assets. And from historically opposing tribes.

Right before our eyes, we can observe the beginning of the inter-Caucasus war unfold.

Given that Ramzan Kadyrov declared a "blood feud" against Suleyman Kerimov from Dagestan in front of his security forces, this war has every chance of continuing

Given that the Chechen leader Kadyrov **declared** a "blood feud" against Suleyman Kerimov from Dagestan in front of his security forces, this war has every chance of continuing.

This ancient custom, still existing in the North Caucasus, refers to a call for retaliatory killing against the individual who attempted to assassinate the person seeking a "blood feud."

The most powerful Chechen, Kadyrov, who is also Vladimir Putin's protégé, is calling for revenge against the Caucasus oligarch Kerimov and some influential politicians and businessmen who are close to him.

At the end of the long, third year of the invasion of Ukraine, Vladimir Putin is faced with a bloody confrontation between powerful Caucasus leaders in central Moscow over loot worth billions of dollars.

The North Caucasus has been Putin's Achilles heel during his entire career, and the last thing he wants at this point is an inter-Caucasus war at the Kremlin's doorstep.