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# Movie Star Seagal Backs Russia's Actions in Crimea

By Christopher Brennan

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Steven Seagal in Arizona on Oct. 27, 2012.

American action movie star Steven Seagal has given state-run newspaper Rossiskaya Gazeta a whopping 2,000 word interview in which he expressed support for Russia's actions in Crimea.

In the interview on the set of a movie he is shooting in Romania, Seagal said President Vladimir Putin's "desire to protect the Russian-speaking people of Crimea, his assets, and the Russian Black Sea military base in Sevastopol ... is very reasonable."

Criticizing the "idiotic" U.S. policy on Ukraine, Seagal said the American media coverage of the crisis was promoting the agenda of U.S. President Barack Obama.

Seagal, a Republican who is thought to be a relatively close acquaintance of Putin partly due to their shared love of martial arts, said that Putin is "one of the great living world leaders"

and that he "would like to consider him as a brother." Earlier this month he helped Putin promote the relaunch of a physical fitness program discontinued after the fall of the Soviet Union.

This is not the first time that the action star and former deputy sheriff has spoken to Kremlin-run media about the situation in Ukraine. Last month English language television station RT brought on Seagal, 61, as an expert panelist on the situation in the country.

Rossiskaya Gazeta pumped up the actor's political prowess by mentioning that fellow actors like former California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former U.S. President Ronald Reagan have played major roles in politics and saying that Seagal is "no less popular or authoritative in the world today."

The newspaper's faith in his stardom may be misplaced, however. The celebrity popularity tracking STARmeter on movie site imdb.com, places Seagal 1,454th for overall star popularity while Schwarzenegger ranks 124th.

In addition to discussing Ukraine during the interview — published Wednesday — the newspaper asked whether Seagal would run for governor of Arizona, to which the actor said it was more important to be a peacemaker than the leader of a state.

Seagal also said that although he loves the United States, it is possible — "sometime" — that he will follow the lead of French movie star Gerard Depardieu and take Russian citizenship.

Contact the author at c.brennan@imedia.ru

Follow him on Twitter for updates — @CKozalBrennan and @MoscowTimes

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