

Russia Tasks Hollywood Actor Seagal With Improving Russia-U.S. Ties

By [Reuters](#)

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Seagal signing his Russian passport in 2016/ [Kremlin.ru](#)

Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Saturday it had made U.S. actor Steven Seagal its special representative for Russian-U.S. humanitarian ties, a role it said was meant to deepen cultural, art and youth ties between the two countries.

President Vladimir Putin presented a Russian passport to U.S. actor Steven Seagal in 2016, saying he hoped it would serve as a symbol of how fractious ties between Moscow and Washington were starting to improve.

Since then, however, U.S.-Russia relations have only got worse, with U.S. intelligence agencies accusing Moscow of interfering in U.S. President Donald Trump's White House run, an allegation Russia denies. The two countries are also at odds over Syria and Ukraine.

The Russian Foreign Ministry likened Seagal's new role to that of a UN goodwill ambassador

and said that the actor, who is known for his martial arts prowess, would receive no salary. "It's a case of people's diplomacy intersecting with traditional diplomacy," the ministry said.

Related article: [Steven Seagal Doesn't Talk About Politics With Pal Putin](#)

Seagal, who sometimes appears on Russian state TV to talk about his views and career, was cited by Kremlin-backed TV station RT as welcoming the appointment.

"I've always had a very strong desire to do all I can to help improve Russian-American relations," RT cited Seagal as saying. "I have worked tirelessly in this direction for many years unofficially and I am now very grateful for the opportunity to do the same thing officially."

For more than a decade Seagal, who according to his own website is 66, has been a regular visitor to Russia. His movies, including such titles as "Under Siege" and "Sniper: Special Ops," are popular with Russian audiences.

Putin is also a fan of the kind of martial arts that Seagal often practiced in his Hollywood action movies.

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