



By: *Sergei Stepancev, TA Moscow*

Moscow's elite hit by a ricochet from Ukraine



The echoes of the war that Moscow started over a year ago against Ukraine have returned to Moscow. After Moscow suffered a drone attack, the Kremlin was in disarray and confusion.

The Kremlin did not know how to explain convincingly to the loyal majority why Moscow was attacked whilst under Putin's 'brilliant' leadership, 18 months after promising to take Kyiv in 3 days.

The Kremlin waited in ambush for a moment and did not respond to the attack to see which fake theory and legend would be easier to digest, and then decided to create retaliation sentiment by telling the people that the attack on Moscow occurred after a successful Russian strike on Ukrainian military intelligence facilities.

The Kremlin has been skilfully spinning false sentiments that Russia is not waging a full-scale war on Ukraine; it only strikes military facilities in Ukraine or so-called decision-making facilities.

This retaliation fake news was accepted by the Russian majority with pride and understanding.

Various Kremlin bloggers and journalists added juice to a blatant lie produced by the Kremlin.

Sergei Markov, for example, as he regularly does, lied passionately to followers on his Telegram channel. He said that citizens of Kyiv cheered and welcomed the attack on Moscow civilians, who only supported the attacks on the Ukrainian fascist army that followed the orders of American and British intelligence services.

And the rich finally suffer

During a recent drone attack on Moscow, a few drones were intercepted in Moscow's upscale Rublevka neighbourhood. It is a relatively large area in the western suburbs of Moscow where most Russian rich and famous people live.

Many patriotic Telegram channels and reporters simultaneously started spinning various sentiments claiming that the rich were finally suffering, just as the working class was, immediately after drones were reported in the Rublevka area.

The Kremlin quickly realised that the attack on Rublevka was a perfect opportunity to distract and unite the Russian majority around the leftist anti-bourgeois sentiment.

All the Kremlin needed to do was to weaponise the never-ending domestic conflict between the lower and upper class, which has always been evident and ever present in Russia.

Contempt for the rich lives on in Russia today, just as it did a hundred years ago.

Therefore, that attack on the Rublevka region was perceived almost as an attack on the enemy territory by the Russian majority.

The Russian majority views wealthy people as detached from reality, pampered and spoiled perverts, or worse, as enemies, and agents of the West, even though, in reality, all Russian oligarchs are Kremlin emissaries, many of whom have spent a great deal of time and money following the Kremlin's instructions, infiltrating and recruiting the Western political class.

After the drone attack on Rublevka, it was

evident that the Russian majority was satisfied that the rich were also suffering.

Tens of thousands of wealthy people, including government officials and Russian politicians, live in the Rublevka area with their families.

Caviar versus drones

Almost immediately, the Russian public domain was flooded with jokes ridiculing the drone attack on Rublevka. Some of those jokes were:

A Rublevka housewife strikes a Ukrainian "drone with a can of caviar." Or, "The Ukrainian drone could not pass Rublevka because of massive shelling by USD and EUR bundles of money thrown at it by Rublevka residents".

Russia is a feudal country to a great degree, with unimaginable differences in living standards between the rich and average people. Russia has the largest concentration of wealth in the hands of very few people, similar to Nigeria or Mexico.

The Russian majority survives and is entertained and distracted daily with lies and fabrications offered by shameless and widespread Kremlin propaganda: lies about Ukrainian fascists or the suffering economies of the EU or the US.

However, the Kremlin cannot hide Russia's wealthy people. Many are among the Russian ruling class, and almost all are too visible in the large Rublevka neighbourhood with the top stakeholders and the business elite.

Putin and the people close to him reside in Rublevka as well. Russian oligarchs and the so-called "siloviks" are also in Rublevka.

The Kremlin on the side of the people

With the drone strike, the Kremlin got a chance to spin the attack to its advantage because it knows well that the Russian majority would love to see Rublevka residents razed to the ground.

There was one more hidden agenda as to why the Kremlin decided to utilise the attack on Rublevka for propaganda purposes.

Various patriotic channels describing the events related to the drone attack on Rublevka provided the Kremlin with the initial "informational support" to begin looking for public enemies in Rublevka, and thus essentially purge the Russian rich not only because the Kremlin suspects them of being disloyal, but also because the Kremlin needs to begin extorting money to finance the war on Ukraine further.

Who sent the drones?

The Kremlin does not know who sent those drones - Ukraine or someone else domestically, or whoever might have sponsored the raid on the city of Belgorod.

Those drones and other attacks on Russian territory could have been organised and sponsored by some capable domestic forces living in Rublevka because that is where most Russian competent and wealthy people live.

We can expect more attacks on Russian territory and, as a result, more turbulence in Russia.

This turbulence has already been evident in random purges of the rich and the ongoing domestic conflicts similar to the one between Yevgeny Prigozhin and Ramzan Kadyrov.

Their top people are already in open conflict and even propose to each other to "take it outside."

Knowing that both Prigozhin and Kadyrov have tens of thousands of armed people behind them, their conflict can end up being bloody and wild.

The Kremlin will now search for domestic enemies and a convenient way to end or freeze the war on the Kremlin's terms as soon as possible.

Many among the Russian elite are looking for such a conclusion to the war. They did not expect to end up hostages of Putin's decision to attack Ukraine.

Putin and a few of those stuck in the past, obscurantist and revanchist hard-liners around him, are looking for a way to survive or delay the fall of Putinism.