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Putin's fear of a corrupt army – the case of the murder of Maxim Kuzminov



In the days when the Kremlin persistently refused to hand over the body of Alexei Navalny to his mother, it is good to take a closer look at the murder of Maxim Kuzminov in Spain.

There are apparent similarities between the already documented **murder of Maxim Kuzminov** and the suspected but confirmed (one way or the other) murder of Alexei Navalny.

To the Kremlin, both Kuzminov and Navalny were dangerous enemies who could influence or provoke others to turn against the authorities in Russia. Their murders sent a message to everyone who would think of opposing the Kremlin.

Maxim Kuzminov was the unknown Russian soldier, like all those thousands of mobilised Russian young men on the frontline.

But his death indicated the use of the so-called Kashchey's needle by the Kremlin.

Kashchey is the villain in the Russian fairy tale who was immortal because his death was hidden in the needle. Only if that needle were broken, he would die.

Kuzminov was not killed for defecting, but for receiving money

Maxim Kuzminov defected to Ukraine. He hijacked the Russian military helicopter and landed in the territory controlled by the Ukrainian armed forces. Reports indicate that other crew members were killed.

Maxim Kuzminov received monetary compensation from the Ukrainian authorities for defecting to Ukraine.

Maxim Kuzminov was recently executed. He was shot several times before a car was driven over his dead body. His body was mutilated after he was murdered. We are currently witnessing something similar with Alexei

Navalny's body.

Kuzminov might not have decided to defect to Ukraine because of his disapproval of the war or Putin's regime

Funerals and tributes to the dead are a significant part of Russian culture. The Kremlin tried to deprive Alexei Navalny of that honour for a long time before finally **handing over** the body to his mother.

For the same reason, Maxim Kuzminov's body was run over. The Kremlin wanted to humiliate the already dead Kuzminov.

Kuzminov might not have decided to defect to Ukraine because of his disapproval of the war or Putin's regime. He might have done it and probably did so just because he was promised and rewarded a significant amount of cash by the Ukrainian authorities for his act of defection.

How to corrupt the Ukrainian army?

Kuzminov's defection might have shocked Vladimir Putin equally as the massive anti-corruption riots formerly organised by Alexei Navalny.

Maxim Kuzminov's act revealed the vulnerability of the system in Russia and its armed forces in Ukraine.

Vladimir Putin knows that the corruption he has created in Russia and globally enabled him to get a hold of the entire Russia and buy the loyalty of Western politicians and influencers.

Corruption is Putin's most efficient weapon, but he knows well that corruption could also be used against him.

Russian agents and emissaries have been attempting to “buy” Ukrainian soldiers and leading commanders

In the world of Vladimir Putin, when he sees an army of 300.000, he estimates that 30 per cent of that army would be willing to take a bribe of something close to \$50.000 and defect to his side.

That would only be \$5 billion to neutralise such an army.

Russian agents and emissaries have been attempting to “buy” Ukrainian soldiers and leading commanders, inclining them to switch to Russia's side.

Given that it is a defensive war for Ukraine, Vladimir Putin's emissaries of corruption were not that successful in their attempts to subvert and recruit the Ukrainian army.

A dangerous precedent

On the other hand, the situation for Russian soldiers and commanders regarding the war in Ukraine is much different.

Many of them might have initially gone to that war wilfully because of skilful brainwashing and propaganda on the one hand and generous compensation promised by the Kremlin's recruiters on the other.

However, as soon as Russian soldiers experienced the horrific and actual consequences of the war, most of them were not that optimistic that they would get to live to see the funds promised by the military recruiters.

Many, if not most, Russian soldiers fighting in Ukraine are from remote Russian cities where \$200 is an excellent monthly salary.

Putin's intelligence bosses might have ordered the brutal execution of Maxim Kuzminov because his case of defection was a dangerous precedent

Therefore, they would seriously consider following Maxim Kuzminov's footprints if they were promised, for example, \$50.000 by an entity or a Western government they trusted.

Vladimir Putin's intelligence bosses might have ordered the brutal execution of Maxim Kuzminov because his case of defection was a dangerous precedent.

In this respect, no one should forget the fear and awe during Prigozhin's march to Moscow.

Imagine one of several Russian military divisions similarly marching to Moscow because they have taken some money, camouflaging their defection with something different. For example, claiming that they were disgusted by what they had actually seen in the war against Ukraine, the Kremlin sent them to.

The truth is that many Russian soldiers are sincerely disgusted by what they have seen. However, the money could provide them with some additional reassurance.

Corruption could turn against Putin

Vladimir Putin understands the Russian people well. He has been playing on their emotions like a virtuoso for a quarter of the century.

His greatest fear relates to his armed men, the army or interior forces turning against him because someone provided more money and guarantees for them.

Because of Russia's reality and the overall system built by Vladimir Putin, the easiest way to turn Russian armed men against Putin's

regime is to bribe them.

While all Russian generals and leading military commanders live comfortably having a lavish lifestyle in Russia, lower echelons of the army, particularly the average soldiers, are not that fortunate regarding the corrupt income facilitated by Putin's administration.



Putin is afraid that someday, someone will use his methods against his regime domestically and against his army in Ukraine

This is also why the order to kill Maxim Kuzminov in Spain was issued and why every Russian propaganda mouthpiece has covered the murder.

Vladimir Putin is afraid that someday, someone will use his methods against his regime domestically and against his army in Ukraine. It only takes the right Western entity or government Russian armed men would trust.

Russian soldiers know the reality of the war in Ukraine. And that reality is much different from the one seen on Russian television. Fifty thousand dollars is more than most would make in a lifetime.

That is where the Kremlin's Kashchey's needle is. It is in overall Russian acceptance of corruption as the only feasible method to survive in Putin's system, which includes the Russian army in Ukraine.

Many Russian soldiers went to the war against Ukraine because of the money.

But most realised that getting that money and

enjoying it could be problematic. They could accept an alternative way of getting their money. The Kremlin has clearly started to understand that.