



Written by [Daniel Sayani](#) on March 10, 2011

Former Soviet Boss Gorbachev Says Putin Is More Communist Than He Was

Most Americans believe, as they were told by the media and taught in schools and colleges, that the Cold War “ended” with events including the so-called “collapse” of the Soviet Union in 1991 and the demolition of the Berlin Wall in November 1989. However, those who are aware of the true scope and nature of the international communist menace know that the Soviet Union truly never collapsed, but instead, has metastasized and adopted new and deceptive forms in the Russian Federation.



KGB defector Anatoliy Golitsyn has made the supposed “collapse” of the Soviet Union the subject of his 1986 book, *The Perestroika Deception*, which outlines the staged fall of the Soviet Union. Golitsyn writes that there is a devious secret intent behind the Leninist strategy which the “former” Communists are pursuing under cover of fake “reform” and “progress towards democracy.” The immediate strategic objective is “convergence” with the West — on their terms, not ours.

Similarly, 21st century Russia has not truly advanced beyond the political models and paradigms associated with communist totalitarian aggression. Russia has pursued a steady course of state capitalism, and is far from having a free market or a free society; the economy is heavily regulated and nationalized, and includes mega-corporations which operate under government sanction and assistance, such as petroleum and natural gas giants Gazprom and Lukoil, which are under the control of a few well-heeled oligarchs, who have amassed wealth, influence, and power under government sanction.

Furthermore, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, a former KGB official, has pursued a program of systematic human rights abuses and violations against the freedoms and liberties of the Russian people. Like his comrade, Belarusian dictator [Alexander Lukashenko](#) — who still commands the Belarusian KGB and has been cited by Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and other groups for his persecution of political opponents, journalists, Westerners, and Christians — Vladimir Putin is a ruler whose control over Russia threatens the long-term strategic, geopolitical interests of the United States and continues to perpetuate a cycle of neo-Soviet totalitarianism.

None other than former Soviet premier Mikhail Gorbachev has decried Putin’s totalitarian and statist policies. In other words, Putin is more communist than a former officially communist Soviet premier — in the words of the Soviet premier himself. This was reported in an interview Gorbachev gave with the



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[New York Times](#) in October 2010, in which Gorbachev voiced growing frustration with Putin's leadership, saying that he had undermined Russia's fledgling democracy by crippling the opposition forces:

"He thinks that democracy stands in his way," Mr. Gorbachev said. "I am afraid that they have been saddled with this idea that this unmanageable country needs authoritarianism," Mr. Gorbachev said, referring to Mr. Putin and his close ally, President Dmitri A. Medvedev. "They think they cannot do without it."

In an interview, Mr. Gorbachev even described Mr. Putin's governing party, United Russia, as a "a bad copy of the Soviet Communist Party." Mr. Gorbachev said party officials were concerned entirely with clinging to power and did not want Russians to take part in civic life.

Mr. Gorbachev was especially disparaging of Mr. Putin's decision in 2004, when he was president, to eliminate elections for regional governors and the mayors of Moscow and St. Petersburg. Those positions are now filled by Kremlin appointees. The impact of this change was illustrated in Mr. Medvedev's dismissal last month of Moscow's longtime mayor, who was replaced with a Putin loyalist.

"Democracy begins with elections," Mr. Gorbachev said. "Elections, accountability and turnover." Mr. Gorbachev feels that he put Russia on the path toward being a functional democracy, only to have Mr. Putin block its progress. "Russia has a long way to go to usher in a new system of values, to create and provide for the proper functioning of the institutions and mechanisms of democracy — the institutions of civil society."

Most recently, Gorbachev leveled further criticism at Putin and Medvedev, as he is approaching his 80th birthday celebration, which ironically, will not be held in Moscow, but at Royal Albert Hall in London. Gorbachev is upset that Russia is regressing to totalitarian ways he thought he defeated during his stint as the harbinger of perestroika and Russia's supposed transition to democracy. He described Russia as an "imitation" of democracy where parliament and courts lack independence from the government and the main pro-Kremlin party is a "bad copy" of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.

Referring to the ruling United Russia Party, Gorbachev also said that Putin should [step down](#) from office and not seek reelection next year:

I criticize United Russia a lot, and I do it directly. It is a party of bureaucrats and the worst version of the CPSU — the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Regarding our parliament, I cannot say that it is independent [and] also our judiciary does not fully comply with the provisions of the constitution.

Vladimir Putin has already served two terms, and one more as prime minister. I would not run for president if I were in his place.... People ... do not want to be a mass, a flock led for decades by the same shepherds. We have everything — a parliament, courts, a president and a prime minister, but these all are to a larger extent an imitation.

Gorbachev occupies a unique place in Russian politics: While many in the West hail him as a great reformer and the harbinger of glasnost and perestroika, most Russians scorn him and believe he is responsible for the political and economic upheavals which followed the collapse of the communist system. Last year, Gorbachev founded a new political movement called Civic Dialogue, headed by prominent human-rights defendants and other public figures.



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However, in spite of his criticisms against Vladimir Putin's neo-Soviet governing style, characterized by political repression and state capitalism, as opposed to laissez fair capitalism (a distinction first made by Tony Cliff, in his book *Russia: A Marxist Analysis*, which identified Stalinism and Vladimir Lenin's New Economic Policy as a form of state capitalism in 1955), Mikhail Gorbachev is not to be heralded as an individual who is anti-communist or in sync with American values.

According to a 2009 interview with the [Associated Press](#), Gorbachev still harbors antipathy toward the American system of constitutional republicanism, laissez faire capitalism and the free market, believing it to be a fundamentally flawed system of government, exploiting the economic downturn of 2007-2008 as an opportunity to attack the United States:

Gorbachev also said the global economic crisis showed capitalism should be tempered with elements of the socialist system he played such a critical role in sweeping away. Gorbachev is a paradoxical figure even after all these years — widely credited around the world with a historic convulsion he admits he did not intend. He sought to fix communism, not destroy it, and in the interview said that while he was willing to let Eastern Europe go its own way he very much hoped the republics that formed the Soviet Union would stay united.

"I was a resolute opponent of the breakup of the union," said Gorbachev, who was forced to step down on Dec. 25, 1991, as the country he led ceased to exist. He still holds out hope that one day Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus will join with Russia in forming a new union. He seemed to view the global meltdown as partly the result of years of Western hubris and excess. "The American media trumpeted ... about the victory in the Cold War, that socialism is down. This disease of extreme self-confidence led to it — the (belief) that things would always go on this way. And it did last long ... I think that now everyone is learning a hard lesson." It is necessary to overcome these mistakes of super-consumerism, of super-profits." he said. "We have to think about finding — through the G20 or other institutions — new models of development (and) cooperation."

The world should look for a composite system, he said, which incorporates "the past experience of all that the capitalist system brings, like competitiveness, and what socialism gives — especially a social safety net." Gorbachev also said the moment was right for improved U.S.-Russia relations, expressed skepticism about the wisdom of Ukraine joining NATO, and called on the world community to head off the prospect of an Iranian nuclear weapon not with confrontation but rather "a maximal dialogue."

While Mikhail Gorbachev's criticisms against Vladimir Putin reveal that the Soviet Union and its dictatorial ways flourish, and are damning for Putin and Dmitry Medvedev, it nonetheless comes as no surprise that the former Soviet premier advocates one of the same fundamental geopolitical strategies for advancing Russian hegemony in the world as does Putin — the creation of a Russian-dominated union of Soviet states, known as the Customs Union State, acting in concert with Iran and Communist China, as the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. Communist rulers do not change their Marxist spots, as is evident in Gorbachev's advocacy of the Customs Union and excluding Ukraine from NATO. Nonetheless, Gorbachev's own attitudes, as well as his criticisms of Putin, indicate that Soviet governance and *realpolitik* and alive and well.

Photo: Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, left, shakes hands with former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev on, March 2, 2011: AP Images



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