

Gorbachev Calls for New Perestroika

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Last Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has urged the continuation of perestroika and the dismantlement of the country's "power vertical" that gives disproportionate authority to the executive.

"The degradation of the state and demoralization of society are becoming a universally accepted diagnosis" for Russia, Gorbachev wrote in an article [published](#) in *Moskovsky Komsomolets* on Wednesday.

Gorbachev, 80, said the current situation in the country reminds him of the 1980s when he started perestroika, or restructuring — a process that he said was cut short in the 1990s and left unfinished.

Now, Russia is sliding back to Brezhnev-era stagnation, made worse by a widening gap between the impoverished and the "fattening glamorous crowd."

The election campaign for the State Duma looks like a Potemkin village because "the authorities make no attempt to hide their plans to avoid fair competition and guarantee their survival, possibly for life," Gorbachev said.

The country is moving toward a dead end and has a maximum of five to six years to reverse that trend, he said.

But this cannot be done until the president gives up his monarch-like powers, and free elections devoid of administrative resources are brought back, Gorbachev said.

The Kremlin did not comment on the article. Gorbachev kept silent on Russia's leadership throughout most of Vladimir Putin's presidency from 2000 to 2008, but has grown increasingly outspoken in recent years, denouncing the government's authoritarian leanings.

Gorbachev's latest proposal echoes that of jailed Yukos CEO Mikhail Khodorkovsky, who published an editorial in Kommersant-Vlast this week urging the transformation of Russia's "superpresidential" republic into a parliamentary one.

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