

If Navalny Takes Power He Could End Up Like Putin, Says Khodorkovsky

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Former tycoon turned opposition politician Mikhail Khodorkovsky has warned Russians against pinning their hopes on Alexei Navalny, saying that if he should come to power, the country would face “hard times.”

“On one hand, I would feel joy [if Navalny won.] A change in leadership is a good thing,” the former CEO of the Yukos oil company told video blogger Yuri Dud in a 90-minute interview uploaded to YouTube.

“On the other hand, I would say: Guys, brace for hard times.”

Khodorkovsky was once Russia’s richest man before being jailed for embezzlement in a case widely considered to have been politically motivated. He spent more than a decade in prison, in a move that marked a sea-change in the Kremlin's attitude towards the oligarchs under President Vladimir Putin.

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Since his release on a presidential pardon in 2013, Khodorkovsky has led an opposition movement from exile and he has frequently spoken out in favor of a less centralized power structure in Russia.

He has been tepid in expressing support for Russia's main opposition politician, Navalny.

“[If Navalny won], we would go back to a system of power monopoly, which is unpleasant for everybody,” Khodorkovsky told Dud. "It is very important for Navalny to come to power alongside other people."

He added that when Putin first came to power in 2010, he was also “significantly more liberal.”

“The path traveled by this country’s leaders has always been more or less the same,” he added.

In September 2016, Khodorkovsky [announced](#) he would fund a candidate to run against Putin in next year’s presidential elections.

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