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Brezhnev Plaque May Return to Soviet Leader's Home

By The Moscow Times

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Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev welcoming U.S. President Gerald Ford at the Vladivostok airport ahead of a 1974 summit.

A plaque commemorating Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev may be restored to the facade of the Moscow apartment building where he lived by the time of the 107th anniversary of his birth, a United Russia deputy said.

A Moscow City Hall committee has approved the plan to return the plaque to the stately building at 26 Kutuzovsky Prospekt, and supporters had hoped to have it installed by this month.

"But the work was delayed. Now we will focus on December, when Brezhnev was born," an initiator of the project, United Russia Deputy Alexander Khinshtein, said on Twitter.

Brezhnev, who was born on Dec. 19, 1906, in Dniprodzerzhynsk, Ukraine, died of a heart

attack in his Kutuzovsky Prospekt home on Nov. 10, 1982. He was 76.

Critics say Brezhnev, who ruled longer than any Soviet leader except Josef Stalin, presided over a period of political repression and economic stagnation.

But many Russians see his 18-year rule, until his death in 1982, as a time of economic stability for the superpower and blame Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, for the breakup in 1991. He also oversaw a significant warming of relations with the United States.



A man passing Brezhnev's former home at 26 Kutuzovsky Prospekt. (Igor Tabakov / MT)

Plaques commemorating other Soviet-era figures adorn many central Moscow apartment houses, but the one on the building where Brezhnev lived was removed after the Soviet Union fell apart.

A poll last month by the independent Levada Center found 56 percent of Russians had a positive view of Brezhnev — more than had a positive view of any other Soviet-era leader, or of the last tsar, Nicholas II, or President Boris Yeltsin.

Satirists have likened 60-year-old President Vladimir Putin's long period in power to that of Brezhnev, who remained in the Kremlin as his health declined long before his death.

Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has called the Brezhnev era a "huge plus" for the country

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