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Film About Soviet Collapse Used to Enforce Party Discipline in China

By The Moscow Times

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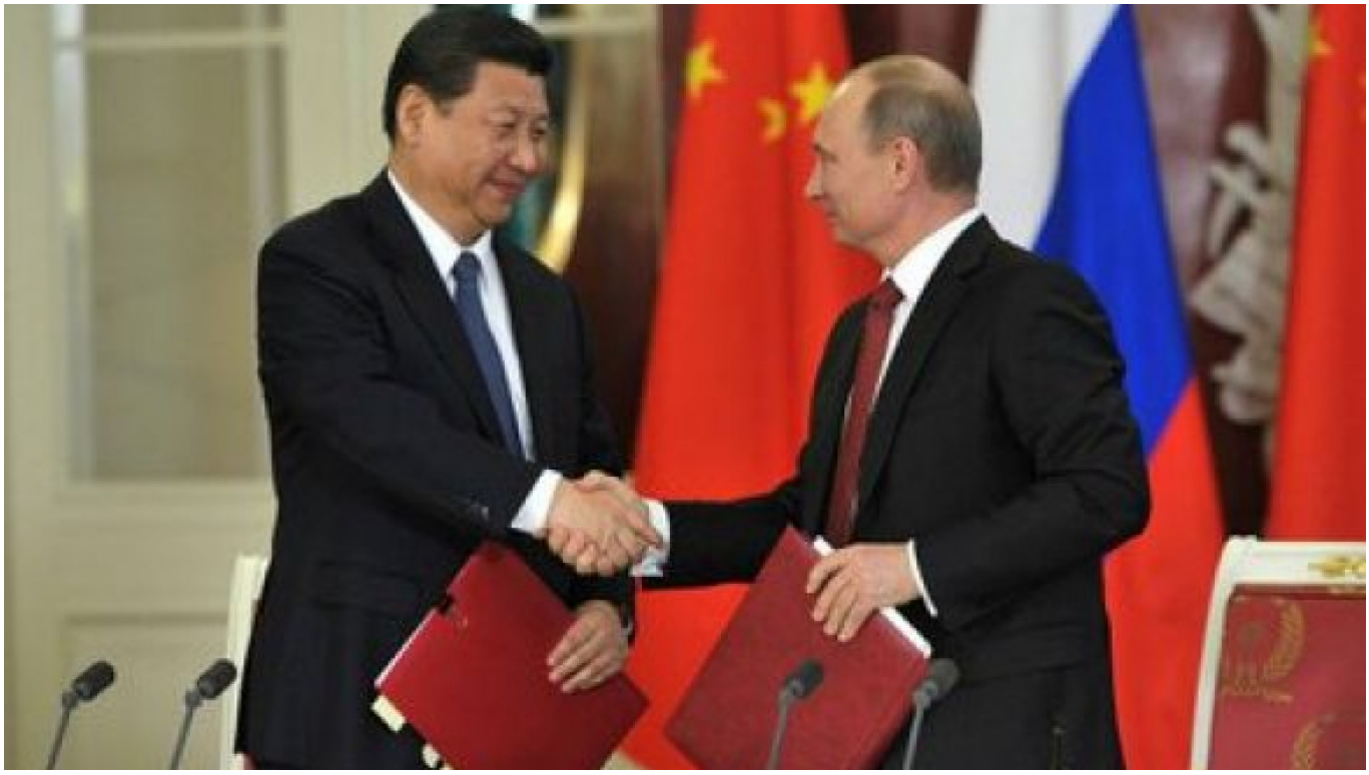

Chinese President Xi Jinping meeting with Putin during a state visit in 2013.

The Communist Party of China has compelled its officials to watch a documentary about the Soviet Union's collapse to draw lessons on how not to govern, and to ensure that they remain disciplined amid economic reforms.

The film, which has been shown at dozens of political meetings during the past few months, is part of Chinese leader Xi Jinping's campaign to re-energize the party and prevent it from going the way of its Soviet predecessor, the Wall Street Journal reported Tuesday.

The six-part documentary, titled "20th Anniversary of the Death of the Soviet Party and State: As the Russians Relate," begins with cheery footage of Soviet accomplishments, but quickly cuts to images of unrest of the 1990s and clips of Russian communists bemoaning the collapse of their party.

It finds little fault with the communist system itself, but blames the supposed weakness of its leaders, primarily former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, and their susceptibility to Western ideas that they allowed to permeate the country.

Chinese authorities first aired the film three years ago, and it is now being used to preach discipline amid a recent relaxation of economic rules, said Yakov Berger, a senior researcher at the Institute of Far Eastern Studies.

"Xi Jinping wants to make his leftist critics understand that market reforms are one thing, and political reforms are a completely different thing," Berger said, Nezavisimaya Gazeta reported.

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