

Mourners Bid Farewell to Shevardnadze, the Last Soviet Foreign Minister

July 13, 2014



Eduard Shevardnadze

More than 30 delegations from different countries attended the funeral on Sunday of Eduard Shevardnadze, the Soviet Union's last foreign minister, who later served as Georgian president.

"The world needs leaders like Shevardnadze, leaders who see the future," former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said at the funeral, according to Interfax. "He was my friend, and we did a lot for the world."

Shevardnadze died last week at the age of 86 following a long-term illness.

Having served as foreign minister under Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, Shevardnadze is recognized for having contributed to the inception of the liberalizing policies of glasnost and perestroika, and for having helped end the Cold War.

Despite a mixed legacy in his native Georgia, Shevardnadze's presidency is remembered

for having strengthened Georgia's ties to the West.

The current Georgian leadership, former German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, former Estonian President Arnold Rüütel, and former Kyrgyz President Roza Otunbayeva were among those in attendance at the funeral in Tbilisi's Holy Trinity Cathedral, according to Interfax.

Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev was unable to travel to the funeral due to the weakened state of his health.

Ilia II of Georgia, the head of the Georgian Orthodox Church, was also unable to attend the funeral because he was receiving medical treatment in Germany. A letter written by the spiritual leader was read out loud at the ceremony, Interfax reported.

Following the service, Shevardnadze's coffin was moved to his family's property in Tbilisi, where he was buried with military honors besides his wife Nanuli, who died in 2004.

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