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Gorbachev Urges Renewed Ties With West

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Mikhail Gorbachev

Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev said that problems inherited from previous eras are holding Russia back and urged Western leaders to restore ties with Moscow instead of trying to "provoke" it during a book presentation Tuesday, Russian media reports said.

"Many are trying to provoke Russia now," Gorbachev said at the presentation, Russian News Service reported. "A rich country, but can't unfold [its abilities]. But it's because it still cannot resolve the inheritance that it has receive from previous times."

Speaking in the wake of a recent nuclear deal with Iran that earned Russia praise for its role in the negotiations from U.S. President Barack Obama and other Western leaders, Gorbachev said it was "important to not miss the moment, to return to the position of trust," the report said.

Gorbachev has previously blamed the “mistakes” of the Soviet era for the crisis in Ukraine, which has soured Moscow's relations with the West, saying that leaders of former Soviet republics should have reached a stronger agreement on borders when the U.S.S.R. collapsed in 1991.

After Moscow's annexation of Crimea, Gorbachev spoke out in favor of the peninsula's “joining” Russia. But he also owns a stake in one of Russia's last independent newspapers, Novaya Gazeta weekly, which has harshly criticized President Vladimir Putin's policies.

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