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Kremlin's Positive-News Drive 'Idiotic,' Political Scientist Says

November 14, 2017



Sergey Bobylev / TASS

A prominent Russian political scientist says the Kremlin's demand that companies provide good news to feed state-run media ahead of next year's presidential elections is "funny" and "absurd."

The Reuters news agency on Tuesday reported that the Kremlin sent a seven-page document to 45 Russian companies in the energy and utilities sector last month, detailing how they should feed the Kremlin news items that would paint the government positively.

"Even in the Soviet Union there was not such an idiotic practice," Gleb Pavlovsky told The Moscow Times on Tuesday.

"The Soviet Union had a gigantic propaganda machine that worked on its own to find the right information and prepare it, so it of course didn't need any help," the political analyst said.

“This is just funny.”

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According to Reuters, the document sent to the companies explained ⊠that the stories should correspond to two themes: “Life is getting ⊠better” and “How things were; how they are now.”

The document placed a focus on highlighting new jobs, infrastructure and scientific achievements, and set a weekly deadline.

A second document, which Reuters examined, listed recipients including Rosneft, Lukoil and Novatek.

Reuters⊠ reported that both were attached to an invitation to an Oct. 12 meeting⊠ at the energy ministry in Moscow to discuss furthering the government’s⊠ P.R. effort.

“This says a lot of about how the Kremlin views the ⊠state media,” Pavlovsky said. “It must believe that the media isn’t ⊠competent enough to put forth the information that the Kremlin needs.”

Pavlovsky⊠ said that he could not recall an analogous effort ahead of any of the ⊠previous elections he had observed over the past 20 years.

“Of course I don’t know if this is fake news,” he said of the Reuters report. “But if it’s true, it is very strange and absurd.”

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