

Frail Mikhail Gorbachev Warns Against Return to the Cold War

By [Reuters](#)

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Mikhail Gorbachev (Sergei Vedyashkin / Moskva News Agency)

Mikhail Gorbachev, the last Soviet leader, warned on Thursday against rising tensions between Russia and the United States and said there should be no return to the Cold War.

The frail 87-year-old was physically helped by aides to a cinema hall to watch the premiere in Russia of a new documentary about his life, his Soviet reforms in the 1980s and his arms control drive that helped end the Cold War.

His legacy has come under a pall as ties between Moscow and Washington have fallen to post-Cold War lows, following Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 and rows over sanctions, election meddling and the poisoning of a spy in England.

He spoke briefly to a cinema hall in Moscow after "Meeting Gorbachev," a new documentary directed by filmmakers Werner Herzog and Andre Singer, and was asked if the world would

hold back from a new Cold War.

"We must hold back," he said. "And not just from the Cold War. We have to continue the course we mapped. We have to ban war once and for all. Most important is to get rid of nuclear weapons."

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Reviled by many Russians as the man whose reforms ultimately led to the Soviet breakup, Gorbachev is lauded in the West as the man who helped end the Cold War.

Gorbachev, whose visibly ailing health was in stark contrast to the vigorous reformist figure he cut in the 1980s, said the world was moving dangerously closer to a new arms race.

Last month in a column for the New York Times, Gorbachev denounced the United States after President Donald Trump said he planned to quit the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces treaty which Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan signed in 1987.

The pact eliminated all short- and intermediate-range land-based nuclear and conventional missiles held by both countries in Europe.

In a prepared, written message read out to the hall by an aide before the film, Gorbachev alluded to the article and said "I am convinced we can stop a new Cold War. I will do everything for this."

"Most dangerous would be a return to confrontation, the start of a new arms race. They are already talking about a nuclear war as if this is something entirely acceptable. It is being prepared, scenarios are being discussed."

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