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30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

In Photos: The August Coup Attempt That Heralded U.S.S.R.'s End

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Thirty years ago today, an attempted coup shook Moscow and signaled the impending end of the Soviet Union. Unhappy with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's perestroika and glasnost reforms, a group of hard-line military and civilian leaders that called themselves the State Committee on the State of Emergency (GKChP) seized control of Moscow — and of Gorbachev himself, placing him under house arrest at his dacha in Crimea. Many Russians today still remember the television switching to a continuous loop of "Swan Lake" as tanks rolled into Moscow. The coup would implode just three days later after a standoff between tens of thousands of Muscovites and troops in tanks, but it fundamentally transformed the balance of power in the Soviet Union. In the months that followed, the Soviet republics would declare independence one by one until the U.S.S.R.'s collapse in December. The Moscow Times takes a look back at the historic events that changed Russia forever:



Tanks at the White House, then the Russian SFSR's parliament building, on Krasnopresnenskaya Embankment. **Alexander Chumichev, Valery Khristoforov / TASS**

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