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# Taxi for Vladimir: Putin Says He Drove Cab After Soviet Fall

By AFP

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Putin drives an Aurus car at the Sochi Autodrom racing circuit in 2018. **Alexei Druzhinin / TASS**

Russian President Vladimir Putin has said the collapse of the Soviet Union spelled the end of "historical Russia," revealing he drove a taxi to make ends meet following the U.S.S.R.'s fall.

Putin, a former agent of the Soviet Union's KGB security services, who has previously lamented the U.S.S.R.'s fall, said the disintegration three decades ago remains a "tragedy" for "most citizens."

The comments, reported by state-run news agency RIA Novosti Sunday, were excerpts from an upcoming film by broadcaster Channel One, dubbed "Russia. Recent History."

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"After all, what is the collapse of the Soviet Union? This is the collapse of historical Russia

under the name of the Soviet Union," the Russian leader was cited as saying.

A loyal servant of the Soviet Union, Putin was dismayed when it fell apart, once calling the collapse "the greatest geopolitical disaster of the 20th century."

Putin is sensitive to the perceived expansion of Western military ambitions into ex-Soviet countries and Russia this week demanded that NATO formally scrap a 2008 decision to open its door to Georgia and Ukraine.

The end of the Union brought with it a period of intense economic instability that plunged many into poverty, as newly independent Russia transitioned from communism to capitalism.

RIA Novosti, reporting from excerpts of the documentary, said Putin had revealed that he worked occasionally as a taxi driver to boost his income.

"Sometimes I had to earn extra money," Putin said.

"I mean, earn extra money by car, as a private driver. It's unpleasant to talk about to be honest but, unfortunately, that was the case."

Russia was the center of the Soviet Union that grew to include 15 republics from the Baltics in the West to Central Asia.

In 1991, wracked by economic woes the Soviet Union disintegrated and Russia became an independent nation.

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