

Russia

Lost
in
Transition

**From Mikhail Gorbachev,
former president of the Soviet Union**

This work by Lilia Shevtsova is, without doubt, an important contribution to our understanding of Russia's historic transition over the last two decades.

Astutely analyzing the complexities of the events of the late 1980s, Shevtsova correctly evaluates the Perestroika process and the lost opportunities of the time, and provides an insightful and multidimensional analysis of Yeltsin's Russia. She rightly explains that it is during this time that we can find the roots of numerous problems that emerged in the late 1990s and that have forced Vladimir Putin to adopt tough measures for the consolidation and strengthening of state power.

Shevtsova demonstrates a serious and thoughtful approach, and offers deep and well-formulated observations. She is astute and non-partisan in her assessments. Yet, she is not an indifferent observer; she is critical of the current Russian system.

The search for a constructive way forward for Russia will become even more urgent in the near future. Vladimir Putin will leave the office of president in 2008, as dictated by the Russian Constitution. A successful future for Russia requires a thorough analysis of Russia's current situation and inventory of all views and positions existing in Russian society.

I am sure that *Russia—Lost in Transition* will be an important help in the construction of a new future for Russia.