

Arkady Murashev on the Fall of the USSR

Arkady Murashev , David C. Speedie

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[The State Duma of Russia](#), Bernt Rostad

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Introduction

DAVID SPEEDIE: Hello. I'm David Speedie, director of the Program on U.S. Global Engagement at the Carnegie Council.

Thank you for joining me for this installment in our interview series "[The End of the Cold War](#)." The series takes you back to a truly

dramatic moment in Russian political history, when a group of American private businessmen traveled to the Soviet Union to promote their idea of democratic capitalism.

In this installment I interview Arkady Murashev, the former police chief of the city of Moscow. Interestingly, Murashev assumed this position with no prior policing experience. I hope you enjoy the program.

Interview

DAVID SPEEDIE: The origins of this project very much come from a book called [Agents of Influence](#), by Arthur Matthews. It was published by the Kriebler Institute.

In it you are prominently mentioned, and both [Robert Kriebler](#) and [Paul Weyrich](#) speak of you very warmly and repeatedly in the book.

Tell me how you came to meet Kriebler and Weyrich, and the origins of this relationship.

ARKADY MURASHEV: The story began when Dr. Kriebler was retired. He was a very rich billionaire, inventor, and the owner and manager of one of the biggest chemical companies in the world. He was a very ideological and pure person. At this time, all of these events in Soviet Union had begun—[Gorbachev](#), [perestroika](#), [glasnost](#).

Dr. Kriebler was interested in Russia—in its literature and music. He decided to help to end the Cold War and to help people fight against communism.

He had the precedents of helping [Contras](#) in Nicaragua, [Solidarnosc](#) and [Walesa](#) in Poland. He found Paul Weyrich, a political manager and a well-known person.

They initiated a project to train people in Russia on the ABCs of political process—elections, democracy, division of power—all of these things which are usual for the people in the West but were absolutely new in the Soviet Union at that time.

In 1989, they first came to Moscow, to Russia, and to the Baltic states. The man who had to organize all of these kind of things was Gorbachev's advisor, who is also a physicist. They had communicated with Dr. Kriebler about science, some years ago.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And that was?

ARKADY MURASHEV: His name is [Yuri Osipyan](#).

At the same time, he was picking deputies of the Soviet Union and in the [Congress of People Deputies](#), where I had been elected in 1989.

Later on, I was executive secretary of the [Inter-Regional Deputies' Group](#), which united anti-communist deputies who had been elected, and was the first parliamentarian opposition in the Soviet Union, or pro-opposition.

One autumn day, Mr. Osipyan called me and said that there are some American traders who are coming to Moscow and asked whether I can organize assistants to the deputies and the deputies themselves, just to meet with them and have a conversation. I organized this meeting.

First, we met and had a two-day seminar dedicated to ideal elections. It was very interesting and fresh. It was like a game. Both sides were very excited.

Dr. Kriebel was so excited that after that seminar he suggested that my assistants and I come to the United States.

After we came, a couple months later, in February—it was the first visit in the United States for my people and I—we met with many people there. We went to the Council for Foreign Policy and so on.

At that time, Kriebel and Weyrich decided to initiate a regular project, which later developed into the Kriebel Institute of Freedom and Democracy.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You actually went on the board of the Kriebel Institute; is that correct?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Yes. From the very beginning I've been on the board of the Kriebel Institute. After Kriebel's death I was the president of the Institute here and in Russia, because he liked that the Kriebel Institute was also a Russian entity.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You mentioned your visit to Washington. If I remember rightly or if I am reading correctly, you had some good friends in high places in that trip—Farrell and the [Council for National Policy](#), some prominent members of the establishment.

ARKADY MURASHEV: We met with many prominent people. We met with [John Sununu](#), who was the chief of staff at the White House.

We met [Bob Dole](#), [Jack Kemp](#), [Newt Gingrich](#), and [Jesse Helms](#). We met very prominent politicians in the [Reagan](#) and [Bush](#) Administrations. It was a very interesting visit.

DAVID SPEEDIE: So we've got a Hall of Fame of Republican politicians in the United States.

Arkady, why did you decide that what Gorbachev was doing was not sufficient, that there had to be a more drastic or radical change of the situation?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Gorbachev delayed the time to move and to take necessary steps.

First of all, in 1990, after elections for the republican parliaments and the local governments had taken place, all of these people who had just been newly elected by a direct and honest election from the people, they made decisions on sovereignty and independence. It was like a reign of independents in 1990.

Gorbachev tried to put the Soviet Union together, and not to go towards republican authoritarianism. He actually tried to reshape the Soviet Union, but it was too late.

He had strong opposition inside the Central Committee of the Communist Party, which ended in the [August 1991 coup](#), an attempt to reverse the situation back to the solid Soviet Union.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Let me go back to a question I meant to ask in terms of the Americans Kriebel and Weyrich coming over to Russia. There were some other individuals. Did [Bill Pascoe](#) come at that time?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Bill Pascoe was one of the authors of the project.

He was very active in the very beginning. But then he stayed apart from the other developments of the project, and he added people. [John Exnicios](#) was deeply involved in that, as were Paul Ogle and Jeff Butzke and the other

guys who were friends of mine for many years.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Let's go back to your American exposure. Your visit, as I recall, drew some attention in the U.S., by speaking out in favor of the [Strategic Defense Initiative](#) and saying that one day the former Soviet Union might become 50 small states like the United States. You must have caused quite a stir when you said these things.

ARKADY MURASHEV: Yes. I said these things because for those who were communicating deeply with the deputies and with the people from the national republics, especially from the Baltic states, from the Ukraine, or even from the Central Asian republics—it was obvious that the Soviet Union could not exist in the Soviet era without the Communist Party. The Communist Party started to split, first of all.

The revolution in the Baltic states started when the Lithuanian Communist Party decided to part from the Central Communist Party. It was the first step towards the independence of the Baltic countries.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You mentioned the Inter-Regional Group within the Duma. You had a lead role in that. You were a very young man. You were 32?

ARKADY MURASHEV: I was 32.

DAVID SPEEDIE: That's pretty young for a political leader.

ARKADY MURASHEV: For revolutionary time, it's not so young.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Who would you have regarded as your mentor or mentors at that time? Were you close to [Sakharov](#) for example?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Yes, I was close with Sakharov for the last year of his life.

My main mentor, or the real leader of the Inter-Regional Group, was an economist, the future first mayor of Moscow, [Gavriil Popov](#). He was a real leader. He was a real thinker and he understood the situation. He knew both Gorbachev and [Yeltsin](#) very well, and he tried to coordinate our movement. It was his idea to put Yeltsin as the leader of the whole democratic movement and finally as the president of independent Russia.

DAVID SPEEDIE: So you would regard Popov as a really formative central force?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Yes, exactly.

DAVID SPEEDIE: In terms of the International Regional Group—obviously this was a very important movement within the then-Soviet Union. Am I right in thinking also that you reached out and sought to develop international relationships with others?

For example, the [National Alliance of Russian Solidarists](#), NTS as they are known, were they close to you in any sort of formal way, or did you just reach out to them informally?

ARKADY MURASHEV: The Inter-Regional Deputy Group was the center of the democratic movement. There were no political parties yet. The Communist Party still existed. There was no democratic Russia movement. It was just starting. It was the very, very beginning.

The old forces, which tried to address, or which tried to communicate with the so-called democratic forces in Russia, they came to the Inter-Regional Group of Deputies.

As the secretary, having a small staff, I was in the center of all these processes. From the very beginning, we started to have a relationship with interests in Europe; with the Republican Party in the United States; with the [IDU](#), International Democratic Union.

It's interesting. Those who were the most anti-communist in the past, they were mostly pro-Russian in these first years of democratic reforms. The people who were strong anti-Communists, whom Reagan tried to unite in his administration, they were very supportive of the democratic forces and Yeltsin personally in these first years.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I see. So in other words, you equate the anti-communist sentiment abroad with pro-Russia? You saw that?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Yes.

DAVID SPEEDIE: A couple of prominent names came up in the record—[Alexander Rahr](#) from Munich, Germany; [George Miller](#) from the UK.

Were they important to you?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Yes. Rahr is the son of immigrants. He was born and grew up in Germany, but he was more Russian than we are. He knows Russian literature better than us, because it was forbidden at the time.

He came to Russia at our invitation, as a guest of the Inter-Regional Deputies Group. We are still friends. He just recently came here for the 80th anniversary of Yeltsin at the International Conference. He is now an important politician and author of several prominent books.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And what about George Miller from London? Was he also invited?

ARKADY MURASHEV: I don't remember him.

But the other was [Ariel Cohen](#) from the Heritage Foundation.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Yes, I know him quite well.

In addition to the training that was done in Moscow by the Kriebel Institute, they were also active mainly in Russia, but also in the Ukraine, the Baltics, and so on and so forth. Were you involved also in helping with training exercises and seminars in the Ukraine and elsewhere?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Yes. We held trainings in the north, just in Russia, but in the first years we also had several seminars in the Ukraine, in all the Baltic countries, in Belarus, in Georgia, and in Armenia. Not in Muslim countries, but in Moldavia as well. And of course we held them all the main cities across Russia, from Khabarovsk to Leningrad.

DAVID SPEEDIE: We have a saying in the United States, "training the trainers." In other words, someone is trained and then they go and train other people. Was that your role?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Something like that. Many people who were in our first seminar later became members of parliaments at various levels as well as members of the state Duma.

Mr. [Burbulis](#), who was one of the first people who was involved in this project, later became number two in Russia, and was secretary of state under President Yeltsin.

[Gaidar](#) and his government, they also were partially involved in this project from the very beginning.

DAVID SPEEDIE: In terms of your interaction with members of the Republican Party in the United States—you mentioned so many prominent names—at that time there was a Republican president, Reagan, then followed by George Bush the first. Of course Reagan was reaching out to Gorbachev at that time.

Did you feel any awkwardness in separate agendas? Did you have any interaction with the embassy here, with Ambassador [Matlock](#)? Was there any sort of liaison with that?

ARKADY MURASHEV: The foreign embassies were actively involved in the democratic process and they often visited us. Especially the Swedish Embassy, but also the American Embassy.

Jack Matlock was a friend of mine, as were his children and his family. At that time we were quite close. He helped a lot.

DAVID SPEEDIE: He's also a good friend of ours. He's an advisor to our program. I will give him your regards.

ARKADY MURASHEV: Thank you.

DAVID SPEEDIE: The Inter-Regional Group had different groups—one might say factions—but it was a very diverse organization. Did it stick together as a cohesive unit, in your opinion, or did it serve its purpose?

ARKADY MURASHEV: It was very difficult to stay together because, you are absolutely right, there were very

different people with very different political views.

The only thing which maybe united all people in the Inter-Regional Deputy Group was that everybody was against the monopoly of the Communist Party. The people united about the idea to abolish the [Sixth Article](#) in the 1977 Soviet Constitution, which we were actually able to do the following year. In the springtime of 1990, there was an amendment to the constitution where Article Six was excluded. So we reached our first and main goal.

In the last year, in 1990-1991, the Inter-Regional Deputy Group started to become more diverse. When the coup happened, different people faced this coup differently.

DAVID SPEEDIE: If I may ask another sort of sensitive question, you mentioned the 80th anniversary of President Yeltsin's birth and the ceremony.

Were you in [Yekaterinburg last week](#)?

ARKADY MURASHEV: No. I was just in Moscow.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Krieble made some mention that Boris Yeltsin had been, of course, a member of the Communist Party and so on. Do you think that Krieble and others came to him on his own merits, or really to get through Yeltsin to people like you, that they really saw as the standard bearers for the future of a non-communist Russia?

ARKADY MURASHEV: For Yeltsin it was a difficult evolution—not only for him, but for many people of the older generation, the generation of our fathers, who all of their lifetime was spent in the Soviet Union. This was their reality. Not just Yeltsin, but there were a lot of people in the Inter-Regional Deputy Group and later in the first Duma—I can name Dmitry Volkov and [Aleksandr Yakovlev](#), of the same age—who evolved their views from the communist ideas to the understanding of the ideas of democracy and freedom. They started to understand what happened with their country in the past and how tragic the history of the 20th century was for Russia.

DAVID SPEEDIE: By the way, there is an archive of the training sessions that took place with you and others. Is there anything that still survives from those training sessions that would be of historical value?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Yes. There is an archive of that, which partially I keep in my *dacha*, in the summerhouse. All the officers and the people from the staff of the final year, they kept some part of the papers and part of the brochures and leader tapes. I have a whole archive on the Krieble Institute. It's very interesting to see.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Twenty years on, are you going to perhaps distribute or show them?

ARKADY MURASHEV: I don't know. I am busy with work, but maybe I will try this a little bit later when I have more time as a retiree. This idea hasn't come to my head. Maybe it is better to wait until we are outside of the country and I can show the many things which were from the Krieble Institute.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Let's follow up on that at some point. That would be good.

We're almost finished, but I did want to mention that at one point you were the Moscow police chief. How did that come about? You've had quite a career.

ARKADY MURASHEV: When the coup of 1991 happened, the Moscow authorities—then Gavriil Popov was mayor of Moscow and Yeltsin was the president—they were very dissatisfied with how the Moscow police behaved during the coup. Actually, it's natural that they tried to be neutral between these two fighting political parties. But they were very, very concerned.

Right after the coup, Gavriil Popov—I was one of the closest people to him—he suggested that I work for the Moscow police, because there were more than 100,000 armed people in Moscow, and he needed to try to put them under control of the democratic government.

For a year I did this job. I reorganized the Moscow police according to the new realities and tried to reform it to exclude communist influence, the Party organizations, and to reshape it in a modern way.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Moving to the present, a couple of things.

First of all, who do you stay close to in Washington? Who are your friends?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Unfortunately, most of the people have died. Krieble died and Weyrich—I went to his

funeral ceremony two years ago—and Jack Kemp died and [Bob Novak](#) died, as I understand it.

When I come to Washington, there are mostly new people. I am going to be there in March. We have an World Russian Congress with Mr. [Lozansky](#). He was one of the first people who accompanied Weyrich and Kriebel in 1989, and he tried to organize translation and to meet with us. He was also born to immigrants.

Since that time, we have this All-Russian Congress each year in the Senate. This year we are also going to have it.

A remarkable event just happened in Moscow. A group of people, including me, just organized and started a new organization, which is called the U.S.-Russian Movement for Rapprochement. That is a new organization that is trying to contribute new ideas and some action plans on how to help the rapprochement of the two countries in the future. Maybe we will present this movement in March in Washington.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Who are the members of this group? Are they parliamentarians?

ARKADY MURASHEV: There are a few parliamentarians.

The president of the group is Mr. [Shokhin](#), who is a former deputy prime minister in the Gaidar government and now he runs the Entrepreneurs and Industrialists Union. His right hand is Mr. Savostyanov of my old life—when I was the chief of police of Moscow, he ran the Moscow KGB at the same time. And there are several deputies, including Mr. Markov. Mr. [Kosachev](#), who is the head of the Committee of International Relations is also coming to Washington this March. And there are a few other people, the former governor of the central bank.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And on the American side?

ARKADY MURASHEV: From the American side, we expect that the other step is to organize something similar in America. We negotiated with some people, like Tom Greer [phonetic] and James Jutrus [phonetic], to organize. But we will meet them in March in Washington and try to coordinate our efforts with theirs.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And presumably you'll have some visits with —you mentioned you will be going to the Congress—there is, of course, a Russian Caucus in the House of Representatives, which would be a good point of contact.

ARKADY MURASHEV: Most of them will participate in our congress in March.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And it's called the U.S.-Russia Movement for Rapprochement?

ARKADY MURASHEV: Yes.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And this is completely new.

ARKADY MURASHEV: It is completely new.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Fast-breaking news. That's good to know.

Arkady, just finally, in your own words, what did the relationship with Kriebel and Weyrich mean to you?

ARKADY MURASHEV: That is very much of interest. For my personal life it meant a lot, because I was a young Soviet guy who grew up in the Soviet time, and they were the first foreigners I met. It's interesting that when we met, I had an impression that all Americans were like Kriebel and Weyrich. Then time passed by and I understand that the people I met were quite unusual even for American society—

DAVID SPEEDIE: That's true.

ARKADY MURASHEV:—and that Kriebel is an absolutely unique person. My first impression was that all Americans are like Kriebel and Weyrich, or something like that. Of course it was naïve and mistaken. But they were absolutely remarkable, and I am very happy that for the many years we worked together. We worked very closely for our countries.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And now, 20 years on, how do you reflect? What do you think has been the legacy? What has this planted that you think has been lasting?

ARKADY MURASHEV: The country changed a lot. But now we are reverting back somehow.

The basic freedoms are achieved and they cannot go back. So we have freedom of movement; we can go anywhere in the world. In the Internet era, it's impossible to have censorship. We have freedom of belief and churches are open and developing very fast.

But the election process, the democracy, and the feedback between authority and the people in many cases are lost. The new authoritarian regime is not a democratic regime. Russia is still a free country, but I can say that it is not democratic.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Thank you so much for your time. I appreciate it.

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