



Evgeny Savostiyanov on Dismantling the Moscow Communist KGB

Evgeny Savostiyanov , David C. Speedie

February 9, 2011



Former KGB Headquarters by [Malinki](#)

The Carnegie Council's U.S. Global Engagement program gratefully acknowledges support for this project from the Alfred and Jane Ross Foundation and Donald M. Kendall.

- [Introduction](#)
- [Interview](#)

Introduction

DAVID SPEEDIE: Hello. I'm David Speedie, director of the U.S. Global Engagement Program here at the Carnegie Council. Thank you for joining me for this installment in our interview series, "The End of the Cold War."

In this series, we take you back to a truly dramatic moment in Russian political history, when a group of U.S. private businessmen visited Russia to promote their idea of democratic capitalism. In this installment, I interview Evgeny Savostiyanov, the former head of the city of Moscow KGB. Savostiyanov said that his proudest moment was in disbanding the KGB as a communist entity.

I hope you enjoy the program.

Interview

DAVID SPEEDIE: Mr. Savostiyanov, thank you for having us in your office.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: They told me to meet you, and I will try to assist you in these investigations.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I thank you. It will be very helpful.

Basically, we are interested in two main areas here. One is your own particular experiences from this key, pivotal period in late 20th-century history. But also, specifically, I will begin with the association that you may have had with Mr. [Kriebler](#) and Mr. [Weyrich](#) of the Kriebler Institute. We were particularly interested in a book that was written called *Agents of Influence*, by Mr. Arthur Matthews. Did you have specific connections with Kriebler when they came over here?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I've met him one or two times, but not more. I know that Mr. [Murashev](#) was deeply involved in a partnership with Mr. Kriebler. They established a conservative institute in the center of Moscow [Center for Liberal Conservative Policy]. But I had no relation to it.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You were not directly involved in the training programs.

The first thing I picked up was that you were involved in [Sakharov's](#) election campaign to the [Academy of Sciences](#) in 1989. Is that correct?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes. I was the head.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You were the head of the campaign.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: To be more honest, there were three co-chairmen of his election campaign. I was one of them. We established the movement which was the Club of Voters for the Academy of Sciences.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Who were the others? Do you know them?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes. The others were Alexander Sabanin and Anatoly Shabad.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Did they continue to be influential, in the same way as you were, in the events that followed?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I am very sorry, but Alexander Sabanin died a very short time afterwards. But he established a really interesting system, which was a mathematical equation for the transparency of election campaigns in Russia.

DAVID SPEEDIE: A mathematical equation. How interesting.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes, it was very interesting. Very often you could blame the results of the election campaigns on cheating or bribery. It was the reason to discuss this. But in every step of his life, he was very honest and successful, from his personal point of view, not the public point of view.

Anatoly Shabad was involved in the democratic movement. He was a member of parliament, I think it was in 1999. He was part of our political establishment. Now he is, I think more of a free-thinking philosopher than a political leader.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You were involved in helping to establish and organize this. You were in regular touch with Murashev then?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: It was the beginning of 1989, when the anticommunist movement in Russia, which was the Soviet Union at that time, started to be more structured and disciplined. It consisted of four main trends. One of them, we may say, was a liberal trend headed by the Andrei Sakharov and [Gavriil Popov](#). There was not maybe a formal leader. There was no sort of structure that defined their interest. It was an interest of ideas, of repetition, especially for Andrei Sakharov.

Another part of this movement, was a movement of the streets, of the crowds. Their moral leader was [Boris Yeltsin](#). They were his fans. He was like some kind of god.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Populism.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes. This movement created a lot of problems for us, because we understood that there were a lot more people in this movement. They were full of energy. He was really too naive and too focused on one personal figure.

DAVID SPEEDIE: If I may ask, just to interrupt you for a second, with Yeltsin, were you involved in any way in an organizing capacity with the Sverdlovsk group, with Mr. [Burbulis](#)?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes. I will explain that a little bit later. The third part of this movement was the people from the Communist Party who wanted to reform it. They named it the Reformal Party of Communist Party. The ground leader of this party was [Alexander Yakovlev](#).

The fourth part was the national movements in various republics of the Soviet Union and various parts of Russia, which were more nationalist movements than democratic movements. But they were also anticommunist movements.

When we came into this process from the point of view from the academic and liberal movement, we, of course, came in very close contact with all other forces that were involved in this process. At that time, in 1989, we established the Society of Letters. There were two competing structures, one of them more influenced by the KGB, another more distant from the KGB. There was a Russian union of voters and a Moscow movement of voters.

In these movements, all four trends were consolidated. Of course, people who were involved knew each other. Of course, it was always a problem of personal competition. Everybody wanted to be the first. We had no time to prepare and to pass through many years of structuring, where everybody could find his real position. There was an army of generals, with no soldiers.

DAVID SPEEDIE: No foot soldiers. Very common.

You mentioned Mayor Popov. You became an aide to him in 1991. What role did you play?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: It was May 2, 1989 when Mr. Sakharov called me and invited me to take part in the preparation meeting of the Moscow group of deputies. At that time everybody was preparing for the start of a first Congress of Deputies of the Soviet Union, which was Mr. [Gorbachev](#)'s idea; his invention. He wanted to use this procedure to back his positions in the Communist Party and to make his positions more influential and strong.

But at the time, we managed to make another stand. Our headquarters was in the club of the Academy of Sciences. We managed to send letters to all elected deputies of this congress, inviting them to come to Moscow before this congress would start and to pass through a short school. This letter was very open. By its spirit, it was distinctly an anticommunist letter. It was the idea of Anatoly Shabad to write this letter. This was some kind of a separator, because people reacted in absolutely different ways to this letter.

Nevertheless, we managed to ask and to keep together nearly 380 deputies who demonstrated the will to be independent from the pressure of the Communist Party. As we say, [nomenklatura](#).

They came and for three days we trained them. But it was a little bit later.

DAVID SPEEDIE: "We" being yourself—

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes. They spent two days simply because they only wanted to demonstrate how beautiful they are. The third day I made them come from the table and said, "Now I will govern our meeting. So let's start to train."

[I told them] The congress would be opened by Mr. Gorbachev. Everybody started to cry, "Why Gorbachev?" I said, "So you will raise your hands with the cards in your hands and we will say 'Why Gorbachev?'"

It was good training. It was absolutely effective.

DAVID SPEEDIE: So you were training them to stand up to Gorbachev.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes.

DAVID SPEEDIE: To be independent, was that the idea?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Independent of Communist Party influence.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes. To rush all the work that prepared the Communist Party to govern this congress, we created another scenario, which was very uncomfortable for them. But it was a little bit later.

On May 2, I came to the Public Political Educational Center. It was a prestigious building of the Communist Party that was used to lecture people from various parts of the Soviet Union. But at that time they made some interesting decisions. They let deputies from Moscow have regular meetings in this building. It was on Trubna Square. Now it's demolished. You can only see the place where it was.

Some time ago, I gave a televised lecture about the places of revolution. I demonstrated old positions that were key points of democratic revolutions in Moscow.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Is there a tape available of this? It sounds very interesting.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Maybe. I don't know.

DAVID SPEEDIE: It would be interesting to have.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I don't remember what channel.

DAVID SPEEDIE: We'll follow up.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I'll try to remember.

So, I came to this meeting. For the first time that day, I met Mr. Yeltsin, Mr. Popov, and Mr. [Zaikov](#), who was the head of Communist Party organization of Moscow at that time. He was the successor for Mr. Yeltsin. We came to this meeting. Alexander Sabanin and Anatoly Shabad were there. After it was completed, looking at each other we said, "They are beautiful men. They are so progressive. They are beautiful speakers. They're full of ideas." But

they spent four hours in discussions and left the building with no results.

I said that we must prepare some minutes of this meeting and send them again to each of the deputies elected to the Soviet Union. We did, and we started to inform all the deputies about the ideas that were generated in the Moscow group. It was especially important because we understood that throughout all of Russia, throughout all of the Soviet Union, not everybody likes Muscovites. Moscow was a special city. The last pieces of meat and food were transported to Moscow, and so on. So if they will start there to declare their ideas just as a congress, they will be blamed by everybody.

So through this letter that was sent over three weeks to the elected deputies of congress, through this three-day training, we prepared kinds of opposition. It was very amorphous. It was very undetermined. It included people of all four directions. But they started to have some experiences together, to speak against the mainstream.

This led us to prepare to establish in August 1989, the first real political structure. It was called the [Inter-Regional Deputies Group](#). It was a very dramatic procedure, because Yeltsin wanted to be the head of this group of deputies. He insisted. We understood that he must not, and that we must limit his influence. We managed to prepare the document, which included five co-chairmen. Yeltsin was one of them, Sakharov, Popov, and a man from Estonia.

In August, we established this first real group. Gorbachev was very nervous. He said, "You are creating an opposition party." And, in fact, it was.

At the time, I prepared a logo for this movement. It was like a road sign and it looked like a crossed 6.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Why the 6?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: The sixth clause of the Soviet constitution presumed that the Communist Party has a special and leading role in the Soviet Union. So this was our logo. In fact, it was the meeting that was enjoining everybody and cementing every man in this group of deputies to the idea that we must break the leading role of the Communist Party.

That was not all, because a little bit later we created and we established the union of former candidates in the elections in the Russian Federation. This association was named [Democratic Russia](#). This was the time when this name, Democratic Russia, first was announced as a movement. The name was invented by a future Russian deputy, Mikhail Astafyev, who said, "Russia is just what we have, and democracy is just what we dream."

DAVID SPEEDIE: Let me make sure I do understand. The letters that were sent to the deputies from across the Russian Federation—

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: The Soviet Union.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I'm sorry, the Soviet Union—the message to resist the direction from Moscow or to be independent of Moscow was in fact a way of saying, be independent of the *nomenklatura*, of the center in Moscow. So it really was an attempt to foster a spirit of independence among the regions.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: There were two or three main goals: First, to make some kind of selection of which of those deputies can be our allies; second, to give to our potential allies, to split all the ideas that we are discussing in Moscow and let them understand that these Moscow deputies are not their enemies; they are their partners. And to prepare some kind of coup to push out the Communist Party demonination in the congress. And it was actually a successful strategy at that time.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Very clever.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: So I met Mr. Popov at that time. He was the chief of this Moscow group of deputies. I explained to him that we must change the mode of their work, finish each meeting with some minutes that we will send to the various parts. He became the editor of these minutes. We started to work together.

After the elections in the Russian Federation were completed he invited me to be his aide in Moscow city government because we got the absolute majority in Moscow City Council. He had to be the chairman of the new *Mossoviet*, Moscow City Council. He asked me to head the new democratic bureaucracy of the Moscow City Council.

DAVID SPEEDIE: At some point, am I right that you shut down the Communist Party headquarters in central Moscow?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: It was the happiest day of my life.

DAVID SPEEDIE: When was that?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: It was August 23, 1991. I started my announcement that I closed this headquarters and I gave 45 minutes to everybody to leave because I will arrest everybody who is here on the 46th minute.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Was this a precedent? Were the media present?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: No.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Just you?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Not just me. There were two of us in this building. There were a lot of people who worked in the headquarters. But, alas, no media.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I was particularly interested in your appointment as the head of the Moscow Federal Security Service, the KGB, in Moscow. How did that come about? How were you appointed?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: After the coup was suppressed—by the way, this story is in English. I wrote a little article explaining it. It's translated in English.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Forgive me. I haven't seen it.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: My friends in Hollywood are preparing a screenplay about me. The name of the movie now is *The Man Who Closed the Door*. The story—if you want, I can send it to you.

But, in short, it was after the coup of 1991 was suppressed, I had to leave Moscow for a few days to go to Switzerland. At the time, [John Paul Getty, Jr.](#) had a philosophy seminar there. I participated in the seminar but couldn't stay there to discuss very interesting but abstract philosophical ideas at a time when Moscow is boiling with revolution. It was too difficult for me. I came back, and I was told at the airport that Popov nominated me as the future chief of the Moscow KGB. But at the time this decision had to be approved by Yeltsin, Gorbachev, Popov, and [Bakatin](#), the new head of the KGB. It took a few days. My KGB career started on September 6th.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You were a scientist. Had you had previous experience in the services?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: No.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And you became a major general? That is a rapid rise.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: No. From the very beginning, I said I don't want to be a general. I don't need to be a general. I refused to get this status. I agreed to take a military position as a general only in 1993, because I understood that we were coming to very crucial, dramatic events. For everybody working under my head, it would be much more simple to realize my orders if they said the general ordered it.

DAVID SPEEDIE: It gives a certain status, honor.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Simple military discipline.

DAVID SPEEDIE: How did you interact with Mr. Bakatin in reorganizing the KGB?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Mr. Bakatin served only three or four months. His time was very short. He left the KGB at the end of 1991. At that time, of course, there were a lot of different decisions from changing the structure of agent staff because it was formed for very strange purposes, from a normal point of view. For example, to know what composers in Russia think, or what the actors in Russian theaters think. Of course, nobody needs this in a normal society.

So we had to reorganize this agent staff. We had to change the main directions of our work. For example—it was one of the first days of my new position—and I wrote a draft order about the antiterrorist operations in the cases where aircraft are kept by the terrorists. I read the first words of this draft: "The goal of the operation is to prevent the jet from leaving the territory of the Soviet Union."

I took my pen and I crossed those words and wrote, "The goal of the operation is to save the lives of the passengers and crew."

It changed technology. By the way, our antiterrorist operation in September, 1994 in Makhachkala put an end to the terrorist attempts to get planes in Russia. There were no other attempts from that time on.

We changed a lot because we had to focus on new goals. We had to limit our purposes. At the same time, we had to make people working in the system more quiet, not to be nervous, and to be concentrated on their formal obligations.

DAVID SPEEDIE: So it wasn't just the tactical questions of antiterrorist operations; it was the whole culture of the organization that you wanted to change.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And you feel that that was achieved?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I like to remember one very short dialogue of that time. I came to this new structure. I couldn't imagine what it was. I started to go from one department to another to understand what they are doing, what their goals are, and what their results are. First, there was the intelligence department. One of the officers asked me, "Do I understand Mr. Savostiyarov, that you only started to work here? You have to earn credibility."

I replied, "I am the chief. You have to earn credibility." [Laughter]

DAVID SPEEDIE: I was going to ask how these people responded when you came in as the new broom, as it were, but you have answered the question.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: For them, it was a tragedy, because at the same time, the upper officers who participated in the coup resigned and were under surveillance, and they didn't understand what would happen when the democrats came. Using the tradition of the Communist Revolution, we had to put every officer of KGB in prison. They thought that may happen. I spent, I think, three or four months making people understand that if they accept the new values of a new country or a new state, they can work with no problem.

DAVID SPEEDIE: And what percentage, roughly, of the people accepted the new order?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: At that time, from my point of view, it was up to 80 percent.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Interesting.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: In reality, KGB officers of that time understood everything much better than people from the street. They understood all the weaknesses of the Communist regime and that its time had passed. So they understood that changes must come. They didn't know what kind of changes must come, but nobody understood, maybe [Deng Xiaoping](#) being the only exception. But in the Soviet Union nobody understood how to make this transformation. For them, the question was: What will this man with the beard do with us?

There were some attempts to betray, to play a Communist agent in the new democratic KGB. There were such cases. It took maybe a year, maybe a year and a half to make the station absolutely controlled.

DAVID SPEEDIE: There's an interesting footnote here that involves the United States that I found in the literature, the history. The National Endowment for Democracy in the U.S., which is a branch of the U.S. government, funded a project to offer democracy training on policy and practice to the KGB, the military, and the police in Moscow. Do you remember how that came about and who participated?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: We started to work—institutional policy was much more usual—in our case, it was a bit limited because we understood in any special services, there are special agents who were in-country, out-of-country, and a special matter of value. Every time when you must come and dialogue with other special services, you must think first how not to lose information that can put your agents under surveillance or under interest.

So from this point of view, we were more limited. Of course, through those years of the Cold War, hundreds and thousands of agents were in the United States, in Great Britain, and in Russia. So it was really difficult.

By the way, one of the funniest results of this very limited preparation was the story of [red mercury](#). You don't remember the story?

DAVID SPEEDIE: No.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: At that time, there was a rumor in the Soviet Union, the United States, France,

Germany, and Great Britain that there is some fantastic agent developed by Soviet scientists. The name is red mercury. Nobody understood its purpose. But everybody said it's of great value.

We mentioned the great interest of American intelligence and special services. Everybody wanted to find this red mercury in the Soviet Union. We tried to find this red mercury in our country, to understand why American agents want to find this red mercury. It was a very funny story.

There was a rumor that the price of red mercury can be up to \$20,000 per gram, and there was an idea to send a few tons of this red mercury to the United States to earn a lot of money. But nobody could find it. [Laughter]

DAVID SPEEDIE: So this was something that didn't exist.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Do you know how the National Endowment for Democracy came about, who suggested that this training be supplied through an American governmental organization?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I don't know whose idea it was. But there was a proposal from our department and several other departments of the KGB. Maybe it was Mr. Batakin's idea.

DAVID SPEEDIE: [Edward Lozansky](#), do you know him? Was he involved at that point? Do you recall?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: At that time I met him and I met—do you know German Pischnev?

DAVID SPEEDIE: No.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: He is from the American Council for Defense Policy, I think. He came to us with a group of American congressmen. I told them that if you want to make the North Atlantic Treaty Organization more wide, you must start from the Soviet Union. If you first include other parts—you must start from Russia, because if you include other parts of the Soviet Union first, you will create a big problem. And, in fact, that's what happened. We still now feel some opposition. We feel that there is NATO, there is Russia, and until now, a lot of people cannot forget that we were enemies. Until now, a very smart person will continue to discuss, can NATO attack Russia; can Russia attack NATO?

Two years ago, we had a meeting at the Council on Foreign and Defense Policy. It was very funny to see how very successful and very progressive people were discussing, is the Cold War over or not? At the very end, I said, "Let's vote."

It's simply over. No, there is no Cold War.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I want to ask you about that in a moment, but on this question of the training that took place, obviously by the [traumatic events of October 1993](#), the military, the various services had to come to the defense of democracy.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: They didn't come to defend democracy. They came to make the orders of the chief commander. I don't think that people shooting tanks thought about democracy. They had an order. Right away it was very difficult to persuade them to—

DAVID SPEEDIE: What was your role in combating this effort by [Rutskoy](#)?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: On various days, it was different. For example, I can mention maybe a few main positions. The first was that it was my idea to include the Russian Orthodox Church in the negotiations, because I understood that the strategic plan of the people sitting in the White House was to keep the same situation for a long time. We needed to blow up the situation by some method to make them finish their strategy of sitting. The invitation of the Russian Orthodox Church as some kind of intermediary in the discussion was a successful idea.

I came on that day to Mr. [Luzhkov](#), who was the Moscow mayor and the friend of the head of Russian Orthodox Church, Alexy II, who at the time was in the United States. I asked him to call Alexy II and ask him to come back as soon as possible, and to arrange such negotiations.

Then I met with heads of these military groups headed by Mr. Rutskoy. We had an agreement that they will not shoot and we wouldn't shoot. Every three hours we will meet again and again, and continue this agreement.

But once when they came, it was September 28, I came to meet one of the leaders and spokesman, and we agreed that we will meet at 9:00 in the evening. But they didn't come.

DAVID SPEEDIE: They didn't show.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: They went to start shooting.

This was a big point.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Yes, you were there.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: At the very end, when the final battle started—maybe because somebody remembered my mining scientific period—they got an order to block underground ways from the White House through metro stations and so on; not to let anybody to leave the White House.

So it was some strange mix of my professions. [Laughter]

DAVID SPEEDIE: So your scientific learning paid off, as well as your more recent activity with the security services.

To move ahead with your own role, which is fascinating and diverse, you had a sort of in-and-out with government. Something happened over the MOST episode of [Gusinsky](#), where you left government. Is that right?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: In general, it was really a dramatic time. It was the end of 1994. It was November 26, when an [attempt](#) to get Grozny from [Dudayev](#) failed. Yeltsin called the meeting of the Security Council two days after that, on the 28th.

He announced the [military operation in Chechnya](#). Because of my position as the main operative commander on the territory of Moscow, immediately after this decision, I announced the special regime in Moscow.

Two days after, Mr. Gusinsky called me and told me that some people with automatic rifles and grenade-launching machines were traveling with him through a very important road in Moscow. After that, they are staying near a Russian government building.

It was very important that the day before, the deputy head of the Russian government—at the time it was [Shakhray](#)—his car was shot by somebody. So we had some reasons to think that attacks in Moscow would start immediately. So I sent my special group to check who was in those cars near the White House.

What happened after that was really funny, from a point of view today. The main thing was that we were in such a limited financial situation that we did not have enough cars, both in the Moscow KGB services and in Yeltsin's security. So, because we did not have enough cars—and I had a big meeting at the time in my office—I asked my assistant to take my car and to go and check what happened there. Mr. Bozukov, who was the head of Kremlin security, also didn't have enough cars, and he gave his personal car to his people to go there.

When my people came to those three cars, people in two of them simply showed their documents and nothing interesting happened. But people sitting in the car of Mr. Bozukov—maybe they thought they cannot hear everybody because they are sitting in the car of the big chief—they started to take out their guns. So they were suppressed.

By the way, later, I asked the people who were in this group, what was the final goal? Nobody understood. They came, they were seated and nothing happened, and then came the conflict with the officers.

Nevertheless, Yeltsin had me resign at that time. For me, it was no problem. At the beginning of that year, I asked, myself, to resign, because I wanted to return to politics, to the democratic movement, because I understood that the democratic movement is melting. Now everybody wants to go from movement to bureaucratic structures, where it is more comfortable and prestigious. But when I asked, Yeltsin said, "No. Continue to work."

At the end of the year, in any case, I resigned.

DAVID SPEEDIE: So where did you go at that time?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I started my one-year work in the trade unions of Russia. I became the adviser for the head of trade unions of Russia, and I tried to do what I could to split communists and trade unions from each other before the elections, because I was very worried about possible alliance between communists and the prepared infrastructure of trade unions. So I did what I could to persuade the head of trade unions not to sign an

agreement with the Communist Party. They didn't.

DAVID SPEEDIE: That's an interesting footnote. Did you have any contact with other trade union movements in Europe? I know, having grown up in Europe, there was concern about the relationship between communists and trade unions.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: No. I was focused on the only problem. I was opposing the possible agreement between the Communist Party and trade unions.

There was one other goal that I wanted to achieve during this work, but it was an economic goal. I wanted to persuade trade unions to be the trusts for the shares of workers. At that time, the organization presumed that a significant part of shares will be in the primacy of workers. I thought it would be very important to trust them in one place.

DAVID SPEEDIE: But then, in 1996, you go back into government. Mr. [Chubais](#) becomes chief of staff for the administration and you become head of personnel and deputy chief of staff. That was the return to government for you.

There were also a number of reorganizations at that time in the military, I understand.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes, of course.

DAVID SPEEDIE: That was an ongoing important process?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes. At that time, we first had the idea that we must have a professional army that will be limited in the number of soldiers, but all those soldiers should be preparing to fight in a very qualified and professional way. It was very funny, because, as Chubais told me, it was a very difficult dialogue with Yeltsin, when he asked him to approve me as deputy chief of administration. But it's interesting.

In the same year, Yeltsin had heart surgery. He was out for some time. He signed the secret order establishing the special staff to guarantee the quietness, stability, and security of the country in the period of his operation. He made me the head of this secret staff. Even Mr. [Chernomyrdin](#), who was the prime minister, was out. He spent all night with me when Yeltsin was in the hospital sleeping after the surgery.

Later, he again fired me but it was the end of 1998. [Laughter]

DAVID SPEEDIE: Another name that has come up in this project—so many different people have a role in this very important period—one name that has come up, the émigré from London, [George Miller](#), was on Chubais' staff. Did you have any interaction with him? He was, I believe, involved with the Russian émigré movement, the anticommunist movement.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I am very sorry. I am not familiar with him.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You're not familiar, okay.

At what points did you visit the United States?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: The first time I went to the United States was August 11, 1991, and I was back August 19, 1991, the day when the [coup](#) started. [Laughter]

DAVID SPEEDIE: You chose a difficult time to go.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: It was my first time abroad from the Soviet Union, just to the United States, to San Francisco.

DAVID SPEEDIE: In Washington, who have you interacted with at the policy level?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I wasn't in Washington. I was only in San Francisco. On the way back, I came to Washington to German Pischnev. The next day I flew from New York City to Moscow, through Shannon Airport, where I got the information that the coup had started.

DAVID SPEEDIE: So you haven't had any interaction with Congress or administrations.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: No.

DAVID SPEEDIE: More than some others, I would say, from this period, you have really done a lot of writing and deep thinking on Russia's role and on U.S.-Russia relations particularly. You have even been published in *The New York Times* on the Russia-NATO partnership, even the question of Russia joining NATO. You mentioned that a few minutes ago. That remains an important theme for you, I assume.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: No, not now, because I don't think NATO is a force now. It is a very symbolic structure. So my point of view is that we must think about partnerships with the United States and Great Britain, but not with NATO, which tries to coordinate 26 interests that are very different, with no decisions. If the United States insists that we partner with NATO, we might think about it. But it is absolutely an ineffective mechanism.

DAVID SPEEDIE: Those of us who have written from the United States about NATO and expanding—it has actually lost coherence and vision, and has become overstretched.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: They can do nothing. Europe in general became the source of problems, but not the solver of problems.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I read some of your writings on this with interest, about Europe becoming somewhat marginal and really focusing on the United States.

You wrote recently, and I quote, "Recent developments in the world make it necessary to focus on a dramatic revision of U.S.-Russia relations. There are no insurmountable obstacles against building a full-scale partnership. The key is, what are the strategic objectives of the Russia-U.S. relationship?"

Do you believe in the reset button, for example?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: It's really difficult to understand from here, why people forget that in 1941 the United States was in deep partnership with [Stalin's](#) regime. Why do we think that we cannot be partners now? We are still thinking about the problems of the past, the Cold War. We must simply forget about that.

I understand that hundreds of people cannot do it psychologically. Thousands of people are interested in conflict. But as for me, I always repeat that two years ago, we celebrated 200 years of formal diplomatic relations. The Russia-American partnership and alliance is even older. It's 230 years.

Of those 230 years, we have only had 45 years of Cold War. Never before and never after were we enemies. Our interests were always parallel. If you study the problems of the world that exist up until now, you will see that we never had opposing interests. We have maybe had different approaches. We have different values for different problems, but not opposing interests. No United States, no Russia is interested in missile and nuclear proliferation. No U.S., no Russia is interested in terrorism or the expansion of drugs.

It's very important to understand that we will meet huge new challenges in the computer sphere, in the Internet. We have no opposing interests.

It's always a question of the time. When I wrote my article about changing political approach to Russian-American relations two years ago it was, as I say, not a simply marginal point of view. But after that, two years passed, and we see an absolutely changing situation.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I think you are working closely with [Igor Yurgens](#) on this. How did that partnership come about? You have known each other for—

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Mr. Yurgens also worked in trade unions. At the very same time, on the same days even, we were the advisors for the head of the trade unions.

By the way, trade unions joined our movement on Russian-American relations.

So we knew each other. But for the last years, I was very far from political and government life. When I wrote this article, I started to join people. First, I joined Mr. Dubinin who wrote about it even earlier than me. Then I called Mr. Yurgens and asked if he wants to sign the same article. Mr. [Karaganov](#) made a great input in developing this idea. A lot of people were involved.

By the way, there were some people who I cannot even imagine would join this idea. For example, Mr. Luzhkov, the former mayor of Moscow loved to be anti-American. But he also wanted to join us.

A lot of people. I always put a very simple question: Please tell me, what should be the relations between Russia and the United States? My answer is as better as possible.

DAVID SPEEDIE: You mentioned before we went on camera the new U.S.-Russia movement for rapprochement with Mr. Murashev. You are involved with this also?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: We had a meeting. We now have a governing board with certain people. The head of governing board is Mr. [Shokhin](#), former deputy prime minister. I am the deputy head of this governing board. From the very beginning, I said it's impossible for a KGB officer to head this movement because immediately the people in the United States will start this process and have a lot of problems.

DAVID SPEEDIE: But on the American side, all these efforts that you clearly put a lot of stock in, and a lot of your own personal time and effort—who on the American side are the people who are particularly helpful to you? We are interviewing people in the United States also on this.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: It's not our problem to define work in the United States. It's probably up to the American people or American society to decide if they want to make a better relationship with the Russians.

The only thing I can say, for example, is that, as Igor Yurgens has told me, Mr. [Tom Graham](#) wanted to head the process. I am not sure. I didn't speak to him.

DAVID SPEEDIE: So Tom Graham is one. You are trying to build some dialogue with individual Americans to take this project further, yes?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Again, I want to say, our goal is to work in Russia. Our goal is to work to lessen anti-Americanism in Russia, to support the idea to be close with the United States, to develop partnerships with the United States, to create some ideas for how to do it, where we can develop these mutual interests, and how to avoid conflicts. We want to work here.

You understand, the minute a KGB officer says, "Oh, now we will start to work in the United States"—

DAVID SPEEDIE: Who knows who you will be working with in the United States, what their background may be?

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: You understand, a lot of people will say, I can't.

DAVID SPEEDIE: But, obviously, while you are working here, in order to build the confidence among Russians in the future of the relationship, you will want to establish relations with Americans who are positively disposed to what you are trying to do.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: We hope that our initiative will meet some response in the United States. We hope so. But we don't want to influence it. It's not our problem.

DAVID SPEEDIE: On that note, thank you very much. It has been a fascinating conversation. I thank you for your time and your hospitality.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: I hope that you will join the society in the United States.

DAVID SPEEDIE: I certainly will ask you to keep me advised as to how you are proceeding.

EVGENY SAVOSTIYANOV: Yes, of course. I appreciate your diplomatic answer.

DAVID SPEEDIE: We always try to be diplomatic. Thank you, Mr. Savostiyarov.