

ANNOUNCEMENT

GARRY KASPAROV ON CHESS AND POLITICS IN THE U.S.S.R.

NEW YORK, NY, February 28, 2016 – Chess champion and human rights activist Garry Kasparov sat down with Bill Kristol to discuss his life and politics in Soviet Russia. Kasparov recounts his journey from questioning whether communism could be reformed toward the conviction that the Soviet Union had to go. Kasparov also recalls his epic series of chess matches against Anatoly Karpov and why chess was important to the politics of the Soviet Union. Finally, Kasparov and Kristol discuss the decline and fall of the U.S.S.R. and the roles of Ronald Reagan, George H.W. Bush, Mikhail Gorbachev, and Boris Yeltsin. This is a must-see [Conversation](#) for anyone interested in 20th-century politics and history.

Below are excerpts from the *Conversation*:

[On his own intellectual and political journey] KASPAROV: Most people who were critical of the Soviet regime believed that it was not due to the rotten nature of socialism and communism but due to bad implementation. The popular myth of a “good Lenin and bad Stalin” dominated the intellectual circles in the Soviet Union. I have to confess that I was hostage to those views for quite awhile. Only in the mid-80s did I realize it had nothing to do with bad implementation [of a good idea]. It’s gulags, and concentration camps, the purges, famine, it’s suppression of freedom. With communism, no matter how you play the moves, you end up with the same result. But it took some time [for me to realize it.]

[On the impact of an important book] KASPAROV: George Orwell’s *Homage to Catalonia* [was important to me]. Orwell was there [in the Spanish Civil War] defending the Spanish Republic against fascists. He realized that, while fighting an absolute evil, he was also surrounded by evil. Stalin and Hitler, they were two poles of absolute evil. Totalitarian regimes, they can have different colors with different cover ups. But what is inside the package is the same. By 1988, I knew, the only way for my country was to eliminate communism and find a new framework.

[On the need to recover our political will] KASPAROV: The West won the Cold War. It was not inevitable. It was a combination of technology, the advantages of the free market over the planning economy. It was freedom and human rights versus concentration camps and gulags of the unfree world. But it was also political will. [During the Cold War there was] understanding from both right and left in this country and in Europe that the free world had an existential enemy. It's very important to recover the spirit that we are defending the free world. Though the nature of the enemy has changed, the ideas and values that helped us to prevail in this fight they have not.

Watch the *Conversation* here:

<http://conversationswithbillkristol.org/video/garry-kasparov/>

About *Conversations with Bill Kristol*. *Conversations with Bill Kristol* is an online interview program hosted by *Weekly Standard* editor Bill Kristol and produced by [The Foundation for Constitutional Government](#). A forum for substantive, thought-provoking dialogue on pressing issues in the news and American politics, *Conversations* segments feature informal discussions between Kristol and guests on a diverse array of issues of public concern—from the American presidency and the Middle East peace process to the ideas that have shaped Western civilization. Recent guests include syndicated columnist [Charles Krauthammer](#), former Vice President [Dick Cheney](#), former Speaker of the House [Newt Gingrich](#), business founder [Peter Thiel](#), best-selling author [Charles Murray](#), former commander in Iraq and Afghanistan [General David Petraeus](#), former U.S. Army Vice Chief of Staff [General Jack Keane](#), and Harvard professor [Harvey Mansfield](#). New conversations are released bi-weekly.

About the Foundation for Constitutional Government. [The Foundation for Constitutional Government](#) is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization devoted to supporting the serious study of politics and political philosophy, with particular attention to the Constitutional character of American government. The Foundation's online programming includes [Conversations with Bill Kristol](#), [Contemporary Thinkers](#), a guide to important contemporary thinkers such as [Harvey Mansfield](#), [Irving Kristol](#), and [James Q. Wilson](#), and [Great Thinkers](#), a comprehensive site devoted to political philosophers such as [John Locke](#) and [Alexis de Tocqueville](#).

Media Contact:

Andy Zwick [917-423-1422](tel:917-423-1422)

AZwick@constitutionalgovt.org