



M.G. Crisci shares his thoughts with Voice of America & the world



“Understanding Russia in Seven Days”

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In his new book, *Seven Days in Russia*, the author tries to break the stereotypes and clichés by which many ordinary Americans still imagine Russians as bears with a balalaika and a bottle of vodka. “Now more than ever, it is important,” he writes, “for Russians and Americans to better understand each other. We are very similar in many respects.”

Crisci also had some interesting views on Russia’s middle class. “There are signs of typical middle class growth everywhere one looks, but as I say in my book, it will be another 50 years before today’s Russia will evolve from a privileged communist society into a true social democracy. “

We asked Crisci if he felt the American press distorted the image of Russians, more than the Russian press distorted the American way. “My intuition told me there was enough untruth on both sides. Few of the people I met in Russia, visited America. And those who did, were very surprised that most Americans were not as had been presented to them by their media in the Motherland.”

“The bottom line is, despite all the words back and forth, we really do not know each other. As I often say in my lectures: Give me 10 minutes to talk with Vladimir Putin, and I will explain things as they are, simply and clearly with passion and honesty.”

For what purpose are you really doing these books, these lectures? He paused, “At least I can tell my family that during my lifetime I somehow tried to make the world a better place for them and their children.”

Does it not occur to you that the Russian authorities can use your good intentions for propaganda purposes? “Yes, of course I understand that. It is impossible to ensure that someone, somewhere will not pervert my words and my intentions. But, I trust my life is an open book, there are no hidden agendas. And, I truly believe mutual understanding cannot happen, if someone does not make an attempt to trust the other side, without demanding anything in return.”



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