MGIMO JOURNAL
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Marina Petrova

Director of the MGIMO Endowment

The Polyanichko Dynasty

Four generations of MGIMO alumni



Anatoly Torkunov: “MGIMO is Ready for Leadership”



Over 150 alumni and friends of MGIMO took part in the 8th MGIMO Rector's Golf Cup, held at Zavidovo Golf Club, and dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the university.

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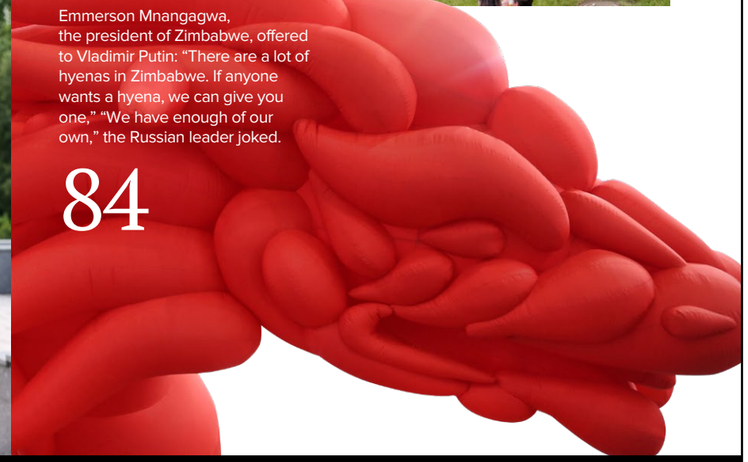
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MGIMO's International Law School has always been and continues to be a source of high-quality talent for government agencies in all branches of power, including the judiciary.



MGIMO UNIVERSITY

MJ

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Interview and photos by **Igor Drobyshev**

ANATOLY TORKUNOV: "MGIMO IS READY FOR LEADERSHIP IN THE EDUCATIONAL RACE"

Once scattered across Moscow, MGIMO's academic and residential buildings were consolidated into a single cluster in the southwest in the 1980s. With the opening of a new large dormitory on the MGIMO campus in 2024, the 80th anniversary of the university, the process of "gathering its Moscow lands" was completed. A big "MGIMO planet" with its own big satellite—a branch in Odintsovo—appeared on the educational map of the capital. Rector Anatoly Torkunov deserves to be called the "collector of MGIMO lands." "Having completed the construction of a new residential building for 1.5 thousand beds," he says, "we have strengthened ourselves logistically, and now, of course, we have to go further. We have everything in place today to ensure that MGIMO will continue to develop for at least the next 100 years!"

MJ: The first students in 1944 could not have dreamed of such amenities. But they had something else—a sense of student fraternity, camaraderie. They continued to meet into old age and maintained a relationship of friendship and mutual aid.

Yes, and these traditions have been passed down through the generations. I remember it well because I was an active participant in the process. For example, one of the forms of strengthening the bonds of the MGIMO fraternity was the practice of patronage of seniors—third-year students—over first year students. When I was a student in the late 1960s and early 1970s, this tradition was a must. Thanks to it, I still know our patrons well—guys who entered MGIMO in 1965 and later became famous ambassadors and statesmen.

MJ: You were also the patrons of some freshmen, weren't you? That's how the vertical of MGIMO camaraderie was built.

Yes, we were patrons of the class of Vladimir Bogdanov, the current deputy foreign minister of Russia. We invited them to our parties; such amateur concert parties were very popular at the time. There were no cell phones or social media in the 1970s, so communication between classes and schools was close. So I know that class very well; it was a good, stellar class; a lot of future ambassadors—about 15 people—came out of it! This year they celebrated the 40th anniversary of their graduation. We are still friends.

MJ: The fact that MGIMO students were considered elite was also important. Did you have a sense of your uniqueness?

Frankly speaking, we felt a certain exclusivity and a sense of privilege from the beginning. But not because we were showing off, as if to say what a big deal we were. No, what was unique were the opportunities that opened up before us. Meetings with world-famous politicians were arranged for us when major international events were held in Moscow. In addition, we were visited by our ambassadors, officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and well-known experts from research centers, such as Yevgeny Primakov, then deputy director and later director of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Nikolay Inozemtsev, the director of the Institute of World Economy and International Relations (IMEMO), also participated in the conferences.

> **"We have everything in place today to ensure that MGIMO will continue to develop for at least the next 100 years!"**

At that time, such meetings were considered an extraordinary event. Today, we have academicians teaching here, but back then there were none at MGIMO; in fact, there were only a handful of them in the whole country.

Finally, each year a large group of senior students traveled abroad for practical training or internships at Soviet embassies and trade missions. Although there were no exchanges with foreign universities at that time, participation in student construction brigades traveling abroad replaced them. For example, after my second year of study, I went abroad for the first time—to Poland—as part of a construction brigade. We worked for six weeks building state-owned garages near Krakow and then traveled around the country for two weeks. It was a very memorable trip.

After the third year, there was the so-called study exchange practice with the people's democracies—Bulgaria, the GDR, Poland, and Czechoslovakia.

MGIMO was indeed a window to the world, albeit the world of the socialist community, but it was a big world!

MJ: The teaching of foreign languages has always been a special feature that has made MGIMO unique.

Yes, and it went hand in hand with country studies, which is why MGIMO has had theaters in English, French, and Spanish since the early years. They were inactive in the 1990s, but now we are reviving them; we want such theaters in the Arabic and Chinese departments. It seems like we are going to turn this creative activity into a movement of university theaters in foreign languages.

MJ: The 1960s and 1970s were indeed a time when MGIMO camaraderie and friendship flourished. Why do you think these traditions were largely lost in the 1980s?

Yes, there was a certain… setback in that



period. Why? The country and society fell into turmoil: as you can remember, first the Soviet party leaders began to die, then the policy of *perestroika* began, the basic principles were revised, the foundations began to crack, other motivations appeared, people began to look for a foothold elsewhere…

MJ: The traditions of the MGIMO fraternity began to revive in the late 1990s thanks to you. Through the rector of MGIMO, your generation spread the values of MGIMO. When did you feel that MGIMO was your thing, that it was not just a university that gave you a ticket to life, but that it was your life?

Probably in 1969-1970, when I became a Komsomol leader at MGIMO and a member of the Academic Council. I saw how big the university was. The picture became more detailed when I became an assistant to Rector N. Lebedev in 1974. Interestingly, the laying of the first stone of the foundation of the current MGIMO building in the southwest took place at the same time; 1974 was the first year of this construction. Just think, it is also the 50th anniversary of the founding of the MGIMO campus!

MJ: Training talent for the Russian Foreign Ministry remains the central pillar of MGIMO, doesn't it?

Yes, the modernization of the training process, including the creation of a new generation of textbooks and the development of new training programs, is aimed at this. The ministry and the university regularly update the areas and subjects of research.

Recently, however, there has been a trend at MGIMO that, if understood, gives a more comprehensive perception of the university. MGIMO, a university with a strong socio-economic and legal core, has been developing and building two areas of competence for the last seven to ten years: in humanities and in technology and science.

"There were no cell phones or social media in the 1970s, so communication between classes and schools was close."



Competencies in humanities are related to the "experience economy," the development of management programs in tourism, creative industries, and cultural cooperation. Last year, together with the State Tretyakov Gallery, we launched a joint master's program in museum and exhibition activities.

Technological, scientific, and perhaps even engineering skills are manifested not so much through digitialization as through the university's exploration of new fields and new partnerships. The synthesis of engineering-technological education and humanities-based educational core will be the "assembly point" of the planned joint programs organized together with famous technological universities of Russia. Joint projects between MGIMO and Moscow State University in neuromarketing and neurolinguistics will also require synergy with medical knowledge.

MGIMO has become part of Priority 2030, the largest state program in all post-Soviet years to support universities and their strategic leadership in the development of industries and territories. Although it is too early to reflect on the results, it is clear that the university has changed in a meaningful and serious way. The university has committed itself to opening new fields of study related to global research in the interests of government and business; the diplomacy of new areas; global agricultural markets; energy and technological development; unlocking the potential of the so-called experience economy.

Development is also noticeable in MGIMO's Russian International School strategic project, particularly in Türkiye. Last year, the university became the operator of a school for the children of workers at the Akkuyu nuclear power plant under construction in Türkiye.

Last year, more than 150 graduates of the Uzbek branch of MGIMO's own lyceum and lyceum-type school classes in Tashkent received Russian school certificates. We train teaching staff for the project in our own master's program, in cooperation with leaders in the field of education.

One of MGIMO's most advanced projects is the Institute of World Agricultural Markets. And it is clear that time has proven its relevance. Together with the Stavropol and Kuban Agrarian Universities, we opened enrollment for bachelor's degree programs last year, and with the Orenburg State University, we launched a program of advanced training in agricultural export. Another dynamically developing project of MGIMO is related to tourism, the development of tourist territories, and the



"experience economy." Bachelor's and master's degree programs in tourism are now being implemented in two locations—Moscow and Sochi. Bachelor's students spend two semesters at the unique facilities of Sochi's sea and mountain clusters, while regular classes are held at the Russian International Olympic University. Master's students study in Sochi in several two-week modules. In the regional platforms, the promotion of the project "Tourist Atlas of Investors and Managers," carried out by a consortium of universities, is noticeable.

A decade ago, MGIMO deliberately chose to work in consortia with complementary partners. MGIMO's master's programs in mineral and commodity markets are offered jointly with the Mining Institute and MISiS University, and the program in artificial intelligence is implemented jointly with the Moscow Institute of Physics and Technology. In Priority 2030, the university has expanded this practice. Consortia with IMEMO, the Institute for System Programming (ISP), the Institute of World History (IWH), the Higher School of Economics (HSE), and others are of an important practical nature.

The "turn to the East" that Russia has taken as relations with the collective West have deteriorated has allowed MGIMO to significantly update its programs and reach out to new partners in the Far East and Siberia. Two dual degree programs have already been established: with the Nevelskoy Maritime State University—in the field of international transport operations, logistics, and trade in the Pacific zone—and with Novosibirsk University—a program combining law and trade business as applied to the markets of Northeast Asia. The cooperation with

Eighty years is an important milestone. But the university is young! Every year, new generations of MGIMO students arrive, and new blood flows in our veins.

the Institute of Oriental Studies in the New Oriental Studies project provides an opportunity to train "practical" Orientalists needed by corporate clients.

Today, the teaching of Oriental languages has been restored in all schools of the university without exception: out of 55 foreign languages taught, 30 can be considered Oriental languages. Changes to the university's language map are ongoing. The teaching of Burmese and Khmer has been restored, and the African Hausa language has been introduced. For the master's program in agriculture, Tagalog and Malay are specifically included at the request of clients.

In the context of digitalization, new departments on Big Data in International Relations, Digital Jurisprudence, and Sociology of Digital Communication have been created at humanities schools—the Schools of International Relations, Law, and Journalism—and a joint master's program with the ISP is in operation in the School of Economics. Fifteen hundred MGIMO students have already acquired or are acquiring sustainable programming skills and the competencies of a professional IT user in the Digital Department, which is becoming a factor in the transformation of the university.

An undoubted breakthrough was the cooperation with Sberbank's School 21: our students spend five weeks on the school's campus learning IT skills. Together with Sber, the National Certification of Linguistic Competencies project is also being implemented on a dedicated electronic platform.

MJ: What would you wish to your alma mater, to which you have dedicated your entire life?

Eighty years is an important milestone. The students who entered MGIMO in 1944 are unfortunately no longer with us… But the university is young! Every year, new generations of MGIMO students arrive, and new blood flows in our veins.

A lot has changed since I graduated from MGIMO. Just think of it: the rate at which knowledge, skills, and expertise are updated today is such that they become obsolete in three to five years, which is faster than the average length of a higher education program! Individualization of education and competition from corporate universities are increasing. There are processes of digitalization of all areas of life, and artificial intelligence makes its presence felt.

Today, MGIMO is more ready than ever to lead in this educational race, increasing the production of knowledge and its transfer to new generations. The most important thing is to preserve the traditions of the Russian diplomatic school on which we have relied all these years.

Photos by A. Melnikova, A. Golyshkin,
M. Levant, N. Stolboushkin

GOLF IN ZAVIDOVO

The 8th MGIMO Rector's Golf Cup, dedicated to the 80th anniversary of the university, was held at Zavidovo Golf Club. Over 150 alumni and friends of MGIMO took part in the tournament.









As is tradition, the event included two programs dedicated to business and sports. The sports program included a golf tournament, workshops for beginners, and a putting contest. As part of the business program, lounge discussions were held where experts talked about the development of high-tech business.

More than 150 alumni, students, and friends of MGIMO participated in the sports events. Special prizes were awarded to outstanding players: Y. Tiurganov in the category "The Longest Shot" among men and A. Batina among women. The winner in the category "The Shortest shot" on the 4th hole among men was Y. Lopatin, on the 12th hole—Nguyen Viet Lin. Prizes in the nominations "The Shortest Shot" among women on the 7th and 17th holes were awarded to M. Shevchuk and S. Zhurova, respectively.

In the overall standings, the team Russian Golf Design won; the second place was taken by the Zavidovo team, and the third place was awarded to Cordiant. MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov awarded the prizes to the golf players.



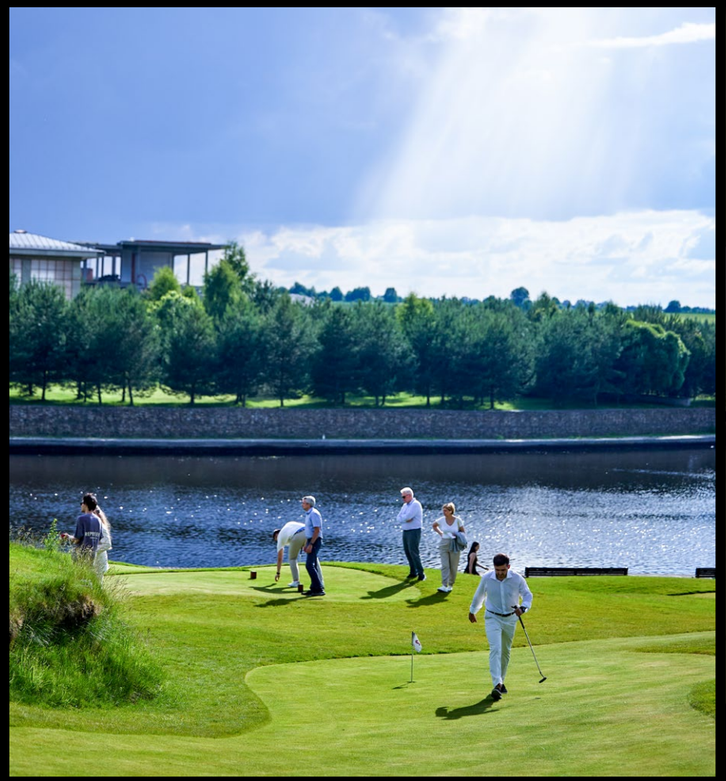








About 150 alumni, students, and friends of MGIMO took part in the tournament.













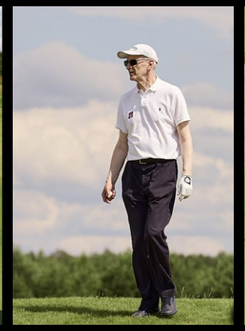






Experts talked about the development of high-tech business during lounge discussions.

The rector noted that he "came to Zavidovo Golf Club for the first time and was utterly shocked: it is so beautiful and wonderful here." The rector prefaced the friendly communication by saying, "Our golf cup has always been held in a very cheerful atmosphere together with our friends, partners, and people with whom we have been cooperating for many years. This cup is special, as it is dedicated to the 80th anniversary of our beloved home university. Many of our alumni are here today—all of whom have chosen different paths in life but have not forgotten the university. This confirms once again that MGIMO is a community of very caring, friendly, and interesting people. And it is a great








“This cup,” said MGIMO Rector Torkunov, “is dedicated to the 80th anniversary of our beloved home university.”





blessing and a great joy!”

The participants of the event had the opportunity to taste the products of the partners—wines of Chateau de Talu and cheeses of the Nikolaevskie Syrovarni cheese factory. The reception was organized with the support of Global Foods, a leading supplier of food and related products to the HoReCa segment. The evening program was accompanied by the performance of the soloist of the band Reflex, Irina Nelson, and the Jazzprom band.

The general partner of the Cup was the multipurpose holding S8 Capital. The Alumni Association expresses its special gratitude to the holding company and its industrial assets: the Cordiant Tire Cluster, the METEOR Lift Cluster, and the Engels Cluster, which includes METEOR Auto, METEOR Thermo, and METEOR Tech, for their help and traditional support in organizing the MGIMO Rector’s Golf Cup.

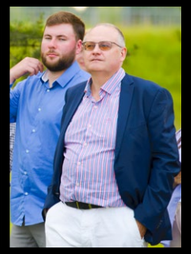
The event was organized by the MGIMO Alumni Association and MGIMO Endowment with the support of Global Foods, Chateau de Talu, the Agrokompleks Vyselkovsky agro-industrial company, the Nikolaevskie Syrovarni cheese factory, and Zavidovo Golf Club. The Association expresses its gratitude to the president of Zavidovo Golf Club V. Bocharov.



















Photos by **I. Drobyshev, N. Khludkov**

MGIMO ANNIVERSARY ON THE NEVA-RIVER

As part of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Hotel Maria hosted a meeting of MGIMO alumni and friends dedicated to the 80th anniversary of MGIMO. The event, organized by the MGIMO Alumni Association and Endowment, is a long-standing tradition on the first day of the Forum.















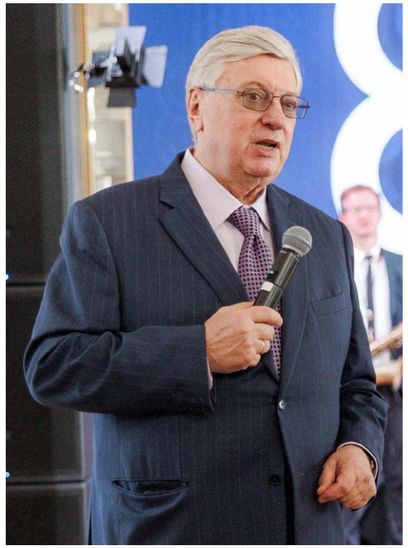
The guests were received by the university administration, represented by MGIMO rector, Academician A. Torkunov, and Vice-Rector A. Malgin.

"Today we have a special meeting," said A. Torkunov. "We have dedicated it to the 80th anniversary of MGIMO." Anatoly Vasilievich emphasized that the university has gone a long way: "That's why we will celebrate this event throughout the year; we will do everything to recall our alumni's memories of the years they spent at MGIMO and to take them back to their student youth, which is the best time of life! But most importantly, these memories are very important for our unity."

The rector assured the graduates and guests that the university is "standing firmly on its feet, developing, opening new programs. I just visited the State Academic Capella (it's right here on the embankment of the Moika River) and signed a contract with this major cultural center of St. Petersburg. The Capella



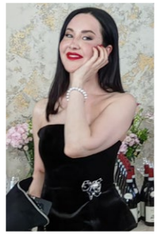


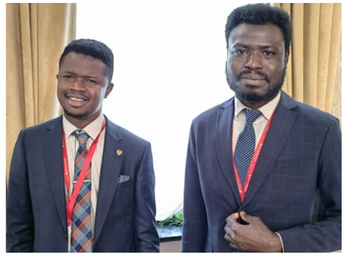












Torkunov: “We will celebrate the anniversary throughout the year to recall our alumni’s memories of the years they spent at MGIMO, which is the best time of life!”

has an absolutely amazing history; it was founded under Ivan the Third, and Peter the Great moved it from Moscow to St. Petersburg. Today, the Capella is part of the city’s creative economy, and I thought it would be useful to use its ‘capacities’ in the master’s program in creative economy and arts management that we are developing. This year, together with the Tretyakov Gallery, the university is launching a new program on museum management, which will be a continuation of the development of the ‘experience economy’ cluster at MGIMO.”

Nevertheless, the university does not forget that its priority is to train personnel for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “And this year, as in all previous years, about 100 people will join the ministry. The geopolitical changes in today’s world require us to make appropriate adjustments in the training of specialists, especially for the East. We have resumed the teaching of languages that we stopped teaching in the 1990s, particularly Khmer and Burmese. We now have a Center for Sustainable Development, and together with our Chinese brothers, we are planning to open a master’s program at the Center.”

Emphasizing that the university is constantly looking for new areas to explore, A. Torkunov urged the graduates to be more proactive, to join “our vision of the future of MGIMO, because now that we have crossed this threshold—80 years—we must, of course, go further. We have also strengthened our logistics by completing the construction of a 1,500-bed residence hall on campus. You will probably see that huge building when you pass by the university on Lobachevskogo Street. I’ll be honest, when the building was under construction, we weren’t sure it would embellish the neighborhood. But now everyone says that it is the most beautiful edifice ‘in the neighborhood,’ especially when its lights are on. So today we have everything we need to keep our university going for at least the next 100 years!”













Photos by Y. Efimova

MGIMO IN DUBAI

Dubai hosted the first foreign reunion of the university's alumni as part of the marathon of events dedicated to MGIMO's 80th anniversary.

Dubai first developed as a tourist mecca, but this growth soon reached its limit. And the authorities decided to organize business tourism, or as they say here, expatism.

Dubai is a new economic zone; it came into existence in 2004, and its innovation part was launched in 2014. On an area of 100 hectares, Dubai in a short time has built 31 skyscrapers, which house about 35 thousand companies, and their number is skyrocketing: 4900 organizations were registered in the first half of 2023 alone!

The Innovation Hub provides a modern working environment for large corporations and small startups, with the expenses of the latter subsidized by the government at 90 percent. Business activity in Dubai is governed by English law, which is enforced by judges who have moved here from Ireland, Scotland, and other countries. So this economic zone is quite transparent for investors and entrepreneurs. The UAE is a vibrant economy with a large, receptive domestic market, with GDP that grew by more than 7 percent in 2023 alone.

Secondly, and perhaps most importantly, the Emirates is one of the world's largest trade and financial hubs, with billions of dollars in transactions passing through it and goods flowing to every country in the world, primarily to the regions of the Middle East, Africa, South Asia, and Southeast Asia. As Emiratis say, "When you come to this country, you are not exposed to a market of 11 million people (the population of the UAE), but to a market with a potential reach of over 3 billion people!"















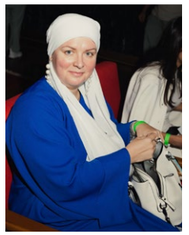






The MGIMO reunion brought together more than 60 alumni that live and work in Dubai and other cities in the UAE.









Here, as well as in many other countries of the region, Russia is treated with great affection and sincere respect. Our country's role in the development of world science and culture, its achievements in education and enlightenment are well known and highly appreciated here. But the Emirates is particularly interested in Russia's breakthroughs in high-tech industries.

Our intellectual capabilities are well respected and recognized in the country. It is in the field of high technology that Russia's cooperation with the UAE has significant potential that has yet to be tapped. Despite the fact that the UAE is one of the world's top 5 oil exporters, the leadership of this Arab state has prioritized the development of the non-resource, non-energy sector of the economy based on the latest achievements in science and technology—in a word, the country is extremely future-oriented.

The MGIMO reunion brought together more than 60 alumni from different years of study that live and work in Dubai and other cities in the United Arab Emirates. O. Fomin, Consul General of the Russian Federation in Dubai and the Northern Emirates, welcomed the graduates. He supported the initiative to develop the community of MGIMO alumni in Dubai and emphasized the importance of interpersonal relationships in developing business cooperation. A. Kryukov, the director of the Alumni Association, spoke about the development of the university in recent years, shared plans for the anniversary events in 2024, and encouraged alumni to participate in the MGIMO Chronicle project—a collection of memories of MGIMO graduates of different years of study.

Y. Klimov and Y. Tarilov, the heads of the Alumni Association in the Arab Gulf countries, spoke about the plans for further development of the regional association and the upcoming events. Guests actively networked and had the opportunity to share their stories and meet other alumni.



CELEBRATION ON KOTELNICHESKAYA EMBANKMENT

The reception hall of the Russian Union of Industrialists and Entrepreneurs (RSPP) at 17, Kotelnicheskaya Embankment, was the venue for the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the graduation of the 1984 class of the MGIMO School of International Economic Relations. The organizing committee of the event was worried whether they would be dressed appropriately, not casually, because of the hot weather. “Mikhail Barinov was concerned about our appearance,” noted Aleksandr Turov, Russia’s trade representative to France (2014-2019), “and said that everyone should be dressed to the nines. Mikhail, how are my jacket and pants? Are they okay”? Turov aptly recalled how, at one of the lectures on international relations, someone asked the professor whether it was acceptable to bang one’s shoe when speaking from a high international podium, alluding to the famous anecdote about Khrushchev’s speech at the UN. “Do you remember what he replied? ‘Go ahead if your shoe is shined.’”



A. Turov summed up the 40-year career of the graduates: “I’m not the longest-serving public official; some of us probably have higher ranks and more awards. Some of us have the ranks of active state counselor and envoy extraordinary and minister plenipotentiary. And everywhere, in the most demanding and difficult positions, our graduates work honestly and selflessly to fulfill the state’s mission. Many of them have gained experience in commercial organizations—they are characterized by

Turov: "Don't postpone work to Saturday, don't postpone love to retirement, and don't postpone the exposition to the last day of the fair"











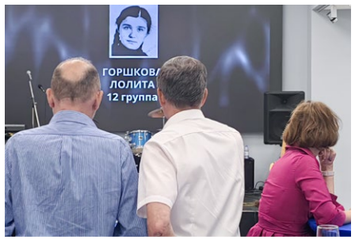














Many graduates have gained experience in commercial organizations—they are highly professional and competent.

their professionalism and competence."

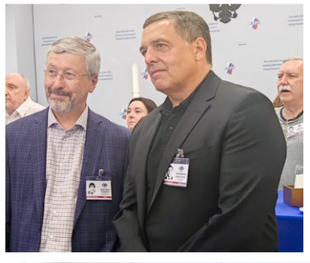
The graduates paid tribute to their first leaders: Nikolai Patolichev, minister of foreign trade of the USSR, and Konstantin Katushev, minister of foreign economic relations. They also remembered Oleg Korunov, deputy head of the Ministry of Foreign Trade, later trade representative in Austria, and father of alumna Marina Korunova. A. Turov: "I remember waiting in his reception room on Smolenskaya Street to be interviewed before a work trip to India. Suddenly his assistant comes up to me and says, "Young man, what are you waiting for? The deputy minister has signed your documents; you can go pack your suitcase…" In fact, when I was in school, I did not plan to go to MGIMO; I wanted to go to the Nakhimov Naval School; I used to try on my grandfather's admiral's uniform. But I could no longer qualify for a naval career after being injured. Well, my father redirected me in time; he said, 'Apply to MGIMO.' And when we were in university, some of us could not have imagined that we would find ourselves in completely unexpected areas. Aleksandr Liubimov went to work in radio. Oleg Migunov also went into journalism. Oleg is no longer here; he passed away, but there is a prize for young













Everywhere, in the most demanding positions, our graduates work honestly and selflessly to fulfill the state's mission.



journalists named after him…"

At the end of the first part of the evening, A. Turov quoted three principles that the director of the Soviet pavilion at the International Fair in Zagreb (then Yugoslavia) had advised him to follow in 1989: "Don't postpone work to Saturday, don't postpone love to retirement, and don't postpone the exposition to the last day of the fair. That is, we should hurry to implement our plans."

And then they talked about creative work. It turned out that Mikhail Barinov, in addition to serious philosophical works, writes poetry; Victoria Kislaeva and Yosik Arutiunian compose songs, and A. Turov is, strangely enough, "the Czech Republic's Russian-speaking author." Twenty years ago, he founded the *Tais* magazine as an amateur, non-profit publication. Thanks to the magazine, he learned about the extraordinary talents of his classmates. For example, about Tatiana Shinkarenko-Paniukova's artwork; it was represented at the evening by her paintings. "Sergei Cherkashin, with whom we worked five years ago when he was the Moscow representative of the Monegasque auction house Hermitage Fine Art, gave the magazine a new impetus."

Maksut Abdulganiev's wife, also an MGIMO graduate, embroiders paintings, and Maks Burev makes lampshades for table lamps from colored glass; it's real stained glass. "Creative effort is not only a means of self-fulfillment; it can also provide new business ideas: the aesthetics professed by M. Barinov grew into the aesthetics of slate roofs, making him a pioneer in this segment of the Russian construction market."

The alumni were treated to delicious appetizers, including cheeses made from Vologda milk by the company founded in Russia by Italian Roberto Moreloni. The white, red, and rosé wines were also Russian, supplied by the Burnier Wine House. The winery was founded in 2001 in the Krasnodar region by Swiss Renaud Burnier. "He came to Russia, met a Russian woman, then sold the company and left, and we are continuing his business," said Leonid Fadeev, the company's general director, who, incidentally, is an MGIMO graduate. In 2012, he studied at the MGIMO International Institute of Management, obtained a degree in management, and joined the wine industry as a senior executive. "And then I realized that I lacked specific knowledge. I studied in Bordeaux and in London, and today I can work as a professional taster; I know everything about production, technology, winegrowing, as well as marketing. I graduated from the Wine Academy in Austria and became an academician. There are only nine of us in Russia."



CLASS OF 1974: 50 YEARS

Photos by I. Lileev, I. Drobyshev

The class of 1974 of the School of International Relations celebrated its 50th anniversary. The Cultural Center of the Administration for Service to the Diplomatic Corps welcomed the 1974 graduating class of the School of International Relations to celebrate 50 years since their graduation from MGIMO as well as to congratulate the university on the upcoming 80th anniversary.





















"In 1969, when we entered the university," said Deputy Foreign Minister Mikhail Bogdanov, "the guys from the junior year took charge of us. Among them were the future MGIMO Rector Anatoly Vasilyevich Torkunov and Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov. They took charge of us not in the sense of studying, but in the sense of sharing free time. Amateur concert parties were very popular at that time, and senior students took an active part in them. It was a very friendly group of guys who were passionate about writing scripts and acting.

Guys with a good sense of humor tended to be sought after. "Because we all got married very early on, one of the things they did was perform at weddings. I also got married while I was still in university, in my fourth year, and my wife was a year younger. Our communication was very lively, we laughed all the time because life was fun. On the other hand, there were no gadgets or social media—nothing to distract us from meeting and hanging out together. The soulfulness of meeting people, looking into their eyes, touching their hand is gone these days."

Bogdanov: "We had no gadgets or social media—nothing to distract us from meeting and hanging out together"

M. Bogdanov studied Arabic; he also considers himself fortunate to have been focusing on the Middle East for 50 years, the last ten years or so as the Russian president's special representative to the Middle East. "When I entered the university, Arabic was very popular, and Arabists were in great demand after the 1967 war; there were many Arab countries, and the scope of work was great. Arabic is practically the language of an entire continent. Interestingly, Rector Mikhail Yakovlev, who admitted me to MGIMO, had arrived shortly before from Iraq, where he had been ambassador. But that was not my only lucky accident. My diploma was signed by Rector Aleksandr Soldatov, with whom I later worked at the embassy in Lebanon."

Bakhtier Khakimov, an advisor to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia and the Russian president's special representative for SCO Affairs, like M. Bogdanov, celebrates two anniversaries this year—his graduation













from MGIMO and since the beginning of his career in the Foreign Ministry. And he is pleased to note the fact that these personal anniversaries coincide with the 80th anniversary of his alma mater.

"For a person, it's a lot; it is, I would say, a super-mature age. But I am convinced that for MGIMO it is another stage of youth, because the university is constantly developing and growing young again. And it is revitalized, because interesting young people who want to study and learn about the world keep coming here."

It is difficult to overestimate the role the education received at MGIMO plays in the lives of its graduates. "We all live the life that our parents gave us," says B. Khakimov. "The family gives us the impetus to move forward. But for me personally, what I received at the university has a special meaning. Thanks to MGIMO, I learned about the Pashto language, which became my first foreign language. The university gave us the knowledge that allows us to grow today. Based on my 50 years of experience in the Foreign Ministry, it is no exaggeration to say that MGIMO graduates stand out not only among graduates of other Russian universities; they stand out among graduates of foreign universities. MGIMO is not just a university; it is an asset—not only for Russia, but also for the whole world."

"50 years is a long time, it is half a century!" said Federation Council Senator Andrei Denisov. "This may sound depressing to some. Nevertheless, when I look at my classmates (and we remember those who have gone, and unfortunately, there are already many of them), I realize that they did their best to benefit the country. Some of them still do. Each of them had not only problems and trials in their lives, but also accomplishments to be proud of.

Two ministers are among my fellow graduates. One of them is Georgiy Gabunia, who served as first deputy minister of foreign economic relations and trade in the mid-1990s and then briefly as head of the ministry. The other is the first foreign minister of the new Russia, Andrei Kozyrev. Several ambassadors graduated from my class, as well as major entrepreneurs and even a metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church."

A. Denisov, who has served as Russia's ambassador to the United Nations in New York, first deputy foreign minister, and Russian ambassador to Egypt and China, believes that reunions are necessary because "only such events provide an opportunity to talk informally with people one has not seen for years, sometimes decades, and to commemorate friends and teachers who have passed away."





















Denisov: "Such events provide an opportunity to talk informally, on first-name terms, with people one has not seen for years, sometimes decades"

David Mnatsakanyan's story is also remarkable. In the late 1960s he was a successful young musician, a violinist in Armenian State TV and Radio's Symphony Orchestra. And one day he suddenly left everything and went to Moscow to apply to MGIMO. Why? "Divine Providence," David replies. After graduation, he worked in various positions in the Foreign Ministry and abroad. But decades later he returned to music and wrote his first piece, "My Way." "I composed it at the age of 58 years and 71 days. This is not my calculation. The experts of the Russian Book of Records did the math and couldn't believe that such a thing could happen!"

After performing "My Way", his signature piece which became the starting point of his creative career, at the alumni evening, D. Mnatsakanyan explained, "The longer I live, the more I am convinced that music is sometimes the best diplomacy, a strong bridge connecting the shores of different cultures. And in our turbulent times, I believe it is also the best therapy."

MARINA PETROVA: “I LOVE SPEED, RUSSIAN WRITERS AND MY JOB”

Photos by **Katya Alagich**; courtesy by **Marina Petrova**

Marina Petrova has recently celebrated 15 years of work at the MGIMO Endowment, where she has been director for a decade. “I was lucky enough to be involved in this project from the beginning,” she says. “I grew up with the Endowment, and now it’s a decent fund in terms of size and focus. It combines research, education, public relations, business, and entrepreneurship.”

MJ: How much is the MGIMO Endowment worth today?
The size of our fund has exceeded 2 billion rubles, making it one of the largest endowments in Russia. Its mission is to attract extra-budgetary funds and develop cooperation with the business community and alumni. The Endowment provides a prospect for financial sustainability and long-term planning for the university’s activities. We invest the fund’s assets in the stock market, generating steady growth. Funding for MGIMO’s programs and projects comes from investment returns, while the capital itself remains untouched.
The idea of endowments in modern Russia emerged almost 20 years ago thanks to our alumnus Vladimir Potanin, who was the initiator of the law on endowment funds.

MJ: Are you an MGIMO graduate?
No, I graduated from the Russian-American Faculty (now the International Faculty) of Ulyanovsk University and from the Bachelor of Business Administration program at Weslean College, Georgia—a small American college near Atlanta.
When I returned from America, I received a phone call with an offer to participate in a winter diplomatic school for students from various universities that MGIMO was going to organize. Of course I said, “Yes!” because I was seriously interested in international relations.
In February 2007, I came to Moscow. I was very impressed with the university, and the two-week program exceeded my expectations! It was arranged in such a way that each day was a real discovery. We listened to lectures by such luminaries of international relations as Yevgeny Primakov (former head of the foreign intelligence, head of the Foreign Ministry, and chairman of the Russian government), Sergey Yastrzhembsky (ambassador, former assistant to the Russian president), and others. We visited the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where Sergey Lavrov met with us on his ministerial floor! A special tour was organized for us to the Reception House of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where the founding meeting of the Endowment was held in March of that year, and where we now hold annual meetings of the MGIMO Board of Trustees.
At the end of the winter school, I was told it was commonly agreed that I was the best student, and MGIMO Rector Anatoly



“At the end of the winter school, I was told it was commonly agreed that I was the best student, and MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov offered me to apply to the university’s postgraduate program.”

Torkunov offered me to apply to the university's postgraduate program.

MJ: When did you join the Endowment?
In 2009, I received a phone call from Yevgenii Biriukov, the director of the Endowment, who had seen me at the winter school and during my postgraduate studies. He suggested that I join the startup, which the Endowment was at the time. The idea appealed to me.

MJ: But after you defended your dissertation, all doors were open to you, including a job at the Foreign Ministry.

"I grew up with the Endowment, and now it's a decent fund in terms of size and focus. It combines research, education, public relations, business, and entrepreneurship."



By then, I was so involved with the Endowment and the university events it helped us organize, including the first MGIMO Alumni Forum in Baku in 2013, I couldn't imagine being anywhere else. The Endowment and the Alumni Association were by then supervised by Vice Rector Artem Malgin, whose ideas gave dynamism to our activities; we held forums in Yerevan, Astana, and Tashkent, the 70th anniversary of MGIMO in the Kremlin Palace, and the 75th anniversary in the Bolshoi Theater. We have just celebrated the 80th anniversary of the university at the Moscow Conservatory. We have organized so many events it became automatic; we have a very good team that can handle both a business forum and a festive event.

MJ: What is your vision for the near future of the MGIMO Endowment?
Our motto is "MGIMO Endowment. The future begins today!" Every new idea aimed at the development of the university should be implemented. In the long run, we would like to reach a level of investment returns where we do not have to worry about where we are going to get funding for this or that project. But, of course, you still have to think, because as the Endowment grows, so do the goals of the university and its overall budget. We have struck a balance between a growth point for long-term programs and a safety cushion to fund ongoing projects. First of all, I would like to mention some of the long-term programs. One can say that this is also the Endowment's investment strategy—not just to spend money but to develop and support MGIMO's major activities. Those include research, publishing, academic conferences and seminars, capacity building for students and applicants, grants for students and teachers, international programs and internships, events for MGIMO alumni and partners, support for MGIMO honorary professors, infrastructure and IT development. For several years, MGIMO's strategic projects have been funded by the state program Priority 2030, while the Endowment has acted as a framework for co-funding and engagement of business partners. The Endowment is essential when new projects and related expenses arise. We are always flexible and find ways to provide support. Accumulated investment returns allow you to think big. But endowments are already constrained within the existing framework. Thus, the



accumulated pool of business partners and student entrepreneurial initiatives led us to the idea of investing in startups. We are now working with the MGIMO Ventures accelerator in this area.
Taking a broader view of the country's economy, university endowments, particularly ours, contribute to the training of skilled talent for various industries and to scientific and technological breakthroughs and are major investors. It is a clear and transparent mechanism that will grow and evolve with the participation of corporate partners and alumni.

MJ: It is important that the endowment culture in Russia develops and scales.
I agree, which is why I first initiated the University Endowment Association back in 2015 and then co-founded the National Endowment Association in 2020. I am always happy to share my experience with colleagues; there are even foundations that call me their "godmother"—they were created thanks to my advice. A guide, "How to Create an Endowment at a University," written by a team of authors under my editorship, will be published soon.
I am also a member of a working group of the Russian Ministry of Science and Higher Education, where I was the main author of the concept for the development of university endowment funds.
After all, what is good about an endowment? It ensures guaranteed funding for programs for centuries to come, so to speak. So that no changes in the economy or in the university's management will affect the payment of the scholarship founded by the university.

MJ: You also teach, don't you?
Yes, I have taught international economic relations in various schools of the university in different years; I still lecture, including as part of the English-speaking bachelor's program. This allows me to keep up with what the new generations of students are doing. (By the way, after graduating from the Gorchakov Lyceum of MGIMO, my brother also became interested in international economics and enrolled at our university; he is already in his fourth year at the School of International Economic Relations).
This is an important means of exchanging energy and, finally, a kind of internal audit because you hear what the students say about MGIMO, what they are dissatisfied with… I also tell them about the Endowment.

MJ: And that's how you cultivate future donors.
Yes, I motivate them while they are still students. In fact, a relatively large part of the Endowment's funding goes to the support for student initiatives. Scholarship programs and study grants are created for students, travel to international conferences and competitions and foreign internships in the countries of the target language are funded. A landmark project is the Endowment's annual student grant competition, which has been held since 2011.



"After all, what is good about an endowment? It is a clear and transparent mechanism that ensures guaranteed funding for programs for centuries to come, so to speak. So that no changes in the economy or in the university's management will affect the payment of the scholarship founded by the university."

Students realize that this is possible today because of the support of alumni and that they themselves will be able to help new generations of students in the future. There have been quite a few of these cases so far, which is very valuable to the fund!

MJ: What do you like to do in your free time?
For me, rest is in many ways just a change of activity: the fund, teaching, startups… I like to read; I travel a lot, both abroad and in Russia. I recently discovered a new hobby—motorcycle riding. I was inspired by my travels in Southeast Asia, where it's an indispensable means of transportation. I recently passed my motorcycle driving test.

MJ: Is it the speed that you like about it?
I guess it's the feeling of freedom and flight—similar to skiing, which I also love. MJ







“MGIMO FAMILY” EXPANDS TO SIBERIA

Photos by **Igor Drobyshev, Polina Alekseeva**

The Novosibirsk State University of Economics and Management (NSUEM) hosted a delegation from MGIMO. As part of the Priority 2030 program, MGIMO and NSUEM held an open house day of the new MGIMO-NSUEU joint-degree bachelor’s program, Legal Support of Economic Activity in the Northeast Asia Region, at the partner university.



Thirty years ago, Pavel Novgorodov, a high school student from Novosibirsk, sat in the hall of NSUEM, listening to the speeches of university professors and thinking about the choice of his life's path.

Today, in the same hall, Pavel Novgorodov, the rector of the university, speaks to the students of his high school, School No. 10. And the occasion is important: he is here to present the bachelor's degree program organized jointly with MGIMO.



"As you know, it is twice as fast to fly from here to China than to Moscow," P. Novgorodov reminded the students. "We are, so to speak, at the 'assemblage point' in terms of Russia's interaction with Asian countries. It is from here that Russian companies enter the Asian markets, and it is through this city that our Asian partners come to Russia with investments to open their production facilities. This will require a lot of professionals—both lawyers who will support these companies and prepare deals and trade specialists. Accordingly, graduates of this program will receive a dual degree. They will study three years at our university, one year at MGIMO, plus they will go on short trips to Moscow for exams."

"Our main goal," A. Malgin, MGIMO's vice rector, told the students, "is to provide you with the knowledge that employers demand and that will make you unique, sought-after specialists. I would like to point out that for many years MGIMO has been the leader in the salary level of graduates in the fields of study we offer. The proximity of Novosibirsk to the most important partners and economic and technological centers of the

Molchakov: "The modern professional lawyer has extensive knowledge both within and outside his or her profession."

modern world—China and the countries of Northeast Asia—gives you even more unique advantages. You will spend two semesters at MGIMO, but you will also see our teachers here in Novosibirsk. The program is 'split in half': Each of our universities accounts for 50 percent of the disciplines and teaching time. Accordingly, by completing one program, you will receive two diplomas and two complementary degrees: 'Law' and 'Commerce.'"

A. Malgin stressed that MGIMO has great experience in training personnel for foreign trade, and the area in which a student will major as part of this program is "much more practice-oriented than just 'economics.'" "You will acquire the ability to work in retail; at the same time, you will be taught to conduct international negotiations in two foreign languages and to conclude foreign trade deals. And our job is to make sure you get the best knowledge in these areas. So that you can graduate and justify the MGIMO saying, 'There is no unemployment after MGIMO.' On the other hand, MGIMO tops the list of universities whose graduates are paid the most in their first job."

Students are offered internships in ministries, banks, foreign trade companies, and representative offices of foreign companies operating in Moscow. "You will become people who are not afraid of the big city on the one hand and who are ready to face the challenges of completely new frontiers on the other. That is why what we have come to you with can really be described as an 'unusual proposal.'"

N. Molchakov, the dean of MGIMO International Law School, spoke about the high quality of training of lawyers at MGIMO. "The modern professional lawyer," he said, "is a lawyer who has extensive knowledge both within and outside his or her profession. What does it mean to have extensive knowledge in one's profession? All disciplines are important in the training of a lawyer. If it used to be said that the success of a specialist in the market is largely determined by his or her major, now the major is an additional advantage. It is still more important to be able to provide comprehensive professional advice. In the case of this program, which deals with business support in Asian markets, this means the ability to assess any legal risks associated with the implementation of various forms of entrepreneurship and economic activities.

There is a strong emphasis on comparative law; you will study virtually all areas of law—constitutional,

Pavel Novgorodov, rector of Novosibirsk State University of Economics and Management (NSUEM), a partner university of MGIMO, considers the joint-degree bachelor's program in Legal Support of Economic Activity in the Northeast Asia Region to be unique and very necessary. What makes this program unique for NSUEM?

"I would put it this way: 'Two universities, two cities, two degrees.' We are building relations with Asia, and this requires the training of legal experts who know the law of other countries, as well as trade experts who understand the economic interests of these countries and their mentality, which is the basis of emerging relations. They should have a good command of foreign languages (Chinese and English). Hence, there are two degrees.

Most importantly, the program should be practice-oriented so that students see good job prospects in our region; for this purpose, starting from the third and fourth years of study, they are to participate in joint projects of Russian-Chinese businesses.

Initially, when we were preparing to discuss with MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov the ways in which we could be useful to each other, there was an understanding that MGIMO is a prestigious, relatively closed, specific university, more focused on interaction with academic partners abroad. But in the context of the turn to the East, which informs the country's development, the idea of using our, so to speak, geographical reserves in the eastern part of Russia came up.

Geographically and in terms of international cooperation, Novosibirsk is connected with China, Kazakhstan, and Mongolia—the latter is not far from us, to the east, over the Altai Mountains. Novosibirsk can claim to be called the 'Gateway to Asia' or to a number of its regions. In this sense, we see ourselves as a strategic partner of MGIMO, and the new joint-degree program, which was mentioned above, is a good first step in this direction.

The second aspect we discussed is related to the potential for domestic export of high-quality education, support for faculty, and participation in programs and areas in which MGIMO is traditionally strong.

It was, of course, about language training, about areas related to international relations, including as part of continuing education.

What do we gain by working with such a strong partner? First, we will expand our target audience, and second, we will



"I see mutual interest in working together between MGIMO and our university, especially in continuing professional education."

receive and launch new programs and new educational products, especially in those areas where we lack our own competencies. Together with MGIMO, we can complement each other. And third, we achieve financial goals: margins are usually higher when there is a strong partner with a good reputation.

We have not yet realized any projects at this level, so this is still a medium-term horizon for us. But we are not in a hurry; we want to go step by step. We have already fulfilled our obligations on the development of the Atlas, and from September we will launch a joint bachelor's degree program, Legal Support of Economic Activity, and if all goes well, I am sure we will have many interesting joint projects. I see mutual interest in working together, especially in the area of continuing professional education, which is clearly a promising option."

administrative, civil, and commercial—from a comparative perspective. The problems may be the same for different jurisdictions, but the solutions are different. And on the other hand, it will allow you to look at our own legal system in terms of solutions that are found in other countries."

The director of the Institute of International Trade and Sustainable Development (MGIMO IITSD), V. Salamatov, called the NSUEU-MGIMO joint program "an absolutely amazing alliance" and "an amazing opportunity to become members of the MGIMO Family."









Malgin: "Our main goal is to provide you with the knowledge that employers demand."







The two fields—commerce and law—are inextricably linked, the IITSD director emphasized. "We are living in a special time when the whole world is changing. We have made a turn to the East, which opens up enormous opportunities: new logistics, new trade, and new partners. And this program is designed to develop our commercial relationships with the world's majority that is friendly to us and wants to trade with us. But it is not so easy because we are different—in mentality, in culture. The education that MGIMO offers allows you to learn the language, customs, and traditions of other nations."

Why is it important for lawyers to know basic economics? "Let's say you come to a negotiation and you know not only how to draft a contract, but also other legal subtleties," says T. Shashikhina, director of the Eurasian Studies Institute (ESI). "But if you are not an expert in the field of trade, you can easily lose sight of the economic benefits of your business. But there's more. If you do not know the mentality of your counterpart or the peculiarities of his or her language, they can 'beat' you, so to speak. MGIMO will teach you not only the language of the profession but also the subtleties of the mentality of your partner's country; you will not only be able to communicate with them but also to think in terms accepted in their society."

V. Paniukova, associate professor of the Department of Commerce and Trade Regulation, emphasized the role of trade in the development of any state. "Domestic trade alone accounts for 12 percent of Russia's total GDP—that's third place by industry. Trade accounts for 12 percent of all taxes paid into the national budget. The number of people working in commerce is growing steadily. Commerce is not just about buying and selling. When we talk about our largest retail chains, we are talking about an innovative industry that is creating the largest digital ecosystems. These companies ensure the country's food security by importing goods from abroad. It seems that everything is simple; the chain is organized: delivery, transportation, customs clearance, and other processes. But in reality, these are separate disciplines. Our program gives you the opportunity to learn them while becoming an expert in country studies because the first foreign language you will study for four years is Chinese. There is a reason for that. Now all the major trading and logistics companies are approaching MGIMO and saying, 'We are ready to take a student for an internship, even to pay for his or her studies in the master's program, provided that he or she has a good command of Chinese.'"

* * *

Another item on the agenda of the MGIMO faculty visiting NSUEM was a workshop for law students held by T. Shashikhina, director of ESI, N. Molchakov, dean of the International Law School, and A. Loboda, associate professor of the Department of Private International and Civil Law.

"International law," said N. Molchakov, speaking about the challenges of this branch of law, "is influenced by various factors. As for the positive ones, I would mention integration as a new form of convergence of legal systems. Hence the emergence of integration law; the legal system it regulates is, for example, the EAEU. Digitalization is another factor. Other areas of law, such as sports law, are also emerging. What is important is that this does not change the fundamental law."

Shashikhina: "MGIMO is celebrating its 80th anniversary, so those who will be enrolled in this program in the anniversary year, will make history!"









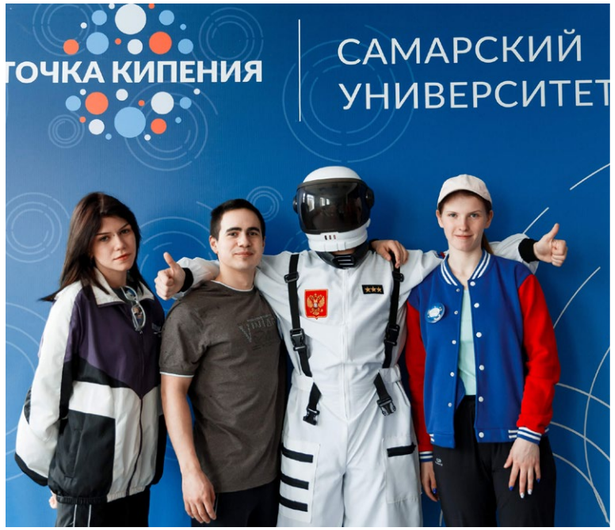
For her speech, T. Shashikhina chose a topic that is very relevant for law students. "Does it make sense to study international law after the geopolitical upheavals that have taken place in the world?" she asked. "And does it even exist now that its basic principles are being violated everywhere? For example, when one of the largest international organizations violates its own statutory documents."

She specified that she meant the Council of Europe (CoE) unilaterally breaking off relations with Russia. "The CoE was originally an organization created to unite. During the 26 years of Russia's membership in the Council of Europe, we participated in the creation of 68 conventions, the vast majority of whose norms became part of our own national legislation. But gradually, geopolitics began to interfere with the activities of the CoE, making it increasingly difficult for us to communicate with the organization."

At the end of the workshop, A. Loboda told the students about the practice of international commercial arbitration on the basis of the relevant UN Convention of 1958 and gave a number of practical examples of the implementation of international legal norms.

* * *

NSUEU Rector P. Novgorodov and Dean of the Faculty of Law O. Sherstoboev gave the colleagues from MGIMO a tour of the university campus and showed them its infrastructure. The university has many innovative solutions for organizing the training process and more. The cafeteria accepts bank cards; with all the "exclusive" discounts, one can have lunch for only 150 rubles (1.5 U.S. dollars)! "We have a very developed special environment necessary for learning activities," added P. Avsianovich, deputy dean of the School of Law. "There is no such thing as students sitting in class for a couple of hours and just leaving. The university has a large number of courses that we use to distract students from bad trends, so to speak. There's a cultural and arts center, a library, various fitness facilities, a swimming pool, and a shooting gallery—although it's electronic, because no one will let us have a real one!"









AVIATORS AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS EXPERTS ARE TRAINED HERE

MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov visited Samara and held a number of meetings with representatives of the business and academic communities of the region.

Photos by **Polina Alekseeva**



As part of the visit, a cooperation agreement was signed between MGIMO and the government of the Samara region. A. Torkunov and D. Azarov, the governor of the region, agreed to develop joint educational and research practices and to jointly strengthen the traditions of Russian higher education.

Anatoly Torkunov visited Korolev Samara University, where he met with its president, V. Soifer. The history of this aviation university dates back to the wartime. In 1942, about 30 aviation enterprises were evacuated to the city

Over 75 years, Korolev Samara University has trained about 80 thousand specialists, many of whom became prominent scientists, engineers, and state figures



of Kuibyshev to produce the Il-2 ground attack aircraft, the most produced aircraft of World War II. The army needed planes, the factories needed engineers. It was decided to establish the Kuibyshev Aviation Institute to train engineering personnel. Over 75 years, the university has trained about 80 thousand specialists, many of whom became prominent scientists, engineers, production managers, major state and public figures.

A. Torkunov visited Samara University,

Torkunov: “I was lucky to have known Yevgeny Primakov for decades, and it is important to me that his name be remembered for as long as possible”

where he held talks on further development of cooperation with its rector, V. Bogatyrev, and also visited the Y. M. Primakov Regional Center for the Development of Public Diplomacy and International Relations, where he gave a lecture to international relations students.

“I was lucky,” said the MGIMO rector, “to have known Yevgeny Maksimovich Primakov for decades, since the days when he was a correspondent for *Pravda* in Cairo. He used to visit MGIMO and talk to us students about the situation in the Middle East. He was a brave man; he was respected in the region; he visited Kurdish settlements in Iraq and talked to the people closest to him about the instructions of the Central Committee of the Communist Party to establish contacts with local Kurds. Later, not only did I work under his leadership, but I became close friends with him, and we often saw each other outside of work, in a family setting. To the point that he baptized one of my grandsons, became his godfather, and was present at the baptism of another. For me, the existence of the Primakov Center is not just the recognition of his contribution to international relations, to the development of foreign policy, but also, above all, to the strengthening of Russia as a sovereign country that plays a decisive role in world affairs.”

A. Torkunov also commented on the peculiarities of the diplomatic profession in today’s conditions: “Our president, who develops Russia’s foreign policy, has long said that it is very important for us to cooperate with the so-called global majority. And to do everything to strengthen the sovereignty not only of Russia alone but also to turn the development of international relations in the direction of multicentrism, seeking to strengthen the sovereignty of all countries involved in international communication. To this end, working with the global majority is a fundamental task; therefore, cooperation with the countries of the Asia-Pacific and Indo-Pacific regions is of great importance, and our relations with Africa and Latin America are developing.” At the same time, the rector emphasized, the president has formulated the idea of creating a Eurasian security system, referring not only to Europe and Asia, but also to the countries of the Persian Gulf. “This possibility is real because this area is home to a large number of regional organizations that cooperate with each other; they have common interests. These are the organizations that exist in the space of the former USSR: the EAEU, the CSTO. This is also the “One Belt One Road”—our engagement with China’s large-scale program… On the other hand, our former partners are realizing that it is impossible to maintain the current hegemony and that they have to cooperate and flirt with the world’s majority. New agendas of relations with African countries are declared in order to hinder their movement towards real sovereignty and to slow down the development of their relations with Russia. But we are also doing a lot: there have been two Russia-Africa summits attended by many leaders, and African students have appeared in universities where they were not present before, for example, in our MGIMO.











Torkunov: “The president of Russia says that it is very important for us to cooperate with the so-called global majority”

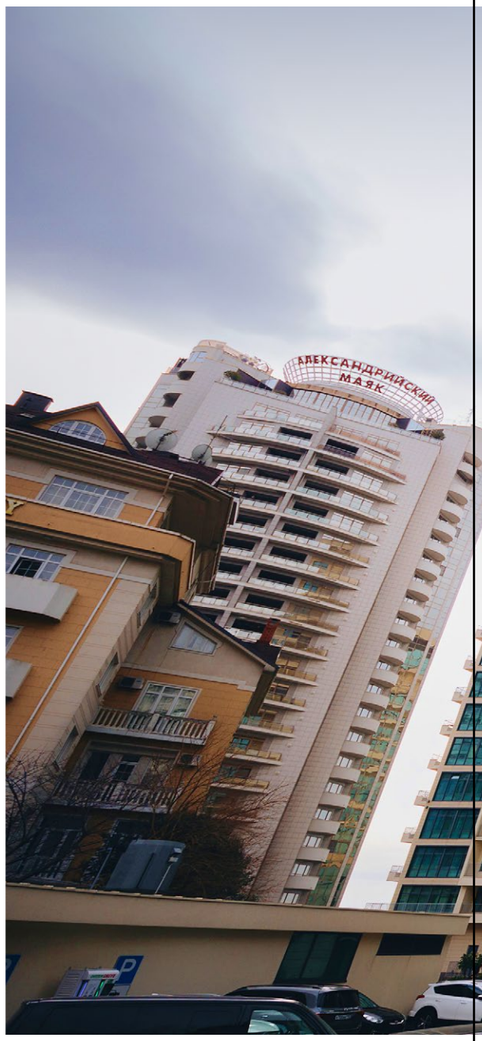














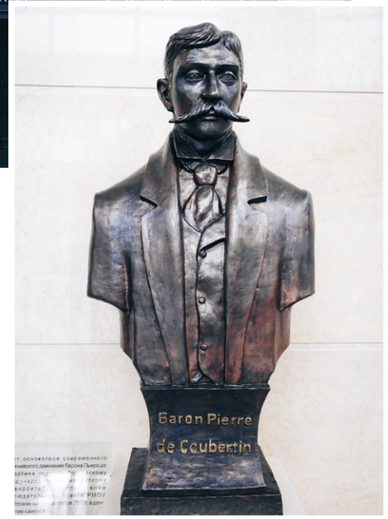
SOCHI, THE CAPITAL OF EXPERIENCES

Photos by **Polina Alekseeva**

The Russian International Olympic University (RIOU) in Sochi hosted an open day and a presentation of MGIMO's bachelor and master programs. Over two hundred high school students and their parents attended the meeting.

Opening the meeting, the rector noted that the cooperation between MGIMO and RIOU had begun at the moment this unique university had been created. Now the Olympic University trains bachelors and masters in the field of tourism; there is a jointly implemented master's program in sports management.

In his address to the students, the rector shared his thoughts on today's requirements for highly qualified specialists. "Some liberal arts students sometimes say, 'Do I really need physics or math?' We must realize that life today forces all of us to become generalists. Although social studies and science education have always gone hand in hand throughout our history. Many famous people who knew their business perfectly, though devoted to their profession, brilliantly mastered other fields; it is enough to remember the authors who knew naval and military affairs perfectly. That was called "Russian encyclopaedism". Don't assume that the knowledge you gain in university is superfluous; it will come in handy. The great advantage of



MGIMO is that our university teaches you to study; in case it is necessary to change professions, our students are able to use a certain tool, a key that allows them to open the doors to new knowledge. One such tool that opens up the whole world to you is foreign languages."

As he touched upon the programs in tourism, the rector of MGI'MO noted that this industry is experiencing growth after the end of the COVID-19 pandemic. "People have realized that life is unfortunately finite; you have to take advantage of opportunities and invest in hobbies, one of which is tourism and getting to know new places. Meanwhile, domestic tourism has begun to grow, and tourism clusters have emerged, attracting investment… The president of Russia has said that the state plans to significantly increase the share of tourism in the country's GDP. But it takes specialists to make sure the money flows and is managed properly. And those are people who should know well the experience economy, its financial side, and speak foreign languages, because it is necessary to attract tourists from abroad, for whom Russia offers a lot of places of interest to see."

Torkunov: "The great advantage of MGIMO is that our university teaches you to study"







A. Malgin, MGIMO's vice rector for development, talked about joint training programs in tourism and hospitality business. "Today, MGIMO has an entire cluster of training programs related to the experience economy; it is based on the 80-year foundation of MGIMO, because we have always taught subjects necessary for a specialist in this field—foreign languages, foreign culture, regional studies, etc. Sochi is the capital of experiences; they are shaped here. It is no coincidence that our programs in tourism, hospitality business, and marketing of tourist destinations are connected with Sochi. This gives MGIMO students additional opportunities, as they can not only study in classrooms but also travel to Sochi to do so."

As he addressed the audience, he noted that as residents of Sochi, they "know about the unique infrastructure of the sea and mountain cluster, which makes it possible to develop a number of varieties of tourism. As part of our program, MGIMO students spend two semesters in Sochi—an advantage that no other university dealing with tourism has."

The vice rector also spoke about other programs of the experience economy cluster, such as Management of Creative Industries, which trains managers "who help creators use technology to bring their works to the user," and a master's degree program in Management in Culture and Art, "which we are opening this year in cooperation with the Tretyakov Gallery and which trains personnel for the management of museum and exhibition projects." There is also a master's program in sports management in cooperation with RIOU.

G. Romanova, the head of the MGIMO strategic project "New personnel for tourism, hospitality, development of tourist areas, and creative industries," said that due to the adoption of the national project "Tourism and hospitality industry" by 2030, the growth of consumers of tourist services in the industry should double; if today there are 67 million of them, in six years this figure should reach 140 million. The number of jobs is also expected to double to 2.7 million. "Therefore, those who choose this line of work have a good opportunity for both career advancement and an opportunity to start and successfully grow their own business."

Malgin: "Today, MGIMO has an entire cluster of training programs related to the experience economy"

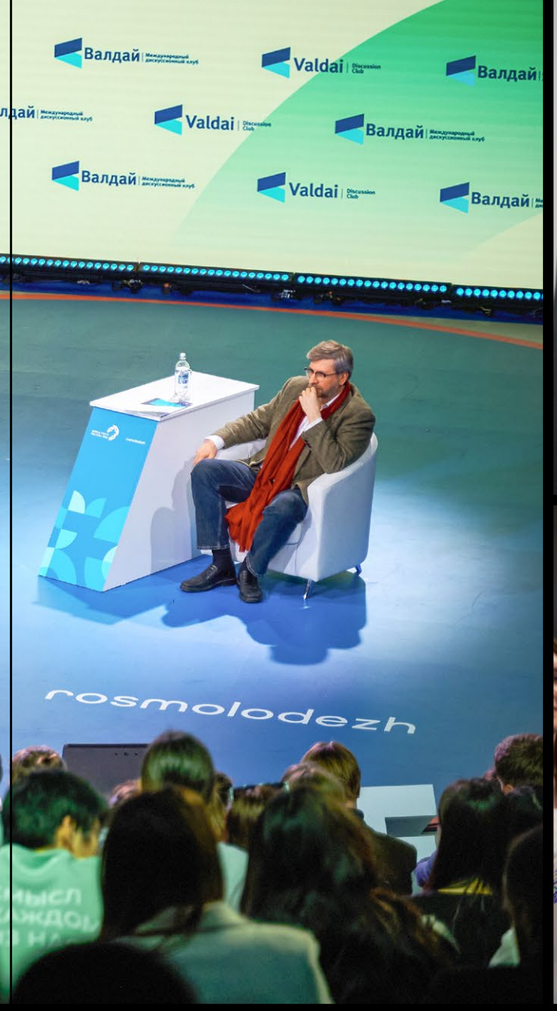


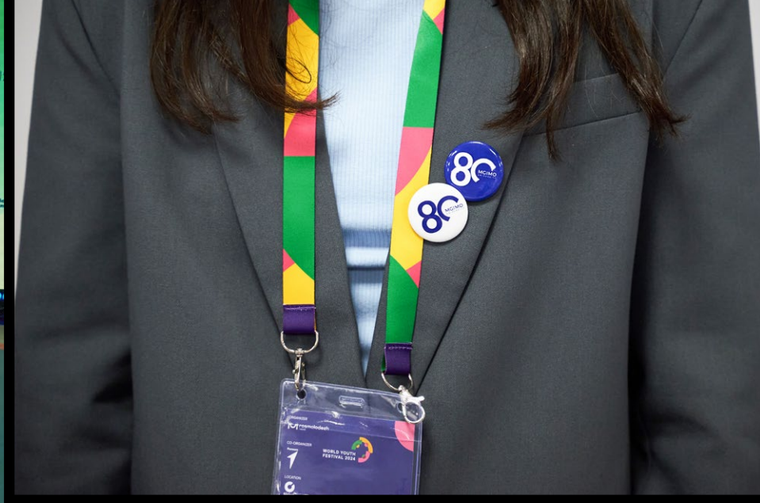




S. Pavlenko, the director general of the Grand Karat Sochi hotel—MGIMO's industrial partner—and A. Domashenko, the operations director of the Grand Karat Sochi hotel, elaborated on the work placement internship and introductory internship: the students of the programs are immersed in the tourism and hospitality industry and learn the intricacies of working at the leading tourist infrastructure facilities of the resort city. Students will learn how the country's leading health resorts, hotels and inns, sports facilities, and transportation logistics facilities operate.













DIPLOMATIC LOUNGE IN SOCHI

Photos by Maria Zaitseva, Yevgenii Osipov

Franco Frattini, former head of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, spoke at the discussion platform “Global Politics and its Agenda” organized by MGIMO at the 2017 World Youth Festival (WYF) in Sochi. He warned, “Your generation, my daughter’s generation, risks witnessing wars. The credibility of the UN’s role must not be undermined; Russia and the United States must cooperate in the fight against terrorism.”

Seven years later, in 2024, the US is gloating over terrorist attacks in Russia, a new world war is brewing in Europe, and the UN is weaker than ever.

No one can ask Franco Frattini’s opinion today: he fought cancer throughout 2022 and passed away in December of that year. One could ask his daughter’s opinion, but she hardly came to Russia for this year’s festival.

International relations are in crisis; Frattini’s generation has failed in its responsibility. It seemed that this failure would press upon 2024 WYF. But young people will never pay such a price for their future, as this great event in Sochi showed.



As it happened, MGIMO volunteer Aleksandr Chursin, who is studying Thai, was assigned to accompany a guest of honor from Tanzania. Meanwhile, the Thai delegation of eight people was entrusted to somebody else, probably a student of Norwegian (how can you organize such a huge forum without hitches?)

But Aleksandr was not discouraged; in addition to his native Swahili, the Tanzanian guest spoke excellent English, so they quickly found a common language.

William Amos Pallangyo, rector of a Tanzanian financial institute in Dar es Salaam, came to Sochi to meet with fellow rectors and participate in a discussion on youth issues as part of a session on the Russia-Africa Summit organized by MGIMO and the Alexander Gorchakov Public Diplomacy Fund.

Each morning, Aleksandr arrived at the Radisson Collection Hotel, where the guests of honor were staying, and took Rector Pallangyo to the festival site, Sirius University, where the WYF participants had rooms available for lectures and panel discussions. Between sessions, guests walked around the lively hangar-like spaces of the festival site, visiting the exhibition stands of the festival's partners, small exhibitions, and pavilions representing Russian regions.

Pallangyo: "Yesterday, I got into a cab, and the driver, a Sochi resident, upon learning that I was from Africa, to my surprise, sang an African song!"

Although Mr. Pallangyo's specialty is finance and accounting, the African rector was more interested in global issues. At a panel session on Africa, he took the floor to talk about the potential for Russian-African cooperation, which is enormous.

Mr. Pallangyo began with a serious argument: "Russia has never been a colonizer, and it is geographically very far from Africa, but perhaps that is why the level of trust between us is so high. And trust is the most important thing. This is the basis for good and strong relations—political, economic, military, and cultural. The USSR supported Africa in the struggle for liberation from colonialism; many Africans studied in the Soviet Union and became good specialists—engineers, doctors, and scientists."

His second argument was even stronger. "Yesterday, I got into a cab," Mr. Pallangyo said, "and the driver, a Sochi resident, upon learning that I was from an English-speaking African country, started talking to me in good English and, to my surprise, even sang an African song in it! My point is that we don't even realize how close Russians and Africans are to each other."

Although the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 caused Russia's drift away from Africa, in the 2000s it "had renewed ambitions to develop relations with Africa."

The Tanzanian rector went on to list the prospects for cooperation with Russia, mentioning agriculture first. "What we need from you are scientific achievements and technologies that would enable us to increase the processing of food so that we do not sell crops abroad for nothing but get a fair price from importers."

The second most important area in terms of potential for cooperation, according to the professor, is the creation of a modern education system, especially higher education, as well as exchange programs. In third place, the Tanzanian guest cited the need to make efficient use of the mineral resources that used to be plundered by the colonial powers. "Africa has a lot of resources—oil, gas. Russia could invest in field development. It will create jobs, reduce poverty, and boost the economy."

Fourth, Africa's participation in international trade, exports, and imports, especially the exports of tropical goods, must be made equitable. "We could, for example, get grain and engineering products from Russia in exchange for them."

It wasn't until the fifth point that Mr. Pallangyo spoke as an accountant: "Transparency and accountability are essential to our collaboration. Only the integrity of our financial relations will ensure that we do business in an honest, sustainable, and mutually beneficial manner."

Sirius University was decorated to look like an international airport for the world's youth where MGIMO opened an impromptu diplomatic lounge

In fact, the Tanzanian rector said in conclusion, "African priorities and hopes can only be reliably secured if they are at the center of the political agenda." Africa, he added, can no longer be dismissed; "Africa is the continent that is coming; it is the continent of the 21st century!"

* * *

MGIMO has always participated in the World Youth Festivals—both in the Soviet years and in the period of the new Russia. Students, staff, and experts of the university worked hard to prepare this year's festival: the exhibition area of MGIMO was opened, and many students became volunteers and undertook a large part of the protocol assistance and interpretation.























"This year MGIMO became the main partner of the forum's discussion platform 'Education,'" says Stanislav Surovtsev, vice rector for youth policy, "and the university's exhibition space was the 'entry point' to the meaningful events of the WYF agenda for tens of thousands of guests. This was especially important in the anniversary year of the university."

The university was entrusted with the international promotion of the festival: MGIMO made dozens of presentations of WYF during visits to China, India, African countries, and neighboring countries. The festival managed to bring together not only students from partner universities but also prominent world experts—partners from Shanghai International Studies University, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Iranian University of International Relations, and others.

The MGIMO Volunteer Center became the official center for recruiting and training of volunteers for WYF. "We selected volunteers in the main avenues of MGIMO's activities: 'attachés of foreign delegations,' 'language services,' and 'protocol,' said Mariyam Khubieva, the center's coordinator. "Our recruiters processed over 5,000 applications from all over the country and conducted more than 1,300 interviews, working day and night due to time zone differences. We selected almost 800 volunteer attachés and linguists who then underwent two stages of training—general and specialized."

Lavrov: "I wouldn't change the UN Charter; I would think about how to make it beneficial for everyone to implement it"

The entire Sirius University was decorated to look like an international airport for the world's youth, and MGIMO opened an impromptu diplomatic lounge there. "Interactive experiences for the guests of the festival included workshops on diplomatic protocol, public speaking, and negotiations, as well as quizzes on world history, Russian foreign policy, law, and others," said Yekaterina Shuvalova, deputy vice rector for youth policy.

MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov was not only a member of the festival's organizing committee but also repeatedly met with students during its preparation, contributed to the development of the discussion agenda, and during the festival he personally received the distinguished guests at the university and accompanied them as they visited the MGIMO exhibition titled "The International Relations Expert through the Prism of Time." Deputy Prime Minister of Russia D. Chernyshenko and Minister of Science and Higher Education V. Falkov were among those who wrote their wishes to MGIMO on the occasion of its anniversary on the cube-shaped thematic art object. And of course, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S. Lavrov visited the MGIMO stand.

The discussion program of MGIMO under the slogan "The Language of Dialogue in the Age of Disagreement" was held in the hall not coincidentally named "Gorchakov." The meanings behind this discussion platform resonated with both the idea of the festival and current international trends. It focused on the mission of the new generation, which involves finding a language of communication across civilizational differences, the ability to interact with an opponent who has an uncomfortable point of view, and the inadmissibility of unification as a basis for international relations.

When asked whether the UN has a future as a unique instrument in shaping a multipolar world, Sergey Lavrov explained, "The concept of multipolarity was originally established in the UN in the form of the Security Council and its five permanent members. I believe that the concept is still viable if what was agreed upon is honestly implemented. But it became clear how honest the West was after W. Churchill's 'Sinews of Peace' speech in 1946. It was about the Iron Curtain, enemies, the division of the world into two poles… I believe that the UN Charter and all its principles are absolutely relevant in today's world. I would like to emphasize that the organization is based on the principle of sovereign equality of states… There has not been a single situation or conflict in which the West has respected this principle. In every situation, it has promoted its unilateral, narrow self-interest in violation of the Charter. The UN enshrines the principle of non-interference in internal affairs, which the United States and many of its allies have repeatedly violated.

"The principles of the UN Charter should not be seen as a menu; they should be implemented in their entirety and in their interrelation. This is exactly the kind of interaction process that Russian President Vladimir Putin had in mind when he formulated his vision of the creation of the Greater Eurasian Partnership. Multipolarity must be based on integration structures. In addition to regional integration processes, there is a global one—BRICS. It has developed over many years solely on the basis of consensus, which is the result of a balance of interests.

"I am deeply convinced that the creation of a new world order does not require a change in the fundamental provisions of the UN Charter. I wouldn't think about changing it; I would think about how to make it beneficial for everyone to implement it."

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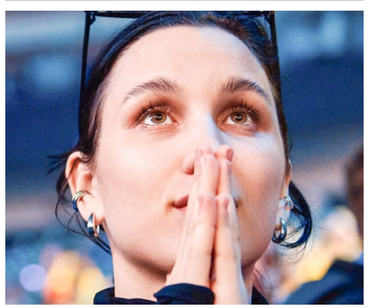
The MGIMO Career Center and the MGIMO Political Club held Diplympics—a series of immersive games aimed at unlocking the diplomatic skills of the festival participants. At the qualifying stage of the contest, everyone could test their knowledge of Russian diplomacy and the history of international relations by answering questions in the form of a multilingual quiz. During the second stage, the most active participants played the game "Briefing a Diplomat," where the best ones could play the role of a press secretary and answer tricky questions from journalists. In the "Diplomatic Lounge," activists of the MGIMO International Students Association held two educational and entertaining quizzes: "Holidays of the Peoples of the World" and "Dishes of the Peoples of the World."











Torkunov: "The process of creating such a world order is very long and difficult. But I agree with Sergey Lavrov that it is based on the wisdom of generations"

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At the closing ceremony of the festival, Russian President V. V. Putin met with students from various countries studying at Russian universities. Among them were MGIMO international students Turtogtokh Batbayar and Olivia Olund Matilda Ofelia. During the informal meeting, the president expressed his

hope that the students' experience of studying in Russia is pleasant and fruitful and emphasized the important role of the festival in building a constructive dialogue between representatives of Russian and foreign youth. "In the place where you study," he said, "you are not just guests. You are full participants in the process there. But you are guests here, and we are trying to create conditions for young people to communicate freely with each other."

One of the main characters of the WYF closing ceremony was Irene Cecchini, a MGIMO student from Italy. She came to Moscow to study because she could not find a university in Europe where she could study international relations in depth. "I first came to Russia in 2019 as a tourist to get an idea of the country not from Western media. I immediately fell in love with Russia, with Moscow, with the friendly people who live here. I soon learned that MGIMO is the most prestigious, world-class university that offers a wide range of knowledge: from history to politics, from economics to international relations—exactly what I was looking for. I entered MGIMO and started learning Russian in my first year. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, we studied the entire first year remotely." Irene was not able to practice her Russian, but when she came to Russia in her second year, she was able to bring her language skills up to a fairly high level. She has been successfully studying subjects related to international relations, although in English. But Irene dreams of entering the MGIMO master's program this year to study international law in Russian, so she is studying hard for her exams.

At the beginning of the year, the Italian was offered to participate in the WYF in Sochi. "I was phoned and told that I had been chosen to be one of the main characters of the festival, representing my country, Italy. They made a video about me in which I talked about how I had fallen in love with Russia and why I connect my future with this beautiful country. It was a challenge: I had to go on a huge stage in full view of an entire stadium, for which we rehearsed a whole dance routine."





Irene sees the festival's role as showing the world that "Russia is an open country. Everything they say about it in the West is untrue; Russia is open to everyone. This is a land of opportunity, including for my future career. The Russian people are friendly; I felt it the first time I came to Moscow. People from different countries and different ethnicities can feel at home here. Everyone I talked to at the festival agreed."

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Aleksandr Chursin did have a chance to practice his Thai.



"At one point, I came out of the hustle and bustle of the festival to get some fresh air, and I saw the Thai delegation in full, dressed in national costumes, all waving flags, followed by others. It turned out to be a parade of the WYF participants to the Medals Plaza for the general gathering of delegations. Among the Thais there was a student from the Linguistic University I knew; I went up to her to say hello, and the others were surprised: a Russian speak Thai! We began to talk, and they took me along; I became the ninth member of the delegation, and so I reached the plaza with them. I sang their songs, shouted their chants, and they gave me a traditional Thai souvenir—a small eucalyptus-based inhaler.

One of the most unusual experiences "popped up" by chance; it was a tour of Sochi with some Chinese delegates. "Five Chinese wanted to go see Stalin's *dacha*. I was assigned to accompany them. We arrived at the *dacha*, walked through the rooms where Stalin's sons had lived, looked in the security room, and looked in the room where his secretary had lived. Stalin himself, or rather his life-size wax figure, sat behind the desk in his office. Next to it was a small bed where the leader had slept. In the recreation room were his chess games, a gramophone with records.

Putin: "You are guests here, and we are trying to create conditions for young people to communicate freely with each other"

Suddenly a Chinese woman came up to me and said, 'We saw everything: where he lived, where he worked, where he ate, but… we didn't see his bedroom. Can't we look at the place where he slept with his wife?' So the Chinese were disappointed, the impression was underwhelming…"

"The impression was underwhelming"—this phrase was heard somewhere else at the festival. Wasn't it at a meeting with the famous pranksters Vovan and Lexus, who use pranks to "disappoint" representatives of the world's Russophobic backstage?

At the festival, there was a meeting with the pranksters, who shared their inner workings. It turned out that a prank is not just an innocent practical joke, but, as Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman M. Zakharova put it, a new genre of media, a kind of "alternative diplomacy" that influences public diplomacy.

How did the festival benefit MGIMO? Undoubtedly, it allowed us to gather a pool of the university's new ambassadors in Russia and abroad—a circle of friends who objectively view our country and its foreign policy, respect its values, and the right to independent civilizational development.











WHO ARE THE JUDGES?

Photos by Igor Drobyshev, Raul Khabibullin

MGIMO's International Law School has always been and continues to be a source of high-quality talent for government agencies in all branches of power, including the judiciary.
In this selection, we publish interviews with three representatives of a small group of Russian judges—graduates of MGIMO International Law School.



LOBOV: “LAW IS ONE OF THE HIGHEST VALUES OF MANKIND”

Interview by **Igor Drobyshev**
Photos by **Igor Drobyshev, by courtesy of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation, by courtesy of M. Lobov**

On September 25, 2023, the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation appointed Mikhail Lobov, a 1992 graduate of MGIMO, as a justice of the Constitutional Court of Russia. “There was a vacancy for a judge,” Lobov recalls, “and MGIMO, as an academic institution, submitted my candidacy. The president of Russia supported it.”
Amazingly, this happened only a year and a half after M. Lobov was inaugurated as a judge of the European Court of Human Rights in Strasbourg. “Yes, in January 2022 I took the oath of office, and a month and a half later the conflict in Ukraine escalated; events began to unfold like an avalanche; the post of judge from Russia and with it my mandate were abolished almost as hastily as Russia’s membership in the Council of Europe was terminated. But I did not leave Strasbourg until the first half of September: I had to finish my business. So I served as a judge there for a very short time, less than a year.”

MJ: Did it hurt?
No. I left with no regrets. First of all, I was very happy to be back home. Secondly, staying in Strasbourg no longer made sense. It became clear that the potential for further cooperation with Russia within the Council of Europe had been exhausted. On the other hand, that organization has transformed in terms of its fitness for its statutory purposes.
This is not a new phenomenon, it happens to organizations, including international ones; every structure in its development goes through a phase of passion, flourishing, then it fades and sometimes collapses. I don’t know what will happen to the Council of Europe, but what it is doing today rather suggests that the organization is outdated. On the other hand, everything we have built over 26 years of cooperation cannot be thrown into the dustbin of history. We have worked honestly on this path, we have fought honestly to preserve the Council of Europe as a unique pan-European platform that brings maximum benefit to all its participants.
But there came a point when that became impossible. It is unfortunate that an organization that was primarily aimed at cooperation and creation, and whose original purpose was to “glue together” war-torn Europe, has degenerated and can no longer work constructively to achieve greater unity among all its participants, as its charter explicitly prescribes. The common cause for which we joined the Council of Europe and worked within it, following the path of cooperation, has given way to open confrontation, not through our fault, I believe, but because of the geopolitical situation that has undermined the very essence of the organization. Once again it has not been possible to build a “common European house,” as Gorbachev said, and even this unique fabric of the pan-European legal space from Lisbon to Vladivostok, which the Council of Europe has partially realized, is unfortunately being mercilessly torn apart by the efforts of most of the current European governments, contrary to the real interests of Europe. For our part, we drew a line, took all the useful things we worked on, and moved on.

It is unfortunate that Council of Europe, an organization that was primarily aimed at cooperation and creation, and whose original purpose was to “glue together” war-torn Europe, has degenerated and can no longer work constructively to achieve greater unity among all its participants.

MJ: Are you in touch with MGIMO?
Of course! In addition, immediately after I came back, I returned to teaching at the Eurasian Studies Institute, in the Department for Integration Studies. Fate gave me a wonderful academic break between Strasbourg and St. Petersburg—a whole year. I spent it writing my dissertation, catching up on what I had not been able to do before in the academic field. Now I continue to work with students and give lectures. However, my work as a judge does not allow me to come to Moscow very often.

MJ: You were a student once, too. Why did you choose MGIMO?
I grew up far from Moscow, in Snezhinsk, Chelyabinsk region, a science city—a closed town of nuclear physicists—so I studied physics and math in depth at school. But in the mid-1980s, a factor arose that changed my destiny. Thanks to the policy of *glasnost*, a lot of information about the outside world became available. I realized there were other areas I could explore. I soon learned about MGIMO, but at the time it seemed like an unassailable fortress. My English was pretty average, and I realized that I would have to work hard to seize this fortress. Of course, I was also lucky, and in 1987 I became a student at MGIMO.
Of the four schools, the International Law School seemed more preferable, so I chose it. I had to learn French as a beginner, and my second foreign language was English.
The first lectures were usually introductory, given by a distinguished professor from each department. There are different ways to teach school and university students about the law, and some of the ways discourage them from studying it. But our professors delivered those first lectures with such passion that the diverse world of law—a field as interesting as it is creative—opened up before us.
Fixed in my memory is what Professor of History A. Grebenyuk told us. In his classes he always taught the ability to see the underlying vector around which certain historical events were systematically organized. This ability to not lose the vector of the solution you are looking for in the abyss of data is very important in both law and in judicial proceedings. Everything else can be corrected, but if the vector is flawed, the solution will be flawed.
Vitalii Volodin, the head of the Philosophy Department, instilled in me a love not only for philosophy as a subject in its own right but also for the philosophy of law. The subject matter he introduced us to was complex; he lectured charismatically but, as befits a philosopher, in a complicated way. I even remember taking

my Elektronika tape recorder to his lectures and transcribing the recordings at home to understand every word. I still treasure Volodin's review of my term paper on the philosophy of existentialism. I keep it as a reward because in those years he was one of the leading experts in the philosophy of existentialism and personalism, studying Sartre and Mounier.
To conclude my memories of MGIMO, I can't help but talk about our language teachers, especially from the French department. I have never found such an effective language learning method anywhere else. I remember my first book in French—*The Little Prince* by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry—as well as many other outstanding works of French literature, from the classics to plays of the theater of the absurd. In four years, the language classes gave us a unique cultural palette! Thanks to my teachers, I realized that through a foreign language you can see reality in a different way, including the



cultural codes embedded in people. By the way, I know from experience that if you have trouble translating a text, you should look for the problem in the original.

MJ: What was the subject of your thesis?

It was related to the pre-graduation internship I had in Cameroon. I left in the fall of 1991, when the Soviet Union still existed, and returned in 1992, already in Russia. It was an unusual experience; I remember changing the flag on the embassy flagpole. The topic I chose for my thesis was related to the same region: international legal aspects of African economic integration. In light of current events in the global South, this topic might be more relevant today.
After successfully defending my thesis in 1992, I realized that I did not see a clear career path and continued my postgraduate studies. At that time, opportunities to study abroad began to appear, and after a year as a graduate student in the International Law Department, I wrote to several French universities about academic exchanges. It didn't take long for the answers to come, and in 1993 I joined the University of Strasbourg. Initially, the plan was the same: to continue my studies in international law and write my dissertation. However, time and circumstances have significantly changed my plans. Strasbourg is a small European town that has been the headquarters of the Council of Europe since the 1950s. That's how I found myself in such close proximity to the European institutions.

Our professors delivered those first lectures with such passion that the diverse world of law—a field as interesting as it is creative—opened up before us.

In the early 1990s, only a handful of people knew about that organization: Russia was not part of it. Today, as a result of our membership in the Council of Europe, volumes have been written about it, but at that time, even for a graduate of the International Law School, it was all very new.
I realized that the subject matter was worth exploring. I began to study the judicial practice of the application of the European Convention on Human Rights and, after successfully passing the university exams after the first year of study, I was admitted to the doctoral program, where I worked on my thesis and, at the same time, continued to study the decisions of the ECtHR. Meanwhile, a new discipline of international law gradually emerged from them: international judicial protection of human rights.
When Russia joined the Council of Europe on February 28, 1996, our permanent mission was opened there, and immediately a very interesting and multifaceted work began, which I joined without hesitation, having already studied the theory well.
I passed the first competition open to Russian citizens and became an employee of the Secretariat of the Council of Europe, thus entering the system of the European Convention on Human Rights. However, as Russia had not yet ratified the Convention by 1996, there could be no Russian cases (they only began to appear after the ratification in 1998). I had the opportunity to work on cases involving all the other countries (there were only 35 of them besides Russia at that time) and to report to the leadership on how the ECtHR judgments on them could be implemented in national law.
The most interesting part began after 1998, when we started to work on Russian cases: we had to interact with various Russian bodies, first of all the courts, which at that time had just started their communication with the ECtHR. This marked the beginning of a long, quarter-century-long history of interaction between Russian courts and the Council of Europe, which, of course, had a significant impact on the development of Russian law—not only on judicial practice but also on structural reforms and the development of the judiciary in the new Russia. During that time, Russia gained useful experience that significantly strengthened its legal system.
In my early years at the Council of Europe, I worked in the unit for monitoring the implementation of judgments of the ECtHR, working with the authorities of respondent states to address many of the structural problems that these judgments revealed. So I worked until 2003, and then I decided to make a drastic change—to go back to school to study common law.
I had already had a six-year career in the Council, which was going well; it was interesting to work, and nothing seemed to be pushing me toward such a step.
But at some point I began to notice that something was missing. I had studied continental law, first in Russia and then in France. But when I met colleagues from the "common law" system, I realized that although we seem to be talking about the same thing, we speak different legal languages and apply different algorithms.
I wanted to expand my legal toolkit, preferably outside of Europe, to get away from its Eurocentricity.
I applied to Columbia University School of Law in New York. The most difficult part was to write an interesting personal statement in which you explain why you need this education and formulate your vision of what you want in your career and in life. The process of preparing the papers and writing the statement itself was quite productive because it made me break my routine and think about my goals.

MJ: Was the study experience worthwhile?

Although I spent two years repaying the loans, I believe that all my efforts were not in vain. Everything was expensive in Manhattan, and I came there with my family with two small children and rented a university apartment. I have no regrets. The costs were later recovered, but in the long run, the experience and education gained were more valuable. Since life offered such an opportunity, it was wise to seize it.
The program I enrolled in in 2003 was an LL.M. degree, so you graduate with a Master of Laws. It's a one-year postgraduate academic degree.
My studies began with a compulsory course, Introduction to American Law, accompanied by seminars with practicing lawyers. September was the start of the main "dish"—study in disciplines that students chose themselves. Each class required processing a hundred or two pages of complex legal material. That included court decisions, textbooks, doctrinal papers, and commentaries. As for the choice of disciplines, I picked not only courses but also brilliant professors, primarily in the fields I was interested in.



We were taught the ability to see the underlying vector around which certain historical events were systematically organized. Everything else can be corrected, but if the vector is flawed, the judge's solution will be flawed.

MJ: What was that?

I decided to take a break from human rights issues as there were enough of them in Strasbourg. I studied constitutional law, both U.S. and comparative; legal theory and anthropology; and selected problems of international law, such as a course on peacekeeping operations, which is at the intersection of politics and law.
It was taught by Michael Doyle, a former advisor to then-UN Secretary General Kofi Annan. We had many discussions about the background and critical aspects of the U.S. invasion of Iraq and, before that, the



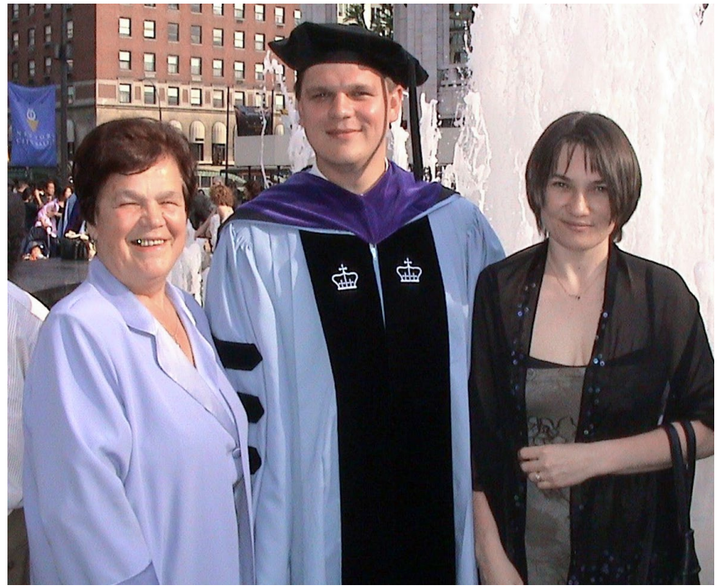
NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. It was very insightful.
I also took courses in international law and management; I wanted to better understand how international organizations and courts work—not just the formal legal side but also the strategy and tactics in their inner workings.

MJ: What did that year of study teach you?
First of all, by leaving the usual context, I was able to look at myself and my career in law in a different way, to rethink my experiences, and to set new goals. Second, it was an immersion in a nurturing academic environment that was different from the international political and legal organizations I was accustomed to, which tend to operate under rather rigid rules. In an academic environment, however, there is a lively exchange of thoughts and ideas, which gives a sense of greater intellectual freedom. I gained a good amount of knowledge, new tools in my toolkit and databases, and learned certain codes that I found useful later.
When I returned to the Council of Europe, to that bureaucratic machine, I realized that the main challenge was not so much leaving to study but returning to Strasbourg, where a sense of academic freedom quickly became a thing of the past.

Everything we have built over 26 years of cooperation with Council of Europe cannot be thrown into the dustbin of history. We have worked honestly on this path, we have fought honestly to preserve the CE as a unique pan-European platform.

If you look at good old Europe from America, it appears as a kind of cozy cocoon, with a narrower horizon of vision of what is going on in the world. Nevertheless, I felt that the European cultural framework was anthropologically closer to me than the American one. I used to think that Europe and America were much closer culturally, but it turned out that they were very different, at least at that time.
The training certainly helped me in my career. In 2007, I became head of the legal department of the Secretariat of the European Court of Human Rights. I was mainly involved in drafting ECtHR judgments. I worked in that position for seven years and was involved in pan-European litigation, which was perhaps in its heyday at the time.
And in 2014, I returned to the Council of Europe's main legal department—and again with a promotion—to head the Human Rights Policy and Cooperation Department with 200 employees.
Cooperation was the key word in that unit: I was to be closely involved in cooperation programs with all CoE member states, including Russia. And we have to admit that it was then that a serious moment of crisis arose that demonstrated the risks of our continued membership in the organization. My transition to the CoE took place against the backdrop of events around Ukraine and Crimea's reunification with Russia.
Although Russia remained a member of the organization after 2014, very strong political pressure began. In 2015, the Russian delegation left PACE in response to the violation of its statutory rights; in 2017, Russia suspended its financial contribution to the budget. Nevertheless, in these remaining eight years, every effort was made to minimize the political costs of growing hostility and to try to preserve the positive developments in pan-European cooperation. New conventions were even signed and ratified, and mechanisms for their use were put in place.
For example, the Reform Protocol to the Data Protection Convention—Russia was among the first to sign it in 2018.
Still, it was a time of interesting projects for me. A large group of project managers from my department worked all over Europe, including Russia. One such project involved MGIMO's European Studies Institute (ESI).
After I left the judiciary in 2014, I began to communicate more with academic institutions, and the ESI became a very good partner, a participant in the pan-European program HELP (Human Rights Education for Legal Professionals), which we then successfully developed in all European countries without exception, including Belarus, which was not part of the organization. The innovation of the program was that European law, based on the conventions of the Council of Europe, first of all the European Convention on Human Rights, should be taught not only as international law but also as an element of national law—based on the fact that these conventions form a single pan-European legal space and are also part of national law. We had to translate every convention and every court decision not only into the language of the country we were working in but also into the legal language of the profession we were addressing.
Achieving such professional engagement between countries, their various judicial institutions, and academic platforms was probably the highlight of my late career at the Council of Europe. We have created a vast network of pan-European communication between people of different legal professions.
In eight years, this project became so successful in terms of cooperation that until now, despite the fact that we withdrew from the Council of Europe on March 15, 2022, everything that was gained during these years continues to be used and even developed in one way or another.

At Columbia University, I gained a good amount of knowledge, new tools in my toolkit and databases, and learned certain codes that I found useful later.



MJ: But the bad taste of the breakup remained?
Of course. It was a highly uncivilized divorce, with gross violations by the organization of its charter, unworthy of it as the guardian of the rule of law. If I may make an analogy to divorce in civil law, even if the partners have had a final and brutal falling-out, there are still some mechanisms in place to take care of their children, so to speak. And the Council of Europe and we have had many common "children," only in the form of conventions, over a quarter of a century. Out of more than 220 conventions of the organization, Russia took part in 68 major ones, not to mention its participation in other frameworks. Some of the conventions have now been denounced, but we are still participating in 40 open conventions, although in some of them the organization and its secretariat stoop as low as to illegally sabotage our presence in the convention bodies.

MJ: Can you think of a "cornerstone" case that illustrates that fruitful period?
In 2019, the Court published a commemorative book containing 47 of the most striking cases from each country in the Council of Europe's 70 years. It was difficult to choose one of the successful Russian cases: there have been plenty of them over the years! The editorial board focused on the famous case of Mr. Burdov, on which there were two ECtHR decisions—in 2002 and 2009.
Anatoliy Burdov, a former Chernobyl disaster responder from the town of Shakhty, Rostov region, complained that Russian court decisions in his favor were systematically not enforced and that the amounts of social benefits awarded to him were not paid by the competent authorities. There were many Chernobyl survivors like him, and their complaints to Russian courts and the ECtHR numbered first in the hundreds, then in the thousands. Mr. Burdov was one of the first applicants whose case was decided by the Strasbourg Court in 2002. It was also the first court ruling on Russia in general. Failure to enforce a judicial act issued

in a state is a violation of the "right to a fair trial" protected by Article 6 of the Convention. Mr. Burdov was awarded compensation, including moral damages, but similar cases continued to come before the ECtHR. After all, the enforcement of court decisions in Russia suffered not only from economic problems but also from the inefficiency of administrative and social security mechanisms. A few years later, Mr. Burdov again appealed to the ECtHR, which in 2009 issued a so-called pilot judgment aimed not only at satisfying the claim of the individual applicant but also at solving a systemic problem. In the ruling, the court made a systematic analysis of the situation and ordered that, in addition to paying compensation to the applicant, a mechanism should be established under Russian law to protect the rights of such applicants. And such a mechanism was created in the form of the law on compensation for non-execution of judicial acts. That increased the efficiency of Russian courts.

Now I am working in my home country, which I am very happy about, and I will be dealing mainly with cases concerning possible violations by this or that law of the fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution.



MJ: The system of international law is in shambles. Can you give us a prediction of what's in store for us?
It's hard to say where this international turmoil will lead. In such a case, lawyers say, "Roman law did not save the Roman Empire." I would add, however, that Roman law outlived it. Because law, in the broadest sense, is the highest value created by humanity. Like other supreme achievements of human culture, law does not disappear without a trace; it cannot be erased. Therefore, I have a feeling that those legal values that were created in mutually beneficial interstate cooperation, including on the platform of the Council of Europe, will not disappear without a trace, as they continue to live on in the form of legal algorithms and concepts and institutions adopted and domesticated by national legal systems, just as elements of Roman law have become an integral part of the national law of many countries.

MJ: Do you see being a justice of the Constitutional Court of the Russian Federation as continuing your previous career?
To a large extent, yes. The difference is that from now on I will be working in my home country, which I am very happy about, and I will be dealing mainly with cases concerning possible violations by this or that law (or other regulation) of the fundamental rights enshrined in our Constitution. If the court finds such violations, it can go as far as declaring the law unconstitutional. And in such a case, the law should be changed to prevent such violations.
Compared to the ECHR, the Constitutional Court has a much greater variety of cases accepted for consideration. If we imagine the pyramid of all legal issues, the very "top" of the pyramid was considered in Strasbourg, i.e., only a very small number of rights fell under the jurisdiction of the ECtHR through a limited set of articles written in the European Convention on Human Rights.
The Constitutional Court of Russia deals with a much wider range of issues because



our Constitution also protects some rights that are completely absent in the Convention. Nine out of ten cases before the Constitutional Court would not even pass the admissibility threshold in Strasbourg. For example, labor, social, and economic cases, which we consider quite often.

MJ: Do you feel that you are part of the judicial elite?
First of all, I feel a great responsibility, as I was twice nominated by the president of Russia, after which I was appointed or elected to the highest judicial positions: first as a Russian judge of the ECtHR, then as a justice of the Constitutional Court of Russia. I believe that any court, as well as the justices themselves, should be judged by their cases, the quality of their decisions, and the level of their judicial skills. Courts should care about their reputation, which builds on the quality of their final "judicial product" and the professionalism of the people who create it—that's where the real value is. And it is always the result of the individual or collective creativity of the judges who, to answer your question, are obliged to be an elite by striving to deliver judgments that will be recognized, first and foremost by their country and society, and by their colleagues in other judicial authorities, as truly worthy of respect and fulfillment. Not only by virtue of the law, but also by virtue of their genuine persuasiveness.

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SHASHIKHINA: “THE LEGAL COMMUNITY DID ME A GREAT HONOR”

Interview by Igor Drobyshev
Photos by Igor Drobyshev
and by courtesy of T. Shashikhina

In November 2022, Tamara Shashikhina, a 1996 graduate of MGIMO and the director of the Eurasian Studies Institute (ESI) of MGIMO, joined the Higher Qualification Commission of Judges of the Russian Federation (HQCJ) as a public representative, and in June 2023 she was elected deputy chair of the HQCJ. “It is one of the bodies of the judicial community formed to express the interests of judges as holders of judicial power. The work of a judge begins with the decision of the Qualification Commission of Judges and ends with the decision of this commission,” Ms. Shashikhina explains. “The community did me a great honor; my candidacy was nominated for approval by the Federation Council, the upper house of parliament. I was standing on the high podium, and of course, I was very nervous. The decision on my appointment was handed to me personally by Valentina Matviyenko, the chair of the Federation Council.”



MJ: Was that an extra duty or a new chapter for you?
Of course, it was a new chapter. The commission is made up of members of the judiciary and the public, and it is an honor to work with them. But it is both a serious duty and a great responsibility. In 2023, 17 meetings were held, while the plan is to hold 6 meetings per year. Last year alone, over 1200 applications for judicial positions were considered.

MJ: You have achieved a lot in your career. Why did you decide to study at MGIMO?
I was born and raised in the family of a diplomat, a graduate of MGIMO, and studied in embassy schools, so I have been breathing the air and living in the atmosphere of the Soviet Union’s diplomatic talent factory since my childhood. There was no question which university to choose. My father was a staff member of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the geography of his work travels was very wide: from Laos and Vietnam to Japan and France. My sister and I studied the languages, culture, and traditions of the host countries. For example, in Japan, I studied at and finished a traditional dance school, learned karate skills, and studied Japanese.
My father called MGIMO the temple of diplomacy. He took my sister there first, and six years later, in 1991, he took me there and said, “This is your home. You must live up to MGIMO.”
When I entered the International Law School, I was enrolled in the Customs Law Department. But the circumstances were such that I studied in two departments at the same time: the customs department and the trade department. In the last years of my studies, however, I had to make a choice when the schedules no longer matched. But it didn’t take me long to decide—by the mid-90s, it was clear that commercial law specialists were more in demand in the market.
I studied at a very favorable time; we learned from outstanding teachers and scholars who had been at the origins of Soviet and Russian legal science. The first person who made a lasting impression on

Prof. Vasiliev sternly interrupted me: “When you decided to become a lawyer, you put on men’s pants! So please speak loudly and confidently. You will have people to defend in the future!”

me was Vitalii Kabatov. He taught classes in Roman and civil law. You couldn't come to class unprepared—it was shameful. Before the war with the German Nazis, he was a talented violinist; he went to war, fought, and lost both forearms in one of the battles… But he did not give up and became an outstanding lawyer. His image and spirit had us in absolute awe. Kabatov didn't just master the subject—he lived it; he immersed us in the world of Latin, a dead language, reviving it for us…
Another vivid impression was meeting Professor Evgeny Vasiliev, who taught us civil and commercial law of foreign countries. It was a little disconcerting at first, though. When the professor asked us a question during the first class, I immediately raised my hand, as an A-student should. I was so nervous that when I answered, I practically started to squeak. Prof. Vasiliev sternly interrupted me, "When you entered the profession, when you decided to become a lawyer, you put on men's pants! So please speak loudly and confidently. You will have people to defend in the future!" I pulled myself together and began to speak in a loud voice, almost as if I were making an official report. It was a great lesson to learn. Since then, I have spoken in front of audiences loudly, confidently, and hopefully to the point.
When Olga Zimenkova, a professor at the Department of International Private and Civil Law, a specialist in contract law, was assigned as my research advisor, someone said to me, "Hold on to your hat!" She was considered a very strict teacher, an absolute perfectionist who would not tolerate students being late for class, being even slightly unprepared, or asking idle questions. But she turned out to be not so much a strict teacher as a fair one. It was she who taught me how to work with sources, how to pay attention to every detail in a contract, and how to pay attention to every letter in a thesis.

We left the Council of Europe, not only having gained serious experience but also having left a serious mark on this organization, giving it a new and unique meaning through our participation



MJ: Why did you choose European law?
It was a new, unknown field of study; the Department of European Law had just been created, and the Institute of European Law (IEL) had just begun to function. And when I was in university, there was no such discipline. However, European law was close to me, and it suited my interests. I studied it in practice by working as a student with French companies in a commercial entity where I was involved in the legal support of purchase and sale transactions. Now I had the opportunity to acquire basic theoretical knowledge and apply my practical experience in teaching European law.
Importantly, in 1996, when the MGIMO began to develop its school of European law, Russia became a member of the Council of Europe, and the Partnership and Cooperation Agreement between Russia and the EU was ratified. It was a milestone, and I was glad to be a part of that important and necessary endeavor for our country. During that time, my colleagues and I received numerous requests from government agencies on European issues, prepared expert reports, and built relationships with European universities and institutes.

MJ: How did the idea of transforming the Institute of European Law into ESI come about?
This was a logical step in the development of the European track, which IEL had successfully represented for 10 years by training law experts. The training program had to be supplemented with new focus areas in economics and politics. The establishment of the European Studies Institute at MGIMO was provided for in the fourth EU-Russia Roadmap, which focused on education, science, and culture. At the time, it was a unique project, both in concept and scope, as well as in the tasks set.
The project was completely new for both Russia and the EU and required a lot of hard work.
The ESI was inaugurated in 2006 in the presence of Russian Presidential Aide S. Yastrzhembsky, Russian Foreign Minister S. Lavrov, and European Commissioner Benita Ferrero-Waldner. Mark Entin, the son of the founder of IEL, Prof. Lev Entin, was elected director, and I became his deputy and head of the Institute of European Law. ESI was one of the few projects that was fully implemented and in strict accordance with the Roadmap.
And in 2012, I was appointed director of ESI following an open international competition held in connection with the appointment of M. Entin as Russian ambassador to Luxembourg.
In addition to the educational process itself, there was a great demand for project work: unique courses on studying the practice of using human rights protection mechanisms and an extremely relevant online workshop on the protection of human rights in sports, which went down in history under the name of "MGIMO initiatives." We left the Council of Europe in 2023, not only having gained serious experience but also having left a serious mark on this organization, giving it a new and unique meaning through our participation.



European Studies Institute is a unique project, both in concept and scope, as well as in the tasks set

MJ: After the start of the special military operation in February 2022, the geopolitical reality changed fundamentally, and Europe found itself on the other side of the barricades.
ESI has always met the challenges of the times with dignity. It was decided to rename the institute the Eurasian Studies Institute while keeping the abbreviation. Thus, an already well-established brand has remained unchanged. Besides, Eurasian studies were not new to the institute. Since the early days of the Eurasian Economic Community and later the Eurasian Economic Union, Eurasian issues have been part of the research field and academic program of ESI. Integration processes and the functioning of integration associations and international organizations have always been taught here in the form of comparative analysis.
I am proud to say that today almost every department of the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) employs ESI graduates.
In May 2023, an agreement was concluded to create the Eurasian Consortium of Universities, which included universities from the EAEU member states: Belarusian State University, Belarus State Economic University, K. Dikambayev Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kyrgyz Republic, and Yerevan State University. In July 2023, the first students were enrolled in the joint master's program Comprehensive Studies of Integration Processes, which is implemented in a network format.
The competitive advantage of graduates of this program is the opportunity to study simultaneously at two universities (MGIMO and a partner university) and receive two diplomas.
We have established close cooperation with the EAEU Court, which was headed by MGIMO graduate Aleksei Dronov in January 2024. ESI prepares expert reports at the request of the court on cases accepted for review.

DRONOV: "I WILL DO MY BEST TO PROMOTE EURASIAN INTEGRATION"

Interview by **Igor Drobyshev**
Photos by **courtesy of the Court of the Eurasian Economic Union, by courtesy of A. Dronov**

On January 8, 2024, the plenary session of the Court of the Eurasian Economic Union elected Aleksei Dronov, a 1994 MGIMO graduate, as its president by secret ballot.
"Before this honorable appointment, I was the consul general of the Russian Federation in Bonn," Dronov said. "But when I learned about the competition to fill the vacancy of a judge of the EAEU Court, I consulted with my family and colleagues and decided to participate. Sounds like a big life and career change, but why not give it a try? After a while I was informed that I was on the "short list" of applicants, and soon after that about the decision of the president of the Russian Federation to select me as one of the two Russian candidates submitted for the assignment by the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. Needless to say, I was very excited! After all, it is a sign of absolute trust in me and a great responsibility!"

MJ: But you must have been appointed for a reason. Have you ever had to deal with EAEU-related matters before?
Yes, I have. While I was the deputy director of the Legal Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, I even had the opportunity to participate in the drafting of the Treaty on the Eurasian Economic Union of May 29, 2014, which provided the basis for the establishment of the EAEU Court and whose tenth anniversary was celebrated last year. I was awarded by the Recognition of the President of the Russian Federation for that work.

MJ: You, however, have never served as a judge, even though you graduated from MGIMO's International Law School and have worked on legal issues at the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
It is true that I had no judicial experience prior to my appointment. However, from my first days as a judge of the EAEU Court, I felt the relevance of the professional background I had acquired over 30 years as a diplomat and international lawyer. It is not only about expertise and many years of practice in international law but also about the experience in communicating with people. Intuition also plays an important role as it suggests when it is a good time to pause and when to act quickly and decisively, for example, by proposing an out-of-the-box solution. I am happy and proud to have the honor of being the first MGIMO graduate and the first Russian to preside over the EAEU Court.



MJ: And it's a great honor for MGIMO as well. Speaking of which, why did you choose our university?
When I went to school, I never thought or dreamed of becoming a diplomat. A chain of circumstances beyond my control led to that choice.
I still remember the first link in the chain. My parents applied late to the nearest schools when they enrolled me in first grade. The only one that still had places was a specialized school with an advanced German language curriculum. But I studied German with no particular affection or aptitude for it. Everything changed in 1988, when I went to the GDR as part of a school delegation, where I was able to communicate with my East German peers. Such exchanges had begun long before the Soviet *perestroika* thanks to the partnership between my school and a school in the town of Eisleben (now it's in the state of Saxony-Anhalt), spearheaded by an amazing man—the headmaster of our school, a former prisoner of the Buchenwald concentration camp, where he had learned German by communicating with German anti-fascists. When I broke the language barrier and communicated with the children from the GDR in a warm and friendly way and lived with their families for a few days, I felt the magic of communication in a foreign language and appreciated the beauty and harmony of the German language in a new way. This is how I became interested in Germany, its history and culture, and wanted to learn more about the German language. But I didn't want to be a translator, so I started looking for other professions where I could use my language skills.
My father convinced me to take preparatory courses at MGIMO. I grudgingly agreed; the prospect of entering this university seemed unrealistic. But I decided to give it a try, and after graduating from high school in 1989, I passed the entrance exams for the International Law School and decided to become an international lawyer. The combination of law and foreign language skills is what appealed to me in this profession.



I am happy and proud to have the honor of being the first MGIMO graduate and the first Russian to preside over the EAEU Court.

We were lucky to be taught by a whole galaxy of highly professional, brilliant and interesting teachers, who can be rightfully considered among the national intellectual elite and who were and still are the pride of MGIMO!
Professor Yurii Kolosov, the head of the Department of Public International Law, contributed to our professional development and helped us realize that the best office for a graduate of the International Law School is foreign service. He had a special way of combining an academic approach with vivid and shrewd observations and stories about legal subjects and international work.
Stepan Molodtsov, an expert in international maritime law and the author of a textbook on this difficult discipline, was a participant in the UN conferences on the law of the sea, deeply and creatively comprehended and systematized their results.
We were vividly impressed by Vitalii Kabatov, a legendary expert in civil law, who gave us a course in Roman law. He was an exemplar of culture, one of those we looked up to as a beacon on our career path.

MJ: Was there an episode that drastically affected you?
My classmates and I were strongly influenced by the pre-graduation internship we had at the Legal Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1993. I didn't plan to get a job there at first. Curiosity played a role, as well as the choice of subject for my thesis ("International legal aspects of the operation of nuclear-powered merchant ships"). It would have been problematic to collect material for it in other places. Thanks to the tradition of engaging

people of different generations, including interns, in collective discussions of the most complex issues, we quickly adjusted to the work of international lawyers. And we were not “apprentices”; any of us, recent university students, could be asked for an opinion by our superiors. In this sense, they did not hesitate to start entrusting us with difficult tasks quite soon. It was during the pre-graduation internship that I made my first analytical materials, for which I was commended by the department’s management.
What we very much enjoyed about the department was the atmosphere of solidarity and mutual assistance, self-control and improvement of expertise. Every employee had textbooks, reference books, and monographs on international law on the desks in their offices.
When we returned to the university and decided to go to work at the Foreign Ministry, we immediately felt how the attitude of our teachers, especially those of the older generation, had changed towards us. It became expressly respectful—they treated us like their colleagues!

That was my dream—to be in demand. When at some point you begin to feel the connection between what you do and the serious processes going on in the country and the world.





MJ: What was your career path like?
It is pretty simple in structure. After graduating from MGIMO, I started working in the Legal Department of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where I returned each time from long-term foreign postings—at the Russian Embassy in Berlin (1999-2004) and at the Russian Permanent Mission to the International Organizations in Vienna (2007-2012). I did not return to my home department only from my last foreign posting—in Bonn, where I headed the Russian Consulate General from March 2021 to December 2023. As I said before, the reason is my appointment as a judge of the EAEU Court.
As rough and even dark as the 1990s were, I remain grateful for that time and the people we shared it with. Even then, we, young diplomats, had the opportunity to take on difficult tasks and prove ourselves as individuals and professionals, with full responsibility for the common cause. It was encouraging to see my analytical and position papers among the documents used by the ministry's leadership. People referred to those papers for a long time afterwards. That was my dream—to be in demand. That seems to be the special appeal of public service, when at some point you begin to feel the connection between what you do and the serious processes going on in the country and the world.
Then came the 2000s, when V. Putin was elected president of Russia. That period coincided with my first foreign posting—to Berlin. The trip gave me a wealth of experience in practical diplomacy. In addition to the bilateral aspects of relations with Germany, I had to deal with the UN and post-Soviet countries, and at one point even supervised an essay on Africa. I was able to build good relations and extensive contacts with my colleagues in the German Foreign Ministry. At one time I had to visit it so often on orders from Moscow that the guards would let me enter the building without asking for a pass.

MJ: Have you had any projects that you look back on as your achievements?
Diplomacy is a team game. But like any diplomat, I had projects in which I invested a special amount of effort and energy. For example, my trust-based relations with my German colleagues allowed me to convey through their channels to the necessary representatives of third countries the information that



made it possible to unblock the process of concluding the UN Convention for the Suppression of Acts of Nuclear Terrorism (a Russian initiative), which at the time was closely linked to the stalled development of the draft Comprehensive Convention on Combating Terrorism proposed by India.
Another notable topic was church property. Five unique and very beautiful Orthodox churches, built at the expense of the tsar’s treasury, were confiscated by the German authorities during the Nazi period. My colleagues and I were tasked with seeking the return of those historical and cultural monuments to the ownership of the Russian state. As a young diplomat at the time, I had the privilege of participating in the development of a legal position on that issue, and it was a truly serious professional challenge. Although the Germans hastily refused to continue the dialogue, those efforts proved to be well spent. The analytical materials and proposals prepared by the embassy proved to be important for the country’s leadership and were used to prepare the visit of the hierarchs of the Russian Orthodox Church Abroad to Russia and their meeting with the Moscow patriarch, with the active mediation of the president of Russia.

Diplomacy is a team game. But I had projects in which I invested a special amount of effort and energy.

Through these and other examples, I was able to see the creative nature of the diplomatic profession. When you set yourself a difficult task, relying on the support of friends and like-minded people, you embark on a difficult journey, often filled with failures and disappointments, and when you reach the planned milestones, you feel great inner satisfaction.
The next stage was a posting to Vienna, where, as senior advisor to the Permanent Mission of Russia to International Organizations, I had the opportunity to work on issues related to the UN Commission on Narcotic Drugs, the UN Office on Drugs and Crime, and the International Narcotics Control Board, as well as on the implementation of the UN Conventions against Corruption and against Transnational Organized Crime. My scope also included matters related to the UN Committee on Outer Space, its Legal Subcommittee, and its Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.
A major diplomatic achievement, of which I am still proud to be a part, was the adoption of the Political Declaration and Action Plan to Address the World Drug Problem by the High-Level Segment of the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March 2009, with Russia’s active participation. It was preceded by a long and complex negotiation process, during which we had good interaction with our colleagues from other delegations, including the United States.
My posting in Vienna was an invaluable experience in working with international organizations of the UN system. In

particular, I had to delve deeply into the administrative and budgetary issues of their functioning, because diplomatic work in any international organization, contrary to popular belief, does not consist only of speeches at plenary meetings. The real work takes place behind the scenes. At the same time, the most serious attention has to be paid to the often hidden issues of program and operations activities of an international organization. Established contacts with its secretariat, colleagues from other permanent missions, and a good knowledge of the rules of procedure are essential for this type of work.

MJ: Did you get promoted after Vienna?
Yes, the leadership of the ministry and its legal department gave me confidence by inviting me to take on the responsible position of the unit's deputy director. I returned to Moscow in December 2012—just before the dramatic events that followed the anti-constitutional coup in Ukraine, including the incorporation of Crimea into Russia, the diplomatic crisis over the destruction of the Malaysian Boeing, and the outbreak of civil war in Donbas. It has become clear that we have entered a very difficult period with unprecedented challenges to national security and the whole range of Russia's vital interests. There has been a constant escalation of tensions by the West, an integral part of which has been the Western attack on Russia, its rights, and legitimate interests on the legal front. Sergey Lavrov aptly called it "legal aggression."

The beauty of the diplomatic profession is that it opens wide and varied horizons for professional self-expression and allows you to respond to major challenges.



During this period, which stretched over nine years, I had to deal with a variety of areas: international treaties, international economic law, maritime law, space law, aviation law, and private law.
And in March 2021, I was sent to Bonn as the consul general of Russia, an appointment that took place during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic.
The Russian Consulate General in Bonn is the only consulate of its kind. Its distinguishing feature is that it occupies the premises of the former Soviet and then Russian embassy in the FRG. These are systems of representative, office and residential buildings and constructions on two land plots of about 10 hectares. It's the infrastructure of a large embassy!
The Consulate General is located at a considerable geographical distance from Berlin, in North Rhine-Westphalia, a state the size of an average European country. And this does not include other federal states previously included in the "Bonn" consular district (Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland) and those that were included in it from January 1, 2024 (Bavaria, Baden-Württemberg, Hesse)—after the withdrawal of consent to the opening of four Russian consulates general in Hamburg, Leipzig, Munich, and Frankfurt am Main. This part of Germany is a hub of major industrial, scientific, technological, cultural, and educational centers.
This vast consular district is home to hundreds of thousands of Russian compatriots, most of whom care about preserving the Russian language and cherish spiritual, cultural, and humanitarian ties with their historic homeland. Despite the pressure, the associations of Russian compatriots engaged in the dissemination of Russian language and culture, historical and memorial work, including the commemoration of Soviet citizens who fell victim to Nazi brutality, continue to work in an organized manner.
It should also be remembered that Bonn retains the status of a federal city, which continues to perform some metropolitan functions (for example, it is the seat of a number of federal ministries) and is the headquarters of a number of international organizations, including bodies and programs of the United Nations system. These include the secretariats of the Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Convention to Combat Desertification, as well as the UN Volunteers Program.
Can you imagine the volume of work representing Russia's interests, performing consular functions, assisting compatriots, and managing such a complex of property that falls on the shoulders of the Consulate General, its management, and its staff!
It consistently ranks among the leading Russian missions abroad in terms of the number of consular actions performed, including passport replacement, citizenship, notary, and pension issues.
By the time I left Bonn, all official contacts with the German authorities in the economic, cultural, and humanitarian areas had been essentially frozen or completely severed.

MJ: What is it like for you, a career diplomat, to wear a judicial robe?
We have a saying: "There are no ex-diplomats." As an international judge appointed to this position by the decision of the five heads of the EAEU member states, I continue to feel connected to the Russian diplomacy, and I am proud to belong to this highly professional and tradition-rich line of work.
Our predecessors, the former members of the Court, had a difficult task—they were pioneers who laid the foundations for the development of the Court as an institution of the Union. By and large, no one knew how the new international judicial body would function and how effective it would be when the EAEU was created. Specifically, because its jurisdiction encompasses matters such as the interpretation and application of Union law, which are at the intersection of national and international law, and because it includes several areas of special legal regulation, previously exercised by each of the states, mainly within their sovereign mandates.
The new judicial bench of the Court and I, as its president, aim to reflect on the experience of our predecessors and, building on it, to continue efforts to strengthen the law of the Union and its institutions in the common interests of the member states and to promote Eurasian integration, which is connected to the development aspirations of the peoples of our countries.
Of course, in order to do this, the member states must have confidence in the Court. Understandably, such trust can only be earned through the pursuit of genuine, highly professional, independent, and impartial international justice. As the president of the EAEU Court, I see my grand purpose as creating the atmosphere conducive to this.
I will do my best to contribute to the further strengthening of the authority of the Court, to the development of the law and institutions of the Union, and to the promotion of Eurasian integration.

We have a saying: "There are no ex-diplomats." As an international judge, I am proud to belong to this highly professional line of work.



MJ: You celebrated the 30th anniversary of your graduation from MGIMO. How do you feel about that?
I can say that choosing my life's path and following my purpose has brought a sense of peace and harmony. Much depends, of course, on the upbringing given by the family and on the ability to communicate with people and build good relations with them based on respect for their human dignity. I used to remind my German colleagues: "My friends, read your Basic Law, the first article of which says: 'Human dignity is inviolable.'"

THE POLYANICHKO DYNASTY

Photos by Yurii Lukin
Text by Masha Kuznetsova
Location: Mercury boutique, Metropol Hotel

The MGIMO alumni dynasty, to which Alena Polyanichko belongs, dates back to the 1940s. "My grandfather, Yurii Pankov, graduated from the university in the second graduating class. And my son Egor, who entered MGIMO three years ago, became the twelfth MGIMO student in our family since the university was founded. That includes four generations of us: my grandfather, my mother and her brother A. Pankov, consul general of Russia in Barcelona; my father, Grigorii Polyanichko; their cousin and his wife—an entire dynasty!
But that's not all: a powerful river source of international relations experts from Kiev flows into the MGIMO alumni stream in Moscow. "My grandfather on my father's side, M. Polyanichko, was an ambassador, deputy foreign minister of the Ukrainian SSR in the Soviet years, and he represented the Ukrainian SSR at the UN."
Today, Alena Polyanichko, public relations director of the jewelry and watch division of the company Mercury, is sure that this unique dynasty will not end: "I have a daughter, a first-grader, Valeria; maybe, like Egor, she will be interested in the profession of an international relations expert."

MJ: How did you become a part of this dynasty?
My parents graduated from MGIMO as a married couple in 1975, and I was born in 1979. For most of the 1980s, I lived with my parents in New York, where my father was assigned as a translator for the UN on his first posting. Dad loved his job; English was his passion. On his second posting, he and my mother already worked as employees of the Permanent Mission of the USSR to the UN.

MJ: It was very interesting for a Soviet diplomat to work in America in the 1980s, especially in the second half, when the West was following the fashion of Soviet *perestroika* and *glasnost*. America was open to us and we were open to America. Did you feel that change in any way?
Of course. I had the unique opportunity to attend a regular American school. For the last two years before returning to Moscow, I went to a public school, but not in Manhattan, where it might be unsafe, but in the quiet, pleasant neighborhood of Riverdale, a five-minute walk from the house where the diplomats' families lived. I would go home alone. One day my mom lost me. She found me in the local library, where she caught me writing a report on ancient Egypt.
Even at that level, as a child, I felt how American society had turned toward us Soviet people. Everyone wanted to show how friendly they were.





And in 1991, I returned to Moscow together with other children whose parents' postings had ended. It was as if we had brought to Moscow part of the environment in which we grew up in America. And we got so used to each other that in 1996 some of my classmates and I even applied to MGIMO together.

I always wanted to follow in my parents' footsteps. As a child, I used to listen to their conversations; I always enjoyed the atmosphere of their work in my family, so to speak. Also, almost all of my parents' friends were MGIMO graduates. So the training I received at our university was a natural development of my personality. I hesitated about what I wanted to study; for example, I was interested in international law, but I wouldn't have had the stamina for it. Knowing my character and inclinations, my parents suggested that I go to the School of International Relations, and it made sense.

I was also attracted to international journalism, and I loved practicing journalistic skills in language classes—analyzing some material, thinking of a headline for it.

After receiving my bachelor's degree, I went to a joint master's program of MGIMO and the French institute Sciences Po. At that time, this program was just gaining traction, so to speak—it was modern, cool, and trendy.

I had the opportunity to compare the two educational systems—Russian and French. They are completely different. Ours is fundamental, comprehensive, and conservative at its best. The students are immersed in the subject, so they learn the essentials from start to finish: they are taught a lot of theory, and they have to do a lot of self-learning. The French system is all about systematization. When you do research, you have to put it into a certain system of analysis. And this is the difference not only between educational systems but also between national characters.

I began postgraduate studies and continued research on "international counterterrorist regimes" (the term I coined together with my advisor Vladimir Petrovskii, a member of the Military Academy of Sciences) and even published a book based on my work.

But I wanted to do something different. While I was preparing my thesis, I worked as an editor at the Russia TV channel, writing economic news for it. I learned what it was like to work in television. It's interesting work, but it's also very stressful. I couldn't stay there for long, so I went to work in a quieter environment, in a representative office of American Express, where I worked in sales and was responsible for the compliance process for banks. And then I went on maternity leave and had my son.

"The MGIMO alumni dynasty, to which I belong, dates back to the 1940s. It includes four generations. My son Egor became the twelfth MGIMO student in our family since the university was founded. My daughter, a first-grader, Valeria; maybe, like Egor, she will be interested in the profession of an international relations expert, as well."

In 2007, I started working at Mercury on the advertising and PR side of the business. At first, I was in charge of one brand, but gradually I began to do PR work for the jewelry line, and then, logically, the watches line. And I've been marketing jewelry and watches for a while now.

MJ: What do you like about it?

First of all, it's art. Speaking of watches, I've met a lot of amazing people over the years—the best watchmakers in the world. They are brilliant people who develop extremely complex mechanisms, come up with unusual engineering solutions even today, create new designs, and continue to amaze the world.

Jewelry making is a whole other world too! In addition to beauty and investment value, each gemstone has its own meaning and story. Stone selection, cutting, jewelry design, and jewelers' work are processes usually hidden from the average person's eyes. Finding the right stones for jewelry that have certain colors and characteristics is incredibly difficult. Jewelers can spend years selecting stones to create jewels! Artificial diamonds are now in fashion, but when people ask me what I think about them, I answer without hesitation with the question, "If you had to choose between hanging a copy or an original of your favorite painting on your wall, which would you prefer?"

For over 30 years, Mercury has represented the finest companies in the jewelry and watch world. It is an amazing experience to work with them! Each has its own history, style, and specialization. And of course, each builds their marketing strategy differently. And this is incredibly interesting. In addition, we have been able to apply this invaluable experience to the creation and development of Mercury's own jewelry brand.

MJ: You've been fortunate to build a successful career in a very interesting field.

And I would like to emphasize that being part of the MGIMO family, which I appreciate very much, has played a big role in this. In my job, I meet our alumni all the time, although the circle of people who have graduated from our university is quite small. I really appreciate our education and the broad knowledge and world outlook it provides. This is the outlook of people who are open to the new, willing to create, build, learn, connect, and unite. People with a mission. At Mercury, where I and several other MGIMO graduates work, we always try to find interesting, unusual, and valuable projects to offer to our shareholders, and we try to do everything meaningfully. Occasionally, you come across the perception that working at Mercury is all



about luxury goods. This is a very narrow view of what we do. In fact, we try to do a lot of interesting cultural and social projects. For example, during the pandemic, we partnered with the Russian edition of Forbes Woman magazine to create an annual award honoring women in small business—the Forbes Woman Mercury Awards.

For several months, we select the most interesting business projects created by women in three categories: Best Business Solution, Best Charity Project, and Best Social Entrepreneurship Project. For example, one of the first awards went to a young software developer who created a program for seniors who couldn't go anywhere during the pandemic. Its algorithm, linked to Russia's largest grocery chains, allowed people who did not know how to use the Internet to easily order groceries over the phone. Winners included a scientist, one of the creators of the Sputnik vaccine, and women who have introduced amazing social initiatives for child development. One surprising project is the support system for deaf-mute women preparing for and during labor: it turns out that they go through this journey without the usual support hearing women have. Winners are featured on the cover of Forbes Woman, and the whole country learns about their projects. And throughout the year, shortlisted projects are featured on the website and in the magazine. In this way, we help great startups grow and create a community of women whose successful projects inspire others to achieve their goals.

In the past, we organized a lot of beautiful image-building events; for example, every year we held the L.U.C. Chopard Classic Weekend Rally, which was a big city holiday for several thousand people; today our company organizes more niche but meaningful events: we cooperate with Moscow's Chekhov Art Theater and other federal theaters; we have been a patron of the Pushkin Museum for several years, and we cooperate with the Tretyakov Gallery.

We create interesting regional projects: in cooperation with the federal magazine Sobaka.ru, we implement the Women Change Cities project in St. Petersburg, Yekaterinburg, and Sochi; we tell about women who implement cultural, social, or entrepreneurial projects that are significant for their regions.

The Mercury jewelry company is a partner of the Moscow International Film Festival (MIFF). In April last year, the 46th MIFF, which included the 9th BRICS Film Festival, was held with MGIMO as a strategic partner. Since 2016, our brand has been a partner of the Golden Eagle national film award, which is essentially the Russian Oscars.



> **"I really appreciate our education and the broad knowledge and world outlook it provides. This is the outlook of people who are open to the new, willing to create, build, learn, connect, and unite."**

MJ: Your son Egor studies at MGIMO, thus continuing the dynasty. Does he have anything in common with previous generations of MGIMO alumni?

Surprisingly, yes—with his great-grandfather, who was always tenacious in his search for the truth. That is why he chose law, although he was torn between law and international relations. He chose law because he has been interested in it for a long time and in different areas: art law, intellectual property law, corporate law, the legal aspects of the gaming industry, and even criminology.

He is very proud to be a part of our dynasty. And he is very proud to be studying at MGIMO. Egor heard about MGIMO all the time in the family, and he knew that it was a sacred place for all of us, which we treated very reverently. He really wanted to go to this university, and when he did, he changed a lot in his first year. I don't think I saw much of him when he was in his freshman year. He made good friends—great guys with whom he did all the extracurricular activities available at MGIMO. In the Legal Club, Egor is the leader of the Liberal Party, and they have their own "battles" there. Recently, however, he said he wanted to study legal issues in art.

I can see how much Egor is fascinated and excited by studying and practicing. But for now, he seems undecided. Most importantly, he has a proactive attitude, which is characteristic of MGIMO graduates of all generations.







SPIEF 2024: MNANGAGWA AND CATACORA WERE THERE

Text and photos by Igor Drobyshev

“There are a lot of hyenas in Zimbabwe. If anyone wants a hyena, we can give you one,” Emmerson Mnangagwa, the president of Zimbabwe, offered to Vladimir Putin.
“We have enough of our own,” the Russian leader joked.

In the midst of preparations for the governor's reception during SPIEF, workers were assembling a stage in the courtyard of the historic building of the State Academic Capella. At the same time, on the stage of the concert hall built in the late 19th century, MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov and Director General of the Capella O. Khomova signed a cooperation agreement to the sound of hammers. The art of choral singing and diplomacy—what could they have in common? But MGIMO has recently been implementing a whole cluster of programs related to the experience economy and creative industries, training professional managers in the field of culture, so it is constantly looking for partners in this area, which is unusual for the university.



The Capella is the oldest professional musical institution in Russia. The date of its birth is considered to be August 12, 1479, when the choir of the sovereign's church singers, founded by Tsar Ivan III, took part in the consecration service of the Cathedral of the Assumption in the Moscow Kremlin. Under Peter the Great, the choir became a court choir, and Catherine II renamed it the Imperial Court Singing Capella. The trials of the 20th century, first of all the October Revolution of 1917 and the Great Patriotic War of 1941-1945, put an imprint on the development of this music school, but everything returned to normal in the new Russia: in 1991 the symphony orchestra—full, with 120 people—was recreated within the Capella. Together with the choir, it has toured extensively and with great success in Russia and abroad.

The art of choral singing and diplomacy—-what could they have in common? But MGIMO has recently been implementing a whole cluster of programs related, training professional managers in the field of culture.

Today, the Capella functions as a multicultural space. "We have become part of the creative industry; we do what the public likes," says Ms. Khomova. "We have eight exhibition spaces—interactive and multimedia-based; there is a virtual hall, as well as a cinema hall. Music is intertwined with all kinds of art here, including 'music of aromas' and immersive concerts, where the chairs in the hall are removed, the orchestra sits backward, the conductor faces the audience, and listeners can walk around the orchestra, filming what happens with their cell phones, trying to get inside, so to speak, the souls of the performers. That also includes concerts with a DJ. That's why we have a lot of young people here."

"We are proud to have signed this agreement with you," A. Torkunov told Ms. Khomova as they parted. "I am absolutely convinced that cooperation can be very productive. I already have several ideas for the programs we are already implementing in the areas of creative industries and arts management."

Torkunov: "Any textbook, and especially a history textbook should spark the reader's interest and become a window to the world of history."

* * *

A few hours before his visit to the Capella, A. Torkunov took part in the convention of the Russian Historical Society (RHS), which was held at the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library. In his speech, MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov noted that as part of the consortium with the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, the



university is conducting research on the role of historical analysis of Oriental studies in the context of the formation of the modern world order. “We all understand that the construction of a new polycentric world order should be seen not as a competition between many rival geographical centers of civilization but as the strengthening and convergence of different cultural and civilizational communities within a single human space, ” Anatoly Torkunov said.

Academician Torkunov referred to historical and academic topics throughout the forum. A day later, he delved into them during a discussion at the session of the Russian Military Historical Society “State historical policy of the Russian Federation using the example of unified history and social studies textbooks.” A year earlier, a new unified history textbook for 10th and 11th grade school students was presented at SPIEF. Its main adva ntage is its interactivity; it contains QR codes and interactive links, through which students can watch videos and films on the subject and study archival documents. “Any textbook, and especially a history textbook,” said A. Torkunov, “should spark the reader’s interest and become a window to the world of history. In some ways, it’s like fiction literature, and the new textbook for the 10th and11th grades is really interesting to read.”

* * *

This year, the Sultanate of Oman received the honorary status of SPIEF Guest Country;

its national stand was opened with the participation of Russian officials and the head of the Omani delegation—Minister of Industry, Trade, and Investment Promotion Qais bin Mohammed bin Moosa Al Yousef. In today’s conditions, the dialogue between Russia and Oman has acquired special significance in the context of the project to make the International North–South Transport Corridor for the creation of new global transport and logistics chains, taking into account the interests of the Persian Gulf countries. The Sultanate intends to use Russian experience in maritime and railway transportation and is also interested in cooperation in tourism and real estate investment.

The session “The architecture of the world order: a view from Russia” was attended by five experts, four of whom





Kosachev: “Our task is to create a design of a multipolar world that will be equally convenient and comfortable for all without exception, including the collective West.”

(except for the Chair of the State Duma Foreign Affairs Committee L. Slutsky) were MGIMO alumni: Deputy Speaker of the Senate K. Kosachev, Deputy Foreign Minister A. Pankin, and MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov. The session was moderated by Dmitry Stolkov, an employee of the Presidential Executive Office, also an MGIMO alumnus.

Konstantin Kosachev suggested that in conditions when the collective West violates the principle of equality of states enshrined in the UN Charter and thereby



disintegrates the world order, the idea of creating some kind of counterweight that would restore it—an economic or military union of states, an alternative center of power—lies on the surface. "But I do not share this point of view, because the creation of any anti-bloc, even with the best of intentions, will take humanity back to the days of inter-bloc confrontation of the Cold War. Our task is to create a design of a multipolar world that will be equally convenient and comfortable for all without exception, including the collective West."

Leonid Slutsky took the baton from the upper house to the lower house: "A new global majority has been formed, and

Slutsky: "We see how quickly the world has seen the formation of various integration blocs, especially the BRICS. This world's largest integration bloc has passed the point of no return."

we see how quickly, especially in the last two or three years, the world has seen the formation of various integration blocs, especially the BRICS. This world's largest integration bloc has passed the point of no return."

Aleksandr Pankin, who at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs oversees issues of economic interaction with partners and the development of integration processes in the post-Soviet space, began his speech on a skeptical note: "In the economic area, the multipolar world has certainly failed. Trade, investment, and other flows continue to be dominated by the dollar and the West. The statistics are improving, though. For example, the BRICS countries have collectively outperformed the G7 economies, with their share of the global economy at 34 percent versus 30 percent… As for the new world order, not only do we need it, but the Western countries need it as well; they are fighting against the existing order; it does not suit them—there are too many restrictions in the UN Charter and international law. In fact, there is a struggle for different kinds of 'new world orders.'"

Anatoly Torkunov brought an academic perspective to the discussion, elaborating on the role of history and historical memory in global processes:

Torkunov: "I advocate that wherever it is possible to continue the dialog, including with representatives of the so-called collective West, it should be continued; there are a lot of rational people there."

"Today, history is becoming a powerful tool both for strengthening national identity and for shaping a new world order. Strengthening civilizational identities means strengthening the role of historical memory as a determinant of political behavior."

A. Torkunov noted the positive role of multilateral networking in building dialog and finding areas of common interest with foreign countries. "Using different tracks of diplomacy, it is possible to overcome the obstacles that hinder the development of today's institutions and negotiating platforms and the building of a polycentric world.



I advocate that wherever it is possible to continue the dialog, including with representatives of the so-called collective West, it should be continued; there are a lot of rational people there."

MGIMO Rector presented the university at the Junior Section plenary discussion "Talent re-importation: education in a multipolar world." A. Torkunov talked about possible frameworks of educational program implementation—network programs, study in foreign branches, and student exchange. The rector noted the effectiveness of Moscow modules for students of the university's Tashkent branch, joint programs, including network programs, with partners from China, and the prospects of such interaction with Latin American and Asia-Pacific countries.

A. Malgin, the vice rector of MGIMO, spoke on behalf of the university at the session "Cultural cooperation as a new driver for business." He spoke about the launch of a new joint network master's program of MGIMO and the Tretyakov Gallery, Management of Museums and Galleries. According to Mr. Malgin, the program is aimed at training specialists for museum and exhibition activities and international cultural cooperation. MGIMO acts as the main educational organization, and the Tretyakov Gallery is both a resource center and a participant in the training process.

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The Energy Panel, organized annually with the support of Rosneft, a strategic partner of MGIMO and MIEP, is rightly considered one of the most interesting panels at SPIEF. The keynote speech was delivered by Rosneft CEO I. Sechin.

In his opinion, green energy is a myth, and the green transition itself is an illusion, since its implementation is not ensured by cost-effective sources. Mr. Sechin emphasized that over the past two decades, about 10 trillion dollars has been invested in energy transition worldwide, but alternative energy sources have failed to replace hydrocarbon fuels. Today, wind and solar power provide less than 5 percent of the world's energy, and electric vehicles account for only about 3 percent. Over the same period, oil, gas, and coal consumption grew by a combined 35 percent. According to his data, after reducing energy purchases from Russia, the EU spent more than 630 billion dollars on gas imports from other countries in 2021-2023. This is comparable to Europe's cumulative gas spending over the past eight years. "As far as developing countries are concerned, the situation is even more unacceptable when, under the pretext of a green transition, green neocolonialism is being built in practice," the Rosneft CEO concluded.

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Of course, everyone was looking forward to the plenary session and the Russian president's speech, and he lived up to the expectations. Noting that the economic growth rate exceeds the world average and amounted to "3.6 percent last year and 5.4 percent in the first quarter of this year," V. Putin emphasized, "It is particularly important that this dynamism is primarily determined by non-resource industries."

The president has set a goal of reducing imports to 17 percent of GDP by 2030, not through bans and barriers but through competitive domestic production. And there are models to follow: the meat industry has almost doubled its production capacity in 15 years!

The event, which was also attended by Zimbabwean President Emmerson

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Mnangagwa and Bolivian President Luis Alberto Catacora, was moderated by political scientist Sergei Karaganov, author of a sensational article on the possibility of a preemptive nuclear strike. It is known that Putin himself chooses the moderator of the panel discussion from several proposed candidates. So it seemed to many that the choice of Karaganov, who is convinced that the West should be made afraid of nuclear weapons again in order to save the world from nuclear catastrophe, was a sign, a signal to unfriendly countries.



But it turned out to be the opposite. In response to Karaganov's call for a tougher stance toward the West, Putin expressed confidence that there would be no exchange of strategic nuclear strikes. "I'm still operating under the assumption that it will never come to that, and we don't have that need." And Putin redirected Karaganov's scathing comparison of Western countries to hyenas to the president of Zimbabwe, who was sitting next to him: "President Mnangagwa knows the habits of hyenas."

"Yes, there are many hyenas in Zimbabwe," the man replied briskly, "but they are all kept in national parks… We don't have any problems with them. If anyone wants a hyena, we can give you one."

"We have enough of our own," Putin joked.

STOLKOV: "BEING PART OF THE MGIMO COMMUNITY IS WORTH A LOT"

Interview by Igor Drobyshev
Photos by courtesy of D. Stolkov

Dmitry Stolkov, a 2005 MGIMO graduate, was supposed to go to work in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, but received an invitation from the Russian Presidential Executive Office. That's how he ended up in the Kremlin.
It was an exciting time. Russia, which had become a member of the G8, was about to preside over its summit in St. Petersburg. Dmitry was part of the team preparing for this presidency.
The event was a success, and then D. Stolkov worked on the preparation of the first BRIC (later BRICS) summit, Russia's presidency of the SCO summit in Yekaterinburg, and other important forums. Since then—for 20 years now!—he has worked at the Executive Office as well as at Roscongress, an efficient and powerful operator of the most complex international forums, including SPIEF and the Eastern Economic Forum, as well as numerous industry-specific events.

MJ: You supervise this activity at the Executive Office, don't you?
As deputy head of the Presidential Directorate for Social Projects, I supervise the preparation of multilateral events in Russia. For almost ten years of its existence, Roscongress has become a de facto development institution, a dialog platform that is itself a source of diplomacy, implementing and promoting it. We set the agendas of the forums, coordinate the work in terms of content and organization, ensure the operation of the organizing committees, etc. We have learned how to prepare forums, set the tone, highlight key issues, and summarize their results.
Because with the end of the forum, the work does not end; on the contrary, it's the beginning of an important stage of summarizing and analyzing the results of numerous discussions involving experts and politicians, governors and federal officials, entrepreneurs and public figures, scholars and cultural figures. And the results are reported to the president.
Roscongress already has subsidiary structures and sub-subsidiaries, and we organize forums almost every month, including the Legal Forum in St. Petersburg, the Caucasus Investment Forum in Grozny, the Wine Forum and Russian Energy Week in Moscow, and industry-specific projects such as the Healthy Society Forum, as well as many others. There is a substantial culture-related track, a large cultural and sports program. Some forums are ordered by the state, in which case their organizing committees are headed by deputy prime ministers or presidential aides.

Before the pandemic, we had over 100 independent events annually. By the way, the last forum in St. Petersburg was at a pre-pandemic level. In 2020, we were the first in the world to hold this multilateral international forum under coronavirus conditions. Much effort and money were spent to develop specific rules and protocols, including testing, site decontamination activities, etc.

MJ: You are an international relations expert by training; international forums must be closer to you?
Nearly all of our events are international. Of course, I remain an international relations expert, I keep in touch with MGIMO, I plan to launch a special course at the university, I am publishing a monograph, "Diplomacy of Dialog Structures," which, by the way, will be dedicated to the 80th anniversary of MGIMO. By the way, we introduced the term into academic discourse. A dialog structure is not just a discussion platform or a framework that provides an event, it is itself an instrument of diplomacy that helps build international relationships. In fact, this informal track has always been there. Even before the 1917 revolution, Russia had salons, which can be conventionally described as platforms for the exchange of ideas. There were such frameworks in Soviet times, during the Cold War, especially in the period of deterioration of relations, when official channels broke down and there were such forums where it was more convenient to discuss issues. Today, the diplomacy of dialog structures is a tool that is sometimes more effective than official channels of communication.



MJ: Was there an event that was so different from the usual format that it required extra effort?
I will mention the Syrian People's Congress that we held in 2017. The task was to reconcile Syrians. We transported them by military plane to Sochi; the plane was shelled on departure, but thank God they made it and sat down at the negotiating table. The success of this event was the result of the efforts not only of Roscongress; much depended on the Ministry of Defense and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. But the key role was played personally by Presidential Advisor A. Kobyakov, whose leadership enabled the Roscongress team to create the conditions for launching this very important consultation process. The quality of work on even the smallest organizational issues was top-notch because anything could break the fragile fabric of those negotiations: water coolers running out of water or a microphone turning off during an important statement. This image-building political component sometimes plays a critical role.

MJ: You certainly don't have a white-collar desk job. You are at the very top of the executive chain of command; you can do anything!
You know what they say: much is expected where much is given. Our level allows us to help people, and if you are a responsive person, you are happy to assume this social duty.
For example, under the umbrella brand Healthy Society, we are implementing an independent project to promote traditional values and change the social environment. And sometimes we have to save lives by taking seemingly hopeless patients to the hospital, etc. Recently we helped the people who created the Save Life movement: we agreed with the governor of the Ryazan region to allow them to have psychologists in abortion clinics. As a result, the number of abortions in the region dropped by 25 percent in one quarter!
Our activities are guided by an ancient principle that actually has a deep Christian meaning: *carpe diem*, "live today." In our understanding, it means appreciating the opportunities you have and doing the best you can at what you have been entrusted to do. Everyone should maximize the quality of their work in their focus area, take an active position in life, create, invent, and not be an ordinary performer of tasks who lacks initiative.



> **"I'm a fan of MGIMO. Being part of the MGIMO community is worth a lot. When you come here, you find yourself in a unique environment, a community of successful, smart, intelligent people."**

MJ: We are celebrating the 80th anniversary of MGIMO; for what are you grateful to your alma mater?
I'm a fan of MGIMO. I recommend it to all my friends whose children are graduating from high school: if you want to go into the humanities, there's only MGIMO, the best university. Being part of the MGIMO community is worth a lot. When you come here, you find yourself in a unique environment, a community of successful, smart, intelligent people. And what opportunities it offers! At what other university do heads of state read lectures to students? I studied Arabic; imagine, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak came to MGIMO to give us a lecture! I remember how excited I was as a fourth-year student when I understood 90 percent of his lecture. I have always appreciated the time I spent at the university, the energy of success that fills this building on Vernadsky Avenue.

Interview by **Igor Drobyshev**

DANGAUER: “THE KEY IS TO FIND YOUR MOTIVATION”

Dmitrii Dangauer, CEO of Russian Fish Company, a 1999 MGIMO graduate, born and raised in Komsomolsk-on-Amur (Far East), graduated from MGIMO and became a successful entrepreneur. He has now returned to his alma mater as a trustee.

MJ: Which school did you choose when you entered MGIMO?
The School of Business and Business Administration; in 1995, it was more in line with my idea of what kind of professionals would be in demand: managers, executives. The organization of the training process in management and marketing, the faculty—everything was top-notch. I studied well, I was motivated. What motivated me? I wanted to live and work in Moscow because life in the capital was exciting.
After graduating from MGIMO, I was invited to join the Russian Fish Company. I started working there in January 2000, and I’m still in the business today.

MJ: This year marks a quarter of a century!
Yes. Why did it happen like that? In those years, everyone wanted to be an investment banker or work in the oil industry. Fish business has never been very profitable. But I realized it’s a big and interesting industry. And when I joined the company, I liked it right away. First of all, there was a young management with a clear vision, a team of like-minded people. Second, it was a young company that was growing rapidly, and it was clear where it was going.
I started as an assistant manager. The first thing I did was to study fish, so I went to our warehouses, looked at what it was like—there are many types of fish—looked at size ranges, quality, learned to determine when it was caught, what fat content it had, etc. Slowly I began to understand.
And my efforts bore fruit: I was soon transferred to the head office, where I became commercial director and, a few years later, managing director. In 2005, I was appointed CEO.

MJ: Good progress. How old were you then?
I was twenty-eight. The company was actively growing, and I was growing with it. We made important decisions on its strategic development, entered regional markets, began to open branches in major cities with populations over one million, and created our own network, which is the most extensive in Russia in the segment of large, medium, and small wholesale.
Soon the Russian Sea Holding was created, which consisted of various enterprises in the field of aquaculture, trade and production of fish products.
In 2016, my partners and I bought the Russian Fish Company from its owners, and I became a shareholder in it. Ours is one of the largest among trade companies. We sell almost all fish caught by Russian fishermen—Northern, Southern, and Far Eastern—as well as imported fish; we are one of the largest importers; annually we import tens of thousands of tons of fish (last year fish imports to Russia amounted to 660 thousand tons)—Asian, South American, as well as rare seafood.

I care about my home university and I’m interested in its development, doing my best to help.

Unfortunately, after the collapse of the Soviet Union, the economy, including the fishing industry, went into decline. But in recent years there have been many good and welcome changes in the management and organization of the industry—catching, processing, selling—and everything is recovering. Interestingly, only private companies operate in the industry, although it is managed and regulated by the state.
Thank God, the education system in this area was not destroyed in the 1990s; it is developing, and it is regulated by the Federal Agency for Fisheries. There is a state program in place, whereby a new fleet is being built (it will be one of the newest and most efficient fishing fleets in the world), coastal infrastructure projects are being implemented, and the state competently regulates catch quotas. Today, our fishing culture is developing vigorously; it is a major industry. With 5 million tons of fish and seafood harvested annually, Russia is among the world’s top 10 producers.

MJ: How did the training you received at MGIMO help you?
The essential knowledge of economics came in handy to understand the basics of the company’s operations. My training was well suited to the kind of activity I have been doing for over 20 years, as my diploma says: “Specialist in the management of foreign economic activities.”

MJ: You are now a trustee of MGIMO.
Yes, I gladly accepted the offer to become a member of the Board of Trustees. It’s an honor. I care about my home university and I’m interested in its development. I try to participate in its life and do my best to help: I provide financial support and express my opinions and recommendations at board meetings. I hope that my children will also want to go to MGIMO.

MJ: What advice do you have for them?
Find your motivation; you can’t force a person to do anything if they don’t want to. When you are motivated, learning is easier. Motivation is in short supply now. My generation didn’t have anything close to what our children have today. We couldn’t even dream of, say, a cell phone. Our motivation was not to starve and to survive! That’s why I got straight A’s all four years at MGIMO. When I came to take an exam or a test, the teacher would sometimes automatically give me an “excellent” grade.
So my advice to young people is to find your motivation.



THE RED CARPET TO THE PROFESSION

Photos by Igor Drobyshev

MGIMO master's degree students walked the red carpet at the 46th Moscow International Film Festival (MIFF), but not as participants. For several days they worked as interpreters with the jury members of the BRICS Film Festival.

Yelena Zhdanovich, Yelizaveta Kovaleva, and **Maria Diachenko** are studying to become interpreters to work in international organizations. For the past year, their group has been following information of the MGIMO Volunteer Center to find events for language practice. They were lucky: in 2024, Russia hosted several BRICS events—the BRICS Games and the summit of the participating countries in Kazan, the Legal Forum in Moscow, and others.

"We found out that the BRICS film forum would be held during MIFF," says Yelena Zhdanovich, " and the whole group first applied as volunteers. We came to the interview not knowing what positions we would be given: it could be protocol or language support. But when the organizing committee found out that we were studying to be interpreters, they gave us a test assignment, and when we passed it, they offered us a job as interpreters."

MJ: Which members of the jury did you work with?
Yelena Zhdanovich: I worked with Florence Masebe, an actress and social activist from South Africa.
Yelizaveta Kovaleva: I worked with Yirgashewa Teshome Amare, a filmmaker from Ethiopia and founder of his own film festival.
Maria Diachenko: And I—with Nayla Al Khaja, who is known as the first female film director in the UAE.

MJ: Did you walk the red carpet at the opening?
Y. Zhdanovich: Of course! But there were reasons to be nervous. I was supposed to meet Florence the day before the event. But her flight was delayed because of flooding in Dubai, where she was connecting. Florence was able to fly in the next day, literally in time for the opening of the festival.
Y. Kovaleva: I did not face such a situation; I met Yirgashewa on the very





first day of work. But just as we were about to arrive at Pushkin Square for the red carpet walk to the Rossiya Theater, a hurricane and rain broke out. The hotel where the Ethiopian was staying was right across the carpet, and we could have walked, but he said, "I'm not going out; it's 30 degrees at home right now, and it's +10 here, raining, and cold. Let's go by car." He got very cold on the carpet standing in line. But when I suggested he make a video for his parents, he got excited, took out his phone, started filming, and he no longer felt cold and wet.

Y. Zhdanovich: "After Florence and I watched the Russian film *Nenormalnyi* ("Abnormal") together, she told me she had actually cried a little"

M. Dyachenko: Due to her busy schedule Nayla, unfortunately, did not manage to arrive in time for the beginning of the festival. However, I met her on the second day of MIFF, and we watched her movie *Three* together.
Y. Zhdanovich: I was lucky; Florence is an incredibly intelligent woman, it was a pleasure to work with her. Neither the flooding nor the downpour that broke out as she walked the red carpet upset her. She is a resilient person, used to hardship. By the way, she is not only an actress but also a cultural advisor to the South African government, including through BRICS, so she goes on trips as a BRICS ambassador.



Y. Kovaleva: Yirgashewa has his own film festival, which he has been running for 20 years in Africa and the Middle East. He looked mature in the photo, but he turned out to be younger and nicer in person. Surprisingly, he himself does not know his age; in Ethiopia, it turns out, they do not record the year of birth, although he knows his date of birth. On top of that, it's 2016 in his country, so it turns out he's one age there and a different age in Russia. "If you want to feel younger," Yirgashewa joked, "come to Ethiopia!"
M. Diachenko: Nayla turned out to be a polyglot. Thanks to her nanny, who was originally from India, her Hindi is as good as her native Arabic. And Nayla studied in Canada, so she speaks excellent English. But most importantly, she is the first woman in the UAE to become a film director (there are several now).







MJ: Did the jury members share with you their thoughts on the films they saw?
Y. Zhdanovich: The jury members were not allowed to discuss the films—neither among themselves nor with the interpreters. But when you are close to them, you can see their emotional attitude one way or the other. For example, after Florence and I watched the Russian film *Nenormalnyi* ("Abnormal") together, she told me that it had moved her so much that she had actually cried a little. I confessed to her that I too had had tears in my eyes.
Nenormalnyi is a story about a disabled boy who has great talent as a pianist. His stepfather dedicates his life to making sure the boy develops his talent. When you see the boy achieve so much, despite serious health problems, thanks to the help of this essentially unrelated man, you cannot remain indifferent. Actor Aleksandr Yatsenko, who played the stepfather, won the male lead award for a good reason.
By the way, we also watched a movie made in South Africa that I liked; it raises the pressing problem of abusive behavior. It is about the hard life of a girl who was tormented by her family and faced with the death of a loved one. But at the final meeting, when the fate of the prizes was decided, Florence found many flaws in it, which proved her objectivity. The film ended up without any awards, although I think it deserved a prize.
Y. Kovaleva: "If you want to ask my opinion about the movies," Yirgashewa said at once, "we can discuss them later,





after the jury has made its decision. Although you're an interpreter, you're still a viewer who can influence me as a jury member."
Moreover, before we started watching *Nenormalnyi*, we were told to leave the room a few minutes before the end of the movie so that the jury members wouldn't hear the audience's reaction.
In fact, it was only after the final session, when the jury had made its decision, that Yirgashewa told me which films he liked and advised me to watch them. I can say that he definitely did not cry during *Nenormalnyi*, but he laughed at the funny moments, which surprised me: I thought he would not get our humor.





MJ: What else did the jury members see in Moscow besides the films?
Y. Kovaleva: Every day Yirgashewa and I drove from the hotel to Novy Arbat, where the Oktyabr cinema is located. And each time the Ethiopian admired the architecture of Moscow. In Ethiopia, he said, the government has neither the money nor the willingness to take care of the buildings; they are old and unkempt. Yirgashewa traveled a lot with his film







festival, so he could compare Moscow to other European capitals; he said that nowhere is the architecture as preserved as in Russia, with very few skyscrapers. By the way, the opening day coincided with Yirgashewa's birthday, and the hotel gave him a small cake as a gift. He sent me a picture of it and texted, "I forgot it was my birthday." I thought, how could anyone forget their birthday, especially since it coincided with the festival's opening? Maybe it's just that he doesn't want to get old?

Y. Zhdanovich: We went on several interesting tours. For example, we visited the Moskino movie park, the size of which made a strong impression on Florence. They don't have anything like that in South Africa. There is a lot of scenery: from an ancient fortress to a Russian village to the streets of 18th-century Moscow and St. Petersburg. It also has the largest chromakey screen in Europe. When Florence and I walked around the movie park, it was mostly her who spoke—as a professional, she knew more than I did, so it turned out that the African woman was telling me about my country. For her, the movie park was a technological achievement bordering on culture shock. "The Russian film industry is looking 30 to 50 years ahead by building such facilities," she said.
She took an interesting tour of the Kremlin Armory, but Yelizaveta had to interpret there. We didn't know we were going to go to a museum; otherwise we would have prepared because there's specific vocabulary. Such hitches are quite common in interpreters' work. Poor Yelizaveta tried as hard as she could while I tried to help her by following the tour guide's speech, looking up English words, and showing them to her on my phone screen. This went on for about 20 minutes until the tour guide finally took pity on us and continued the tour in English herself.

Y. Kovaleva: Yes, the situation was stressful. Yelena and I split up: first I would interpret for 20 minutes, and then she would; that's how we usually do it in class. But, as she said, it turned out that I was the only one who had time to interpret. It was really difficult; one can't translate special terms from fine arts and architecture without training.
Yirgashewa also liked the movie park, especially the pavilions representing different historical periods, such as the fragment of the Berlin Wall with Checkpoint Charlie, 18th-century Tverskaya Street, and a whole airplane said to be donated by Vnukovo Airport, as well as the military pavilion with objects painted in camouflage for combat scenes. And then we went to the Mosfilm film studio. There we also saw the pavilions, but the most important thing was that we were treated to food for filmmakers; it was brought to the set in containers, and the choice of first and second courses and drinks was impressive. Every dish was neatly labeled, even halal food.

Y. Kovaleva: "Yirgashewa definitely did not cry during *Nenormalnyi*, but he laughed at the funny moments, although I thought he would not get our humor"

M. Dyachenko: Nayla didn't get to Moskino because of her busy schedule, but she really enjoyed the tour in the Kremlin. And she was charmed with Moscow and the people. She said it was very clean and safe there. She said many Emiratis, especially residents of her native Dubai, do not believe Western propaganda and support Russia. Nayla promised to return as a tourist with her husband and twin children to visit St. Petersburg.

MJ: Did she try to take the opportunity to learn Russian with your help?
Y. Zhdanovich: Florence is a very lively and curious person. She told me right away, "While I'm in Russia, I want to learn Russian." I taught her all week, and she grasped everything very quickly, which filled me, a future linguist, with admiring envy. No wonder, as there are 11 official languages in South Africa: English, Afrikaans, and others. It turns out that Florence speaks all of them!
Of course, learning Russian was not without fun episodes. The phrase "Give me some water, please," said in Russian, made Florence and her friend, a filmmaker from the South African delegation, with whom she often communicated in one of the 11 languages, laugh out loud. Apparently, the word "water" in the plural means something obscene to them, or maybe it's just a junk word.
Y. Kovaleva: Yelena was really lucky: Florence spoke very good British English. Yirgashewa was sometimes difficult to understand because of his pronunciation, which was far from Oxford; the Ethiopian accent was sometimes an obstacle to communication. And he was not eager to learn Russian; he just asked me how

to say "thank you." He didn't even use the translation app on his phone. It was so different from the Youth Festival in Sochi, where Yelena and I had also worked together. I was an attaché to the Indonesian delegation. They were constantly asking me to teach them Russian and were actively using the translation app.

MJ: Was this experience professionally rewarding?

Y. Zhdanovich: Of course. First, it was great training for the ability to handle extreme situations. For example, at the preliminary jury meeting, I had to interpret from English into Russian not only what Florence was saying, but also what other people were saying (they were all English-speaking, except for one Chinese man) because of a hitch. It was hard to keep track of everyone's speech, and my brain got confused sometimes. But this kind of fieldwork is worth dozens of university language classes.

Second, I improved my consecutive interpreting skills, especially the ability to filter live speech, leaving out a maximum of 20% of it, as we are taught in university, and thus find the gist to convey the meaning of what the person is saying. I once again saw for myself that word-for-word translation is sometimes impossible and even unnecessary.

Also, consecutive interpreting was difficult without a notepad and pen. The reason is that people often forget that they are being interpreted, and it's hard to stop a person once their thoughts start flowing. When I first interpreted Florence's interview, she spoke—and she does it very skillfully!—for about two minutes as she started answering the journalists' questions. I ended up forgetting what she had said at the beginning, and I didn't have a notepad and pen.

Y. Kovaleva: It was a great experience, especially in terms of consecutive interpreting. For me, this type of work is more difficult than simultaneous interpreting, for you have to have time to listen, take notes, and think about how to translate. In such a stressful situation, when the adrenaline kicks in, you suddenly realize that you may not have time to write everything down and translate it correctly…

I remember that on the second day of the festival, when we were in Oktyabr, the chair of the jury, Aleksei Pimanov, who speaks English, came up to Yirgashewa. They talked for a while, but suddenly Mr. Pimanov said to me, "Why am I taking your job? Go ahead and practice." And it turned out that he was supervising my interpretation, and I, knowing that, sometimes got confused. It was a stressful moment.

M. Dyachenko: It was certainly a rewarding experience, even a challenge. While in university we mostly interpret political texts, this was an opportunity to dive into the film business. I've acquired an extensive vocabulary from this area, and now I'm looking forward to the next festival to use it!





MJ: Did you share your work experience with your teachers when you returned to the university? Did they suggest any ideas?

Y. Kovaleva: Maria Gerasimova, our teacher, was very happy for us and praised us and said, "Well done for going to this practice." And we shared with her our interesting experiences and told her about the situations we had to face. She didn't complain about us missing her class (half the group was working at the festival); on the contrary, she accommodated us and rescheduled the test.

Y. Zhdanovich: I would like to improve my consecutive interpreting of dialogs. In university we interpret fast-paced texts in the form of monologs. And the topics are mostly military, including nuclear disarmament issues, but there is a shortage of informal communication topics. By the way, practicing at events allows us to train this skill, which is very necessary in fieldwork.

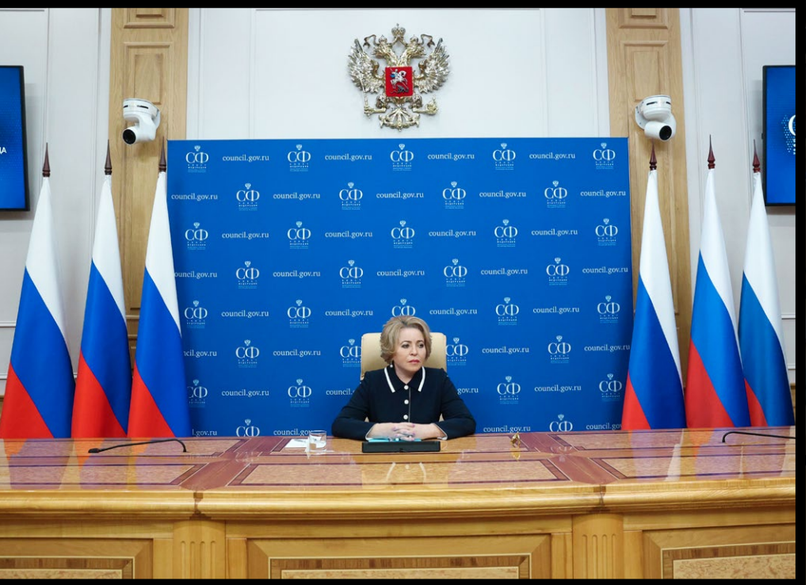
MJ: Did you have any funny or odd episodes that happened because of the difference in cultural backgrounds?

Y. Zhdanovich: Yes, we did. It is jokingly said that people in the southern hemisphere walk "upside down" relative to us. This may be due to some cultural peculiarities. As we walked the red carpet in our smart dresses in a cold downpour, Florence, accustomed to an average temperature of +35 in her country, told me about an unusual tradition. "In South Africa," she said, "organizers who want to ensure good weather before an important event hang a shoe behind their backs: if you walk like that all day, everything will be fine tomorrow!"

M. Dyachenko: Nayla wanted to take home Borodinsky bread instead of matryoshka dolls or vodka! They don't have it in the Emirates, while here one can buy it in any grocery!

M. Dyachenko: The people I worked with, Nayla and her assistant Akhmed, took home Borodinsky bread instead of matryoshka dolls or vodka! It turned out that Ahmed's wife had tried it once, but she forgot the name and didn't know where to find it. I realized they were talking about Borodinsky bread only from the pictures they showed me. I said, "You are welcome to buy it in any grocery store here!"











SENATORS AREN'T BORN

Interviews by **Igor Drobyshev**
Photos by **courtesy of the Press Service of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation**

Among diplomatic officials, there are advisors, envoys, ambassadors... But it would be fair to have a footnote in the table of ranks noting the very important title of "International Affairs *Aqsaqal*." They are ambassadors with decades of service abroad and in the central office, wise men experienced in international affairs. Some of them, including MGIMO graduates, are highly honored by the state by being offered to become members of Russia's highest legislative body—the Federation Council.
In this issue, they talk about their work and take the opportunity to congratulate their alma mater on its 80th anniversary.

KOSACHEV: “MGIMO DRASTICALLY CHANGED MY LIFE”

Interview by **Igor Drobyshev**

When we last met in 2016, Konstantin Kosachev was head of the Federation Council Committee on Foreign Affairs. Five years later, he was appointed deputy speaker in the Senate. “At some point, Chair of the Federation Council V. Matviyenko felt that I could be trusted with tasks of a larger scope, and I am sincerely grateful to her for this.”

MJ: How much has the scope increased?
The range of my responsibilities has broadened twofold. It includes overseeing not only the Committee on International Relations but also the Committee on Education, Science, and Culture, as well as other equally important areas.
I also have the honor to chair the Council on Interethnic Relations and Interaction with Religious Associations at the Federation Council. I must say that interethnic relations represent an idiosyncratic topic, one of great importance. On the one hand, we can say that our country has been coping with this issue rather successfully: we have learned how to build these relations, and we now live in interethnic peace and harmony—after all, there are 194 peoples and nationalities speaking almost 300 languages in our country. It would be quite a task to find a similar country in the world! On the other hand, having learned how to solve this problem at home, we must move forward in an environment where external forces have begun to actively interfere in this area. These external forces introduce new factors that surely cannot but cause anxiety and a natural desire to counter them.
One of such external factors, I would say, is an increased terrorism threat level. We understand that very often terrorist attacks are committed by people who are guided by misunderstood religious theories and slogans. Nevertheless, each such terrorist attack, without a doubt, results in a lot of repercussions for our society and provokes additional tension.
The second factor is, of course, the increase in the migration flow to our country. We are still far from finding the optimal solution that would not result in cutting off those who would like to come to work with us, given the obvious needs of our labor market, as well as demographic considerations.
The third factor is the information war waged by our geopolitical opponents with the aim of straining interethnic relations in the country and, therefore, debilitating Russia from within. In Parliament, we are dealing with these issues very carefully, including within the framework of the council I chair, as well as through the Council on Interethnic Relations under the President of the Russian Federation, which I also have the honor to be a member of.



> **“There is a common saying: “Truly great is a man whose strong imagination begets the event itself.” I would apply this formula to diplomacy. It is hard to imagine a more creative field.”**

MJ: In 2024, you celebrated 40 years since graduating from MGIMO, didn’t you?
Yes, August 1 marked 40 years of my work experience. For me, the choice of profession was only logical, since I come from a family of diplomats. I consider the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic service to be one of the most powerful and effective schools of professional excellence. Moreover, it’s not about some specific skills, such as knowledge of the language or the ability to analyze media sources, that is, everything that can be referred to as craft. We are talking about more significant aspects that are absorbed in the process of receiving appropriate education.

> **“I consider the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the diplomatic service to be one of the most powerful and effective schools of professional excellence.”**

I will give you an example. I worked at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 15 years, and most of that time, in addition to other duties, I was engaged in interpretation activities at the highest level. My main working language is Swedish. I was an interpreter for Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and other senior officials. Later, I discovered that many of my interlocutors and journalists who saw me working began to note my ability to spontaneously express complex thoughts clearly and distinctly.
Let me tell you about another valuable quality. Working in diplomatic analytics means that you constantly find yourself under the influence of a variety of different points of view: it’s not only your supervisor’s stance that you need to take into account, where your freedom of thought is limited and your conclusions must fit into a predetermined pattern of logical reasoning. Being at the forefront, so to speak, you are faced with a different logic of thinking, with a different perception of what is happening in your homeland and in your host country. You are constantly focused on defending your own position and proving your opponents’ positions wrong.



It often turns out that the truth is somewhere in the middle. And a true diplomat showcases their full potential when they do not defend their country’s position bluntly, but when they are able to find a compromise that would not harm national interests, but at the same time would be acceptable to the opposite side. This quality, when you are ready to accept the opposite point of view, turns out to be constructive; it’s much needed. You then begin to create, because compromise is the art of creation.
Finally, the third important quality in diplomacy is the ability to work with people. Working in an embassy implies working with very few people, all of them with different points of view and different backgrounds. It is like working on a spaceship or in a submarine. I had two long-term foreign postings in Sweden, which amounted to 8 years in total. And each time I came back having made lifelong friends. That is, it is important to be able to work in a small team, to learn to work well together, and to grow your social circle. This allows a person to be more stable professionally.
There is a common saying: “Truly great is a man whose strong imagination begets the event itself.” I would apply this formula to diplomacy. It is hard to imagine a more creative field.

MJ: Could you talk about the time when you found yourself in the middle of

the process of shaping Russia's foreign policy?

Surely, the most striking episode was Primakov's "U-turn over the Atlantic" in 1999. I was lucky enough to work for him as an assistant for international affairs when he was prime minister. (Being an assistant to Primakov himself seemed to me almost insolent at the time: it was like working as a speechwriter for Spinoza.)

I was on the plane with him when it happened. At that time, Yeltsin was not in good shape at all, and he actually entrusted Primakov with leading the dialog with the United States.

The Russian–American meeting was being prepared with the help of two assistants: yours truly and, respectively, the late Leon Firth, assistant for international affairs to Vice President Al Gore.

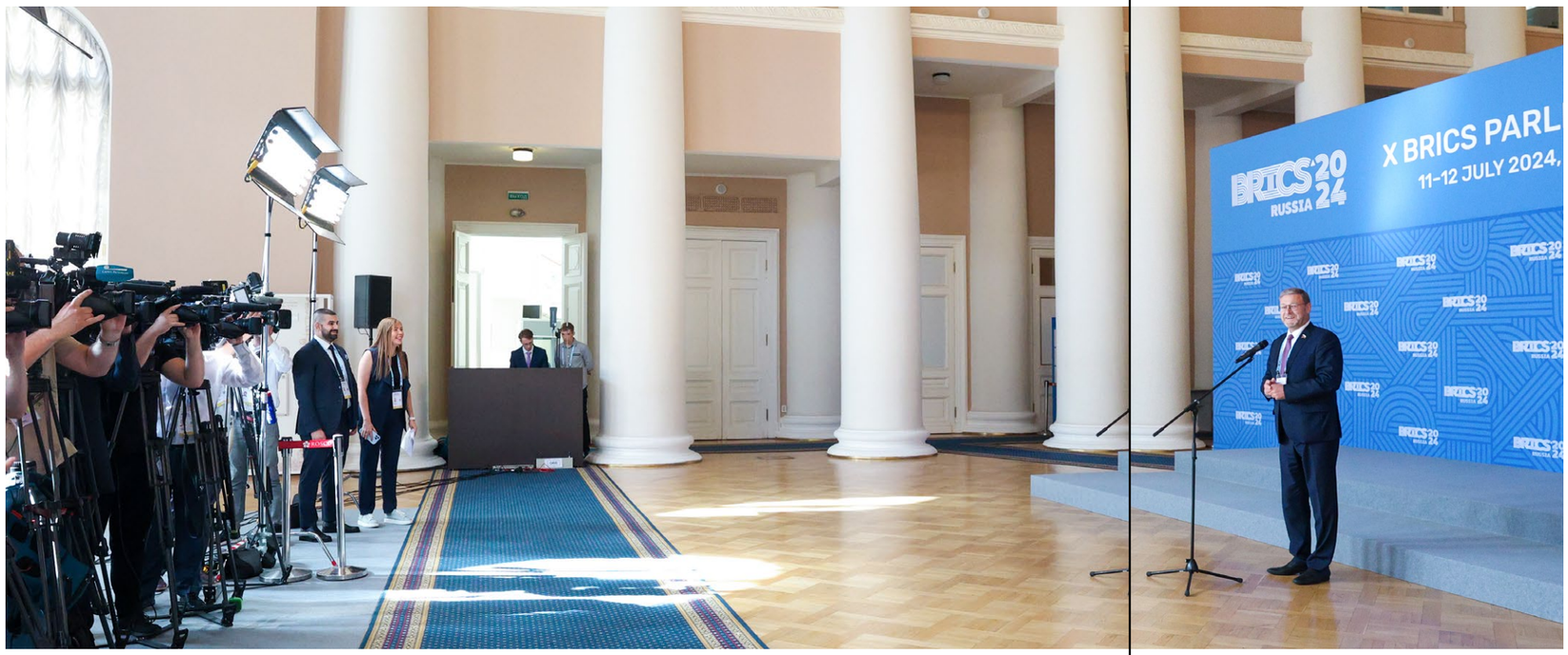
Primakov coordinated all decisions with Yeltsin at all stages of the negotiations, but given the president's state of health, he simply could not be expected to delve into the details. Therefore, the prime minister had to take the responsibility and to propose potential steps, and he always received Yeltsin's consent; I witnessed this personally. When our plane had been in the air for over 4 hours after taking off from Shannon, Ireland—that is, it had flown more than half the distance—Gore called and informed us that they had decided to start bombing Yugoslavia.

In his small cabin, Primakov gathered three advisers: Deputy Foreign Minister Georgiy Mamedov, who oversaw relations with the United States; his close friend Vitaly Ignatenko, director general of the TASS news agency; and yours truly. After giving us the contents of the conversation with Gore, he said that in this situation he considered it impossible to continue the flight and would make a decision about turning around. He invited the pilot-in-command to his cabin and asked him only one technical question: do we have enough fuel to return back to Shannon? After hearing an affirmative answer, he asked to be connected to the president. Since it was about three o'clock in the morning in Moscow, they asked at the other end if it was worth waking the president up. Primakov said that it was, and Yeltsin was woken up. The prime minister spoke about the situation and added that he considered turning the plane around the only possible course of action. Yeltsin asked him the only question: is there enough fuel? Primakov confirmed that this issue had been resolved, and Yeltsin said, "Turn it around."

We returned to Shannon and then to Moscow. I will add one more detail: after the conversation with Yeltsin, Primakov went into the passenger section, where a delegation was sitting, flying to a meeting of the Trade and Economic Commission, which included those who were commonly called oligarchs. When he informed them that the situation was developing in such a way that a decision had been made to turn the plane around, they started to applaud.

"When it comes to international relations, justice is very important to us, even though this term might not be properly scientific or associated with diplomacy."





"We are ready to build relations in a mutually respectful manner, without interfering in the internal affairs of any state in the world, because we respect their sovereignty."

It was really emotional and touching; everyone experienced an intense sense of patriotism then!

This U-turn over the Atlantic was a highly civic, patriotic, and very responsible act. I am sure that it was from that moment on that Russians regained their sense of self-worth, the feeling that we live in a great country and that we will no longer allow ourselves to be treated the way our geopolitical rivals were almost accustomed to treating us by that time.

MJ: Due to the events that began in February 2022, the concept of Russia's foreign policy has undergone significant adjustments.

We are, in fact, living in a different world by now. What is its distinguishing feature?

More than three decades ago, Russia ended a period of bloc confrontation—not because we lacked the strength to fight or were exhausted economically, as they try to paint it in the West. Instead, it was a choice that we made consciously. We concluded that endless confrontation is contrary to our interests and the interests of the whole world and that we must build relations with other states on the principles of cooperation and not as losers and winners of the Cold War.

Let us recall the famous CSCE Charter of Paris for a New Europe, signed in 1990. Compared to the Helsinki Final Act of 1975, which was written during the Cold War and for it, and included particular elements the opposing sides agreed on, the Charter was written for Europe, where there would be no rivals anymore, where everyone would contribute to strengthening this new entity. And we thought that our former rivals felt the same way about it. But

they thought they had won the Cold War.
So, what happened? In the Charter of Paris, the three institutions that were destined to determine the fate of the future world were named the UN, the CSCE (later the OSCE) and the Council of Europe. NATO was not mentioned once; the European Union was mentioned just once as an entity that would promote trade and economic cooperation; it was not mentioned there as an institution in the field of security.
And then it turned out that our still

“Being an assistant to Primakov himself seemed to me almost insolent at the time: it was like working as a speechwriter for Spinoza.”



geopolitical rivals used this document as a cover and continued to develop the institutions that, in their opinion, brought them victory in the Cold War: they proceeded with NATO’s expansion and assigning the European Union with security functions.
As a result, instead of building an entity that would be inclusive—that is, would provide all its participants with an equal share of security—they spent these 30 years trying to shape such conditions where some participants would receive an exclusive share, becoming, according to Orwell, “more equal than others.” Security was actually divided into three areas: the elite club, in which, like in first class, to use an aviation analogy, the United States and its closest NATO allies fly, and security is provided at an appropriate level; a kind of business class, where states loyal to the United States and NATO reside. These are, relatively speaking, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, Japan, and South Korea. And everyone else is crammed into economy class. They can behave as they please, but they must listen to what the “passengers” of the first class think about it.
The root of the evil lies in this international “seating” system. It was this order of things that made it possible for Poroshenko and then Zelensky to jump into business class simply because they showed their absolute loyalty to the United States and agreed to be part of its unipolar model. But Milošević, who at some point tried to pursue an independent policy and opposed NATO, was listed as a pariah. For disagreeing with the elite class members, such passengers are likely to get “kicked out of the plane” altogether.
We have found ourselves in a situation where the principles of arranging the world in accordance with the unipolar model have exhausted themselves, and everyone has begun to experience enormous negative effects from the mistakes that this model is associated with. I am talking about what happened in Iraq, Libya, and Syria. And now Ukraine is on this list.
But the main problem is that security is divided, and we cannot cooperate in preventing common challenges and threats that are growing in the world. Americans are not afraid of what is happening in the Middle East, believing that the danger is far away and the terrorists will not reach them. Europe also regards these threats as relative.
But then how can Americans explain to the world why they need NATO, which is ineffective in combating terrorism, drug trafficking, and epidemics? Meanwhile, it is the core of the unipolar world, and only the fact that there is an external enemy, which they see Russia to be, can justify this model. Even Obama and other Western figures started talking about us as a threat that is almost more dangerous than terrorism.
Is there more guile in this, or some kind of unbelievable underestimation of common challenges and threats? We do know for sure that this is a direct challenge to our own national security. At a time when our partners perceived Russia’s constructive policy as a sign of weakness, we, of course, had no choice but to reconsider it, clearly defining our rejection of the unipolar model of the world and the limits beyond which we cannot retreat, based on our understanding of how the world should be.
This is not an attempt to play the king of the hill game, knocking down an opponent from a high cliff and taking his place. This is a proposal for a fundamentally different model of the world order, where there will be no standalone leaders and centers of power, and where we will start a conversation with everyone on equal terms. And only if national interests are respected will we be able to ensure a just world order.
We are ready to build relations in a mutually respectful manner, without interfering in the internal affairs of any state in the world, because we respect their sovereignty. We do not allow ourselves to make assessments of other states.
It is no coincidence that our country has a unique opportunity to maintain relatively normal relations with many pairs of states that are in irreconcilable conflict and demonstrate hostility towards each other. We manage to smoothly develop



relations with such conflicting pairs: with Armenia and Azerbaijan, Iran and Saudi Arabia, North and South Korea, Israel and Palestine. And this is not a manifestation of unscrupulousness, nor is it a refusal to participate in the settlement, but a unique asset and dignity of Russian foreign policy. Thanks to this, Russia has repeatedly provided assistance to these states and helped them maintain opportunities for political dialog in their relations with each other.
Conversely, as soon as the unilateral approach comes into play, the United States begins to support South Korea exclusively and to threaten North Korea, which drastically escalates tensions on the Korean Peninsula.
I am sure that our view of a just world order will gain more and more supporters, and we need to seize the moment. The mistakes that the West has made over the decades are becoming all the more evident and revealing for an increasing number of states, and this situation must definitely be taken advantage of. It’s not about going against anyone but about standing for a peaceful and just future for all, not only for the chosen ones.

“The principles of arranging the world in accordance with the unipolar model have exhausted themselves and everyone has begun to experience enormous negative effects from the mistakes that this model is associated with.”

MJ: We are celebrating the 80th anniversary of MGIMO. What would you like to wish to your alma mater?
For me, MGIMO is an institution that drastically changed my life. I did not just obtain a diploma, taking into account that the level of education here is really high. The important part is that here I also developed my ability to grow as a person, which I’ve been doing all my life. It is indeed our wonderful university that I have to thank for this. MGIMO helped me hugely expand my knowledge of the world and my social circle—to this date, I keep in touch with my classmates, even though we graduated from MGIMO exactly 40 years ago… Self-confidence, knowing that nothing is impossible and that any task can be done if done correctly—this is what I took away from MGIMO, and I am really grateful that there was such a wonderful period in my biography.
What can I wish to our university? Just one thing: to keep moving forward. The situation in the country and the world is changing, and the tasks facing MGIMO graduates are changing with this, too, no matter where they work. The educational process itself must keep up with these changes. MGIMO has succeeded in this so far, and I can sincerely congratulate the university on this. Remember the piece of wisdom from *Alice in Wonderland*? You must run as fast as you can just to stay in place. I wish the university in no case to stay in place and to run even faster. MGIMO knows well how to do it. And it’s important to run in the right direction, which our university has always done.

DENISOV: “MY WISH IS FOR MGIMO TO KEEP THE BAR HIGH”

Interview by **Igor Drobyshev**

In 2022, after completing his term as Russia’s ambassador to China, Andrey Denisov, a 1974 MGIMO graduate, planned to retire from the diplomatic service. “I have already discussed with MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov the possibility of teaching at my home university—it was a welcome opportunity for me, and I did not consider any other options. And then I received an offer to think about joining the upper house of our supreme legislative body, the Federation Council, to become a senator. The offer was unexpected for me, but I accepted and thanked the leadership for such an honor and trust.”

MJ: So you were an ambassador in such a difficult place as Beijing for almost ten years; maybe it’s time to rest now?
Oh, no! A few days later, at a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Federation Council, I was elected its first deputy chair. The committee is chaired by Grigory Borisovich Karasin, former deputy minister and state secretary of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In addition to yours truly, his deputies include two of our international colleagues: Sergey Kislyak (former Russian ambassador to the United States) and Farid Mukhametshin (former Russian ambassador to Moldova). Among the senators is Konstantin Kosachev, deputy chair of the Federation Council and an MGIMO graduate. And, of course, our chief diplomat is Valentina Matviyenko, chair of the FC, who has twice served as ambassador to Malta and Greece.

“The Chinese are showing understanding of our concerns about our own security in the context of the conflict in Ukraine.”



MJ: Why were you offered to become a senator representing the Saratov region?
It just so happened. I am new to the Saratov region, but I already consider it my home. And helping the region is not only my responsibility but also my duty as a human being. For example, I’m trying to promote its relations with China. Saratov is a border region with good transport communications that provide a direct route through Kazakhstan to China.
I see it as my duty to promote cultural cooperation. Saratov has a number of first-rate education institutions: Saratov Chernyshevsky State University, the Agrarian University, the Academy of Law, and the Conservatory, one of the oldest in European Russia (there is a Rachmaninoff grand piano there!), which, incidentally, is attended by many talented young Chinese. I gave lectures at these universities and brought specialists from Moscow through the Russian-Chinese Friendship Society (by the way, we established its Saratov branch).

MJ: Did you want to get to learn Chinese at MGIMO?
God forbid! For me, even entering MGIMO was a gamble—I knew nothing about it. I lived with my parents in Leningrad and, like many of my schoolmates, wanted to attend either a technical university or a naval academy. But I graduated from one of Leningrad’s English schools, and once in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, I read about a certain MGIMO university that trains international affairs experts. I applied to the School of International Economic Relations, took the exams, and, to my surprise, I got in!
But my joy was short-lived: when foreign languages were distributed, I got Chinese and was discouraged, to say the least.
I was to live for five years in Moscow, a foreign city, and learn the language of a country with which our relations were at their lowest point…
I am eternally grateful to Professor Ruvim Sidelskii of the History Department, a war veteran and holder of combat decorations. He literally noticed in the first few days of study that there was something wrong with me. After learning the reason, Sidelskii gave me a whole sermon that boiled down to this: “China is a great country, an ancient culture; it’s infinite levels of knowledge that you can only deepen, but you still can’t reach the bottom. It may be in dire straits now (those were the years of the “Cultural Revolution”), but in time it will surely recover and rise to the forefront of the world. The relations between our two countries are at their lowest point now; there is no way to go down any further, and if they move, they can only go up. So you keep your head up, keep studying, and you’ll be fine.”
I remembered his words almost daily. It was difficult; the first and second years I studied halfheartedly, but in the third year I began to take a serious interest in China; gradually it attracted me…
You know, it may sound counterintuitive, but it was easier to learn Chinese at MGIMO than Western languages. The thing is that they are taught in large departments with dozens of teachers, where the standards are very high: if you fail a test, you lose your scholarship, and you get reprimanded. There were few teachers in our Chinese department. They were all passionate about the profession, worked with great attention to detail, and tried to instill in us a love of China and its language. That’s why I started getting excellent marks in my third year. In my fifth year, I went to China for an internship and worked in the trade mission for four months, after which my interest in the country began to take shape.
And in 1978, after three years of postgraduate study and defending my dissertation on the Chinese economy, I went to work in Beijing. Professionally, I was lucky because six months later, in December, the historic 3rd plenary session of the 11th Central Committee of the Chinese Communist Party was held, at which Deng Xiaoping launched a policy of reform and openness to the outside world. From that moment on, the work of researchers of the Chinese economy like me became something that felt like a holiday. Documents and statistics that did not exist before began to appear, economic journals began to be published, and Chinese academic economists returned from exile. The central office requested an analysis of what was happening in the Chinese economy. Apparently, Moscow took notice of our work, and Vadim Shabalin, head of the China Department in the Socialist Countries Division of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, called from China first my colleague and comrade, later my predecessor as ambassador to China, Sergei Razov, and two years later me. Incidentally, some



“Coincidentally, I arrived as ambassador to China exactly two months after Xi Jinping had been elected as the president of the People’s Republic of China, the head of state, in early March 2013.”



time later, Igor Morgulov, the current ambassador in Beijing, was also invited to work there. Thus, all three future ambassadors to China began their careers in the Soviet trade mission and then had experience working in the Central Committee apparatus in the China department.
By the way, in 1983 the student exchange, which had been interrupted in the 1960s, was resumed, and Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the current president of the Republic of Kazakhstan, came to China in the first group. He worked in the Soviet Foreign Ministry before returning home to Kazakhstan. Tokayev graduated from MGIMO a year later than I did, in 1975, but we all knew each other in one way or another, since we had crossed paths in the Chinese department, sometimes even had classes together.

MJ: How long did you work at the Central Committee?
A long time—ten years. But it was a very important period. The selection of people for the Central Committee was based on merit, and in the China Department there were outstanding specialists, mostly from the Foreign Ministry; we had no professional Communist Party workers among us. The normalization of Soviet-Chinese relations took place before our eyes (and with our participation).
In 1982-1983 a recovery began that was as slow as melting snow; it was a "policy of incremental steps" both on our side and on the Chinese side. Ideological superstructures were overcome, and solutions were found to the main political issues that had impeded normalization, primarily the border issue.
That period was important and fruitful for me from the point of view of professional development, a great broadening of horizons, because from the position of the Party apparatus I could see much and far; I had the opportunity to familiarize myself with documents that were previously inaccessible and to work with the academic community of Sinologists.

"Today, our relations with China fit into the formula of "comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation in a new era." The "new era" part was added at the suggestion of the Chinese side."

MJ: When was the next time you visited China?
Spring of 1992. Igor Rogachev, our outstanding diplomat and Sinologist, left the post of deputy foreign minister to go to Beijing as ambassador. He was looking for people to join his team, and since he knew me from his previous job, he invited me to be an embassy counselor. He needed someone to deal with China's domestic issues—politics and economy—and these were not the most popular areas with his colleagues in the Foreign Ministry. That's how I got a job at the Foreign Ministry.
It was an amazing time! I have to say I was lucky because every time I was in China at the "right" time. After Gorbachev's visit in 1989, for which, incidentally, I prepared documents and was responsible for drafting memos for the talks, normalization took off. And in December 1992, President Boris Yeltsin made a historic visit to China. It marked a seamless transition from the Soviet to the Russian framework for the development of bilateral relations, and a completely new period began. We soon reestablished and began to develop contacts in quite sensitive areas. I mean nuclear energy or space research, and, by the way, the military—as part of military-technical cooperation; it was quite legal cooperation under the supervision of international procedures.
Six years later, I returned to the Foreign Ministry to the post of the director of the Department of Economic Cooperation, which was unexpectedly offered to me by Minister Y. Primakov. It was quite a challenge, and although I studied this field at MGIMO, I had to learn a lot in the commercial and political field and in the legal regulation of foreign trade.
At that time, our trade turnover with China was at the level of 5 billion dollars (let me remind you that in 2023, according to China's data, it was 240 billion; according to our data, it was 228 billion), and this figure seemed huge. I remember that during Yeltsin's visit in 1996, we were preparing to sign a document that included the provision that in five years we would reach the level of 10 billion, i.e., double the amount. When we presented it to the president for signing, he took a pen and corrected the number 10 to 20. We were astonished: how could this be? But it turned out that both the skeptics and the optimists were wrong, because by 2000 we had reached a much higher number.

MJ: And what was the political formulation of the relations?
That's when the term "strategic partnership" came into use. It was Primakov's idea; he convinced Yeltsin to come to it. China's very first formula sounded like this: strategic-type partnership relations. Today we say, "comprehensive partnership and strategic cooperation in a new era." Moreover, the "new era" part was recently added at the suggestion of the Chinese side: our partners thought it would be more "modern."





"To cheer up those who are learning Chinese, I will say: it is not that complicated, although of course it has its own peculiarities because of the characters."

In fact, our positions may disagree. We are not allies, and we don't owe each other anything; we ask questions openly, and we justify our vision. China has its own specific positions, for example, on arms control. But these are just topics of conversation, not a matter of binding agreement or disagreement between the parties. We respect each other's positions and are willing to discuss and listen to different approaches. For example, the Chinese are showing understanding of our concerns about our own security in the context of the conflict in Ukraine…
When I returned to the Foreign Ministry,

I left the Chinese track for a full 17 years. And I came to the conclusion that, if there weren't China, foreign trade would be the most interesting thing I would want to do. For example, the issues of debt and assets in the framework of the Paris Club of creditors, negotiations on accession to the WTO, etc.
And then, after serving as department head for two years, I received an unexpected offer to serve as ambassador to Egypt. I expressed my doubts because I had never been involved in Middle Eastern affairs. But the answer was: you don't think about politics, you're trained in economics, and your job is to regain the leading positions we lost in the Egyptian market in the 1990s.
However, a month and a half after I arrived in Cairo, the infamous "Temple Mount incident" occurred when Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon visited the site, triggering the second stage of the Intifada, the Palestinian popular struggle against Israel. And frankly, for the next two years of my rather short ambassadorial term, I was 95 percent focused on the Middle East settlement. There were also some improvements in our economic relations. In 2002, I returned to the central office and was appointed deputy minister for economic affairs. It was a very productive period; I had to address many new issues. However, I was not able to work there for long, because in 2004, Sergey Lavrov, the then Russian ambassador to the UN, returned from New York. When he took charge of the ministry, literally immediately after the reception



"I left the Chinese track for a full 17 years. It happens to us; diplomacy is not a job, it's a service."

in the president's office that evening, he gathered a small group of our MFA staff. "Pack your suitcase," he told me, "you'll be my replacement there."

MJ: This is unexpected. Was it the same as with Egypt?
Yes, I felt about the same way. The time in New York was an important experience for me. A few days later, Russia's first presidency of the Security Council would begin with me at the helm, so I got straight to work. And another month later, a terrible tragedy happened—the terrorist attack in Beslan. That situation became a baptism of fire for me. It was a very serious and, I would say, very ambiguous situation—in a bad way. The UN and the Security Council could not but respond to such a terrorist attack with, say, a Security Council statement. But we have to admit that even then, our "partners" tried to put a fly in the ointment whenever possible. In this case, they tried to insert their own wording into the draft resolution, such as condemning "Russian aggression against the Chechen Republic" and the like. Which was totally inappropriate. And how we managed to rectify the situation and get rid of those ambiguous, insulting, and totally unacceptable phrases is a different story.

MJ: How did you manage to do that?
I turned to my fellow SC members and said, "There has been a terrible tragedy, children have died… And you are pursuing an unworthy agenda, trying to emasculate the draft statement to advance your petty interests." All in all, the result was in our favor…
It was very hard to work at the UN; sometimes it was nerve-wracking. The point is that in bilateral diplomacy, when you are face to face with your counterpart, you can still somehow come to an agreement, but when you have to come to an agreement with 10 to 15 negotiators, it is extremely difficult. Unfortunately, the further we went, the more the situation became a consensus-minus-one type of situation.



MJ: What does that mean?
As one of our representatives in the Council of Europe put it, he had to work in a situation where all the European countries were on one side and we, Russia, were on the other. In the SC, however, it may not have come to that because there were Chinese comrades after all. It also helped that countries friendly or neutral to us were elected as non-permanent members…

"In 2004, S. V. Lavrov, the then Russian ambassador to the UN, returned from New York. When he took charge of the ministry, he told me, "Pack your suitcase; you'll be my replacement there."

I only had the chance to work in such an intense mode for two years. I was called back to Moscow to take the post of first deputy minister. During my seven years in that position, I often remembered the Chinese proverb: "If there is no old tiger on the mountain, a monkey becomes king." Even though it is only a joke and it sounds a little self-deprecating, when I realized the magnitude of our minister's personality and tried to put myself next to him, I had exactly those feelings.

MJ: After that position, did you go to China as the ambassador?
Yes, and it was the only place I asked for myself. On the other hand, I felt completely fit and professionally equipped for that job.
I wanted to end my diplomatic career where I had begun.
And I was lucky again: it was a time of important changes in China. Coincidentally, I arrived exactly two months after Xi Jinping had been elected as the president of the People's Republic of China, the head of state. This happened at the beginning of March 2013, and a few days later he made his first visit to Russia and had his first talks and meetings with V. Putin.

MJ: Who had been elected president of Russia a year earlier!
Yes, it's a totally unique coincidence of events, for which I thank fate. Moreover,





my first activity, literally on the second day of my arrival in China, was to meet and accompany His Holiness Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia during his visit to China. His visit was previously agreed upon by Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping, who personally invited the patriarch. I can safely, without any pretension and pathos, equate this event with the historic events of our time.
I met the patriarch and accompanied him first in Beijing and then on his trip to Harbin, where there is the only Orthodox Church in China, where Father Alexander, a Chinese man, serves. However, this

“China was the only place I asked for myself. I felt completely fit and professionally equipped for that job.”

temple is not actually ours; it belongs to the autonomous Orthodox Church in China. There is only one temple in China that is ours, and it’s on the grounds of the Russian Embassy, where our priest serves. So His Holiness held a service in this temple for our community—those who live and work in China, which is hundreds of people! He also held a service in the Church of the Intercession of the Mother of God in Harbin and then in Shanghai, in our former church—the Cathedral of the “Surety of Sinners” Icon of the Theotokos, which, however, is no longer a church, because if there is no service there for one year, the status is lost.
Meeting His Holiness and his visit, which gave impetus to my entire ambassadorial term, is one of the greatest fortunes of my life!

MJ: You said you were perfectly “equipped” to work in China. This fully applies to the language as well. I wonder how often you used Chinese proverbs and sayings in your work.
This is the alpha and omega of working in China. Even the character-based writing itself determines the higher importance of various clichéd expressions, references to classical literature… As in any other language. In China, this kind of idiomatic expression—for example, “kill a chicken to scare the monkey” or “wash a monkey and put a hat on it”—is widely used. These phrases are usually four characters long. There are also lines from classical Chinese poetry, ancient literary texts, and quotes from Confucius. Famous stratagems also consist of four characters, such as “Make a sound in the east, then strike in the west.” And if you use a phrase like that in the right place, your counterpart is sure to appreciate it.
In China, for example, there is the province of Sichuan. It is like our Krasnodar region, a very rich province, a breadbasket. The largest in China. And there are two phrases: “The young should not enter Sichuan” and “The old should not leave Shu” (the old name of Sichuan). In other words, the young can’t go there because it’s too good, and they won’t go back to their place later, and the old shouldn’t leave Sichuan because they won’t find a better place.
Of course, if I start my acquaintance with the leaders of this province with this phrase when I visit it, I will make a good impression. That is what usually happens. To cheer up those who are learning Chinese, I will repeat: it is not that complicated, although of course it has its own peculiarities because of the characters, so many concepts are conveyed figuratively, and sometimes it is just poetry.
A good example is the expression “Like a galloping white stallion flashing through a gap in the barn wall.” In Russian, it means “a short moment.”



MJ: This is a big problem for translators, of course.
I agree. Especially in the last few decades. The political documents and speeches of China’s leaders and their articles used to be dry and routine. Now they use more and more old sayings and verses in their speech. For example, when discussing Taiwan affairs, you may hear expressions such as “Fan Juan danced with his sword in front of Liu Bei.” This means that even though he’s dancing, he’s signaling that he’s ready to chop off his opponent’s head.

MJ: What can you wish to your alma mater on its 80th anniversary?
I owe a lot to the university, and I’m sure every one of our alumni can say that. MGIMO provides ample opportunities for self-actualization in a wide range of areas—both those related to the knowledge a student receives here and those that are, so to speak, “foreign” to an international affairs student.

“Thanks to the leadership of MGIMO, the university has been able to keep the bar high; I want it to stay that way in the future!.”

Both the future metropolitan of the Russian Orthodox Church and the commander of an aircraft of the Khanty-Mansi polar aviation detachment studied with me. My graduating class includes two ministers—of foreign affairs and foreign trade—as well as several ambassadors and a number of very serious entrepreneurs and corporate executives. And I have only scratched the surface. Those who have not reached such heights are people who have become this country’s elite, in the good sense of this word, in their professional fields.
My wish for the university is to keep the bar high. It’s hard. Because competition in the market of educational services (I don’t like this expression!) is now very serious compared to the Soviet years. Thanks to the leadership of the university, it has been able to keep the bar high; I want it to stay that way in the future!
In conclusion, as a Sinologist, I would like to recall a Chinese expression. If you translate these four characters, it means, “May the ten thousand things you do go as you wish!” MJ



CHIZHOV: “THE MGIMO DIPLOMA IS A SYMBOL OF BELONGING TO THE INTERNATIONAL FRATERNITY”

Interview by **Igor Drobyshev**

In 2022, after 17 years of diplomatic work abroad, Vladimir Chizhov, a 1976 MGIMO graduate, received an offer to become a member of the Federation Council, or Russian senator. Since 2005, he has represented Russia to the EU, succeeding Mikhail Fradkov (who left Brussels for Moscow to take up the position of Russian prime minister). In the Senate, Chizhov changed the character of his work from international to domestic, retaining the role of a representative, but now of a Russian region—the Republic of Karelia.

MJ: Have you had time to get to know the region in the last two years? What is good about Karelia?
There are more than 60 thousand lakes in Karelia and almost 30 thousand rivers—just imagine! Pristine nature, islands… The famous churches of Kizhi Island, built only with axes! The very interesting history and culture of the indigenous peoples—Karelians and Vepsians, who have been living together for centuries—are carefully protected by the state. At the same time, the population of Karelia is just a little over 500 thousand people, which is only three people per square kilometer. In short, there are perfect conditions for tourism and recreation.



1982. Soviet leader L. Brezhnev welcomes Cyprus President S. Kyprianou in Moscow.

“I still remember my first words in Greek: “Ime fititis” (“I am a student”). It is a fairly well-structured language, which makes it easier to learn.”

MJ: And fishing!
Oh, that’s a whole other story. To be honest, I’m not a big fan of fishing, but I can appreciate the fishing spots of Karelia—they are amazing! By the way,

Karelia produces 80 percent of all the trout harvested in Russia.

MJ: Karelia has an extensive border with Finland. You probably have to deal with international affairs as well, don't you?
Unfortunately, after 2022, all European "international affairs" are a thing of the past. Karelia used to cooperate very closely with Finland, and there were a great number of overlapping economic and cultural threads. Now it's a NATO country. What's the point of all this trouble? To go from a respected country, whose neutral status was invoked by the great powers in different years, to a backyard, a remote periphery of this military bloc…?

"There are more than 60 thousand lakes in Karelia and almost 30 thousand rivers! Pristine nature, islands… Perfect conditions for tourism and recreation."





MJ: The same could be said of another NATO member, Greece. By the way, how is it that you devoted part of your life to studying it?
In 1971, I passed the entrance exams and entered MGIMO. And when it came to the distribution of languages, I was quite surprised to hear that I would be studying Greek. I had a vague idea of it: I knew what Alpha and Omega were, but not much more than that. By the way, at that time Athens was ruled by "the colonels," but the USSR did not break diplomatic relations with Greece… After some thinking, I remembered that Cyprus also speaks Greek, so I was lucky after all.

MJ: How did your Greek learning go?
It went well. It went so well that after my sophomore year, I interpreted for the president of the Republic of Cyprus, Archbishop Makarios.

MJ: How did you manage to get that job?
In 1973, during my summer vacation, I went to Cyprus, where I worked as an interpreter for the USSR Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Nicosia International Fair. That month and a half gave me a great impetus to continue my studies.

MJ: What's the first phrase you remember?
"Ime fititis" ("I am a student"). Greek is a fairly well-structured language, which makes it easier to learn. But it has its own peculiarities, especially in phonetics. And although it seems simple—not like Chinese or Vietnamese—some sounds are difficult: for example, the sound "t" is always pronounced firmly, without any deviation to "ti" or "te," and the sound "s"—Sigma—is half fricative. Which, by the way, was a big problem for the Bulgarian student in our group, because in Bulgarian that sound is sibilant. She later said that was why the Greeks did not consider her one of them, even though she could be mistaken for a Greek. The more surprising thing is that I was once mistaken for a Greek.

MJ: You look so not Greek! And with a last name like that.
That happened in 1975 during my pre-graduation internship in Athens. I would walk around the city, happy to realize that I could communicate. One day I was talking to a Greek guy. He: "Well, you're not from around here; I can see that. You're a Greek, probably from Boston." "Well, well," I said, "from this point on, be more specific." He said, "It's because of your accent." It turns out that there are a lot of Greeks living in Boston…

MJ: And one of them came as a tourist to his historical homeland?
It turns out this way… To continue the linguistic theme, I'll tell another story. When Yevgeny Primakov was foreign minister, I was already working as the head of the Balkan department and had to go to Athens for scheduled consultations. During the same days, the World Congress of Greeks was held in Thessaloniki, with the participation of Greeks from Russia, among others. I approached the minister with the idea: "Let's prepare your welcoming address to the Congress; I will translate it into Greek and read it out." He agreed.
I flew to Thessaloniki; the consul general met me and took me to the Congress. It was in a huge gymnasium with about two thousand people in it. As I walked in, I could feel it in my skin: something was wrong; the atmosphere was tense. It was later explained to me that they had been arguing for an hour and a half before I arrived about who was to be considered Greek. And in particular, whether the criterion is knowledge of the Greek language… And then a Russian diplomat comes to the podium and reads a welcoming address from the Russian minister in fluent Greek. The exploding bomb effect is a weak description of what happened. Some crying old Greek ladies kissed my hands… That is, my speech hit home, and the argument apparently ended there.

MJ: Is this your greatest achievement as a Greek expert?
I don't think so. On October 28, 1982, I found myself in the Palace of the Facets of the Kremlin, where, 12 days before his death, Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev was negotiating with and hosting a formal dinner in honor of Cypriot President Spyros Kyprianou. I was practically Brezhnev's last interpreter.



"In 2005, I was sent to Brussels and worked for 17 years as the head of our Permanent Mission to the EU, becoming probably the longest-serving ambassador of the new Russia."

MJ: In the 1990s, you worked your way up from advisor to deputy minister for Europe.
Yes, I worked in the British department for 13 years, but I never went to London. And since the mid-1990s, my work began to take on a European direction, where I had been working for almost 30 years until I went to the Senate.
This is how it started. At that time we did not have a permanent mission to the OSCE in Vienna, but we had a delegation headed by Ambassador-at-Large V. Shustov. Its composition changed twice a year. V. Shustov, who arrived in Moscow

during the summer vacation, sharply criticized those who had formed the delegation for the previous term. "They couldn't find me a person who spoke fluent English," he grumbled. "There's no one to do the drafting!" And they approached me and offered me to go to Vienna for half a term (six weeks). I thought about it and agreed.
But as soon as we got there, Shustov said, "Would you like to stay for the whole term?" I ended up being there for four months. At that time, Dayton had just happened, and the Americans and Europeans began to propose various projects on how to create a mechanism for implementing the peace agreement for Bosnia. The Americans assigned roles to everybody: NATO would deal with the military aspects, the European Union with the economic aspects, and the OSCE with the preparation of the elections.
The question arose: who would head the OSCE mission? When the Americans offered me the position of deputy chief of the mission, I refused on principle. I eventually became involved in the region in a different capacity, as deputy to Carl Bildt, Sweden's former prime minister, who was appointed High Representative for the Peace Settlement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
As for some vivid episodes of the Bosnian period, I would like to mention my participation in the meeting between Y. Primakov and C. Bildt in Rome. I was suddenly faced with a challenging task: I had to write the memos for both participants and then the final papers for them as well.
And those had to look like completely different documents, both in style and in language. I won't go into the details of how I did it, but they both enjoyed it…

"Karelia used to cooperate very closely with Finland, and there were a great number of overlapping economic and cultural threads. Now it's a NATO backyard."



Upon my return to Moscow, I became director of the Third European Department, where I dealt with the Balkans, and two years later I was promoted to director of the Department for European Cooperation (DEC).
Although I had other plans. By that time I had been working at the central office for quite some time and was thinking about a foreign posting. Especially since the position I could theoretically dream of—ambassador to Greece—became vacant with the departure of Valentina Matviyenko in 1998.
But when Igor Ivanov, who had been minister for only the first month, offered me the position of director of the DEC, I gave up the idea of Greece and agreed. That position was a professional challenge for me: the DEC was considered one of the most important units as it monitored the OSCE, the European Union, NATO, and the Council of Europe.
And in 2002 I was appointed deputy minister. I was in charge of two departments, then five; you could say I was responsible for the whole of Europe. And in 2005, I was sent to Brussels and worked for 17 years as the head of our Permanent Mission to the EU, becoming probably the longest-serving ambassador of the new Russia.

MJ: How do you see this huge period in our relationship with the EU?
Of course, it cannot be judged unequivocally; there were ups and downs. We are in a deep "down" right now, and through no fault of our own. Everything we built during that time is frozen today…

MJ: In the Federation Council, you are the first deputy chair of the Defense and Security Committee. This is an extremely important area in the current situation.
Absolutely. In the current geopolitical situation, in the context of the ongoing special military operation, the importance of defense and security issues has increased manifold. The Russian Constitution gives the Federation Council a special role in this area of state and social life.
However, while dealing with such problems as the timely and qualitative fulfillment of state defense procurement, issues of support for servicemen and their families, and ensuring the rights of defenders of the homeland and veterans, I naturally keep a watchful eye on international affairs.



Strengthening cooperation within the CSTO, developing military and military-technical cooperation with friendly states, and analyzing peacebuilding experience—these are just some of the items on my agenda.

MJ: MGIMO is 80. What would you wish to your alma mater?
For 80 years, our university has produced several generations of professionals to navigate the turbulent waters of international politics and economics, forming the basis not only for the diplomatic service but also for a number of other parts of the state apparatus, as well as for influential business organizations and academic centers. Not only in Russia but also in many (and this is not an exaggeration) foreign countries. Today, the MGIMO diploma serves as a reliable pass to the field of foreign policy, a kind of mark of quality education, and at the same time, a symbol of belonging to the international fraternity of those to whom our common alma mater has given a great start in life.
In this anniversary year, I can only wish that the students will continue the traditions of past generations and that the faculty will maintain the high standards that have ensured the university's worldwide reputation over the years.

"I wish that the students will continue the traditions of past generations and that the faculty will maintain the high standards that have ensured the university's worldwide reputation."

UMAKHANOV: “MGIMO IS THE TALENT POOL FOR OUR DIPLOMATIC SERVICE”

Interview by Igor Drobyshev

Since 2001, Ilyas Umakhanov, a 1979 MGIMO graduate, has been a representative of the Republic of Dagestan in the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation. The uninterrupted record of service in the Senate makes him a doyen and, in Oriental terms, an *aqsaqal*.
Umakhanov’s whole life has been closely linked with Dagestan: it is where he was born, where he grew up, from where he went to apply to MGIMO, and where he returned to rebuild what was destroyed in the 1990s.
For almost a quarter of a century, he has served the people who elected him to the highest legislative body of Russia, and much has been done—in the position of deputy chair of the Federation Council, as well as through the Committee on Science, Education, and Culture, and serving as director of entities that he heads officially or on a voluntary basis.
“The main purpose of a senator is, of course, legislative activity,” he says. “But warmth of heart, empathy for grief and pain, and engagement in the fate of your fellow citizens are important, and no laws can replace that.”

MJ: Which topics have you been dealing with lately?
There have been quite a few. For example, one of the topics is organizing pilgrimages to holy sites in Saudi Arabia, which I have been working on for the last 15 years on behalf of the Presidential Executive Office and the Russian government. Over the years, about 300 thousand of our fellow citizens from 85 regions of Russia have performed the *hajj*, and there is also the small *hajj*, the *umrah*, which other tens of thousands of our Muslims have partaken in. At the same time, we managed to convince our Saudi partners to increase the quota for the *hajj* for Russians from 20.5 thousand people to 25 thousand people per year. Thus, we solved the problem with the shortage of places, relieving some tension among the Muslim ummah.

MJ: A question from uninitiated readers: what does the *hajj* mean for a Muslim?
This is one of the fundamental, unshakable pillars of Islam. Any Muslim should strive to make a pilgrimage to the holy places in Saudi Arabia: Mecca and Medina. Visiting holy places serves as a purification ritual for a Muslim; it is a religious exaltation crowning his spiritual aspirations. For many, the *hajj* remains a dream because, first of all, this trip is costly, and secondly, it is assumed that only a spiritually and morally mature person is able to make such a pilgrimage.
The second area of my work, which is also international by nature, is the activities of the Russian Committee for Solidarity with the Peoples of Asia and Africa, of which I am the chair. Now we are gaining momentum in this important field: we have opened branches in more than 45 regions of the country, which allows us to call the committee all-Russian. This is an important instrument of public diplomacy, and it is becoming increasingly relevant today.
Among the latest activities, I can mention a competition held among students from Asian and African countries who study at Russian universities for the best performance of poems about the Great Patriotic War of 1941–1945 written by Soviet and Russian poets.
We recently held this activity for the fifth time. Students representing 76 countries and studying at 90 Russian universities—a total of 600 people—recorded their performances via their phones and sent them to the jury. Some of the recitals were very moving and, I would even say, heartfelt.
And finally, working as part of the Russia–Islamic World Strategic Vision group is an extremely responsible mission.


I. Umakhanov with his friend A. Torkunov, Rector of MGIMO

“True male friendship should not depend on the market state or the position your friend currently holds.”

MJ: As for the regional level, what interesting developments could you highlight there?
The Federation Council is the chamber of regions. And in this sense, whether we are engaged in lawmaking, discussing the budget or distributing regional subsidies, or working with different departments, the senator’s main mission is not engaging in political bias (there are no factions in the Federation Council) but to promote and sometimes literally protect the interests of the region he or she represents.



Major forums that are held in the regions are also part of this effort.
One of such important events was the 9th International Forum on Historical and Cultural Heritage of Russia held in Dagestan in 2023, which was attended by the speaker of the Federation Council, Valentina Matviyenko. Following the forum, recommendations were produced, which subsequently formed the basis for a number of draft laws.
In 2007, the Russian–Uzbek Senate Commission was established, and I now serve as its co-chair. In 2024, as part of it, we signed an agreement on cultural cooperation and held an event called the Days of Dagestan's National Poet Rasul Gamzatov in Uzbekistan, which was dedicated to the centenary of his birth. Similar events were also organized in Belarus, Azerbaijan, and Kyrgyzstan.


Umakhanov with Tawfiq Bin Fawzan al-Rabiah, Minister of Hajj and Umrah of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia



"The main element in working on the regional level is doing your best to help the region use the resources from the federal center to its fullest: these include not only financial resources but also intellectual, educational, and scientific resources."

MJ: You are lucky to have met with Gamzatov in person, aren't you?
Yes, I knew him. My parents and he were close. When I worked at the USSR Embassy in Canada in the late 1970s, I was lucky enough to meet with him abroad. Rasul arrived to celebrate the 60th anniversary of the Hands Off Russia movement, which originated in Toronto in 1918–1920, during the period of foreign intervention in Russia. He was one of the leaders of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR (the Soviet parliament) and the Soviet Committee for the Protection of Peace. But for me he was primarily a fellow countryman, and the ambassador instructed me to accompany him. I translated for him and told him about Canada; it was a big responsibility. And a great joy, too: he brought me gifts from my parents.

MJ: Did you arrive in Canada after graduating from MGIMO?
No, I went there for an internship prior to graduating. By the way, right before the trip, the dean of my school, Vladimir Kulagin, suggested a potential topic for my thesis: "Take a closer look at peacemaking; this topic may become relevant in relation to Canada," he said.
Indeed, Canada took an active stance on the issues of peacemaking, and Prime Minister Trudeau himself was promoting this topic. So, I decided to write about it.

MJ: How did you like working in Canada?
I met some really remarkable people, including professional diplomats. In 1978, when I got there, the circumstances were quite difficult, and a large group of our diplomats, a total of 13 people, were expelled from the embassy. Soviet–Canadian relations were strained to the limit, and espionage was rampant. At that time, the events associated with the Soviet troops entering into Afghanistan had just



begun; everyone was tense, our diplomats were under constant surveillance, and I remember that the *Ottawa Tribune* newspaper even published the numbers of their license plates. As a result, my pre-graduation practice, which proved to be rather opportune in the face of the shortage of employees, turned out to also be a test of my psychological stability in those harsh and sometimes even extreme conditions. I finished my thesis, and it was highly evaluated—so much so that I got into the Canadian sector at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, I did not stay there for long: two years later I joined the staff of the Central Committee of the Komsomol. But that's a different story…

"Each student at MGIMO was treated as a "valuable asset," whereas studying was not seen as a service at the time: the focus was on providing continuous educational support to students."

MJ: Why did you decide to enter MGIMO and specialize in international affairs?
In part, this decision was predetermined thanks to my friend Maksud Maksudov, who was a neighbor of mine in Makhachkala, the capital of Dagestan, where I lived. He was four years older and was already studying in the diplomatic school. He told me a lot about the prospects for MGIMO graduates, with the university being known as the diplomatic talent factory. In March 1974, during the school holidays, I went from Makhachkala to Moscow to learn about the admission rules. As fate would have it, I was lucky enough to meet Anatoly Torkunov, a young



graduate student from the Department of Asian and African History and Culture, the current rector of MGIMO. He clearly outlined what I was supposed to prioritize during this process and gave me simple and clear explanations on how I should prepare for entering the university.

MJ: And now you are a member of the MGIMO Supervisory Board.
Yes, life is full of surprises. At that point in my life, Torkunov monitored my academic achievements, and now I'm happy to watch how our alma mater is moving forward! Since then, he and I have never really parted: we have kept our friendship alive for the past 50 years!
Without a doubt, I can call Anatoly an elder friend and a loyal comrade. True male friendship should not depend on the market state or the position either of you currently hold. It is noteworthy that regardless of the positions that Torkunov's friends hold, he never breaks off relations with them.

MJ: It is known that it is difficult to get into MGIMO, but studying here is even harder.
This is true. For example, at first I didn't do that well in the English class. But I studied diligently, and eventually my English got better.
MGIMO has always been different from many other universities: it has had its signature style, if you will. There was a clear understanding that a young person graduating from MGIMO would sooner or later be dealing with defending the interests of the country abroad, on international platforms.
Therefore, each student was treated as a "valuable asset," so to speak, and a lot of attention was paid to him or her in the process: some needed additional support, others would benefit from a little scolding. This was very well done at the university. Also, the educational process was not seen as a service at the time; the focus was precisely on providing continuous educational support to students.
Studying was hard, especially during the exam periods. But I was mostly concerned with keeping my family's reputation intact, especially since I was the only son in the family. And when I graduated from the university with honors, I heard probably the greatest praise from my father, which I still remember. My father was brief: he said, "You did well." These words served as a compensation for the 5 difficult years of study.

MJ: You said that you left the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and joined the staff of the Central Committee of the Komsomol. This is quite unexpected.
Yes, my case was very rare, and the staff of the Central Committee looked at me with surprise; on the contrary, they considered it a great success to get in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. My career there was developing well, too. I left for family reasons. By then, I had three children born a year apart, and it was very troublesome and expensive to travel abroad with them and work there full-time.

MJ: Nevertheless, two years at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is enough time to gain some solid experience.
Yes, it is. We are talking about acquiring a political outlook and skills in system analysis and preparation of materials. At the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, I would write certain texts, and they would be edited by senior colleagues. At that, they would not disregard my drafts: they would study the text and take it as a basis, specifying how to shift the emphasis. To this day, I mostly write all my speeches myself.
There were many similarities with my previous job in the Central Committee of the Komsomol, since here I also worked in the international department. But there was also a significant difference. After all, as a diplomat, I worked more with documents, and in the Komsomol, a public organization, I worked with people. I traveled half the country meeting with



> "Students from 76 countries studying at Russian universities recorded their performance of poems about the 1941–1945 War written by Soviet and Russian poets"

young people.Thanks to such a turn of events, I got to meet a lot of interesting, talented people. This helped me later in my political career, which I started in the mid-1990s. In the elections to the People's Assembly of Dagestan in the Central District of Makhachkala, my rivals were the minister of communications, the head of the police department, a trade union leader, and a university vice rector. These were people with a lot of experience! Nevertheless, I received 67 percent of the vote in the first round, even though I had lived in the republic for only about two years by that time. It was just that the time



was different, mere managerial functions were no longer sufficient, and it was important now to start communicating, convincing, finding the right images and the right words that would reach other people's hearts and would touch their souls. I learned this skill while in the Komsomol.

MJ: Why did you return to Dagestan?
The main reason was the desire to continue the family traditions, as well as to stay in my homeland during difficult times, after the USSR collapsed in 1991.

MJ: I've noticed that you keep your father's photo in a prominent place.
All the good things I have come from my father and mother. My father fought in the war that began in 1941, from day one. He fought throughout the whole war, all the way to Berlin, where on April 22, 1945, with his group of scouts, he planted the Victory Banner in the Pankow district of Berlin, a few kilometers from the Reichstag. He was wounded and awarded ten orders. After the war, returning to his native Dagestan, he was chairman of the government of Dagestan for 11 years and its party leader for 16 years, meaning he actually served as head of the republic for more than a quarter of a century!
I don't remember a single Saturday when he was at home. He traveled hundreds of kilometers through the mountains with a driver and knew the names of all shepherds, grape growers, and tractor drivers—he had an outstanding memory! When an earthquake struck Dagestan in 1970, he devoted all his efforts to rebuilding local cities and towns. Four years from then, Makhachkala looked completely different: it was modern and flourishing… People who survived the war, fighting at the front, were something else indeed.

> **"In the Caucasus, age is determined not by the number of years but by the glorious deeds that a person has accomplished for the benefit of the homeland."**

MJ: That explains why he didn't want you to work at his side.
At that time, modesty and restraint were held in high esteem, and family members would always keep a low profile. So, I kept it low, so to say. It was only after my father's death that I began a political career of my own. Therefore, when I arrived at the meetings with voters in 1995, there were veterans sitting there who said, "Well, this is an impostor; Umakhanov did not have a son!" And I had to prove that I would become a worthy son of my father.

MJ: What a time that was! The Chechen war, Russia on the verge of collapse…
Only a person devoid of self-respect can sit still when his home is in trouble. Our country is big, but everyone has a place that's dear to them: their street, their school, their village… It was a challenge for me: I had to follow in my father's footsteps and stay with my homeland in difficult times. I worked as chairman of the Budget, Taxes, and Finance Committee of the Republican Parliament at that time when there were not enough taxes or finances in the region even to pay out salaries, pensions, and child benefits. And when I was appointed deputy chair of the Republican Government, in addition to solving multiple issues already, I joined others in their active fight against terrorism and extremism.
It was an anxious time. I had my fair share of troubles. On March 30, 1998, I was riding in my official Volga, and there was a Moskvich on the way, filled, as it turned out later, with 40 kilograms of TNT. But, fortunately, the trajectory of the explosion was such that only the windows of our car were shattered. Meanwhile, the other car's engine flew over a five-story building and landed on another street. I got off with just a scratch, whereas my driver came in the



next day with shaking hands, saying, "Sorry, I won't be able to work with you anymore." Another time they fired a grenade launcher, there was almost no chance of survival. Although my car was armored, the grenade penetrated the frame and exploded in the trunk.
I was wounded, hit by shrapnel. But the Almighty saved me.

MJ: In such cases, some make a decision to step down voluntarily, while others grow more confident upon facing such danger and decide that they will continue, to spite the enemy.
I had it that way. After all, at that time, the question of the unity and territorial integrity of Russia was on the line. The stakes were very high: these were human lives. Dagestan lost many of its best people in those years. But no one was going to back down. We could not betray the memory of our fallen comrades and to turn our back on our fathers' accomplishments.

> **"There is one thing I want to say: we only live once and I am sure that those endeavors that I decided to spend my life on are worth it.M**

MJ: Now it's clear why Dagestan has trusted you to represent it in the Federation Council since 2001.
I guess this is partly due to the fact that I try to do my job conscientiously. Once you've been trained that you should always do your job well, as a rule, it becomes a life-long principle. But the main thing is that people need you and that you are in demand in your region. And I'm glad that my efforts are appreciated.

MJ: MGIMO celebrates its 80th anniversary. What would you like to wish to the university on this occasion?
My wish to the alma mater is very simple. It would seem that 80 years is a long time, but it's not yet a milestone that needs to be emphasized. Our university is young; it is constantly looking for new approaches, introducing various innovations. This is because its rector, Anatoly Torkunov, is rather young: I mean that his soul is young, his intellect is sharp, and he has a desire to find and introduce new things. Moreover, in the Caucasus, age is determined not by the number of years but by the glorious deeds that a person has accomplished for the benefit of the homeland. For this reason, I'm proud to say that the university is 80 years old. But I am equally proud to say that there is still a lot awaiting it in the future!
MGIMO is the face of Russian diplomacy; it embodies the basic values and principles of Russian foreign policy and represents the most powerful talent pool of our diplomacy.











THE RHINOCEROS FROM ZURUMBIA

For those who are unaware, the Republic of Zurumbia has recently experienced a rise in tension.

The global pandemic and the political miscalculations of Zurumbia's authorities have caused confidence in the new government, composed almost entirely of BINT party members, to plummet to an all-time low and public sentiment to deteriorate. The situation is particularly acute in the oil-rich Zahi Zahi region in the south of the country, where separatist sentiment is on the rise. According to international experts, the state is on the brink of disaster—about a week away from the point of no return.

The model's aim is to understand what is happening in the world and to hold discussions finding solutions rather than listing problems.

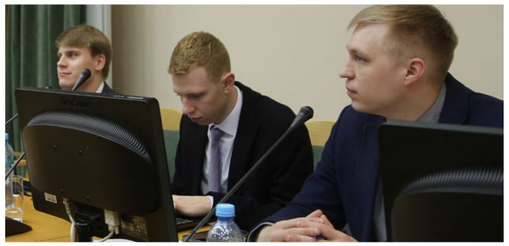
All in all, it's a mess. The situation in the country can be exploited both by the opponents of the BINT party (the Downed Pilot party, the Union of Zurumbia's Well-Wishers movement) and by external forces—first of all, by representatives of the Democratic Republic of Banania, from which Zurumbia once seceded…

Of course, there is no Zurumbia. But there is a group of young men and women—MGIMO students and Africans who came to Moscow to participate in the Russian-African Forum of Young International Relations Professionals on Security and Development. For one of the days of the forum, a situational game was planned—about the crisis in a fictional Zurumbia. It was a highlight of the forum.





















* * *

The lecture hall brought together young diplomats, military officers, politicians, scholars, and journalists from Zambia, Congo (Brazzaville), Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda, Ethiopia, and South Africa, as well as students of the master's program in International Security implemented by the research organization PIR Center in cooperation with MGIMO.

During the week, the white plastic figurine of an African rhinocero gazed curiously at the crowd of experts. attended all the forum's events: lectures and seminars that touched on such relevant topics as neocolonialism and crisis management in Africa, digital development of sub-Saharan countries, BRICS activities in peace and security, energy sovereignty and mining in Africa, and cooperation between Russia and African countries in the field of nuclear energy.

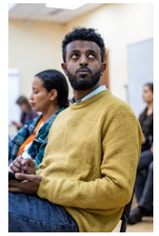
Arov: "The participants were to not so much resolve the crisis as to try not to exacerbate it. They succeeded."

But why the rhinoceros? This rare animal is considered dangerous to humans. But paradoxically, it is also endangered. It is no coincidence that the rhinoceros has become the logo of the PIR Center, an expert analytical organization that has been researching international and regional security issues for 30 years.

Five teams—The Statesmen, The Opposition, The Centrists, The Ethnic Minorities/Indigenous Ethnic Groups, and The Foreign Country Representatives—were to try to influence the country's politics. To that end, they were to work out their strategies to overcome the crisis for the sake of further development. The crisis resolution process was led by Leonid Tsukanov, a PIR Center consultant.

The teams were familiarized with the script and the characteristics of their factions beforehand, which allowed them to fully engage in the simulation from the very beginning. The stages



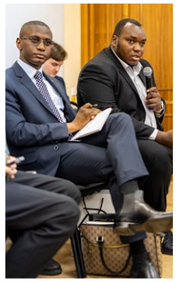


















it was not explicitly stated," said L. Tsukanov. "When the stakes are too high and the fate of the country is on the line, one must be able to establish contacts not only with foreign partners but also with domestic opponents. And the participants realized pretty quickly which way their friendships should go."

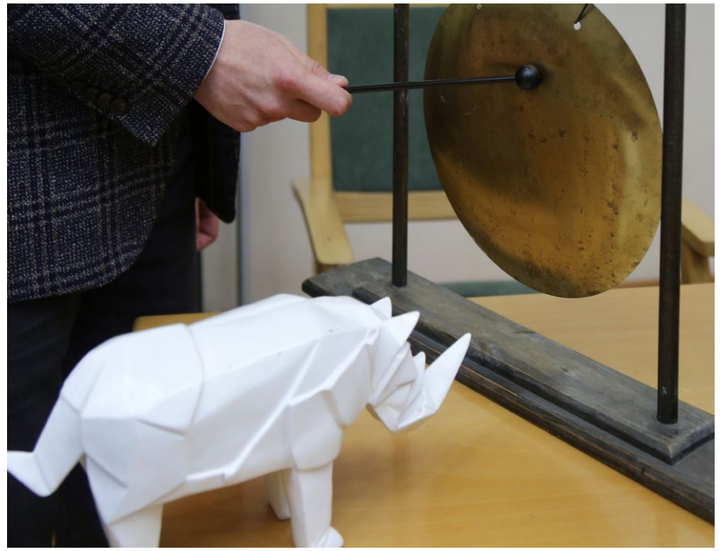
At the end of the first three phases, team representatives presented their strategies and answered questions from the audience and expert moderators.

After analyzing and systematizing the strategies developed, the expert moderators gave the following assessment of the situation: the efforts of the government of Zurumbia (BINT) have made it possible to exclude the possibility of a military coup in the country. At the same time, the policy of militarizing the country and aggravating the conflict with neighboring Banania continued.

The opposition parties (Downed Pilot and Union of Zurumbia's Well-wishers) and the centrist For All the Good Things party formed a tactical coalition but did not come up with a unified strategy: their approaches to economic development and tactics in the international arena differed, so the coalition could not become a serious challenger to the ruling party.

Banania's government relied on the support of the coalition of the opposition and centrists, but their contacts were more tactical and would not affect Zurumbia's politics in the short term. On the other hand, the policy of support for the Zahi Zahi region, which had previously seen a rise in separatist sentiment, was continued with the right priorities in view.

It can be useful for the Aricans to leave their countries to get a different perspective on what's going on in their region, to see things that can't be seen up close.



were "Elaboration" (the development of strategies), "Negotiation" (interaction between the factions), and "Finalization" (the finalization of strategies building on the first two stages).

To complicate the game, "black swans" were included—hard-to-predict events that could affect the political forces' domestic and foreign policies.

"The script proposed to the teams implied inter-team cooperation, although

All the teams put their stakes on international cooperation (predominantly on the dialog with the US and the PRC), including in exchange for some economic and technological sovereignty. There were no proposals to develop contacts with other extra-regional powers (Russia, India, the EU, and others), which made the teams dependent on Washington and Beijing in the medium term.

Only the ruling BINT party has proposed working within the African continent, albeit only in declarative terms. None of the teams have made proposals to reduce tensions between Zurumbia and Banania through de-escalation.

"At the end of the game, although the crisis in Zurumbia remained at the same level, further escalation was prevented,"

But why has the rhinoceros become the logo of the PIR Center? This rare animal is considered dangerous to humans. But paradoxically, it is also endangered.

says Sviatoslav Arov, research fellow and executive assistant to the director of the PIR Center. "The participants were to not so much resolve the crisis as to try not to exacerbate it. They succeeded."

The peculiarity of the game was that the African side was represented by experienced, one could say seasoned, experts: analysts, employees of research centers, diplomats, and even journalists with dozens of forums under their belt. MGIMO, on the other hand, was represented by future international relations experts, master's students—people who have yet to gain experience.

"In fact, the African team was all experienced professionals," notes S. Arov, "with good English. They delivered their presentations in a professional and expressive manner. Abdi Abubakar, an analyst from Somalia, was particularly memorable; he performed so well that he even reminded us of Martin Luther King Jr. by his manner."

Some of the students' setbacks could only be explained by lack of experience. Moreover, while for the MGIMO students, the situation game around a fictitious country was abstract and theoretical in nature, for Africans, whose countries sometimes see real conflicts and crises



change like the seasons, this model provides an opportunity to look for approaches to solving real problems at home—separatism and terrorism—based on the experience of studying such situations. So they're not just "asking for the sake of asking;" they are so engaged and expressive for a good reason.

"Indeed, the students perceived this session more like a game," agrees S. Arov. "The African participants were more pragmatic and invested, and they surprised both us and the experienced lecturers with their focus, clear understanding of the topic, practical and clear questions.

On the other hand, it can be useful for a person to leave their country to get a different perspective on what's going on in their region, to see things that can't be seen up close.

All in all, both the Africans and the MGIMO students enjoyed the game. They only expressed a wish to do such modeling at other major PIR Center events and to extend it to five or more hours so that everyone could participate in the final debate and ask the team leaders their questions.

Judging by the reviews, however, the model seems to have achieved its goal. It was outlined by Vladimir Orlov, founder and head of the PIR Center, who opened the forum with the following message: "You are to understand what is happening in the world now and to hold discussions aimed at finding solutions rather than listing problems. The key words for us will be 'development' and 'sovereignty,' because only when we are truly independent will we be able to make progress." MJ

VALERY SALYGIN: “MIEP IS A SCHOOL OF ENERGY DIPLOMACY AND GEOPOLITICS”

Photos by courtesy of V. Salygin, MIEP press service

MGIMO is 80 years old, and the International Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy (MIEP) has been operating within the university structure for almost 25 years.
Professor Valery Salygin, the director of MIEP, told us about the goals of the institute, the training process, strategic partners, and MIEP graduates.

MJ: How did MIEP’s history begin?
The institute was established by the decision of the academic council of our university in February 2000. A lot has been done over the past nearly 25 years. In fact, MIEP gave rise to the first school of energy diplomacy and geopolitics in Russia and in the world.
MIEP has developed and opened more than 20 bachelor’s, master’s, and MBA degree programs, including international programs. Nine departments have been established in the institute, as well as several institutes for energy cooperation in collaboration with leading foreign universities, the Center for Strategic Research in Energy and Digital Economy, the International Center for Hydrogen Energy, and the Center for Strategic Research in Innovation.
MIEP was founded in response to the urgent need for experts in energy diplomacy and geopolitics in the new era of international energy cooperation. Today this focus area has acquired even greater significance and relevance in light of the current geopolitical situation and serious challenges facing our country and the world community, including challenges in energy policy and diplomacy. That is why our graduates, more than five thousand of them, are in great demand, and the institute has received serious support from state and international organizations and large companies throughout the years of its existence.



In almost a quarter of a century, MIEP has created the first school of energy diplomacy and geopolitics in Russia and in the world

MJ: How does MIEP work with the companies employing the graduates?
The institute’s strategic partners include major companies such as Rosneft, Transneft, Norilsk Nickel, and Gazprombank. MIEP also has close long-term cooperation with Gazprom, Rosseti, Rosatom, Gazprom Neft, Zarubezhneft, Lukoil, and a number of other companies. It is important to note that since 2006 our institute has specialized departments of strategic partner companies. These include Rosneft’s Department of Global Energy Policy and Energy Security, Transneft’s Department of Foreign Economic Activity in Energy Transportation, which is personally headed by Transneft’s President N. Tokarev, Norilsk Nickel’s Department, and Gazprombank’s Department, whose first head for many years was Chair of the Management Board A. Akimov. We also have the World Resource Markets Department, established by the initiative of leading companies in the coal industry; Russia’s first Department of International Issues in Fuel and Energy; the Department of Legal Regulation in the Fuel and Energy Industry; the Department of World Electric Power Industry; and the Innovation Management Department.
The companies that are our strategic partners are actively involved in personnel training. This is a whole system of interaction that includes joint practice-oriented training programs, courses by managers and leading experts of partner corporations, regular interesting workshops, long-term internships for our students, guidance in preparing final term papers, company executives’ participation in state examination commissions, corporate scholarships, engaging the best students in corporate competitions and conferences, and, of course, job offers for our graduates.
Together with Rosneft, we have been implementing a joint master’s program in Economic Strategies of International Oil and Gas Companies for almost 20 years, in cooperation with Transneft—a master’s program in International Management in Oil and Oil Products Transportation, and together with Gazprombank—a master’s program in International Banking Business. With the support of major coal companies, we have launched a master’s program in Strategic Management of International Mineral Resource Companies together with MISiS University.

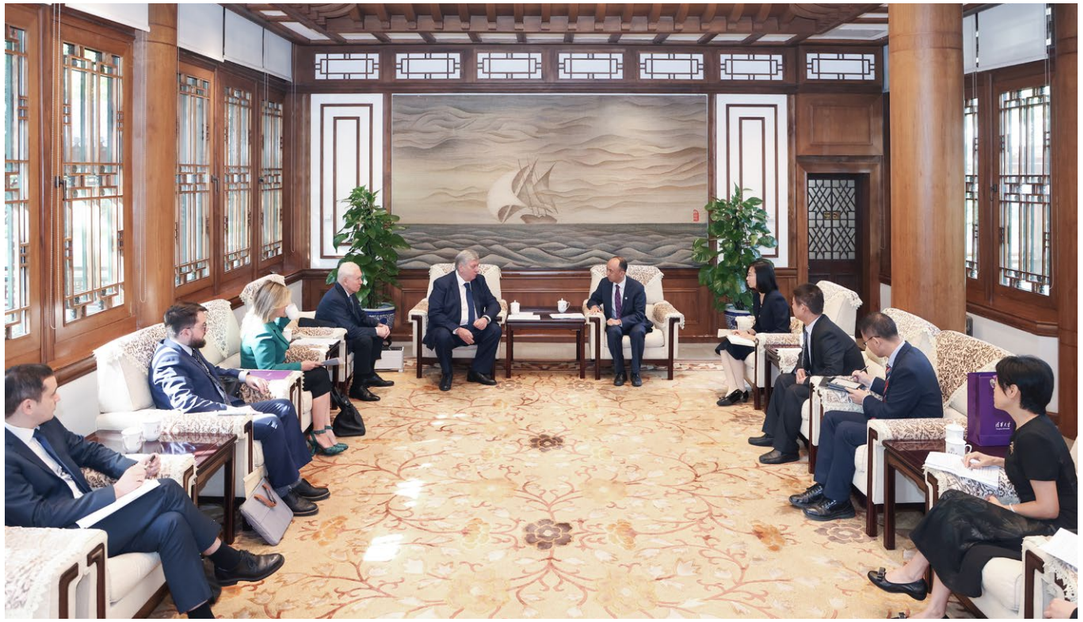
MJ: Tell us about your students. Which regions and cities do MIEP students come from, and do students from abroad study at your institute?
MIEP enrolls graduates of our country’s leading schools; now we have students from about 50 regions of Russia and more than 20 foreign countries. Among the foreign countries, I would like to specifically mention Mongolia. Given the expansion of bilateral trade and economic cooperation between our countries, Mongolian students are enabled to study at our institute by the organizational and financial support of our strategic partner, Rosneft. MIEP has already trained more than 60 citizens of that country. This is a targeted training of talent for Rosneft’s major energy projects in Mongolia.



MIEP’s strategic partners include companies such as Rosneft, Transneft, Norilsk Nickel, and Gazprombank

MJ: You talked about working with international organizations. With which of them does MIEP work most closely and productively?
Our cooperation with the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries began more than 20 years ago. MIEP students have had the opportunity to meet several OPEC secretaries general who have visited and lectured at our institute. One of our master’s students became the first Russian student to be invited for an internship at the OPEC Secretariat. We have also cooperated productively in the field of analytics and have gained great experience in holding joint expert seminars in Moscow and at the OPEC headquarters in Vienna for several years, dedicated to the study and forecasting of trends in the world energy markets, as well as oil and gas price issues.
MIEP actively participates in the BRICS programs, in the activities of the Working Group on Energy Security, and it has been put in charge of the preparation of the section on international energy security as part of the BRICS Energy Research Platform.

MJ: What other scientific areas does MIEP prioritize?
One of the priorities of the new Strategy for Scientific and Technological Development of the Russian Federation is to establish a partnership between the state, industry, science, and higher education.
To this end, MIEP, through the Center for Strategic Research in Energy and Digital Economy, actively works on behalf of partner companies to conduct large-scale scientific research on the study of key trends in the development of world energy, sustainable development, problems of globalization and regionalization in international relations, forecasting the processes of the development of world markets of energy resources, and analysis of world experience in the implementation of advanced innovative and digital technologies. Currently, in accordance with the strategies of leading Russian companies, special attention



is paid to conducting research and developing recommendations on digital transformation, cybersecurity, countering sanctions pressure on the Russian fuel and energy sector, and developing new export routes for hydrocarbon supplies from Russia.
I would like to note that MIEP's Center for Strategic Research in Energy and Digital Economy is headed by a world-renowned scientist, the former president of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Academician Y. Osipov.
I would also like to emphasize that one of the most important features of studying at MIEP is the opportunity for our most talented undergraduate and graduate students to participate in the Center's large-scale analytical projects carried out on behalf of leading companies.

MJ: What other forms of student science development are most effectively implemented in MIEP?
MIEP's science clubs, created on the initiative of our students, are successful and active. In clubs such as World Energy Policy, Arctic, Energy Law Club, and Innovation Club, students discuss the issues that they find interesting and learn to analyze, discuss, debate, and make presentations. They organize brilliant annual events: Model OPEC, Moscow

We are implementing the MBA program International Business In the Oil and Gas Industry together with the leading university of the People's Republic of China—Tsinghua University

Youth International Model of the Arctic Council, MGIMO Innovation Week, and a number of others. I would like to note that the projects of our science student clubs have been highly appreciated by international organizations, in particular, the UN Global Initiative for Sustainable Development, as well as by leading partner companies, for example, as part of the Transneft International Scientific and Technical Youth Conference, as well as by member organizations of the International Association of Oil Transporters.

Our undergraduate and graduate students are active participants in major international forums in Russia and abroad. These include the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, the Russian Energy Week International Forum, the Caspian Dialogue Forum, and many others.

MJ: Where do the graduates of your institute work?
The demand for its graduates is a very important indicator of MIEP's effectiveness. I would like to emphasize that 100% of our graduates are employed. We know that they have interesting and demanding jobs; there are many examples of excellent careers in government agencies, Russian embassies abroad, international organizations, and major corporations. Many of our graduates work for Rosneft, Transneft, Gazprom, Gazprombank, Gazprom Neft, Rosseti, Rosatom, Lukoil, and many other companies and their representative offices abroad.
Needless to say, the most significant positions in leading companies are held by graduates of our MBA programs in International Business in the Oil and Gas Industry and Management and Regulation of Economic Activity in the International Electric Power Industry.



implements international dual degree programs. We have a strong track record of developing joint master's degree programs with major universities and business schools in Italy, Norway, the UK, and Germany.
Agreements have been signed with the most reputable educational centers in the United Arab Emirates (Abu Dhabi University), Saudi Arabia (King Fahd University), Iran (University of Tehran), India (Jawaharlal Nehru University), Indonesia (Bandung Institute), South Africa (University of KwaZulu-Natal), and others, and preparations are underway to implement joint bachelor's and master's degree programs.

MJ: In the year of MGIMO's anniversary and in the run-up to MIEP's 25th anniversary, what would you wish for your graduates and students?

MJ: Tell us about the MBA program for Rosneft's top managers.
The MBA program International Business in the Oil and Gas Industry has been successfully implemented by MIEP for almost 20 years as a corporate program for senior and mid-level managers of Rosneft Oil Company. This program was the first international-level MBA program in Russia dedicated to oil and gas business development.
Rosneft's top managers learn from leading Russian and foreign experts with vast professional and educational experience.
In view of the active development of Russian-Chinese cooperation in the energy sector, today we are implementing this program together with the leading university of the People's Republic of China—Tsinghua University, whose graduates include the president of China, Xi Jinping. Russian President V. Putin is an honorary doctor of Tsinghua University.
It should be noted that our cooperation with Rosneft in further education and advanced training is not limited to the MBA program. MIEP has established a unique Rosneft Corporate Training and Development Center at MGIMO.
In addition to the MBA program, the Center organizes corporate seminars, conferences, and short-term professional development programs for employees of Rosneft and its subsidiaries.
In addition to the cooperation with Tsinghua University, MIEP actively develops cooperation with a number of other foreign universities and successfully



MGIMO MIEP's graduates are part of a powerful community of people united not only by education but also by the desire to make Russia beautiful, strong, and prosperous

Never rest on your laurels; constantly improve your knowledge and skills, and develop your professional abilities to make a significant contribution to the development of Russian and global energy policy and diplomacy and effective international cooperation.
It is very important to always remember that when you become students and then graduates of MGIMO and MIEP, you are part of a powerful community of people united not only by education but also by the desire to make their country beautiful, strong, and prosperous, to help it achieve the highest positions in the world community.



PJSC Rosneft Oil Company's central office on Sofiyskaya Embankment in Moscow

ROSNEFT

One of the main strategic partners of MGIMO and MIEP is the largest Russian company, Rosneft. The strategic partnership agreement was signed at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum by PJSC Rosneft CEO I. Sechin, MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov, and MIEP Director V. Salygin.
Rosneft's specialized department, the Global Energy Policy and Energy Security Department, headed by Rosneft Vice President A. Shishkin, has been actively working within MIEP since 2006.

PJSC Rosneft Oil Company is one of the largest public production companies and the leader of the Russian oil industry, as well as the world's undisputed leader in terms of hydrocarbon reserves among public oil and gas companies.

Rosneft is Russia's largest oil producer, accounting for over 40% of the country's total oil production. Rosneft's share of global production is 6%. Rosneft is also one of Russia's largest independent gas producers. Rosneft's share in gas production in Russia is 8%. The company operates in all major oil and gas provinces of Russia, including the shelf of the Russian seas.

Rosneft is the leader of the Russian refining industry. It accounts for more than 35% of oil refining in Russia. The company also holds stakes in a number of refining assets abroad—in Germany, Belarus, and India. Its retail network is the largest in the country in terms of geographical coverage and number of stations—about 3 thousand filling stations in Russia.

By presidential order, Rosneft is carrying out a large-scale project to create a shipbuilding cluster in the Far East—the Zvezda complex.

At the end of 2021, the board of directors approved the strategy "Rosneft 2030: reliable energy and global energy transition." The key priorities of the strategy are carbon footprint reduction, operational leadership, and efficiency improvement.



KRISTINA ERIKSSEN,

head of the International Projects Department, Rosneft, 2021 MIEP graduate:

In 2019, I completed my bachelor's degree in International Business and International Energy Cooperation at MIEP, and then in 2021 I graduated from MIEP with a master's degree in Economic Strategies of International Oil and Gas Companies—a degree program that is implemented in cooperation with Rosneft. Now I am studying in the postgraduate program of Rosneft's specialized department.

The training I received at MIEP laid the foundation for my career. I can confidently say that I use the knowledge I gained in class on a daily basis. The most important skill I acquired as a student is the ability to learn, the desire to extend my professional knowledge, and the desire to broaden my horizons.

One of the main advantages of studying at MIEP is the opportunity to undergo practical training in the largest companies in the fuel and energy sector. Now I myself am happy to accept the best students of the Institute for internships, to help future specialists to apply their knowledge in practice, to get acquainted with Rosneft's activities from the inside.



Transneft JSC central office, Evolution Tower, Moscow International Business Center

TRANSNEFT

In 2013, a strategic partnership agreement was signed between MGIMO, MIEP, and Transneft JSC. The specialized department of the company, the Department of Foreign Economic Activities in Energy Transportation, is personally headed by N. Tokarev, the president and chair of the board of directors of Transneft.

Transneft JSC is a natural monopoly, with 100% of its voting shares being in federal ownership.

With the total length of all pipelines exceeding 67,000 km, Transneft ranks first in the world in terms of the length of main oil pipelines.

Transneft ensures the reliability of the main pipeline system and the quality of exported oil. The company's key projects include the Zapolyarye-Purpe-Samotlor pipeline system, the Kuyumba-Taishet main oil pipeline, the Baltic Pipeline System-2, the Eastern Siberia-Pacific Ocean (ESPO) pipeline system, which is considered to be the world's longest oil pipeline in a single pipeline system, the Skovorodino-Mohe main oil pipeline, the North project, the South project, and others.

Transneft is present in most regions of Russia. Geographically, it covers all federal districts of the Russian Federation, as well as underdeveloped territories.

The company has developed and approved the Energy Conservation and Energy Efficiency Improvement Program, in accordance with which measures are taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.



YANA NECHAEVA,

senior specialist of the External Communications Department of Transneft, MIEP 2018 graduate:

In 2013 I graduated from MIEP with a bachelor's degree in International Business and International Energy Cooperation, and in 2018 I became a graduate of the joint master's program of MIEP and Transneft—International Management in Oil and Oil Products Transportation.

I got into MIEP in part because I had studied at Gazprom School. I thought that international energy cooperation is a very promising field, and MIEP is the best specialized university in this sense.

The faculty we had was amazing. Professors and teachers tried not only to share knowledge with us but also to teach us good manners, discipline, and the best human qualities—responsiveness and diligence. The practice-oriented training, knowledge, and communication skills I received at MIEP and Transneft's master's program helped me get a job at this company. I have been working in the External Communications Department of Transneft for six years now, and I believe that MIEP helped me to make the right choice.

NORNICKEL

In 2016, Norilsk Nickel became a strategic partner of MGIMO and the International Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy (MIEP), and the company's specialized department was opened—the Corporate Security Department, headed by V. Gasumyanov, senior vice president and member of the Management Board of Norilsk Nickel (2012-2020), director of the National Research Institute for Communications Development, Doctor of Sciences in Economics.

Nornickel is a leader in mining and metallurgy in Russia and the world, the largest producer of palladium and high-grade nickel, one of the largest producers of platinum and copper, a producer of cobalt, rhodium, silver, gold, iridium, ruthenium, selenium, tellurium, and sulfur, as well as metals essential for the development of a low-carbon economy and clean transportation.

Nornickel's products are supplied to 37 countries and purchased by more than 400 partner companies. Nornickel Group's main divisions are vertically integrated mining and metallurgical operations.

In addition to its production facilities, Nornickel has its own sales network, fuel, energy, and transportation facilities; a complex of research and design units; and a unique Arctic transportation fleet.

In 2021, Nornickel presented its Sustainable Development Strategy 2030. The company has significantly revised its approaches to environmental risk management, water management, biodiversity restoration, and climate change issues and has set clear targets for each of these areas.



IVAN KUZMENKOV,

head of Advanced Projects at OJSC MMC Norilsk Nickel, 2015 MIEP graduate:

During my time at MIEP, I studied in the World Economy and International Energy Cooperation program. I started my career, one could say, practically by distribution—in the international relations department of one of the research institutes of the largest state geological exploration holding, Rosgeologiya. From the very first days of my work, I had to report to people at the ministerial level, including foreign ministers, for which only the language departments of MGIMO could fully prepare me.

Having obtained my first management position at the age of 23 (I became the deputy director of the innovative development department at Nornickel), I realized in the course of my work that managers are required to have a much broader set of competencies than specialists, so I appreciated the comprehensive nature of the training we received at MIEP. The essential knowledge and self-learning tools provided by the university allowed me to develop my professional and managerial knowledge and skills.

MIEP has invited me many times to share my experience with students in lectures and seminars at my home department. Giving students the opportunity to gain practical knowledge from alumni and communicate with employees of leading corporations is a special feature of our institute.

There are many MGIMO graduates among my colleagues and friends, but the most important thing is that I have found my family in MIEP, which proves once again that I made the right choice!



Head office of OJSC MMC Norilsk Nickel, Mercury City Tower, Moscow International Business Center

GAZPROMBANK

Since 2009, cooperation between MGIMO, the International Institute of Energy Policy and Diplomacy (MIEP), and Gazprombank, one of the largest financial institutions in Russia and Central and Eastern Europe, has been actively developing. A. Akimov, chair of the management board of Gazprombank, became the first head of the bank's specialized department—the Department of Economics and Banking, which is currently headed by Professor I. Yarygina, advisor to the management board of Gazprombank.



Gazprom headquarters in the Lakhta Centre, St. Petersburg. Gazprom and Gazprombank cooperate closely to implement priority projects

Gazprombank is one of Russia's largest universal financial institutions, offering a wide range of products and services to corporate and private clients, financial institutions, institutional and private investors.

The total number of its outlets in Russia is over 480. The bank also has representative offices in Astana, Beijing, Ulaanbaatar, New Delhi, and Tashkent. Gazprombank's clients include more than 4 million individuals and about 92 thousand legal entities.

The bank provides services to key sectors of the Russian economy and has a strong presence in domestic and international financial markets, being one of Russia's leaders in the organization and underwriting of corporate bond issues, asset management, private banking, corporate finance, and other areas of investment banking. Retail business is also a strategically important area of the bank's activities, and its scale is consistently increasing.

The bank is a technology leader in the Russian financial market. Over the past few years, it has successfully implemented a digital transformation project by rebuilding IT infrastructure, introducing new services to improve customer experience, and relaunching remote service channels.

Gazprombank is committed to the principles of sustainable development and is currently actively engaged in all key areas of the ESG agenda.

TATIANA TERLETSKAYA,

executive director of Gazprombank's Center for Business Development for Trade and Pharmaceutical Companies, a 2019 MIEP graduate:

In 2017, I graduated from MIEP with a bachelor's degree in World Economy and International Energy Cooperation, and in 2019, I graduated with a master's degree in International Banking, a degree program organized jointly by MIEP and Gazprombank.

MIEP was a great choice; it fully met my needs in terms of curriculum, faculty level and future job prospects. I remember not only my studies but also my participation in interesting events with gratitude to the MIEP leadership. For example, I will never forget my participation in an international student conference in Norway. And, of course, the fact that thanks to the institute I became a scholarship holder of Transneft, a strategic partner of MIEP.

In my case, it would not be an exaggeration to say that the university and MIEP have laid the main bricks in the building of my professional career. The foundation was an internship at Zarubezhneft after the third year of my undergraduate studies, then at Gazprombank with subsequent employment. The rest was ensured by the multi-level system of knowledge and skills acquired during the six years of study at MIEP. Thanks to it, as well as to my own persistence and efforts, after two years of work, the management gave me the Employee of the Year Award and three years later I was promoted from the position of a specialist to that of an executive director.

I remember how we presented a project that we had spent months preparing to a vice-president of Gazprombank (at that time the head of the Customer Relations Unit, where I eventually got a job). After the presentation, he promised to present our ideas at a board meeting. It made a huge impression on me at the time. Two years later, as an employee of the unit, I presented a business development strategy for pharmaceutical companies to him—again successfully. This example confirms the practice-oriented nature and value of MIEP's programs, which truly serve as a platform for the growth of future professionals.



TRUMP INVITED ME TO MAR-A-LAGO, BUT I HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET THERE IN NINE YEARS

Text and photos by **Igor Drobyshev**

Who would have thought in 2015 that Donald Trump, who announced his campaign then, would become the 45th and 47th president of the United States!

When I traveled to New York in September 2015 as part of Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's press pool, two near-scandalous stories dominated the news: the pope's tour of New Jersey prisons, where he absolved rapists and murderers, and the launch of Trump's presidential campaign.
How much he was badmouthed all that year! And he said sensible things that the "silent majority" keeps discussing in low voices: curbing illegal immigration, rooting out corruption ("draining the Washington swamp"), bringing back American production facilities from overseas ("We've had 70,000 factories close or move overseas since China joined the WTO in 2001!"), and so on.
And it's not about Trump at all. It's just that America's pendulum has swung and begun to move in the opposite direction. New times have come. Just like 50 years ago when John F. Kennedy came to power and Bob Dylan sang "Times they are a-changing," foreshadowing the liberal revolution, so in 2016, time called for Trump to launch a revolt of the "silent majority." Money helped him buy the right to say what the middle and working classes and the farming community had long wanted to hear and who had been muzzled by the leftist liberal supremacists.
Why even the most sensible part of the American establishment did not realize this is completely beyond comprehension! On the eve of the 2016 election, I interviewed John Mearsheimer, a highly respected political scientist, and when asked who would win, Hillary or Trump, he said, "Remember this day—September 29. I tell you, Hillary Clinton will win!" I said, "But why?" And then one of the pillars of American thought looked at me like I wasn't serious (to put it mildly) and started spouting cheap liberal nonsense: "Don't you realize Trump is a clown and a buffoon!"

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Trump is neither a clown nor a buffoon. The author Ayn Rand predicted it as far back



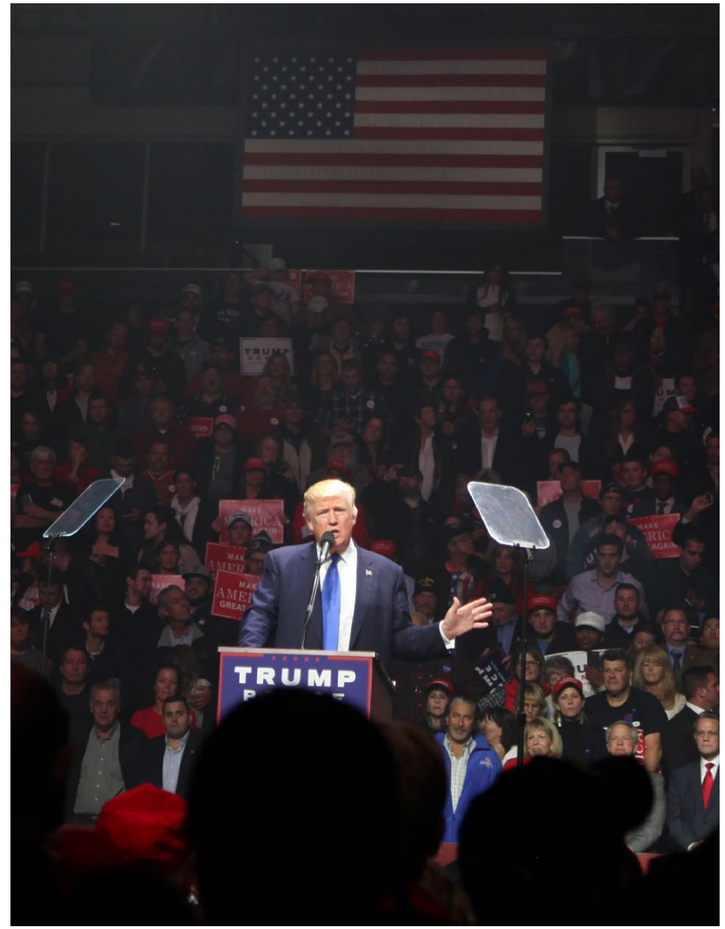
I suddenly started receiving emails from Trump—apparently I had been mistakenly included in his voter base. And this messaging went on for NINE years!

as 1957 in her novel *Atlas Shrugged*. In the fictional America she described, everything was falling apart: bridges were collapsing, trains were derailing, railroads and cars were rusting, and there was nothing anyone could do about it. But people were looking with persistence for a certain John Galt—to put it in modern terms, an extra-systemic leader who would break the hegemony of the establishment, which had subjugated the country to a soulless bureaucratic dictatorship, and take responsibility for the fate of the crumbling state…
Modern, non-fictional America has been waiting for the real "John Galt"—Donald Trump—for a long time, forty years. All the while, the liberal dictatorship, which has absolutely "absolutized" the concepts of "human rights" and "democratic freedoms," has suppressed the self-awareness of the "silent conservative majority"—with the help of political correctness, the liberal media, the establishment, and minorities—those "victims" of inequality who, in their struggle for rights, have fought their way to "reverse discrimination."
The stupidity of the liberal supremacists was eventually to play a cruel joke on them, and it did. The anger of white men and their families, who had been unable to find an outlet for years, began to pour through the breach that Trump had made. Neither the accusations of eccentricity and clownishness hurled at Trump by the media nor the sex scandals "brewing" against him in the kitchen of the Democrats' most powerful propaganda machine turned the "silent" voters away from him one bit. Trump became the voice of their aspirations, their anger, and it became clear: they will not give him up without a fight!..

***

Before Trump's final campaign rally on November 7, 2016, in Manchester, New Hampshire, I applied for accreditation on his organization's website while still in Moscow. After arriving in New York, I kept checking my page, but there was always the unfortunate status: Your Request Pending. I was about to go without accreditation so that I could somehow make my way through when, in the evening of November 6, my page suddenly miraculously showed: Your Request Approved.
Early in the morning, I boarded a long-

Igor, you're invited to Mar-a-Lago! I will cover the ENTIRE cost; I wouldn't let just anyone into my luxurious Mar-a-Lago residence, Igor.





distance Greyhound bus that would take me to Manchester—albeit with a connection in Boston.
Trump was expected to arrive at 8 p.m., and his appearance was preceded by an exemplary "warm-up act" for the crowd: first a blind young man sang the national anthem, a priest said a prayer, local Republican bosses and congressmen self-promoted to their hearts' content, and finally vice presidential candidate Mike Pence spoke.
The atmosphere in the packed stadium resembled a rock concert, occasionally turning into an anti-war rally with a full range of militant chants, from "Lock her up!" to "Drain that Swamp!" or simply "USA! USA!"
The familiar soundtrack of old Rolling

Stones songs dear to Trump's heart—"Time Is On My Side," "Heart of Stone," and especially the unofficial campaign anthem "You Can't Always Get What You Want"—put those in their 50s in a warm, nostalgic mood. But the whole set pales in comparison to Creedence's "Born on the Bayou." The people started "rocking" to Stu Cook's bassline; rednecks started dancing, sometimes to the point of becoming absolute "deplorables."

"Liberals have betrayed the American working class, but that's okay—it'll fight back tomorrow!" Trump began immediately. "I will bring back jobs, I will support our great military, our amazing police force, and our glorious border patrol, I will build a wall in the South so that immigrants who are deported for the fifth time for killing a cop or raping a student can never come back to America! We will repeal the Obamacare program that has caused the cost of healthcare for the middle class to skyrocket and the quality to plummet…" And so on and so forth.



* * *

Trump won, and when I returned to Moscow, I suddenly started receiving emails from him—apparently I had been mistakenly included in his voter base. At first I tried to tell his team through feedback that I was a foreign national, but it didn't work. So I relaxed and started to enjoy the messages. Here's an example:

Igor, you're invited to Mar-a-Lago!
I will cover the ENTIRE cost; that's how much I want you to see the Winter White House!
I wouldn't let just anyone into my luxurious Mar-a-Lago residence, Igor.







Trump has turned his presidential saga into a business process that surely outweighs the costs.

And it went on for NINE years!

The main purpose of Trump's emails is to solicit donations from his flock, but he does it in a creative and unconventional way. If I had sent him three dollars (the minimum amount of support), I would probably own a lot of Trump merchandise (wallets, baseball caps, T-shirts, etc.), have several Trump honorary cards (gold, silver, iron), be eligible to send Valentine cards to Donald and Melania, play a lottery (see above) to win such prizes as a lunch with Trump at Mar-a-Lago or a ticket to both of his inaugurations.

Trump has turned his presidential saga into a business process that surely outweighs the costs.

Trump has made it his life's mission to "make America great again," and he's not going to give up his cause to anyone without a fight. He's not a politician who doesn't care what happens when he retires. Trump is a businessman, and the mentality of a businessman says: I have to leave my business in good shape to my children. This means that Vice President JD Vance has no chance of becoming the future leader of the United States. The aging Trump is likely to put forward his daughter Ivanka, a smart young woman who will be in her 50s in four years, in the next election. Especially since the Democrats have only one option to give Trump a fight: to nominate Michelle Obama. MJ











TCHAIKOVSKY AND TARLE: THE MEETING PLACE CANNOT BE CHANGED

Photos by Igor Drobyshev, Aleksandra Melnikova, Igor Lileev, Maria Novoderezhkina, Nikita Stolboushkin

MGIMO celebrated its 80th anniversary in the Great Hall of the Tchaikovsky Moscow Conservatory.

Five years ago, the 75th anniversary of MGIMO was celebrated at the Bolshoi Theater, a cultural mecca of global significance. The idea of celebrating the 80th anniversary in the Great Hall of the Moscow Conservatory was in line with the trend for "the golden and eternal".

The building of the Great Hall of the Conservatory was opened in April 1901, 43 years before the establishment of the Faculty of International Relations of Moscow State University, which was transformed into MGIMO the following year in 1944. Not so long—only forty years!

In the building on Nikitskaya Street, the best musicians of the time taught the future greats of music, some of whom can be seen in the

On the day of its anniversary, the international university of MGIMO was hosted by another university of world culture—the Moscow Conservatory.











medallion portraits on the walls of today's hall among the geniuses of various epochs: Bach, Dargomyzhsky, Mussorgsky, Beethoven, Mozart, Schubert, Schumann, Rimsky-Korsakov, Gluck, Wagner, Glinka, Tchaikovsky, Rubinstein, and Borodin.

The walls of the building near the Krymsky Bridge, where MGIMO was housed, saw the triumph of lectures by such greats of the academy as Tarle, Krylov, Durdenevsky, Volkov, Lyubimov, Kozhevnikov, Narochnitsky, Trukhanovsky, and others. And the acoustics of the large lecture hall at 53 Metrostroevskaya Street were perhaps as perfect as those of the Great Hall of the Conservatory, where the prestigious International Tchaikovsky Competition has been held since 1958.

Incidentally, the conservatory has been granted the status of a university, which no other music educational institution in Russia has. Therefore, on the day of its anniversary, the international university of MGIMO was hosted by another university of world culture—the Moscow Conservatory.

The evening was opened by MGIMO Rector Academician Anatoly Torkunov, who was joined by his classmate and 1972 graduate, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. "Eighty years is not a long time," the rector began, "but as the great sage Confucius said, life is not measured in years but in deeds. The deeds at our university were started eight decades ago by very young people who strove to create the atmosphere that is sung about in our anthem, composed by our minister. This is the idea of student fraternity, the idea of serving the homeland, the state, the people." The rector particularly noted the role of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs and later the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in the establishment of the university and the formation of the traditions of higher education.

Recalling that next year the country would celebrate the 80th anniversary of the victory over Hitler's Germany in 1945, the rector said, "Half of the first students of MGIMO were frontline soldiers who gave a strong impetus to the development of the university. But none of this would have happened without the mentors, wonderful teachers, professors, and academicians (first of all, Academician Tarle, whose 150th anniversary we are also celebrating), who, together with the leadership of the People's Commissariat for Foreign Affairs, were the founders of MGIMO. Of course, the university would not have become what it is today without the strong support of the Foreign Ministry. At all stages of MGIMO's development, including the difficult ones. The ministry has always been there for it. I went through the archives and saw how many of our wonderful diplomats taught at our university. For example, many people remember Anatoly Dobrynin, the Soviet Union's longtime ambassador to the United States. He essentially became a teacher of future academicians, teaching Georgy Arbatov, Nikolay Inozemtsev,

Torkunov: "Eighty years is not a long time, but as the great sage Confucius said, life is not measured in years but in deeds."

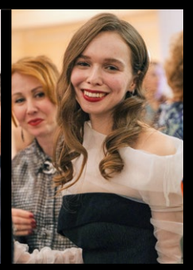




























and Vladimir Vinogradov. Many students' academic records are signed by Dobrynin himself. We have always not only felt the affection of the ministry; thanks to it, the university is not just afloat but vibrant, opening new programs, working hard in research, energy, and other areas."

A. Torkunov said that on September 18, by the decree of the President of Russia V. Putin MGIMO was awarded the Order of Alexander Nevsky "for high achievements in academic activities and many years of efficient training of highly skilled specialists in international relations, world economy, international law, and international journalism." The rector congratulated the MGIMO staff on the high award and thanked them for their professionalism and dedication.

And the veterans in the audience recalled that it was not the first time that the homeland had honored the university with a high award. Exactly 40 years ago, MGIMO was awarded another high honor—the Order of the Red Banner of Labor, which was pinned on the banner of the university, held by the then Rector Nikolai Lebedev, by V. Kuznetsov, the first deputy chair of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, the Soviet parliament.

Torkunov: "Half of the first students of MGIMO were frontline soldiers who gave a strong impetus to the development of the university."

"Continuity of generations, traditions, and our history," said S. Lavrov, taking the floor, "is a guarantee of success and a guarantee that MGIMO will remain at the forefront of our diplomacy and foreign policy to implement the foreign policy concept approved by Russian President Vladimir Putin. Just as eighty years ago, when MGIMO was created at a critical moment in the Great Patriotic War, we are at a critical moment now. We are sure that this 'critical point' will be inevitable in the course of history, and diplomats, of course, as in the years of war and the post-war reconstruction of 'that' world, this time will play their role in the development of our land and the entire Eurasian continent in such a way that none of our Western 'partners' will ever try to bargain or wrest unilateral advantages by deceit or flattery."























As the minister pointed out, Russian President V. Putin has repeatedly stated, “That we have been deceived over the past thirty years. We are ‘learned’. We learned from that experience. I am convinced that our diplomatic service will use its art, its skills, and the experience of our predecessors to do everything possible to ensure that this never happens again. So that the objectively emerging multipolar world order is just and does not allow anyone to use it to promote selfish unilateral interests.”

Rector said that by the decree of the President of Russia V. Putin MGIMO was awarded the Order of Alexander Nevsky.

The minister read the congratulatory message from Russian President V. Putin. “The high state award is fully deserved. MGIMO has firmly established itself among the world’s leading centers for the training of specialists in international relations,” the message reads. “Genuine professionalism is what distinguishes MGIMO graduates who work in many other fields: in various government



agencies, in research and education, in business, and in the mass media."

The Russian president also noted that "in addition to fruitful educational activities, MGIMO has always conducted and continues to conduct serious expert research. It is a good tool for assessing international reality and making

Lavrov: "MGIMO will remain at the forefront of our diplomacy and foreign policy to implement the foreign policy concept approved by Russian President Vladimir Putin."













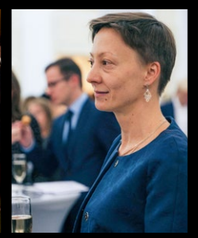


















Putin: "The high state award is fully deserved. MGIMO has firmly established itself among the world's leading centers for the training of specialists in international relations."

important policy decisions."

"I would like to add," the minister said, "that we are working very closely with A. Torkunov, vice rectors, deans, and heads of departments. Every day, we discuss the most serious issues in real time. Often our colleagues from MGIMO suggest certain solutions when there is a general argument or discussions in the format of situation analyses (they have already become a good tradition). I will finish my speech by saying: many, many more years to the order-bearing MGIMO University!"

Then there was a gala concert, before which the guests of the evening watched the film *It's All MGIMO*, made for MGIMO's 80th anniversary—with many of the participants present in the hall.

The concert program included a performance by the Moscow Conservatory Symphony Orchestra conducted by Merited Artist of Russia A. A. Levin that played the polonaise from the opera *Eugene Onegin,* Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1, and N. Rimsky-Korsakov's suite *Capriccio Espagnol*.

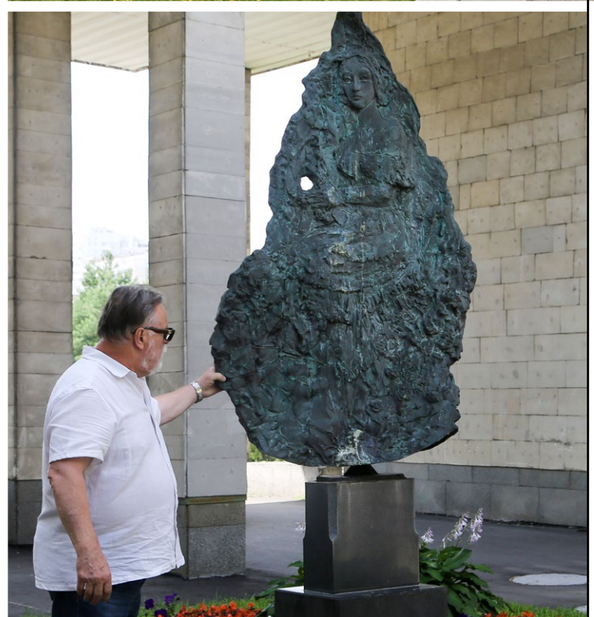
The concert concluded with the MGIMO Anthem performed by the MGIMO Proxenos Choir and accompanied by the Moscow Conservatory Orchestra. Faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the university (about 1,600 people in all) sang along with the choir, checking with the lyrics that each had in the evening's card.

The event was supported by the Alumni Association and the MGIMO Endowment. The partners of the evening were the Abrau-Durso Group of companies, Château de Talu, Mercury Retail Group, the Nikolaevskie Syrovarni cheese factory, and the Agrokompleks Vyselkovsky agro-industrial company.











MGIMO CAMPUS PARK

Text and photos by **Igor Drobyshev**

The 80-year history of MGIMO, which is closely intertwined with the history of Russia, is immortalized in bronze and stone on the university campus.




Фото: И. Липеев

On October 13, 2022, a monument to Alexander Pushkin was unveiled on the MGIMO campus in the Alley of Friendship. It was impossible to make a living from poetry in the olden days, so the great Russian poet devoted 17 years of his life to diplomatic service.

But the parallels don't end there; they just begin. Yurii Frantsev, an academician and legendary rector, always called MGIMO a lyceum. The university veteran Aleksei Shestopal recalls, "We students once asked him, 'Why lyceum?'. And we heard a story about how in 1945, after the war, he moved from Leningrad (where he survived the siege organized by the German Nazis) to Moscow and became the rector of MGIMO, and he felt the connection between the Alexander Lyceum, which developed in the atmosphere of Tsar Alexander I's victory over Napoleon in the Patriotic War of 1812, and MGIMO, which absorbed the spirit of 1945—the victory over Hitler's fascism."

Indeed, Pushkin's "Our union, friends, is glorious by right!" resonates with the lines of the anthem written by MGIMO graduate Sergey Lavrov—"We were born under the canopy of the great MGIMO!"

Pushkin's "Our union, friends, is glorious by right!" resonates with the lines of the anthem written by MGIMO graduate Sergey Lavrov—"We were born under the canopy of the great MGIMO!"

It is no coincidence that on the MGIMO campus there are monuments to two friends and graduates of the Alexander Lyceum: Alexander Pushkin and Alexander Gorchakov, minister of foreign affairs of the Russian Empire (1856-1882).

It's known that their friendship was not too close; Gorchakov was the top student of the class, and their circles of friends were different. But Pushkin's three poetic epistles to him written during all six years of their study at the lyceum are evidence of friendly attention.

Gorchakov felt early that Pushkin had a



great destiny. This is confirmed by dozens of Pushkin's poems, copied by him in the lyceum, the first Pushkin autograph preserved. Gorchakov appreciated the lyceum friendship to the end of his days (he died at the age of 85, the last of his graduating class).

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Igor Loginov, the MGIMO rector's advisor on social issues, still remembers how the construction of the monumental complex on the university campus began.

How did it all start?

In the 1980s and 90s, there was nothing on the MGIMO campus, and there was no campus as such: just a few buildings, a dormitory, and a huge backyard. There were no monuments—only the ensemble on the pediment above the entrance to the main building (they are still part of the building today): a high relief of Lenin's Decree on Peace with the Kremlin's Spasskaya Tower growing out of it and the figures of a young man and a girl holding olive branches of peace. MGIMO students who were studying their future profession—diplomacy—were to identify with those pure images.

The MGIMO campus was founded in 1974—50 years ago! Accordingly, the young man and girl depicted by the sculptor are the same age as the students and graduates of the early 1970s, i.e., current MGIMO Rector A. Torkunov, Russian Foreign Minister S. Lavrov, and their classmates.

It was during those years that the principles of MGIMO camaraderie were established, which became the basis not only for professional but also for spiritual community, for the feeling of belonging to a special





As if through the generations, the visionary Pushkin saw those who would replace his friend Gorchakov—graduates of a similar small elite school called MGIMO who would become the glory of Russian diplomacy.



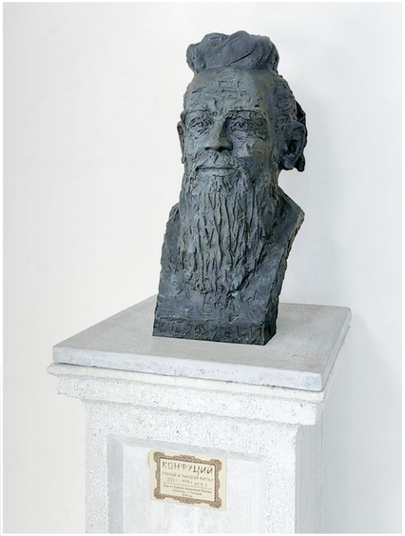


caste of professionals—experts in international relations. “Our union, friends, is glorious by right! It’s like the soul unbroken and eternal”—as if the visionary Pushkin wrote this about them. It was as if through the generations he saw those who would replace his friend Gorchakov—graduates of a similar small elite school called MGIMO who would become the glory of Russian diplomacy—Sergey Lavrov, Anatoly Torkunov, Vitaly Churkin (former Russian Ambassador to the UN), and many others.

But in the 1980s and 1990s, during the period of social turmoil, something very important left the “MGIMO soul,” leaving a gap. As A. Torkunov said, “The country and society fell into turmoil: as you can remember, first the party leaders began to die, then *perestroika* began, the basic principles were revised, the foundations began to crack, and other motivations appeared; people began to look for a foothold elsewhere…”

“All the institutions of socialization were shattered,” recalls I. Loginov. “While before everyone used to have one path, from the children’s organization of pioneers to Komsomol, the organization of youth and students (and all the leaders of MGIMO, from the rector to the deans, followed this path, and it was beneficial both for themselves and for society), now we had people coming to our university who moved like molecules in chaotic motion. Everyone had their own route, which prevented an understanding of the common whole. Everything that constituted our MGIMO ‘brand,’ as S. Lavrov wonderfully wrote in the MGIMO anthem, disappeared. Everyone was on their own.”

Once, being on a study tour in Brussels, Mr. Loginov found himself in a Catholic university, where he was impressed by the interaction with students. “The students there were really engaged; their well-being, which is based on a combination of physical and mental health, was prioritized. This was in the very early 2000s. Without much hope for progress in this direction, I shared my impressions with Rector Torkunov. It was a complete surprise for me when he appointed me vice rector for medical and social and, most importantly, outreach work. A. Torkunov tasked me with creating a social structure that would support students enrolled in MGIMO and begin to accompany their life activities.”





How do you bring them together? Mr. Loginov made an audit of all the student organizations, which turned out to be very numerous, but they were all disparate. So came the idea of offsite events for student representatives, when they are taken on an outing, as Komsomol activists once were, to one of the sites near Moscow (to a vacation home or a recreation facility), where they shape the student body core. “First we traveled around the region looking for a place,” says Loginov, “and then we just got lucky—we came across Ruslan Bairamov’s company Etnomir, and since then we have been going to this area in the fall and spring for almost ten years. And the mechanism worked!”

At some point, the MGIMO leadership realized that something was missing. All aspects of a student’s life needed to be connected in an ecosystem. So it became clear: there had to be a campus park—with amenities, cozy, homey.

At some point, the MGIMO leadership realized that something was missing. All aspects of a student’s life need to be connected in an ecosystem. “When you move into a new apartment, you’re happy at first—you finally have a roof over your head! Are the walls bare? But the view

out the window is beautiful. And then you start to settle in: you put in a bed instead of the folding cot, buy a table and chairs, hang pictures on the walls… So it became clear to us: there has to be a campus park—with amenities, cozy, homey… When one student can say to another, Let's sit on a bench under Pushkin's monument and read a textbook. Or under Leo Tolstoy's. And immediately Tolstoy's characters appear—Anna Karenina, Pierre Bezukhov."

And then, as in the case of Etnomir, an opportunity arose. "I met Grigorii Pototskii, an artist, an honorary member of the Academy of Arts, a vigorous and extremely creative man. And once he showed his work, *Turgenev and Viardot*. It was a sculpture in the shape of a leaf, with the face of the writer on one side and the face of Pauline Viardot on the other. Pototskii donated this work to MGIMO, and this item was the first in our park."

At first people asked, "Turgenev, Viardot, and MGIMO—what's the connection?"

"The answer was clearly articulated by Anatoly Torkunov: 'Turgenev is a great Russian writer—an ambassador of Russian fiction literature, who introduced it to Europe.' And everything fell into place! As for the opera singer Viardot, she was the muse of the Russian genius. By the way, she also promoted Russian culture and literature in her company."

The next stage of the park's development was the monument to the defenders of MGIMO—heroes of the Great Patriotic War of 1941-45 who were MGIMO graduates. This project was realized by the sculptor Nikolai Ivanov, who created many other monuments on the MGIMO campus, making him the architect of its sculptural ensemble. At this level the monumental complex was created in accordance with the agreement between the rector of MGIMO, A. Torkunov, and the president of the Russian Academy of Arts, Z. Tsereteli.

"I got to know Nikolai Ivanov very well. Once I went to his workshop and saw a bust of Lev Yashin, the great soccer goalkeeper, winner of the Ballon d'Or! But there is only one monument to him—outside the stadium of the Dynamo soccer team, where he is depicted throwing for the ball. And there is no such monument anywhere else. I asked Ivanov, 'Let's put it on the university grounds, at the entrance to the stadium.'" And the rector explained it all again: "Yashin is an ambassador of Russian sport, the best soccer player of the twentieth century!"

Similarly, Leo Tolstoy, whose monument was put up later, is for us an ambassador of goodness and peace and of Russian culture. Taking into account the wishes of the university administration, the authors of the project, N. Ivanov and V. Buskin, placed the monument in the MGIMO apple orchard, the apple trees for which were brought from Yasnaya Polyana, the writer's family estate. His bronze sculpture stands at the edge of a small garden by a mountain ash bush. And the effect of this great man's presence is felt by those who sit on the benches in the garden.

The bust of the first cosmonaut of the planet, Yuri Gagarin, is an ambassador who opened the space for the people of the Earth.

Presented to the university by Etnomir, the bust of the first cosmonaut of the planet, Yuri Gagarin, is placed in the main building of MGIMO; he is also an ambassador who opened the space for the people of the Earth.

The pantheon of diplomats, legends of the embassy service, stands out on the MGIMO campus: ambassadors are located in different buildings of the university, alumni who have become legends seem to observe student life, and the MGIMO leadership checks its decisions with them.

The park of the MGIMO campus is gradually taking shape. There are plans to erect monuments to the poet F. Tyutchev, the scientist V. Vernadsky, the opera singer F. Chaliapin, the writer I. Bunin, and the legendary military leader A. Suvorov, all by the People's Artist of Russia N. Ivanov.

"Of course, our garden is not the Summer Garden in St. Petersburg, which is famous all over Europe, but everything here is very agreeable and also homely and cozy," said I. Loginov. MJ







THE PANTHEON OF HEROES

By May 2020, a composition dedicated to the university's graduates who were participants of the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945), Heroes of the Soviet Union, and Heroes of the Russian Federation was completed on the MGIMO campus.

YURII VINNIK

When the war began, he volunteered for the front. He took part in the liberation of Smolensk, Ukraine,



and Belorussia from the German Nazis and was seriously wounded near Danzig (Gdańsk). He was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. After medical treatment and demobilization, he came to Moscow and entered MGIMO. After graduating from university in 1950, he worked in diplomacy and teaching.

VIKTOR VOLSKII

As a student of the Belorussian Forestry Institute, he was drafted into the Red Army and fought in the Arctic Circle, in Karelia. He was wounded twice. He received the title of Hero for the liberation of Moldavia. After demobilization, the command sent Volskii to study. He graduated from MGIMO in 1950. He became director of the Institute of

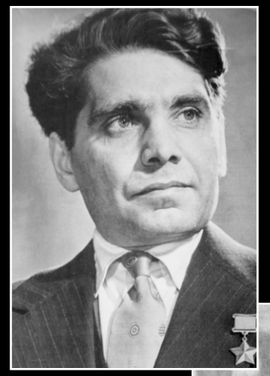




Latin America of the USSR Academy of Sciences and worked as editor-in-chief of the journal *Latin America*.

NIKOLAI ZABELKIN

He was born into a peasant family. After graduating from the Chelyabinsk Power Engineering School in 1941,



he volunteered for the front. He fought at Stalingrad, in Ukraine, and for the Battle of the Dnieper he received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Zabelkin participated in the liberation of Romania, Hungary,

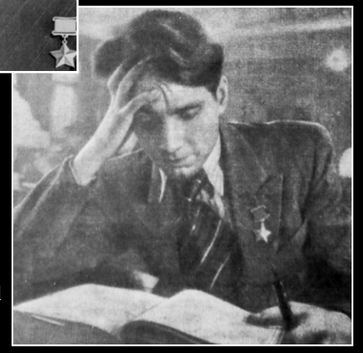
Austria, and Yugoslavia. After demobilization he entered MGIMO, which he graduated from in 1951, worked for many years in the Novosti press agency (APN), and for 16 years he headed the APN office in Hungary.

MIKHAIL KUDACHKIN

He was born into a peasant's family. During the war he started fighting in the



Crimea, then he fought in Stalingrad and Kursk, participated in the battle for Berlin, where he took the fortress of Spandau, for which he received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. He entered MGIMO as a major in the reserve, graduated in 1951, worked in the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in the embassy



in Chile, and later in the International Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, where he headed the Latin America sector.

ANDREI IGNATIEV

He was born into a teacher's family in the Moscow region. A tank crewman. He liberated central Russia and western Ukraine from German invaders. Received the title of Hero of the Soviet Union. Demobilized with the rank of captain, he entered MGIMO, graduated in 1950,



and worked in the permanent mission of the USSR to the UN in New York. He was deputy editor-in-chief of the *Great Soviet Encyclopedia* for nearly two decades.

GEVORK VARTANIAN

A veteran of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service, he served in intelligence for 64 years and never had a single failure. Together with a group of Soviet intelligence officers, he prevented an assassination attempt by Hitler's saboteurs on the "Big Three"—Stalin, Roosevelt, and Churchill—during a conference in Tehran, Iran, in 1943. During the mission, he met Gohar, his future wife. In order to obtain new documents in different countries, Gevorg got married three times. And all three times—to his own wife. In 58 years of marriage, he managed to maintain a touching, affectionate attitude toward her.







IVAN TYULIN
(1947–2007)
First Vice Rector of MGIMO

In 2007, Ivan Georgievich Tyulin celebrated 15 years of uninterrupted service as the first vice rector of MGIMO. I visited him to ask him to talk about the place of the university in his life. And, of course, about its growth prospects. After the interview, I took some pictures of him. And then a strange thing happened. When he saw me at an event, he didn't ask about the interview I was working on but about the photos I'd taken. He asked me to bring them and show them to him. A few days later I went to see him; he put the disk in his computer, looked at the pictures, and pointed to one, "Can I have this one?" I said: "Sure. I also chose it to illustrate the story." He had a serious, somewhat solemn expression on his face, and I don't know how much it sounded like a compliment to him, but I said, "You look like… a U.S. president." He chuckled.

"I was lucky, because Anatoly Torkunov and I share the same views on how the university should develop."

And then the new issue of the magazine came out. But Mr. Tyulin never saw it because he went to the hospital and never came back…

When we arrived at the hospital to pay our last respects to him, I had some complicated feelings when I saw that picture of him. It was printed on a large scale, with a black mourning ribbon in the lower right corner, and stood at the entrance to the memorial hall…

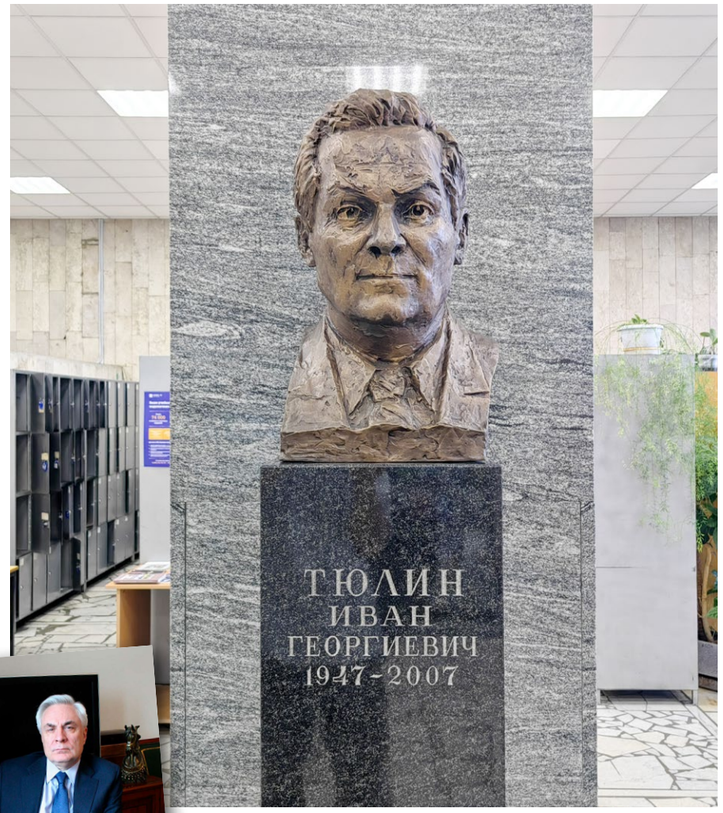
It turns out that Mr. Tyulin included it in his will, or rather in a step-by-step plan for organizing his funeral—he was that thorough…

As a child, Ivan Tyulin dreamed of becoming a biologist. But then he met a diplomat working in France and, impressed by his stories, thought about enrolling at MGIMO.

In early April 2007, MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov was re-elected for a new term, which coincided with an objectively overdue new stage in the university's development. "We have come to the point where we need to substantially renew the university," said Ivan Tyulin. "I was lucky, because Anatoly Torkunov and I share the same views on how the university should develop. We started working together back in the Komsomol organization and have come quite a long way."


Наши кадры

Мне повезло, что с Анатолием Васильевичем общие взгляды на то, как должен развиваться институт. Мы начинали работать вместе еще в комсомоле и прошли довольно сложный путь испытаний, я бы сказал, крутых горок



During his years of study, Tyulin's class took charge of the current Minister Sergey Lavrov and Anatoly Torkunov's class. "Yes, we took them under our wing and formed a Komsomol organization there. I remember very well how Anatoly did not want to be a member of the committee responsible for educational work; I even had to twist his arms. He was persuaded, the work took off, and his excellent organizational skills were discovered. He and his friends loved to sing, dance, and act, and they did these things well. We had a traveling Komsomol brigade with which we toured and performed for workers of various enterprises in Moscow. We played for the workers scenes from Mayakovsky's *The Bathhouse*; I read a story by Zoshchenko, Lavrov—Voznesensky's works…"

In 2007, MGIMO won the competition of innovative programs and received a large grant for development. I. Tyulin was inspired by that. "At the heart of our ideas was a competency-based approach, which emphasizes skills and the ability to apply them in practice rather than the acquisition of knowledge. And we won! Now we will implement these plans."

These are the words of a man who realized he was leaving… But he stayed! MGIMO's academic library, one of the largest, is named after him.



THE PANTHEON OF DIPLOMATS

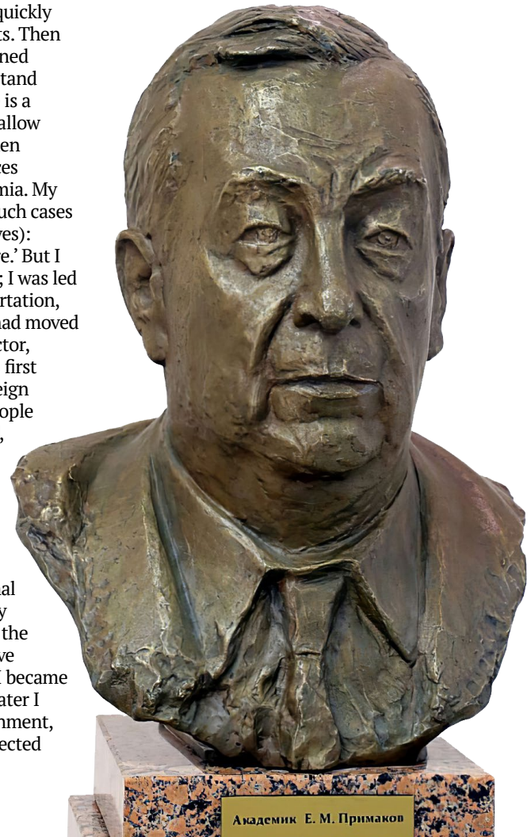
St. Prince Alexander Nevsky, whose sculptural image can be found in one of MGIMO's buildings, is the patron saint of Russian diplomacy. Many of his victories in the 13th century were achieved not only with the sword but also through his activity in the field of foreign policy. He managed to choose such a form of it that would help preserve the Russian nationality and thus ensure its political future. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said that Alexander Nevsky was the founder of a multi-vector policy, primarily directed to the East. He dealt with the West rather harshly because the West came mostly with the sword or with diplomatic attempts to turn Russia toward the West. His main mission was to preserve the Orthodox faith in Russia. Thus, Alexander Nevsky not only saved Orthodox Christianity—he saved Russian ethnicity for the future.

YEVGENY PRIMAKOV (1929–2015)

In January 2006, I went to see Yevgeny Primakov on Ilyinka Street, at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of the Russian Federation, which he headed, to do a big interview for the "Guru" section. And I was immediately struck by this: he didn't come out of the depths of his large office to meet me; he opened the door for me in a homely way, and before I could say anything, he said with a smile, "Hello, Igor Alekseevich!" —like a good acquaintance, even though it was the first time he'd ever seen me…

He was not the most diligent student; he confessed to me that he had always answered better on exams than he actually knew the subject. Perhaps it was this ability that allowed him to hold the highest positions in the state in the future. But it was probably something else.

"I guess I'm one of those people (and there are pros and cons to that) who, no matter where they work, feel like it's the most important thing. When I was a journalist, I thought it was the best job. I first worked in foreign broadcasting, where I learned to work in the noise of the newsroom, quickly writing commentaries on events. Then I moved to *Pravda*, where I learned to refine phrases and to understand that behind each of them there is a certain meaning that does not allow for misinterpretation. Then when I defended my Doctor of Sciences dissertation, I went into academia. My late wife always said to me in such cases (and she had no career incentives): 'Why? You're fine where you are.' But I myself did not seek new places; I was led by destiny. I defended my dissertation, and Nikolay Inozemtsev, who had moved from *Pravda* to IMEMO as director, suggested that I join him as his first deputy. I had a lot of fun in foreign intelligence. There are good people working there, really dedicated, honest, and decent. I had no intention of leaving. Then I had the post of minister in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—the highest point in the career of an international affairs expert, and I am an international affairs expert by training and by vocation. I did not want to join the government either; I refused five times, but it so happened that I became prime minister. Eight months later I was "demoted" from the government, but I stayed in politics: I was elected to the State Duma and headed the Fatherland–All Russia faction. Then I joined the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where I am also very interested in working.



"I believe thoughts about the career should not guide a person, a student. They must study to become very proficient in their specialization. And where they will work—life will suggest. You know, such zigzags happen… I still believe in destiny guiding a person."

"But what's better for a good career—to change with circumstances, to adapt to them, or to stay yourself, to stand up for yourself, to respect yourself, even if it hinders your career?"

"I believe that opportunists are worthless. They can't really add value anywhere, and they can't really play a role—the role they're meant to play. So one should not be opportunistic. But one shouldn't assume that their opinion is the only correct one. You have to be able to admit your mistakes. If somebody proves me wrong, I'm willing to admit my mistake. If they don't, I will stand my ground."

"Do you have any regrets in your life?"

"Frankly speaking, I regret that I did not study the language hard enough at university; I really began to study properly only in the postgraduate program at Moscow State University, at the Faculty of Economics. I had to do a lot of reading there. By that time, however, I had already read Karl Marx's *Capital* and had taken notes on all the volumes. By the way, I don't regret it one bit, and I consider myself a Marxist, and I believe that Marxism is a very real academic discipline. Just don't turn it into a religion and think that it doesn't change depending on certain processes in society."




Евгений Примаков: По-настоящему я начал учиться в аспирантуре

I guess I'm one of those people who, no matter where they work, feel like it's the most important thing.

"You've been called a foreign policy *aqsaqal*."

"I don't think that is accurate. An *aqsaqal* is a wise man to whom everyone should bow, simply because he has lived to such an age. But not everyone who has reached such a respectable age is wise."

"You are one of the best-informed people in the country. What are Russia's most pressing problems?"

"I'd name one. If we are now looking for a national idea, it is the idea of preserving Russia. The problems associated with this are rooted in demographics. If we do not really think about how to create socio-economic and transportation infrastructure in the East, we will lose Russia. And it can only be created through a differentiated approach to tax, customs, and pension policies. Only through a smart migration policy. The population does not move from the west to the east of the country. This means that we need measured and controlled immigration to build the appropriate infrastructure in eastern Russia."

"Are you happy with your destiny?"

"I'm happy with my destiny."

"What is destiny?"

"It's God. Genetics, definitely. Collisions of life. Environment. Luck is very important…"

Almost 20 years have passed, and at the mention of Primakov's name, I immediately remember the same thing: the smiling man who opened the door for me and said warmly, "Hello, Igor Alekseevich!"

VITALY CHURKIN
(1952–2017)

Russian Ambassador to Chile, Belgium, and Canada; Russia's Permanent Representative to the United Nations (2007-2017); 1974 MGIMO graduate

It was the fall of 2011. I once again found myself in New York at the UN General Assembly as part of Lavrov's press pool. As always, the minister had a busy schedule, with my foreign colleagues entering his meeting room as if they were on a conveyor belt.

Vitaly Churkin, Russia's Permanent Representative to the UN, did not participate in that "party;" he was sitting in the waiting room and chatted with people from the Russian Foreign Ministry who had come with the minister. He was in a very good mood, laughing, reacting to jokes, and making jokes himself. I took a few shots and then took advantage of the pause to go over and ask him for an interview. Mr. Churkin immediately agreed, and we went behind the scenes. He took me somewhere, and somehow, without me noticing it, we found ourselves in the meeting room… of the UN Security Council, the inner sanctum of the building on the East River!

Mr. Churkin habitually sat at the table with the sign of the Russian Federation. I sat in the chair of the representative of a country "next door." I don't remember which one.

By that time, Mr. Churkin had worked in New York for five years and was very popular among his colleagues and journalists for his unusual style of communication and work. In characterizing our permanent representative, a *Washington Post* journalist played with Churkin's first name in the headline, writing: "vitaliation" (from the English word "retaliation"). *The New York Times* called Churkin a scrappy negotiator.

Mr. Churkin had plenty of experience with the American press, dating back to the 1983 shooting down of the South Korean Boeing and the 1986 Chernobyl accident. He was the last official representative of the Soviet Foreign Ministry and the first representative of the Russian Foreign Ministry. To confuse him was difficult; to "exert pressure" on him was dangerous. The UN press corps knew that. At one point, reporters surrounded Churkin in a hallway and held an informal press conference on Libya. "And one guy," Mr. Churkin recalled, "who is always deliberately provocative, albeit humorous, asked me a question that was clearly hardball and contrary to what I had just answered. So I said to him, 'Shall I punch you in the nose?' Everyone, of course, realized it was a joke, but that's the exchange we had."

"One guy, who is always deliberately provocative, albeit humorous, asked me a question that was clearly hardball and contrary to what I had just answered. So I said to him, 'Shall I punch you in the nose?'

"Undiplomatic, to say the least."

"Sometimes it's the only way to put a person in their place. But I try not to overuse it."

Having an independent caustic style in the corrosive waters of the United Nations is, at the very least, a risk to one's health. But Mr. Churkin was not just a diplomat; he was a soldier who guarded the interests of his homeland, and soldiers usually do not think about their health.



"Indeed, the work is hard; not only do you have to stay up late, but sometimes you don't get a single Saturday or Sunday off. Crises come one after another. By the way, we have this inside joke: at the UN, August is not a vacation month; it's a month of constant crises! In August 2008, there was the Russian-Georgian conflict in the Caucasus, and in 2011, the situation in Syria escalated, and Libya again had a lot to deal with. And, in fact, there is no such thing as 'vacation' for the Security Council. In 2008, I came home 15 minutes before New Year's Day because of the Gaza crisis and the very intense discussions that followed."



"And your colleagues at the Foreign Ministry had it even worse: because of the eight-hour time difference, they spent the entire New Year's night in their offices."

Churkin was not just a diplomat; he was a soldier who guarded the interests of his homeland, and soldiers usually do not think about their health.

"What can you do? The sense of responsibility does not allow you to relax. After all, you have to respond promptly to the discussion, propose ideas, and receive instructions from the central office, even if we do not always agree with it."

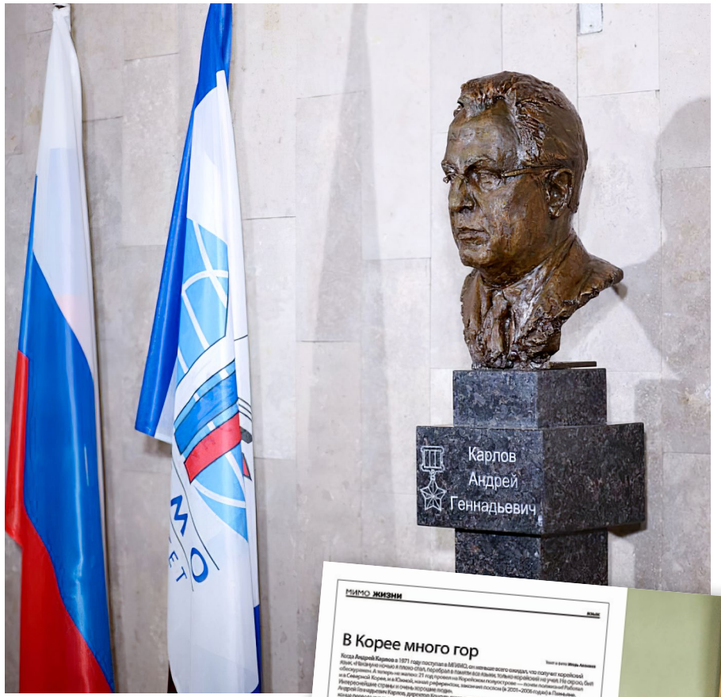
"Does that happen?"

"Why deny it? We argue with our colleagues from the Foreign Ministry about the best way to phrase a question, for example… And you know what the most fascinating part of this job is? Moments when you feel—especially in private consultations—that you can actually influence the course and outcome of a discussion with the arguments you manage to find. But we do not allow professional disputes, even the most heated ones, to spill over into our personal relationships. I don't remember any cases of people being mean; on the contrary, even my Western colleagues would come up to me before a meeting and say, 'You know, I was given very strict instructions here; I softened them in my speech where I could; don't take it personally.' Well, and we maintain a gentlemanly, tactful style; we don't try to catch each other off guard."

"We are sitting in the Security Council Chamber. What do you feel when you walk in here?"

"I feel a certain solemnity. In the Security Council Chamber, you see not on paper but in real life that this body has the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security. Although this hall is temporary while the main hall is being renovated, they managed to recreate it. Now, this mural on the wall isn't original, but the table we're sitting at is the same, the real historic table…"

On a chilly February morning in 2017, we paid our last respects to Vitaly Churkin at the Central Clinical Hospital before his burial at the Troyekurovo cemetery. I exchanged a few sad words with Aleksandr Pankin, now deputy minister of foreign affairs and then director of the Department of International Organizations of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In my memory, however, he will remain the first deputy of V. Churkin in New York. Back in 2011, Mr. Pankin was part of a group of permanent mission staff who were half asleep, "tired from running" (diplomats who prepare the schedule for a ministerial visit barely sleep) and posed for my story on MGIMO alumni at the UN. It opened with a big interview with Vitaly Churkin.





ANDREI KARLOV
(1954–2016)
The Russian ambassador to North Korea and Turkey. A 1976 graduate of MGIMO

In 2009, I applied for visas for North Korea and South Korea through the Consular Department of the Russian Foreign Ministry in order to travel to those countries as part of Mr. Lavrov's press pool. There was a setback with the DPRK embassy. I was advised to call the director of the department, Andrei Karlov. I called and was pleasantly surprised: Mr. Karlov immediately looked into the problem, promised to help, and, most importantly, asked me to call him if the problem was not solved. His friendly tone and desire to help a fellow MGIMO graduate made me think it would be a good idea to do an interview with him.

Mr. Karlov turned out to be a Korean studies expert who was lucky enough to pick up the baton from Anatoly Torkunov himself. "When I entered MGIMO in 1971, I was given Korean as a foreign language to learn. In those days, we had a good tradition: seniors who had finished their language practice would meet with freshmen and share their experiences with them. And our future rector, after returning from his internship, met with my classmates and me. It was the first person-to-person information about the DPRK, the only place we could subsequently go to work. We didn't have relations with South Korea. After Torkunov's story, I was more interested, so it was easier for me to learn Korean, and it got better."

"Anatoly Torkunov, our future rector, after returning from his internship in Pyongyang, met with my class. After his story, I was more interested, so it was easier for me to learn Korean, and it got better."

But Andrei had the opportunity to work in both North and South Korea. "I spent almost my entire life on the Korean peninsula—21 years! But I don't regret it one bit: those are very good countries with good people. Nowadays, one can only envy students who study Korean: there are a huge number of sources in the language; you can listen to Korean radio, watch movies, read newspapers, and go there to practice. We had nothing—no videos, no computers, no Internet. When I met a real Korean, I thought, 'Was the language I studied Korean?' There are many peculiarities in this language. For example, there are several forms of politeness. And Koreans will judge your knowledge of the language based on which form you choose. But at MGIMO, we only learned the official form of politeness used in newspapers and negotiations. And when I first addressed a child as an equal in North Korea, I didn't understand why it made people chuckle: I was supposed to choose another form of politeness, a less respectful one. The Korean language does not have the pronoun 'you'; in the DPRK, it is replaced by the word 'comrade.' When the relationship between people is close, the address (in both the North and the South) is 'elder brother' and 'younger brother.' And of course, in South Korea, they say 'sir.' The ability to choose the correct form of politeness shows the level of your language skills."

A few days after that interview, I was onboard an IL-62, flying east, and in my head I heard Mr. Karlov's phrase: "Very good countries with good people." I realized this the next day when I found myself in Kim Il Sung Square in Pyongyang. I watched elementary school children sweep the dust from the perfectly clean stone slabs at the foot of his majestic monument. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw two little girls, six or seven years old, holding hands, crossing the square, going somewhere on their childish errands. Not five meters from where I was standing, they abruptly changed course and headed straight for me. I'll be honest, I was a little startled. Meanwhile, the children stopped in front of me and bowed deeply to me. I bowed in return, and the girls went about their business and jumped on without looking back, as if they were accustomed to bowing. I looked around: who saw that? As the sun sat behind the majestic Kim's head, the children enthusiastically continued to scrub the clean square like sailors…

"I spent almost my entire life on the Korean peninsula—21 years! But I don't regret it one bit: those are very good countries with good people."

This is the story: Kim Il Sung left behind an impoverished country, which would sacrifice itself so that its powerful army would be ready to repel any encroachment by "white imperialists" and their "South Korean stooges." But at the same time, when little children see an adult white man, they do not ask him with a squint, "Who are you?" but bow to him like to a guest, give him respect…

I had similar feelings when Sergey Lavrov opened the Russian Language Center at the Pyongyang Foreign Language Institute. After the official ceremony, the students of the Russian faculty gave a concert. It was preceded, as it should be, by a preamble: "Our people and army have received with deep satisfaction the re-election of dear comrade Kim Jong Il as chair of the National Defense Commission. The whole country will celebrate this event with new achievements…" The concert began, and I was immediately struck by their speech: it was the purest Russian with native intonation that was correctly understood… And when the mixed choir of students sang with an absolute steppe-inspired feeling, "My horse and I will walk through the field together…"—a lump rose in my throat, and I wasn't the only one. "Wow, they made me tear up…" Sergey Lavrov told reporters afterward.



There are no steppes on the Korean peninsula; it is a mountainous place. And I remembered what Andrei Karlov had told me: "The first sentence we learned in class, which I remember all my life, is 'Joseonneun sani manhseumnida'—'There are many mountains in Korea.' And this sentence is also an example of how there can be two nominative cases in one sentence at the same time."

VYACHESLAV TRUBNIKOV
(1944–2022)

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Russian Federation, Army General, Hero of Russia, Head of the Russian Foreign Intelligence Service (1996-2000), First Deputy Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation (2000-2004), 1967 MGIMO graduate.



I met Vyacheslav Trubnikov in one of the Indian restaurants on Leninsky Avenue, not far from his house. He was already ill, suffering from a back injury he had sustained in an accident during one of his foreign assignments; he had difficulty moving around and didn't want to go far.

Trubnikov, as an Indologist, invited me, his fellow Indologist, to eat tandoori chicken, the famous dish of Indian cuisine. We both studied Hindi at MGIMO and knew and appreciated this funny, spicy food.

Vyacheslav dreamed of a career as a naval engineer. But in 1961, the Komsomol youth organization recommended that he go to MGIMO.


ГУРУ

И ОДИН В ПОЛЕ — ВОИН

ВЯЧЕСЛАВ ТРУБНИКОВ (МО, 1967)

That year, it was especially difficult for a high school student to get into a prestigious university. By the decision of Soviet leader Khrushchev, 1 million 200 thousand conscript soldiers and regular officers were dismissed from the armed forces in one fell swoop. A special enrollment was arranged for them, with 80 percent of the places in universities reserved, including in MGIMO. But luck was on Trubnikov's side and he got in. Although he wanted to study Arabic, he unexpectedly found his name on the list for the Hindi language group. And our wonderful teacher Semen Dymshits, who taught both of us, told him a decisive phrase in his characteristic, a little burry voice: "Trubnikov, Hindi is your living!"

"I remember hearing someone say a phrase that defines the essence of intelligence: 'One man can match an army.' The leeway for independent action was much greater there than in the Foreign Ministry. As for the risk, I saw it as a challenge that I had to meet."

And that's how it turned out. Even more so, Hindi, one could say, also shaped his personal life—he met his future wife Natasha, who was already studying to become an Indologist. Trubnikov saw himself as a diplomat, but during his pre-graduation internship at the embassy in Delhi, he was noticed, so to speak, by his future colleagues and invited to join the intelligence service.

Dymshits tried to dissuade him: "What's your hurry? There is a place at the embassy that is ready for you. And in intelligence, if you fail, you can become a persona non grata and be banned from traveling!" So why did he go into intelligence? For the allure of it? "No; what attracted me was the opportunity to engage in a challenging and largely independent endeavor. I remember hearing someone say a phrase that defines the essence of intelligence: 'One man can match an army.' The leeway for independent action was much greater there than in the Foreign Ministry. The risk, however, was also much greater. I opted for more discretion. And I saw the risk as a challenge that I had to meet."

"So you're not a ladder climber. It is easier and safer to build a career in the Foreign Ministry."

His reply was a little abrupt (Trubnikov, as they call it, was never at a loss for words):

"I've never thought in terms of career advancement. Excuse me, but in my worst nightmares, I never dreamed that I would ever be in charge of the intelligence service! Especially since there have always been people around me who have surpassed me in many ways in terms of talent and personality, I am absolutely sure of it! I am a statesman to the bone, and the interests of the state have always come first for me! And my main goal was not to get a higher position but to get the job done successfully. So, when I had the opportunity to go into business after finishing my work in the intelligence service—the Russian president offered me this option (along with the position of first deputy foreign minister)—it did not appeal to me."



"I am a statesman to the bone, and the interests of the state have always come first for me!"

"Intelligence is a profession after all, or…?"

"I remember very well the arguments about what intelligence was in our huge office in the KGB headquarters on Lubyanka Square, where there were seven of us—the young ones together with an experienced officer who supervised us. Some said it was a craft, some said it was an art, and some even said it was a science!"

"What about you?"

"I said it was a profession like any other. But depending on the results the intelligence officer achieves, in its mediocre manifestations it is a craft, and in its best manifestations it is an art. So you have to be creative. If an officer doesn't have that spark, he or she is not going to make it in the profession."

"What was the outcome of the dispute on Lubyanka?"

"There was none. Everyone drew their own conclusions, got food for thought, and pondered the question of why a person would engage in this hard, sometimes dangerous business that keeps them under constant stress. After all, every man has to manage stress, but in normal life it is short-lived. For an intelligence officer, however, it is constant—not only physical but across all aspects of life, so to speak.

"What else is difficult about our profession? Any person, especially a man, strives to be needed, to feel a sense of his relevance. But if a worker in a public profession, such as journalism, finds fulfillment in public recognition, i.e., if they relieve their inner stress in the process of achieving results and enjoy praise or applause, an intelligence officer has no right to it. All of his accomplishments remain within himself. Yes, the state awards him; he feels good about it, but he can't show his awards to anyone. So yes, on the one hand, 'one man can match an army,' but there is another famous saying: 'Everyone knows about the failures of intelligence; no one knows about the accomplishments.'"

I was at the funeral of Vyacheslav Trubnikov at the Troyekurovo cemetery. He was buried in the intelligence officers' alley, where lie the illegal residents who were awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union, the MGIMO graduate Alexey Kozlov, Gevork Vartanian, and others… The guard of honor marched, and a triple salute rang out over the grave. And I remembered how sincerely the Indologist Trubnikov was pleased when I told him that the interview would be published in the "Guru" section. MJ



WHEN TOMORROW COMES

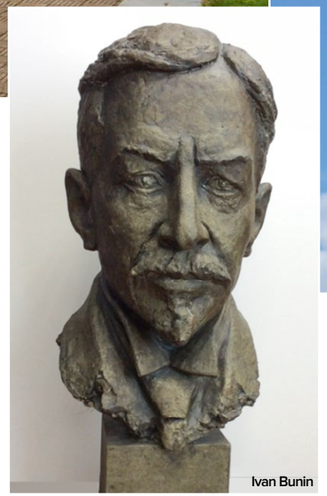
The future of the MGIMO campus is unfolding before our eyes. In September 2024, in addition to eight administrative buildings, a sports center, and a 13-story old dormitory where dozens of generations of MGIMO graduates lived, a new residential building—a technologically equipped 18-story building resembling a book—was put into operation. It completed the process of, so to speak, "gathering the MGIMO lands" in the southwest. "By completing the construction of a new dormitory for 1.5 thousand beds," said the rector of the university, A. Torkunov, "we have strengthened ourselves logistically, and now, of course, we have to go further.

The future of the MGIMO campus is unfolding before our eyes. With a new 18-story dorm put into operation, the process of, so to speak, "gathering the MGIMO lands" in the southwest has been completed.

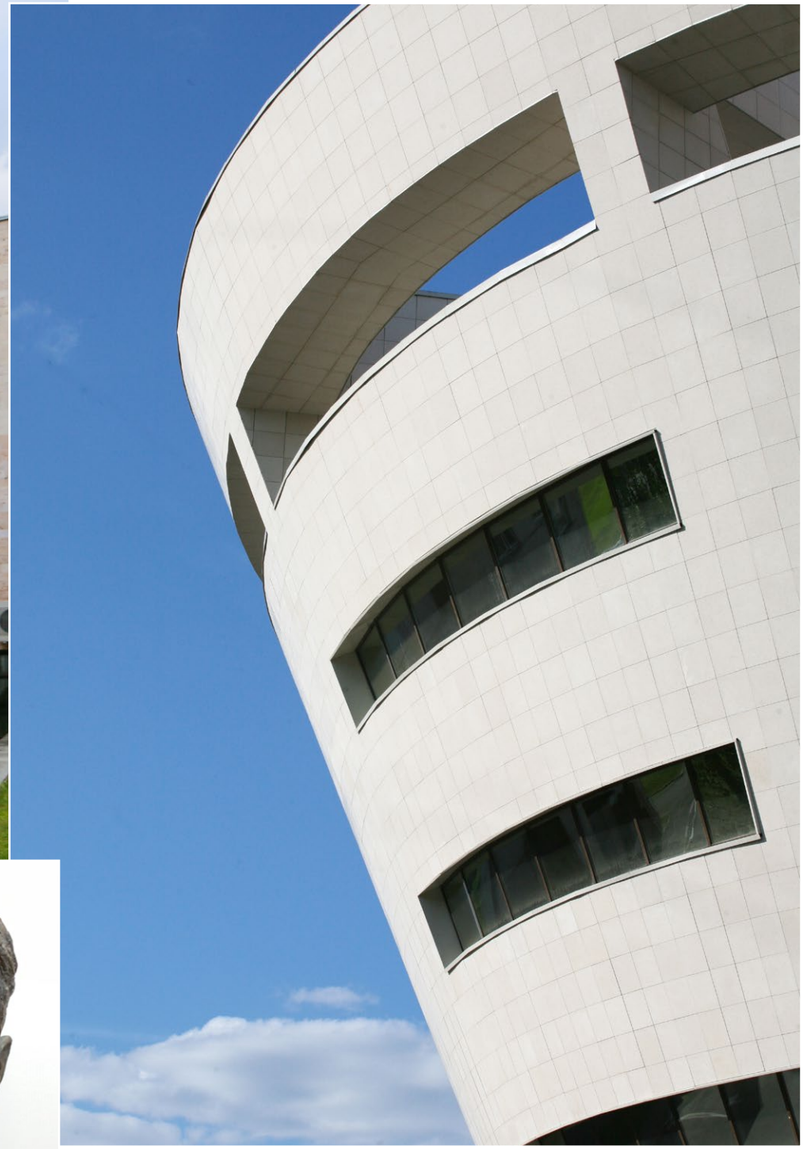
Fyodor Tyutchev

We have everything in place today to ensure that MGIMO will continue to develop for at least the next 100 years!"

Thanks to the cooperation with the Academy of Arts and the sculptor N. Ivanov, the MGIMO park is expecting new additions. A monument to the poet and diplomat F. Tyutchev and a bust of the Nobel laureate in literature I. Bunin will widen the circle of authors and philosophers. The sculptor's workshops still hold the sketches of the monument to V. Vernadsky, a scientist who developed the doctrine of noosphere and gave his name to the avenue where the MGIMO campus is located, to F. Chaliapin, an incomparable bass, another ambassador of Russian culture in the West, as well as to A. Suvorov, an outstanding military commander who never lost a battle, a brilliant teacher, and a spiritual mentor of the Russian army.



Ivan Bunin



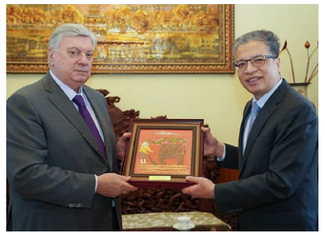
A ceremony was held to award Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of MGIMO and Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences, with the esteemed Royal Order of the Sahametrei Officer of the Kingdom of Cambodia. The award is primarily conferred to foreign nationals for their contributions to the development of international relations, diplomatic service, or as a token of friendship. Dr. A. Torkunov was recognized as an esteemed Royal Order of the Sahametrei Officer for his significant contributions to strengthening cooperation with the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports and for promoting the comprehensive development of the education sector in the Kingdom of Cambodia. Graduates of MGIMO include high-ranking officials from Cambodian side,



such as Dr. Hang Chuon Naron, the Minister of Education, Youth, and Sports, as well as notable diplomats and public figures. The order was presented by Panha Pichkhun, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Cambodia to the Russian Federation. Currently, the cooperation between MGIMO and universities and research centers in Cambodia continues to develop repidly. Expert dialogue is regularly maintained, both within ASEAN-centered formats and on a bilateral basis.

H.E. Dr. Anatoly Torkunov, the Rector of MGIMO, visited the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in the Russian Federation. He met with H. E. Dang Minh Khoi, the Ambassador of the SRV in Russia. Dr. Torkunov and Ambassador Dang Minh Khoi discussed the partnership between MGIMO and various universities in Vietnam, focusing on the activities of the MGIMO's ASEAN Centre and the introduction of new educational programs in areas related to culture, art, and the "experience economy," especially a joint Master's program between MGIMO and the Tretyakov Gallery. They also explored a broad spectrum of other cultural exchange initiatives. Dr. Torkunov noted that to further promotion of cultural ties between the two nations, MGIMO hosts annually a Day of Vietnam along with a Festival of Vietnamese Culture.





H. E. Dang Minh Khoi emphasized MGIMO's pivotal role in training specialists for Vietnam's Ministry for Foreign Affairs and underlined the significant achievements of MGIMO alumni who are currently employed at the Vietnamese Embassy in Russia. It is noteworthy that both the Ambassador and his wife are graduates of MGIMO. Prior to the start of the official discussions, a professor from the Moscow Conservatory entertained the guests by playing a selection of Vietnamese and Russian national songs on the authentic Vietnamese musical instrument known as the "Monochord."

MGIMO was visited by Ambassador of the Republic of Iraq to the Russian Federation, Haidar Mansur Hadi Al-Azari. He was welcomed by the Rector of the MGIMO University, Anatoly Torkunov. He informed the Iraqi guest about the history and current state of Arabic language teaching at MGIMO, which is currently studied by 108 students in Bachelor's degree programs and 31 students in Master's programs as their first language, as well as students from a significant number of Arab countries studying various programs at the University, and the activities of the Middle Eastern Club at MGIMO, which specializes in studies of the region, its history, culture, and current political situation. The Ambassador thanked the University for the opportunity to meet and emphasized the importance of developing closer academic cooperation and laying the foundation for building scientific and educational partnerships with Russian higher education institutions, including MGIMO.





A meeting took place between the Rector of MGIMO University Anatoly Torkunov and the Ambassador of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, P. M. Amza. During the meeting, Rector spoke about faculties and educational programs of the University, as well as additional opportunities for international students. Ambassador P. M. Amza expressed hope for the development of cooperation between MGIMO and Sri Lankan academic institutions in both educational and scientific fields. Special attention was given to teaching Russian as a foreign language and regional studies.







At the Embassy of the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in Russia, Anatoly Torkunov, the Rector of MGIMO, left a note in the Book of Condolences in connection with the untimely passing of the General Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Nguyen Phu Trong. He noted the significant role that Nguyen Phu Trong always played in the development of Russian-Vietnamese relations. MGIMO, in turn, highly values relationships with representatives of the Vietnamese community. Students from Vietnam were among the first foreign citizens at MGIMO — since 1959, over 400 citizens of the Republic have graduated from the university, and Vietnamese language has been taught since 1954. The Vietnamese community at MGIMO is traditionally one of the most active clubs of international students. The Day of Vietnam, organized by the Community together with the Embassy and the ASEAN Center, has already become an annual event. The Vietnamese Association of MGIMO Alumni is one of the most representative abroad. After returning to their homeland upon graduation, alumni of the university later have held various leadership positions in government and diplomatic services — at the level of minister, deputy minister, permanent representative of Vietnam to the UN, and ambassador. Among MGIMO alumni are the current Ambassador of Vietnam to Russia, Dang Minh Khoi, and his wife, Ambassador Le Linh Lan.



Salman Al Farisi, Secretary General of the Indian Ocean Rim Association (IORA), visited MGIMO. He was invited to Russia by the Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov. The guest was welcomed by Andrey Baykov, Vice-Rector, and Ekaterina Koldunova, ASEAN Centre's Director. During the meeting both sides discussed potential areas of cooperation in education and science, with a view to attract more students and young professional from Indian Rim Ocean countries to Russia. Secretary General told about the Association activities and its mission, while Baykov presented MGIMO and ASEAN Centre's educational programs and projects. A follow up to the meeting was an open lecture by Secretary General on the role of IORA in humanitarian cooperation and promotion of sustainable development in the region. He was especially pleased to meet students from Indonesia – his home country.





Un Kheang, the State Secretary of the MFA of Cambodia paid a visit to MGIMO. Un Kheang coordinates the National Institute of Diplomacy and International Relations of Cambodia (NIDIR). The cooperation between MGIMO and NIDIR has been rapidly growing since 2018. During the meeting the Cambodian guest presented the key activities and projects of the Institute. Andrey Baykov, MGIMO's Vice-Rector, noted that the visit to MGIMO holds particular significance as it coincides with the celebration of the 68th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Russia and Cambodia. Both sides discussed future plans for cooperation, including an exchange of experience in training diplomats, the organization of joint research events devoted to relevant issues of international relations and attracting Cambodian applicants to study in MGIMO.





The XV Asian Conference of Valdai Discussion Club took place in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia). Ekaterina Koldunova, Director of the ASEAN Centre, took part in the conference as a speaker. The conference had a title «Malaysia, Russia and ASEAN in the multipolar world.» The co-organizers of the conference were Bait Al Amanah analytical Centre, Sasakawa Peace Foundation and Institute of Strategic Analysis and Policy Research (INSAP). The keynote speakers - Minister of Foreign Affairs of Malaysia Mohamad Hasan and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Andrey Rudenko – addressed the audience. Koldunova spoke at the session, dedicated to ASEAN cooperation with BRICS, financial diversification and the future of ASEAN-Russia Strategic Partnership. Discussions were also focused on the ASEAN centrality, regional security and various aspects of Russian turn to Asia.

MGIMO hosted the opening ceremony of its first ASEAN and EAS Student Model, organized by the ASEAN Centre and the Southeast Asian Club, supported by MGIMO's Endowment. Vilavan Yiapoher, Ambassador of Lao PDR to Russia and the Chair of the ASEAN Moscow Committee, Andrey Lyamin, Deputy Director of the Department of Asia-Pacific Cooperation of the Russian MFA and MGIMO's Vice Rector Andrey Baykov welcomed the delegates. Among the ceremony's guests were Ambassador of Cambodia to Russia Panha Pichkhun, Ambassador of Singapore to Russia Mark Neo, Ambassador of Myanmar to Russia Thit Linn Ohn and officers from other embassies of the ASEAN Member States. The purpose of the Model is to familiarize the students with the structure of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, its goals and development. The ASEAN and EAS Model program includes a series of lectures and master classes from the ASEAN Centre's experts. Participation in the Model will allow the students to improve their negotiation and presentation skills, learn more about the business culture of Southeast Asian countries explore the ASEAN Way of decision-making and try on the role of a participant of the ASEAN and EAS Summits.







Presentation of the second issue of the Yearbook «Global Food Security and International Trade in Agricultural Products 2023/24» took place at Moscow's Four Seasons Hotel. The annual report is a product of the Institute of Global Agricultural Markets at MGIMO (IGAM), developed in collaboration with the Federal Center «Agroexport» and the Ministry of Agriculture of Russia. The Yearbook is dedicated to the situation in the global food market and Russia's role in it. The report analyzes key trends affecting the transformation of the global agricultural sector, contains global food price indices, results from a survey of 200 authoritative participants in foreign economic activity from Russia and 18 foreign countries, and highlights case studies from Russian and foreign companies. Special attention is paid to trends and development factors in the agricultural sector in the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, Africa, Latin America, and post-Soviet countries.
Anatoly Torkunov, Academician and MGIMO Rector, shared future plans: «The first Yearbook was well received by many. We continue our work in this direction, including developing a digital information-analytical system that contains all the information available in the directory and is constantly updated. We expect this to be a serious IT project, and next year, alongside the presentation of the third edition of the Yearbook, we will also present the information system».

ASEAN Centre's Deputy Director Dr. Valeria Vershinina and Expert Dr. Nikita Kuklin visited Indonesia to participate in the meetings of the working bodies of the 21st ASEAN-Russia Joint Planning and Management Committee (ARJPMC) and 22nd ASEAN-Russia Joint Cooperation Committee (ARJCC). From Russian side the meetings were co-chaired by H. E. Evgeny Zagaynov, Ambassador of Russia to ASEAN. The visit's program also included meetings in ministries, universities and research institutions aimed to establish cooperation with MGIMO University. During meetings the Russian and Indonesian experts highlighted the lack of analytical materials about Russia in Indonesia, the absence of developed programs of Russian studies in Indonesian universities and research institutions, as well as the information gap that impact on the credibility of study on Russia's approaches to world politics and international relations. Both sides discussed the necessity to enhance contacts between MGIMO and Indonesia's research centers.



A delegation from Gadjah Mada University from Indonesia visited MGIMO. Gadjah Mada University is the oldest leading institution of higher learning of Indonesia. The program of the visit included taking part in the Indonesia Day and delivering an open lecture on Indonesia's quest for leadership in the Global South and participation in the round table discussion on Indonesian and Russian approaches to ASEAN-Russia Dialogue Partnership. The delegation visited MGIMO's ASEAN Centre, the museum of MGIMO's history and the Rare books Museum. Ekaterina Koldunova, Director of the ASEAN Centre, welcomed the guests.

MGIMO hosted the Indonesia Day, which was organized by the ASEAN Centre in cooperation with the Indonesian Embassy in Moscow. It started with a lecture by Dr. Muhadi Sugiono, a guest speaker from Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia). He shared with the audience his ideas concerning Indonesia's potential to become a leader of the Global South. A round table discussion brought





together esteemed experts from Indonesia and Russia, along with the representatives from the Indonesian Embassy in Moscow and the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as well as students specializing in "Politics and Economics of the World Regions" from the Schools of International Relations and International Economic Relations.

MGIMO hosted its traditional Day of Vietnam organized by MGIMO Vietnamese Student's Community and the ASEAN Centre, with the support of the Embassy of the SRV in Russia. The event was attended by more than 700 guests, namely by representatives of government agencies, diplomats, entrepreneurs from Russia and Vietnam, prominent experts in Vietnamese studies, lecturers and students from leading universities. The opening ceremony was attended by the Deputy Chief of Diplomatic Mission of Vietnam in Russia Doan Khac Hoang and Deputy Director of the ASEAN Centre Valeria Vershinina, who delivered their welcoming remarks.



The event continued with a lecture by Dr. Bui Thanh Nam, Vice Chairman of the Vietnam National University on "Role of Vietnam in ASEAN". The highlight of the Vietnam's Day program was a research conference "Vietnam in the Multipolar World: Approaches, Challenges and Prospects". The keynote speaker of the session was Dr. Phan Anh Son, President of the Vietnam Union of Friendship Organizations. The culmination of the program was cultural evening "Around Vietnam" featuring traditional and contemporary dances, songs, theatrical performances and opera that were performed by students from MGIMO and other Moscow and Saint-Petersburg universities, as well as by invited professional artists.

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