MGIMO Turns 75

Vladimir Putin
“MGIMO has established a strong reputation as a leading global center for training professionals in international affairs”

Presidents Ilham Aliyev and Kassym Tokayev congratulate alma mater

MGIMO Forum in Tashkent
If you are lucky enough to have lived in Paris as a young man, then wherever you go for the rest of your life, it stays with you, for Paris is a moveable feast.

Ernest Hemingway
The wonderful Khilola welcomed MGIMO graduates from around the world to hospitable Uzbekistan. Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund. Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Vitaly Churkin: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Lukaš Parizek: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

MGIMO is in Tashkent for a reason! The Vietnamese language came into the life of a Deputy Minister of Economic Development of Russia, while he studied at MGIMO.

MGIMO in Tashkent

MGIMO in Tashkent

The wonderful Khilola welcomed MGIMO graduates from around the world to hospitable Uzbekistan. Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund. Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Vitaly Churkin: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Lukaš Parizek: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

MGIMO is in Tashkent for a reason! The Vietnamese language came into the life of a Deputy Minister of Economic Development of Russia, while he studied at MGIMO.

MGIMO in Tashkent

MGIMO in Tashkent

The wonderful Khilola welcomed MGIMO graduates from around the world to hospitable Uzbekistan. Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund. Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Vitaly Churkin: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Lukaš Parizek: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

MGIMO is in Tashkent for a reason! The Vietnamese language came into the life of a Deputy Minister of Economic Development of Russia, while he studied at MGIMO.

MGIMO in Tashkent

MGIMO in Tashkent

The wonderful Khilola welcomed MGIMO graduates from around the world to hospitable Uzbekistan. Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund. Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Vitaly Churkin: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Lukaš Parizek: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

MGIMO is in Tashkent for a reason! The Vietnamese language came into the life of a Deputy Minister of Economic Development of Russia, while he studied at MGIMO.

MGIMO in Tashkent

MGIMO in Tashkent

The wonderful Khilola welcomed MGIMO graduates from around the world to hospitable Uzbekistan. Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund. Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Vitaly Churkin: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Lukaš Parizek: “MGIMO presents unique opportunities” State secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO.

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”

Alisher Usmanov: “MGIMO could play a very positive role in Uzbekistan” A graduate from MGIMO, Alisher Usmanov is currently ranked 9th in the Russian Forbes Rich list. He is one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund.

Patokh Chodiev: “We are carried by MGIMO spirit!”
For MGIMO, 2019 was an anniversary year. Seventy five years ago the war with the German Nazis was coming to an end. Realising the growing demand for diplomats, who would define a new world order, the Soviet government decided to establish a university for training experts in international relations – MGIMO.

The celebrations were held throughout the year as alumni forums were organized at a number of Russian cities and abroad. They culminated on October 23rd with a Gala Evening in the Bolshoi Theater in the center of Moscow. For over 250 years great operas and ballets have been performed at the main Russian theater, and that evening its orchestra played the MGIMO anthem, written, by the way, by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation, Sergei Lavrov, a 1972 graduate. Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation, congratulated the audience from a huge screen: “Over the past 75 years, MGIMO has become a leading center for training professionals in international affairs. MGIMO alumni constitute the core personnel in the Russian diplomatic service. They demonstrate professionalism, patriotism and fidelity to duty while protecting our country’s foreign policy interests.”

Certainly, MGIMO is also a well-known center for expert training in foreign affairs. Hundreds of alumni from dozens of countries recall with warmth and gratitude their university years, being proud of acquiring a profession in demand as well as gaining invaluable experience and life-long friendship. Alumni also came to Moscow for the celebration.

2019 saw the continuation of the Trianon Dialogue, a joint initiative of Vladimir Putin and Emmanuel Macron, aimed at creating closer ties between Russian and French civil societies, under the auspices of MGIMO. Several events called “the Trianon week” were held on the sidelines of the Paris Peace Forum. Read the reports on these and other events in the new issue of MGIMO Journal.

Igor Drobyshev
Editor-in-Chief
Dear Friends!

Warm congratulations on 75th Anniversary of MGIMO!

Over the past 75 years, MGIMO has established a strong reputation as a leading global center for training international affairs professionals. MGIMO alumni constitute the core framework of the personnel of the Russian diplomatic service. They demonstrate top professionalism, patriotism and fidelity to duty while protecting our country’s foreign policy interests.

Those who graduated from this remarkable university to dedicate themselves to work at government agencies, public organizations, in research, business or journalism also excel in their professional qualities.

The analytical and expert work of the faculty and researchers at MGIMO deserves high praise. It is important that, in addition to the traditional areas of study and research, the university is actively developing new programs on public administration and corporate management, as well as information and financial technologies.

MGIMO is expanding its international links and cooperation with the world’s leading universities, as well as with numerous associations of foreign alumni. This year, the first foreign branch of MGIMO opened in Tashkent. There is no doubt that all this testifies to the university’s high standing and its educational and academic achievements.

I sincerely wish you success in all your future endeavors and all the best.

Vladimir Putin
ILHAM ALIEV: “THE 75th ANNIVERSARY OF MGIMO IS A FESTIVE EVENT FOR OUR FAMILY, TOO”

The President of the Republic of Azerbaijan, a 1982 MGIMO graduate, and his daughter, Leila, are proud to be part of the MGIMO family.

MJ: Dear Mr. President, this year marks the 75th anniversary of MGIMO. How do you feel about that?

It goes without saying that MGIMO is and has been the best university in the world when it comes to training specialists in international affairs. MGIMO has produced a good many brilliant and outstanding public and political figures, journalists, lawyers, and businessmen. Years spent at MGIMO can be described as a happy period of youth in hopes, pursuits and discoveries. It is a time to build personality, to realize your ambitions, and to mature. The 15 years at my alma mater was not a thing of the past. Time has not erased my memories about studying at MGIMO. It gives me a great pleasure to remember every moment of being a student. Studying at MGIMO was the best period of my life: building a family, having our first child, being a student, post graduate studies, and teaching activity.

I take pride in having graduated from this renowned University. I am honored to have been taught by world famous professors. MGIMO is lucky to have Anatolii Torkunov as its Rector, who continues and multiplies the good traditions of the University. The life of my family happens to be very closely connected with MGIMO.

I graduated from this University. So did my elder daughter Leila. Moreover, she heads the Azerbaijani Association of MGIMO Alumni. Which is why, the 75th anniversary is a big event in our family.

MJ: You initiated holding MGIMO international forums. The first forum took place in Baku, 2013. Your idea was a success, and 2019 saw the fifth forum in Uzbekistan. The forum has become a tradition and has proved to be an effective discussion platform. On its sidelines the participants can consider and address a whole range of key issues from bringing together different civilizations and analyzing the international security situation to environmental issues and ways to achieve sustainable development. These forums contribute to the integration of MGIMO graduates from different years, resuming the old contacts and establishing new ones.

MJ: You maintain wonderful personal contacts with Russian President Vladimir Putin. As is known, this is the key factor in developing international cooperation. Could you assess the current state of Russian-Azerbaijani relations?

You are absolutely right. Contacts with presidents influence international cooperation greatly. Our regular meetings and talks help strengthen good neighborly relations between Russia and Azerbaijan. Thanks to close ties based on mutual respect and understanding, we managed to reach a strategic partnership in our cooperation. Azerbaijan considers relations with Russia a key foreign policy avenue. We support each other in different international organizations. We have very good trade and economic ties. Turnover increases, joint transport and energy projects are implemented. We boast our humanitarian cooperation. There are
over 340 schools in Azerbaijan where teaching is conducted in the Russian language, with the number of such schools increasing annually. There is Slavic University in Baku, branches of Russia’s leading universities – MSU, I.M. Sechenov First Moscow State Medical University. Work to open a MGIMO branch is underway.

MJ: As a specialist in international relations, could you characterize Azerbaijan’s foreign policy? How does it contribute to the development of the country? If we take Azerbaijan as an example, I can definitely say that a well-thought domestic, as well as foreign policy which considers national interests and the current realities can be a crucial factor in ensuring stability, security and successful development. That helped us considerably reform the social and economic sphere, launch ambitious transport and energy projects, diversify the economy, improve infrastructure and significantly increase living standards.

After 2005 we implemented three state programs on social and economic regional development, and created a new, modern image of the country. It is noteworthy, the economy of Azerbaijan has grown by 3,4 times over the past 15 years, which is the best growth indicator in the world. Two social packages have been approved since the beginning of the year. They cover 4,2 mln citizens. Over $3 bln has been allocated for these ends. Preserving and promoting ethnic and religious diversity and multicultural traditions is the avenue Azerbaijan puts a premium on.

Over the course of hundreds of years, the representatives of various religions and peoples have lived in Azerbaijan enjoying peace, mutual respect and trust, which made our country famous across the globe as an exemplary space of tolerance and a center of multiculturalism. The rich experience of Azerbaijan in this field shows that multiculturalism is the only way to strengthen solidarity, harmony and mutual understanding among people. I believe that we lead by example in achieving stability and sustainable development.

To conclude, I would like to congratulate the faculty and students of MGIMO on the 75th anniversary and wish all to be healthy, wealthy and achieve professional success. 

The MGIMO forum has become a tradition and proved an effective discussion platform to exchange views on the most burning and pressing issues.
KASSYJM-JOMART TOKAYEVR: “MGIMO FOSTERS TRUE STATESMEN”

The President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a MGIMO graduate of 1975, believes that if many of today’s politicians had studied at MGIMO, they would be able “to cool down and act within the framework of unwritten rules of true diplomacy”.

MJ: Mr. President, two years ago we met at the office of the President of the Senate at the time when Kazakhstan hosted the MGIMO Alumni Forum. First of all, I would like to highlight that MGIMO Alumni Forum in the capital of Kazakhstan turned out to be quite representative and productive. Among our guests there were many prominent political leaders and public figures, diplomats, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergey Lavrov, journalists and businessmen, who represented several generations of MGIMO graduates. Nowadays many of them are top public officials in their countries. The Forum in Astana, which is now officially called Nur-Sultan, gathered more than 400 MGIMO alumni from CIS states, Europe, North America, the Middle East and Asia Pacific region. It became a renowned discussion platform for open exchange of opinions on the most complex issues that are at the top of the international agenda at present.

This year we are celebrating the 75th anniversary of MGIMO University. Next year you will celebrate 45 years since your graduation from the university and the beginning of the way that has led you to the top position in the state. Let me take this opportunity to congratulate our University on this glorious jubilee. MGIMO sets a benchmark of knowledge and skills, which allows every graduate to excel in their career. Lectures of outstanding diplomats and scholars in the field of international relations, internships at embassies abroad, involvement in research activities: all this is a genuine school of professional excellence. MGIMO is a world class university, and it’s an exclusive privilege to be its graduate. From the very first day at the alma mater I felt that it was a special academic institution with a rich history and unique academic environment. Everything served the purpose of formation of future specialists in international relations. Even formally there were major differences from other universities. MGIMO students were to wear formal suits and ties, which was an
My formula of state power is as follows: “A strong President, a powerful Parliament, an accountable Government.” Development of civil society is of utmost importance for implementation of my concept of “the state that hears.” Additional reminder of their special mission. However, the key point, no doubt, is knowledge and skills acquired at the university. This institution of higher learning is second to none in terms of qualification of the faculty staff and providing opportunities for diplomatic practice. The years of studying at MGIMO develop the ability to understand the problems of international politics from the perspective of genuine deep interests of one’s state. Unfortunately, today’s global politics lacks this very thing. All too often personal ambitions, emotions and fleeting sentiments come to the fore. I presume that studying at MGIMO would teach many of today’s politicians to cool down and act within the framework of unwritten rules of true diplomacy.

MJ: The MGIMO Alumni Association can boast of two presidents already among its members — you and the President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev. Indeed, MGIMO Corporation is gaining heft! In what way, do you think, could this unique administrative resource be used? MGIMO has always cultivated its special esprit de corps, which unites the diplomatic community, graduates of several generations. Despite the fact that they graduated at different times and represent a wide variety of states, there are common traits uniting them all. I would like to emphasize that such characteristics as allegiance to the chosen path, intellectual component and, surely, deep understanding of national interests of one’s own state combined with respect for the interests of partners are typical of MGIMO graduates. The university, as I see it, fosters true statesmen. Going back to your question about the administrative resource of MGIMO alumni, I should say that it’s rather difficult to answer. Despite the fact that many of the graduates hold senior positions in their respective states, taken together they form a resource united by shared values, professionalism, determination, close friendship and mutual respect rather than an administrative one. This is definitely much more important.

MJ: You have become head of state. Please accept our heartfelt congratulations on this occasion. Does holding this post present a major challenge? Indeed, being a president is a serious challenge and a great responsibility, but at the same time it’s a tremendous honor for me. I will do my best to meet the expectations of the people of Kazakhstan and Nursultan Nazarbayev himself. He has always adhered to a systemic, evolutionary approach, in which every new step lays a solid foundation for future progress. I am a strong advocate of this principle. To assure the continuity of strategic development course of Kazakhstan is one of my priorities as President. However, at the same time we are to keep abreast of the latest trends and follow the spirit of the times. As Mahatma Gandhi put it: “You must be the change you want to see in the world.” My formula of state power is as follows: “A strong President, a powerful Parliament, an accountable Government.” With this in mind, I will also pay close attention to the development of civil society, which is of utmost importance for implementation of my concept of “the state that hears.” In Kazakhstan, as well as, in any other rapidly developing states, there are a lot of pressing problems requiring timely solutions. Currently the issue of improving the quality of life of the people of Kazakhstan is the focus of our attention. Social security system, available medicine, clean water and high-quality roads are the issues we concentrate our efforts on. Besides, we pay increased attention to modernizing educational sphere and carrying out a reform of law enforcement agencies. Moreover, we are to do a lot in the sphere of industrialization and diversification, and application of new technologies, inter alia, the digital ones. We need to increase export potential. One more important task consists in the development of our transport and transit capacities.

AJ: What’s your assessment of the place of Kazakhstan in the international arena? Is any readjustment likely to take place? In its foreign policy Kazakhstan is trying not to be limited by narrow geographical confines, but to think big and to act big, as it becomes a large regional state. Our priority is to make a significant contribution to promoting global and regional stability and increased cooperation within the framework of the world economy. At the same time, we are witnessing a growing imbalance in global socio-economic development. Such factors as international agenda that is hard to predict, a growing number of trade and sanction wars and new polarization of the world pose risks for global development. All social catastrophes and lack of progress in solving long-standing regional military conflicts. Taken together, these factors make promotion of security and ensuring fundamental national interests the most pressing issues for Kazakhstan.

Our strategy remains unchanged: comprehensive modernization and greater international cooperation in line with current global and regional tendencies. Kazakhstan considers building a balanced model of socio-economic development in close cooperation with its international partners to be its top priority. Our goal is to establish a “smart”, innovation-driven economy, to ensure sustainable development, to diversify industrial production, to increase efficiency of agriculture, and to attract investment and technologies from developed states. Our foreign policy is targeted at achieving these goals; it will continue the course for confidence building, de-escalation of international tensions, promotion of global, as well as, regional security and cooperation mechanisms.

As for our relations with Russia, they are a truly successful example of strategic partnership and alliance of the two countries. Historical, cultural, geo-economic and geopolitical factors lie at the heart of these relations and contribute to such a high level of our cooperation. Kazakhstan and Russia effectively collaborate on the broadest range of international issues. We also support each other when it comes to acting in multilateral formats. Harsh realities of the modern world make a reliable companionship an even more valuable asset.

There is no forgetting of the fact that it was due to the close cooperation between Kazakhstan and Russia that a new integration association, namely, the Eurasian Economic Union, emerged on the territory of CIS. A large-scale bilateral cooperation with Russia, as well as, cooperation within the framework of international organizations is a long-term priority of Kazakhstan’s foreign policy. As the president of the state I will do everything I can to ensure that we strengthen and promote cooperation with Russia: our natural ally.
The Gala Evening dedicated to the anniversary of MGIMO University was held on October 23rd in the center of Moscow, on the Historic Stage of the Bolshoi Theater. Fifteen hundred professors, veterans, famous graduates, including foreign ones, gathered in the main Russian theater.
For over 250 years great operas and ballets have been performed at the Bolshoi Theatre, and now its orchestra played the MGIMO anthem, written by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation Sergei Lavrov, a 1972 graduate. Vladimir Putin, the President of the Russian Federation, congratulated the audience from a huge screen. “Over the past 75 years, MGIMO has established a strong reputation as a leading global center for training professionals in international affairs. MGIMO alumni constitute the core personnel of the Russian diplomatic service. They demonstrate top professionalism, patriotism and fidelity to duty while protecting our country’s foreign policy interests. MGIMO is also a well-known center for such training. Alumni from many countries recall with warmth and gratitude their university years, being proud of acquiring a profession in demand as well as receiving invaluable experience and assistance. I am glad that MGIMO is developing dynamically today, while its faculty, graduate and undergraduate students have a bright and eventful life. I am sure that the university’s faculty will do their best to ensure that MGIMO remains a leader and its diploma is a sign of the high quality of Russian higher education.”

Then a trailer of the film about MGIMO was shown to the audience. It was broadcasted a few hours later on Channel One Russia. The film includes memories of famous MGIMO alumni: Ilham Aliyev, President of Azerbaijan; Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, President of Kazakhstan; Sergey Lavrov, Russian Foreign Minister; Alisher Usmanov, Vladimir Potanin and Patokh Chodiev, prominent businessmen and philanthropists, and founders of the MGIMO Endowment; Alexey Ostrovsky, Governor of Smolensk Region; Vladimir Medinsky, Russian Minister of Culture; Miroslav Lajčák, OSCE Chairman-in-Office and Foreign Minister of Slovakia; Sergey Mikhailov, Director General of one of the world’s largest news agencies TASS; Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, President of FIDE (1995–2018); and others.

Vladimir Putin: “Over the past 75 years, MGIMO has established a strong reputation as a leading global center for training professionals in international affairs.”

JUBEL
The trailer was followed by Anatoly Torkunov’s address. The MGIMO Rector thanked the Russian President for his appreciation of the work of the professors and lecturers who were awarded state decorations the day before. Anatoly Torkunov said: “I am not going to present you a progress report, but I should say that we thank everybody, who has been involved in creating our University, even those who worked in the precursor of MGIMO – the Lazarev Institute of Oriental languages, established in 1815 and whose 200th anniversary we celebrated three years ago. We also should thank Moscow University where the School of International Relations was created and developed into an independent institute. We also should thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which initiated the creation of our university and throughout our history has been supporting us. I am sure that MGIMO brand will always be synonymous with a reliable and famous institution, which is attractive for many people. A university, which turns 75, is a child or an adolescent. But today we have a celebration, just a celebration. We are not here to present review or reports. We are here to just to enjoy our get-together.”

Anatoly Torkunov: “We thank the Ministry of Foreign Affairs which initiated the creation of our university and throughout our history has been supporting us.”

For over 250 years great operas and ballets have been performed at the Bolshoi Theatre, and now its orchestra played the MGIMO anthem.
The Rector invited graduates and guests to enjoy the “Raymonda” ballet performed by the Bolshoi Theatre artists, which was a “wonderful gift for everyone”.

The Rector invited the audience to enjoy the “Raymonda” ballet performed by the Bolshoi Theatre, which was a “gift for everyone”. In the intermission, the MGIMO alumni and friends of the University, chatted, savoring delicious refreshments.
Students from Uzbekistan have always stuck to MGIMO, both in the Soviet period and later on. The first five students from the republic were enrolled in a course at MGIMO University as early as 1945. And several years ago the first collective efforts started to be made to create a full-fledged MGIMO Alumni Association in Uzbekistan. It’s important that the idea belonged to young alumni, graduates of the last years, who realized that relationships between MGIMO alumni living in different states might open up opportunities not only for informal contacts, but also for serious professional and business relations. The first meetings of this kind yielded the idea of MGIMO Global Alumni Forum in Uzbekistan. Senior colleagues helped this dream of the younger generation come true.

When President Shavkat Mirziyoyev came to power, Russian-Uzbek relations took off. The presence of heads of both states, signed an agreement between UWED and MGIMO on the creation of a MGIMO branch in the Republic of Uzbekistan. UWED, as the Rector of MGIMO pointed out, is “our guide in Uzbek realities”, and MGIMO is gradually creating its full-fledged educational and research unit in Uzbekistan.

The same day an official ceremony was held to award the rector the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. After the ceremony Anatoly Torkunov delivered a lecture to university students, faculty members and the activist group of MGIMO Alumni Association in Uzbekistan. Step by step MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov visited Tashkent October 2, 2017 to meet the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov.

The programs taught at UWED follow the modular principle, which in part results from the need to invite MGIMO lecturers to Tashkent for periods of two-three weeks. Language classes will be given by the faculty staff consisting of tutors from Moscow, local language instructors and native speakers. The MGIMO requirement for teaching two foreign languages on a compulsory basis remains. Students from Uzbekistan will also study in Russia; their courses involve several semesters spent in Moscow (three semesters at the undergraduate level (beginning from the 2nd year of studies) and one semester (the 3rd one, namely) at the graduate level). The fifth MGIMO Global Alumni Forum in Uzbekistan held in May served not only as a place for friendly encounters, but also as a platform where MGIMO programs in Tashkent were presented, the future of the project discussed and understanding of the place of the branch in MGIMO Development Strategy reached.

Students from Uzbekistan have always stuck to MGIMO, both in the Soviet period and later on. The first five students from the republic were enrolled in a course at MGIMO University as early as 1945. And several years ago the first collective efforts started to be made to create a full-fledged MGIMO Alumni Association in Uzbekistan. It’s important that the idea belonged to young alumni, graduates of the last years, who realized that relationships between MGIMO alumni living in different states might open up opportunities not only for informal contacts, but also for serious professional and business relations. The first meetings of this kind yielded the idea of MGIMO Global Alumni Forum in Uzbekistan.

Senior colleagues helped this dream of the younger generation come true. When President Shavkat Mirziyoyev came to power, Russian-Uzbek relations took off. The presence of heads of both states, signed an agreement between UWED and MGIMO on the creation of a MGIMO branch in the Republic of Uzbekistan. UWED, as the Rector of MGIMO pointed out, is “our guide in Uzbek realities”, and MGIMO is gradually creating its full-fledged educational and research unit in Uzbekistan.

The same day an official ceremony was held to award the rector the title of Doctor Honoris Causa of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED) under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan. After the ceremony Anatoly Torkunov delivered a lecture to university students, faculty members and the activist group of MGIMO Alumni Association in Uzbekistan. Step by step MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov visited Tashkent October 2, 2017 to meet the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan Abdulaziz Kamilov.

The programs taught at UWED follow the modular principle, which in part results from the need to invite MGIMO lecturers to Tashkent for periods of two-three weeks. Language classes will be given by the faculty staff consisting of tutors from Moscow, local language instructors and native speakers. The MGIMO requirement for teaching two foreign languages on a compulsory basis remains. Students from Uzbekistan will also study in Russia; their courses involve several semesters spent in Moscow (three semesters at the undergraduate level (beginning from the 2nd year of studies) and one semester (the 3rd one, namely) at the graduate level). The fifth MGIMO Global Alumni Forum in Uzbekistan held in May served not only as a place for friendly encounters, but also as a platform where MGIMO programs in Tashkent were presented, the future of the project discussed and understanding of the place of the branch in MGIMO Development Strategy reached.
Students of Bachelor, Master and Lyceum programs, faculty members, employees, and other guests gathered on the premises of the new building, built in record time with the help of the leadership of Uzbekistan. A photo exhibition devoted to the history of MGIMO “From the Lazarev Institute to Nowadays” was presented on the walls of the building.

The branch was officially opened by A. Abduvakhitov, the State Advisor to the President of Uzbekistan, also Rector of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, A. Kamilov, the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan and A.Torkunov, the Rector of MGIMO.

A. Abduvakhitov reminded the audience that MGIMO foreign Campus was being opened based on an Agreement signed the previous year in the presence of the Presidents of the two countries. “It is a pleasure to say that the project has worked out. We are interested in the cooperation between Russia and Uzbekistan being productive in the sphere of diplomacy and leading to the development of education in Uzbekistan,” remarked A. Abduvakhitov.

A. Kamilov expressed enthusiasm at the MGIMO branch opening in short time and at MGIMO’s Russian campuses. Grants will be provided to undergraduate students. The Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UMED) M. Bakoev remarked that some MGIMO programs have no equivalents in Uzbekistan.

MGIMO’s Vice-Rector A. Malgin described the different training programs offered at undergraduate and graduate levels. During the academic year 2020-2021 students at MGIMO-Tashkent will study within two BA and four MA programs, specializing in “Law”, “Business Informatics”, “Management” and “Linguistics”. All the programs offer students the opportunity to follow “Moscow” modules, which are taught at MGIMO’s Russian campuses.

Students of Bachelor, Master and Lyceum programs, faculty members, employees, and other guests gathered on the premises of the new building, built in record time with the help of the leadership of Uzbekistan. A photo exhibition devoted to the history of MGIMO “From the Lazarev Institute to Nowadays” was presented on the walls of the building.

The branch was officially opened by A. Abduvakhitov, the State Advisor to the President of Uzbekistan, also Rector of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, A. Kamilov, the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan and A.Torkunov, the Rector of MGIMO.

A. Abduvakhitov reminded the audience that MGIMO foreign Campus was being opened based on an Agreement signed the previous year in the presence of the Presidents of the two countries. “It is a pleasure to say that the project has worked out. We are interested in the cooperation between Russia and Uzbekistan being productive in the sphere of diplomacy and leading to the development of education in Uzbekistan,” remarked A. Abduvakhitov.

A. Kamilov expressed enthusiasm at the MGIMO branch opening in short time and at MGIMO’s Russian campuses. Grants will be provided to undergraduate students. The Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UMED) M. Bakoev remarked that some MGIMO programs have no equivalents in Uzbekistan.

MGIMO’s Vice-Rector A. Malgin described the different training programs offered at undergraduate and graduate levels. During the academic year 2020-2021 students at MGIMO-Tashkent will study within two BA and four MA programs, specializing in “Law”, “Business Informatics”, “Management” and “Linguistics”. All the programs offer students the opportunity to follow “Moscow” modules, which are taught at MGIMO’s Russian campuses.

Students of Bachelor, Master and Lyceum programs, faculty members, employees, and other guests gathered on the premises of the new building, built in record time with the help of the leadership of Uzbekistan. A photo exhibition devoted to the history of MGIMO “From the Lazarev Institute to Nowadays” was presented on the walls of the building.

The branch was officially opened by A. Abduvakhitov, the State Advisor to the President of Uzbekistan, also Rector of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, A. Kamilov, the Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan and A.Torkunov, the Rector of MGIMO.

A. Abduvakhitov reminded the audience that MGIMO foreign Campus was being opened based on an Agreement signed the previous year in the presence of the Presidents of the two countries. “It is a pleasure to say that the project has worked out. We are interested in the cooperation between Russia and Uzbekistan being productive in the sphere of diplomacy and leading to the development of education in Uzbekistan,” remarked A. Abduvakhitov.

A. Kamilov expressed enthusiasm at the MGIMO branch opening in short time and at MGIMO’s Russian campuses. Grants will be provided to undergraduate students. The Vice-Rector for Educational Affairs of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UMED) M. Bakoev remarked that some MGIMO programs have no equivalents in Uzbekistan.

MGIMO’s Vice-Rector A. Malgin described the different training programs offered at undergraduate and graduate levels. During the academic year 2020-2021 students at MGIMO-Tashkent will study within two BA and four MA programs, specializing in “Law”, “Business Informatics”, “Management” and “Linguistics”. All the programs offer students the opportunity to follow “Moscow” modules, which are taught at MGIMO’s Russian campuses.
of Russia and Uzbekistan, dozens of them originate from Uzbekistan and are MGIMO graduates. Among the representatives of the business community of both countries, we can mention the co-founders of the MGIMO Endowment Alisher Usmanov and Patokh Chodiev,” remarked A.Torkunov. On the occasion of the inauguration of MGIMO-Tashkent and in the context of the celebrations for the 75th anniversary of MGIMO, A.Torkunov awarded A.Abduvakhitov, A.Kamilov and the Vice-Rector of UWED M.Rakoev MGIMO’s Order of Merit. Concluding his speech, the Rector introduced to the guests the Director of the Branch, Bakhtiyor Islamov, the Ambassador of Russia to Uzbekistan from 2003 to 2008 and a MGIMO graduate (1977).

Almost a dozen of ambassadors of Russia and Uzbekistan, who originate from Uzbekistan, are MGIMO graduates. Among the representatives of the business community of both countries, are the co-founders of the MGIMO Endowment A. Usmanov and P. Chodiev.A. Abduvakhitov: “It is a pleasure to say that the project has worked out. We are interested in the cooperation between Russia and Uzbekistan being productive in the sphere of diplomacy and leading to the development of education in Uzbekistan. Endowment Alisher Usmanov and Patokh Chodiev,” remarked A.Torkunov. On the occasion of the inauguration of MGIMO-Tashkent and in the context of the celebrations for the 75th anniversary of MGIMO, A.Torkunov awarded A.Abduvakhitov, A.Kamilov and the Vice-Rector of UWED M.Rakoev MGIMO’s Order of Merit. Concluding his speech, the Rector introduced to the guests the Director of the Branch, Bakhtiyor Islamov, the Ambassador of Russia to Uzbekistan from 2003 to 2008 and a MGIMO graduate (1977).

Before the ceremony, the guests had the opportunity to visit the new building and the Library, which are a unique blend of classical architecture and modern infrastructure. They could also converse with the first students having already begun their studies at MGIMO-Tashkent in BA and MA programs and with students of the Lyceum programs. To mark the official opening, students had prepared a video in which they disclosed their first impressions about their studies at MGIMO-Tashkent.
we called it, was very positive and lively, we were extremely optimistic about our future!

MJ: And would you cook plov?

I did that only once in my life. To become a man, you need to cook it just one time. After you do it two times, you practically become a chef.

MJ: Last year, a historical decision was made to open a MGIMO campus in Tashkent. Soon, Uzbekistan will have its very own MGIMO alumni. My congratulations to MGIMO! It should be pointed out that the education system in Uzbekistan is about to start a revolutionary comeback. And MGIMO could undoubtedly play a very positive role in that.

MJ: In the last two and a half years, we’ve been witnessing an unprecedented improvement of Russia-Uzbekistan relations. What do you think about the prospects of these relations? Any kind of cooperation, and relations between states even more so, should benefit both actors. For Russia, allied relations with Uzbekistan mean the restoration of the old ties with a country that was once part of a greater state – the Soviet Union. That’s first. Second, these ties have declined significantly over time but still haven’t been severed. What would you do with them? My family has everything they need, my wife is well-provided for, and I spent money as I deem necessary: on my friends, on things I love, and the rest I give back to people. This is only natural, I think. I regret nothing, any fortune is diminished in three generations because it may become obsolete morally or in the physical form.

Education system in Uzbekistan is about to start a revolutionary comeback. And a MGIMO campus could undoubtedly play a very positive role in that.
and defense cooperation. The key issue here is the soft and vulnerable underbelly of the whole region, as some people call it, and that is in Afghanistan. That country has been destabilized for decades now. Any way you look at it, Russia can nothing but benefit from peace and sound economic development of Afghanistan.

MJ: MGIMO eagerly participates in a number of international projects, such as, the Trianon Dialogue initiated by the Russian President Vladimir Putin and the French President Emmanuel Macron. The idea behind it is to bring closer the civil societies in Russia and France. Anatoly Torkunov, MGIMO’s rector, co-chairs the Coordinating Council of the Trianon Dialogue. Back in the day, you were an athlete, you did saber fencing. Now, you are president of the International Fencing Federation, and the French nobility are especially good at that sport. Do you think your federation could possibly come up with some initiative to forge better relationship between Russian and French fencers?

In May 2018, we organized a friendly saber fencing competition for Russian and French national women’s teams as part of the St. Petersburg Economic Forum’s sporting program. For me, it was a great pleasure to see that tournament take place in Russia. This is one of the examples that surely proves that sports is not only about rivalry and competition but friendship too. I was really glad to know that France, with whom Russia has a strong long-standing relations, supported the initiative. Today, the Russian and French women’s teams are two main contestants for gold in saber fencing. They practically take turns winning and losing.

MJ: When we met with you in 2007, the relations between Russia and the West were problem-free, later on the two even announced the famous reset of relations, namely with the US. However, the subsequent events caused a dramatic decline. The whole system of international law has been destroyed. You are a very well informed and wise person, and, after all, you majored in international law. So, could you please share your forecast concerning the future of the world and Russia’s future too?

Only the naïve or uneducated try to predict future. Today, everything is happening at 5G speeds and there is almost no way to guess what the reaction of a certain politician to such changes will be. In my opinion, Russia is clearly regaining its economic power, it’s now the 5th to 7th economy in the world. This has triggered more competition with countries which are still considered as leading global economies. Economic competition is now acquiring a political dimension to it. Nowadays, foreign policies are formulated in such a way as to also yield certain economic benefits. Naturally, the key players today are the countries with the deepest pockets. As simple as that. China has an extremely pragmatic foreign policy and its interests today overlap with those of the main economic players. I think that with time China’s presence will be getting stronger practically everywhere. The reason is pretty simple. China’s economic power is growing. India is close on its heels, but it still not strong enough to drive domestic consumption up.

The second and the main consideration is that the US is unable to objectively perceive the reality of today, and the fact that global leaders realize that their role is changing. The US, however, thinks it should carry on with its old habit of policing everyone with a baton in the form of all sorts of economic measures. That’s the source of contradictions and antagonism. Russia’s foreign policy is not flawed, there have been tactical and, let’s say, forced mistakes and unwanted actions, but it is still very well thought through. Russia’s main goal is to maintain economic growth despite all the political pressure. In my opinion, the decisions President Putin has been making so far allows Russia to carry on with minimal damage.

What will happen next? I think compromises have always been the bricks that helped to build international relations. When the time is right and the benefit for everyone involved is clear, that’s when a compromise can be reached. As soon as all the pieces fit in, something will certainly happen like it already happened before. This is how the anti-Hitler coalition was born, together with détente and the so-called nuclear parity that came later.

MJ: It was peaceful coexistence.

Peaceful coexistence in the Cold War, that’s what it was called. It is important.
PATOKH CHODIEV: “WE ARE CARRIED BY MGIMO SPIRIT!”

Patokh Chodiev, a well-known businessman and benefactor, one of the founding fathers of the MGIMO Endowment Fund, proudly calls himself the one who promotes the MGIMO style of education. That is why, the 1976 MGIMO graduate welcomes the inauguration of the University branch in Tashkent, which was the key event in celebrating the 75th anniversary of Alma Mater.

Above all, Chodiev believes that this event is a great achievement for Uzbekistan, which expressed a strong desire to have MGIMO in Tashkent: “You just fancy young people graduating from MGIMO in Tashkent as well as in Moscow. This is huge progress in improving good neighborly relations between our countries and in promoting Russian culture in Uzbekistan.

Now MGIMO in Tashkent has its own home. Uzbek youth have always dreamt of studying at MGIMO. That was not possible 20 years ago as the old regime disapproved of young Uzbek people receiving education in Russia. They had to choose other institutions, which was not good. MGIMO will support Uzbekistan as we produce very well-educated specialists. I am more than sure that many Uzbek people will seize the opportunity to receive a good education in Russia. Furthermore, the opening of the MGIMO branch in Tashkent paves the way for the Uzbek youth learning the Russian culture, and obtaining the knowledge and values Russia has accumulated throughout its history.

I call myself the one who promotes the MGIMO style of education. That is why, I welcome the inauguration of the University branch in Tashkent. Now, MGIMO has its own Home!

President Mirziyoyev is very sensitive towards these trends. His great achievement is his true understanding of the importance of Russian-Uzbek friendship. Uzbekistan still remembers and appreciates the support rendered by the Soviet peoples in the 1966 earthquake in Tashkent. We combined our efforts to quickly restore the city.

In 1971 I went to Moscow to enter MGIMO. There were only four Uzbek school-leavers who managed to enter MGIMO that year. Among them were Alisher Usmanov, Abduhamid Khazakystaev, Mukhtar Gulyamov, and me. We felt excited! We knew that MGIMO is the one of the best universities, which pushed and motivated us to study only there and meet the status of MGIMO. We were obsessed about studying. I remember studying very hard in the first three years as we learnt Oriental languages, which required a lot of work and commitment. However, many specialists who mastered the difficult language made use of it as a first language neither at work nor in life. Take Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, who studied Sinhalese but is working with the English language. But that is not the point! It is about feeling excitement while at university, which MGIMO infills in you! The point is to love the university and its traditions. MGIMO has become an invaluable and genuine source of knowledge for us. That may be the key reason why we achieved something in this life.

Alisher Usmanov is an outstanding person. Just look at his accomplishments! He is one of the greatest businessmen and industrialists of Russia. I truly believe that President Mirziyoyev is very sensitive towards these trends. His great achievement is his true understanding of the importance of Russian-Uzbek friendship. Uzbekistan still remembers and appreciates the support rendered by the Soviet peoples in the 1966 earthquake in Tashkent. We combined our efforts to quickly restore the city.

In 1971 I went to Moscow to enter MGIMO. There were only four Uzbek school-leavers who managed to enter MGIMO that year. Among them were Alisher Usmanov, Abduhamid Khazakystaev, Mukhtar Gulyamov, and me. We felt excited! We knew that MGIMO is the one of the best universities,
The V International Forum of MGIMO-University Graduates was held in Tashkent, the capital of Uzbekistan May 17-19. It was attended by more than 450 graduates from 32 countries.
The first evening of the guests’ stay in Tashkent was remarked by the visit to the exhibition in the Karakalpakstan State Museum of Art named after I. V. Savitsky in the Gallery of Fine Arts. MGIMO University rector, Anatoly Torkunov together with the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan Ikhomzhon Neymatov and Adviser to the President of Uzbekistan, rector of University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Abduzhabar Abduvahitov, have participated the press conference.

MGIMO University’s Rector, Anatoly Torkunov, has noted that many countries applied to host the V International Forum of MGIMO-University Graduates, but preference was given to the capital of Uzbekistan. “Many of our graduates, who were studied at the University in the Soviet era, as well as, those who studied after Uzbekistan gained independence, work here,” the Rector explained, “Now they are successfully working in many spheres, i.e. in the foreign policy field, in business, in the spheres of culture and education.”

The Rector noted that this year MGIMO University, established in 1944, is celebrating its 75th anniversary. In 2010, MGIMO University was listed in the Book of Records as a University where the largest number of state foreign languages is taught. Nowadays the University students are taught 55 foreign languages.

Anatoly Torkunov also stressed that a branch of MGIMO University would open in the Republic of Uzbekistan next academic year. “We have foreign platforms for work and cooperation in Spain and Switzerland,” the Rector said, “But it will be a legally registered branch, an educational institution. Of course, we are not going to copy our Moscow experience. We are going to teach specialists in those areas that are in high demand in Uzbekistan today.”

The Rector particularly noted the support of the Deputy Chairman of the MGIMO-University Board of Trustees, founder of USM Holding, Alisher Usmanov, thanks to whom the forum was organized at a high level.

Anatoly Torkunov: “Our meetings are becoming regular, and it is a real pleasure for us. We are thinking about the developing of MGIMO-University and about ways to make its work even more fruitful”
MJ: By the way, MGIMO has just launched a training program called “agricultural attaché”. This is exactly what we need! Later we can launch it in the MGIMO branch campus, too. Your university doesn’t have any limits on the range of educational programs.

MJ: That’s true, we even have a slogan: “MGIMO Goes Beyond Diplomacy”. This is important for us as we have faced several challenges. For instance, there has been no special training for translators for many years. Students were taught foreign languages, but not translation, let alone highly-qualified simultaneous interpretation. I know it from my personal experience, as I started my career as a translator from Arabic. You see, we need highly literate, well-educated people who have broad horizons and are able to think freely. Behind that is a very simple need to give people an opportunity to have a stable and decent life.

ABDUJABAR ABDUVAHKHITOV: “MGIMO BRANCH CAMPUS WILL PROVIDE US WITH QUALIFIED PERSONNEL”

The opening of a MGIMO branch campus in Tashkent is not only an important event in Uzbekistan’s education. “The establishment of a MGIMO branch campus as well as dozens of other Russian university branch campuses reflect the needs of our economy”, says Abdujabar Abduvakhitov, Advisor to the President of Uzbekistan and Rector of the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED). “It also reflects the need to become more modern by applying new technology, raising investment and diversifying our economy. And, of course, through education. We need qualified personnel – engineers, experts on nuclear technology, energy, medicine, agriculture…”

MJ: By the way, MGIMO has just launched a training program called “agricultural attaché”. This is exactly what we need! Later we can launch it in the MGIMO branch campus, too. Your university doesn’t have any limits on the range of educational programs.

MJ: That’s true, we even have a slogan: “MGIMO Goes Beyond Diplomacy”. This is important for us as we have faced several challenges. For instance, there has been no special training for translators for many years. Students were taught foreign languages, but not translation, let alone highly-qualified simultaneous interpretation. I know it from my personal experience, as I started my career as a translator from Arabic. You see, we need highly literate, well-educated people who have broad horizons and are able to think freely. Behind that is a very simple need to give people an opportunity to have a stable and decent life.

W e hope MGIMO branch campus will train for us qualified personnel

MJ: Naturally, an educated person is a stable person. Exactly! Several years ago it was not common to say that a person should earn good money or be rich. In the East a simple idea is widespread: one rich person feeds a hundred poor people, creating a stable environment. For many years I have been doing research on the cause-effect mechanism of emerging radical and extremist groups and their transformation into terrorist ones. Certainly, it’s the result of a combination of factors, but one of them creates the environment for recruiting future radicals, and this factor is poor living standards. Provide people with stability, create a humanitarian space where everybody would have an opportunity for self-expression, and they would find an occupation. With the help of education, we will be able to minimize the influence of radicalism.

MJ: Don’t you think that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan would prefer graduates from the MGIMO branch campus to the UWED graduates? Aren’t you afraid of the competition?

No, we are not afraid. On the contrary, we are interested in creating a competitive environment in general and in education in particular. What’s more, it’s the political will of our president who would like to see the competition in all areas as it is the driver of development which makes us work on ourselves. A situation where there would be too many graduates of MGIMO and UWED simply will not arise. The demand for qualified personnel is rising, and, consequently, the demand for new universities. Just imagine: there are more than 600,000 children born each year in Uzbekistan. It’s quite a few by our standards and a lot by Russian standards. There is a need to give these people an education and a profession, an opportunity to earn money, and multiply the wealth of our country. This is, as I have already mentioned, the key to stability.
its 75th anniversary, the President said, "MGIMO-University is a global brand that confirms the traditionally high quality of Russian higher education. Its graduates represent different countries. They are true open-minded professionals with deep, fundamental knowledge. During many years MGIMO-University has contributed to the higher education of specialists in International Diplomacy, Law and Economics for Uzbekistan," he noted. "More than four hundred of our compatriots have graduated from this world-known respected higher education institution."

The President noted that a branch of MGIMO-University was to be opened in Tashkent and expressed hope that it would become an integral part of higher education in Uzbekistan and a regional educational center in the field of International Relations. Then the Rector of MGIMO-University Anatoly Torkunov read out a message of the Russian President Vladimir Putin: "I am happy that on the eve of such a significant anniversary, graduates from different countries gathered here, in hospitable Tashkent to exchange views on topical issues of the international agenda in an atmosphere of friendship and solidarity, to discuss further prospects for the development of the University."

Following the Rector, the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov, delivered a speech at the event. "We are hosting so many prominent people here that proves MGIMO University is one of the leading Russian educational institutions, but also an internationally recognized Universities that graduate brilliant professionals for many foreign countries, including Uzbekistan," the Minister said. Abdulaziz Kamilov recalled that in 1945, five representatives of Uzbekistan had entered MGIMO University. One of them
Vladimir Putin: “It is a pleasure that on the eve of such anniversary, graduates from different countries gathered in hospitable Tashkent to exchange views on topical issues of the international agenda in an atmosphere of friendship and solidarity”

“Since 2000,” the Minister said, “the Uzbek language has been taught at the School of International Relations at MGIMO University. The University has a club of students from Uzbekistan, which is actively involved in the activities of student life. And now a branch of MGIMO University is to be open in Tashkent.”

Abdulaziz Kamilov expressed confidence that the MGIMO branch opening “would make a worthy contribution to the education of highly qualified specialists who can work effectively and with full dedication in the modern, complex, and rapidly changing world.”

Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Pankin, a graduate of MGIMO University, announced the greeting of another graduate, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov: “Such regular meetings symbolize the immutability of MGIMO brotherhood. Countries and cities of gatherings are changing, but our loyalty to friendship and firm focus on maintaining a fruitful, truly friendly dialogue remains unchanged. This year we celebrate the 75th anniversary of the Alma Mater. We have something to be proud of. Being a major educational and research center, MGIMO University moves forward in a quick pace, implements new programs, and expands training areas. The opening of the first foreign branch
MJ: Did you go back to working with Russia right after that?

No, it happened somewhat later. After working in the USA, I became Ambassador at large and was in charge of boundary delimitation with neighboring countries.

MJ: For Uzbekistan it was a very complex issue.

Exactly. Twenty five years after we got our independence we didn’t have formal boundaries in the classical sense with any Central Asian countries; we beat about the bush and couldn’t find a compromise. It’s only when Shavkat Mirziyoyev became president that the situation radically changed. Speaking before the parliament, he said that the Uzbek foreign-policy priority would be the relations with its immediate neighbors. Now these relations are very good and based on mutual respect and interest, having signed boundary treaties with Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

In November 2016, I was offered the position of the First Deputy Minister, and now I am in charge of cooperation with the CIS countries, including with Russia, as well as multilateral cooperation and other issues.

MJ: There is a very tricky place in your region – it’s Afghanistan. The situation there is a very sensitive issue for Russia.

Yes, we understand. As I am in charge of the relations with Russia, I also have to deal with these issues, though it’s not my main area of responsibility. Afghanistan is our neighbor, it’s a very important country for us due to many factors, primarily security and economy. Uzbekistan is a landlocked country, and the shortest way to the sea-ports for us lies through Afghan territory. That’s why we are interested in the settlement of the Afghan issue as soon as possible.

MJ: As a person who is responsible for Uzbekistan’s relations with Russia, could you, please, assess the state of relations?

Our relations with Russia have always been stable. I am very happy to note that thanks to the political will of our presidents – Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Vladimir Putin – our relations have developed stably in the past two years and are based on strategic partnership and alliance.

MJ: One of the manifestations of this cooperation was the opening of a MGIMO branch campus in Tashkent. Yes, it’s a very important event to us. I have worked a lot with your alumni and I have to say that the education that MGIMO has been providing for the past 75 years is of very high quality.

ILHOM NEMATOV: “FOR 75 YEARS MGIMO HAS BEEN PROVIDING HIGH QUALITY EDUCATION”

In the early 2000s, Ilhom Nematov was first Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan. He was responsible for the relations between Russia and Uzbekistan and personally involved in the drafting of agreements on strategic partnership and alliance between the two countries. “That’s why when I was sent as ambassador to Moscow, I already knew everyone: from an attaché of the department to the MFA leadership. Unfortunately, I didn’t have a chance to work in Moscow for a long time. About a year later the president offered me to go to the USA as ambassador, and from 2010 to 2014 I worked there, during Obama’s second presidential term.”
of the University in Tashkent is a vivid confirmation of all the above mentioned.” Deputy Chairman of the Federation Council of Russia Ilyas Umakhanov noted that the brilliant organization of the forum would have been impossible without the “strong support of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev”. Mr. Umakhanov also stressed that Russia and Uzbekistan are actively developing relations in many areas, but “their dynamics are directly related to the extremely warm relations between presidents Putin and Mirziyoyev.” The Russian Minister of Culture, a graduate of MGIMO-University Vladimir Medinsky, thanked the hosts of the forum for the tour to Samarkand which was “amazing from a historical and cultural point of view.” “In addition to the fact that 53 foreign languages are taught at MGIMO,” he said, “all the students are taught one more language, the language of mutual respect that is the main language of any international relations specialist, as it is not matter of translation.”

A Trustee of MGIMO University, a successful businessman and philanthropist, a native of Uzbekistan and a graduate of the University, Patokh Chodiev, said: “I am grateful to MGIMO for the fact that it provided all of us with such knowledge, thanks to which we could find a way out of the most difficult situations. I am very proud that our first foreign branch is opened in Tashkent, we have not even dreamt of this! I am happy we have the opportunity to teach our young people the programs developed at MGIMO.”

“The forum continued with fruitful discussions in the framework of three sessions devoted to political, security, economical, and cultural issues. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, MGIMO graduate Miroslav Lajcak joined the forum participants at the evening reception on behalf of the Minister of the Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov. Traditionally for MGIMO events, the reception was held in the form of a cheerful friendly party.

An Uzbek proverb says, “the stars are brighter and the plov is sweeter when your friends are with you!”

A Trustee of MGIMO University, a successful businessman and philanthropist, a native of Uzbekistan and a graduate of the University, Patokh Chodiev, said: “I am grateful to MGIMO for the fact that it provided all of us with such knowledge, thanks to which we could find a way out of the most difficult situations. I am very proud that our first foreign branch is opened in Tashkent, we have not even dreamt of this! I am happy we have the opportunity to teach our young people the programs developed at MGIMO.”

“The forum continued with fruitful discussions in the framework of three sessions devoted to political, security, economical, and cultural issues. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Slovakia, MGIMO graduate Miroslav Lajcak joined the forum participants at the evening reception on behalf of the Minister of the Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, Abdulaziz Kamilov. Traditionally for MGIMO events, the reception was held in the form of a cheerful friendly party.

An Uzbek proverb says, “the stars are brighter and the plov is sweeter when your friends are with you!”

A Trustee of MGIMO University, a successful businessman and philanthropist, a native of Uzbekistan and a graduate of the University, Patokh Chodiev, said: “I am grateful to MGIMO for the fact that it provided all of us with such knowledge, thanks to which we could find a way out of the most difficult situations. I am very proud that our first
SALAM MGIMO

The wonderful Khilola welcomed MGIMO graduates from around the world to hospitable Uzbekistan.
The name Khilola translates as “fragile, tender” or “moon face.” Khilola Ulugova (International Relations, 2013), Head of the Rector’s Office at MGIMO, was born in the Uzbekistani city of Samarkand, where she lived for seven years before moving with her family to Moscow. However, she is wonderfully nostalgic when remembering her place of birth. When MGIMO’s leadership had the idea to hold the next international alumni forum in Tashkent, she thought, “This is fate – I need to definitely show my native city of Samarkand to MGIMO graduates from around the world!”

**MJ: What’s great about the Samarkand Region?**

It’s ancient history, rich culture and people, and its main feature – generous hospitality! Guests are immediately brought home and fed, as well as given gifts when they leave. People from Samarkand love visiting their friends without notice, and you should always be ready for it. You need to immediately serve tea and get the dastarkhan ready. Having fed the guests, people from Samarkand will take you to see the city. Samarkand is called the “Pearl of the East”, and it is an important center along the ancient Silk Road. The city is 2,762 years old, but it hasn’t always been easy. Alexander the Great conquered the city, and it is an important center along the ancient Silk Road. The city is 2,762 years old, but it hasn’t always been easy. Alexander the Great conquered the city, and it was at different times under the control of the Persians, Chinese, Arabs and Turks. Genghis Khan and the Mongols conquered the city in the 13th century, looting and destroying it. The city flourished during the rule of Timur the Great (Tamerlane). Under the grandson of Tamerlane, Ulugh Beg, the city became a global center of science. During his rule, the first madrasa was built on the world famous Registan Square, as was an observatory named after Ulugh Beg.

**MJ: And where did you live?**

In my family home. Its location is unique, with one side facing the mausoleum of Khodja Daniyor, a place of pilgrimage for Muslims, Christians and Jews, who all worship him, and the other side facing the observatory of Ulugh Beg. Iby the way, at the observatory’s foot they sell the famous Samarkand bread “Galaosiyo”. It can’t be cooked anywhere else. Even though our bakers have traveled to different places and used the same ingredients and even tandoori ovens to bake it, it’s not the same! In summer – and ours is long – we slept in the wooden bed in the garden under the magnificent stars in the sky, and during the days we walked to the observatory, where they have preserved part of an ancient sextant, with the help of which they determined where the planets and stars were.

**MJ: How come did you move to Moscow?**

I studied in the Russian-language first grade at my school in Samarkand, but I had only studied there for one year before my parents, brother and I moved to Moscow. My grandfather lived there and had a small catering business. My parents had decided that their children – my brother and I – needed to get a good education.

**MJ: How did you arrive at the idea of entering MGIMO?**

I am by nature a balanced person; I am a Libra, I try to avoid conflict and establish contacts, so I have the character of a diplomat. English came quite easily to me as well. But translation didn’t appeal to me. I wanted to be where you made decisions and answered for them. So a choice was made. Mom said, “What are you doing? It’s MGIMO!” But I came to the university’s open house, signed up for evening preparatory courses and entered MGIMO in 2009. I’m lucky to have received such an incredible education!

**MJ: What was life like outside of class?**

In general, I studied so much that there was no time for different activities and clubs. However, I was an active volunteer.
I helped the Central Election Commission during the presidential elections and I helped to organize the 2014 Winter Paralympics in Sochi. I especially remember the APEC summit in Vladivostok in 2012. We lived on Russky Island the entire month on the campus of the Far Eastern Federal University. As a way to encourage us – and on the orders of the president himself – the 500 most active volunteers were rewarded with a three-day cruise to Japan on the ocean liner “Legend of the Seas”. It was really cool!

The main problem was that because this idea was spontaneous, we didn’t have our passports or even visas for Japan. We immediately contacted our nearest and dearest in Moscow so that they could gather together and send us our passports. I remember how our coordinator sat all night in the Japanese consulate and put together the visas, taking our photos there in the hallway.

We then spent three days on the sea! This was the first time in my life on a boat that had everything your heart desired: a pool, a casino, karaoke, dancing and more. There were dinners in the elegant restaurant and breakfasts on the deck… Once in Japan, we had a one-day excursion to Yokohama with a trip to Tokyo. We returned to Vladivostok by chartered plane.

MJ: How did it happen that you didn’t join the Ministry of Foreign Affairs after graduating and instead stayed at MGIMO?

It was a twist of fate. Vice-Rector Artem Malgin was looking for an assistant and asked me to stay. He had known me as a student and seen how I “volunteered”. I thought about it and decided why not. This turned out to be one of the best decisions I ever made.

I am in charge of the Rector’s schedule. In general, I optimize his work so that he achieves a lot without overdoing it. Despite his workload, Rector is always active and open to new ideas.
This idea had come to me much earlier. When I was a master’s student and working in the MGIMO Alumni Association, I thought that there were so many such associations around the world but not one for Uzbekistan. The number of graduates from the country isn’t small, and it includes leading figures such as Alisher Usmanov and Patokh Chodiev, who both are founders of the MGIMO Endowment Fund. I decided to start working to establish the association.

Moreover, I could help the process and move it along from Moscow. The previous leadership of the country never responded to my request, but once the new one took power, they were contacting us. They were interested in establishing an association, opening a branch and holding a forum!

MJ: What interests do you have? What do you enjoy doing?
I am very enthusiastic by nature, which means I am very inconsistent in my hobbies. I’m interested in everything. I can jump from one thing to another. Today I’m playing badminton, tomorrow I’m signed up for tennis, and the day after that I’ll think “Should I learn how to play golf?” I don’t want to look back, only forward!

MJ: Are you a sentimental person?
Very. I easily can cry if something touches my soul. The last time I felt so was while watching the French-Israeli film “The Other Son”. It’s the heartrending story of how in a maternity ward in the Israeli city of Haifa during an evacuation, two children are mixed up and a Jewish family raises an Arab-Palestinian baby and a Palestinian family raises a Jewish baby. Neither the parents nor children for 18 years suspect anything. When the secret of their birth is accidentally revealed, both families find themselves in a difficult moral situation. The boys start to suffer in general from existential crises; after all, the “Jew”, for example, follows all the traditions... It ends relatively well, and the families grow close and continue to live with it all. What a story...

MJ: By the way, speaking of existential crises, how do you feel inside? Are you the Wolf or Little Red Riding Hood?
I’m Pocahontas!
DILSHOD AKHATOv: “MGIMO WAS MY DREAM UNIVERSITY”

Dilshod Akhatov, Deputy Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, is quite a unique graduate in MGIMO's history. Several months prior to his graduation from the International Energy Policy and Diplomacy Institute (MIEP) at MGIMO, Dilshod Akhatov, Head of the European Department of Uzbekistan’s Foreign Ministry at the time, was appointed Ambassador to Germany. “I had to take my last exams, write and defend my thesis as an ambassador” Dilshod Akhatov recalls, “I am grateful to MGIMO and to MIEP’s boards for allowing me to take my exams earlier, ahead of the schedule, and to the Faculty for being so understanding. In early June 2010 I passed my exams, defended my thesis and went back to Berlin.”

MJ: Why did you decide to attend MGIMO University? Your career was on the upswing anyway.
Firstly, hard routine work took up a large chunk of my time. I needed a breath of fresh air. Secondly, I felt that if I wanted to move forward, I needed new knowledge. I learned that at MGIMO they had MIEP, by then energy diplomacy had acquired a special sense of urgency (it is still true today) in Europe and in the EU, and I headed a corresponding department at Uzbekistan’s Foreign Ministry. I thought, “That’s exactly what I need.” I decided I’d go deeper into a field that is closely related to international relations: international law, focusing on a fairly narrow subfield, i.e. energy diplomacy. And finally, MGIMO was my dream university since I was a child.

MJ: How did your journey to MGIMO start?
A small town of Kattakurgan, where I was born and lived with my family, is located between Samarkand and Bukhara. My father, a historian, worked in the field of general and professional education. That’s why at home we had tons of books on history and politics. I would watch analytical TV shows on global politics and read international sections in Pravda and Izvestia, my father had a subscription for those newspapers.

MJ: Russian was virtually our second mother tongue, I spoke it every day at kindergarten, then at school, even though it was a school where they taught in Uzbek. As for foreign languages, they were not taught at a level that would allow you to enter such a reputable institution as MGIMO. Dreams were all I had. After finishing school in 1989 I went to Ukraine and got into Kiev Polytechnic Institute.

MJ: Was Russian that widely spoken in Uzbek provinces?

Russian was virtually our second mother tongue, I spoke it every day at kindergarten, then at school, even though it was a school where they taught in Uzbek. As for foreign languages, they were not taught at a level that would allow you to enter such a reputable institution as MGIMO. Dreams were all I had. After graduating in 1996, I straight away got into the Foreign Ministry, to the German-speaking countries section in the European Department. In early 1999 I got a long-term posting to our Embassy in Germany, where I became part of a team in charge of political relations. I worked with the German political foundations, think tanks, the Bundestag, the Foreign Ministry, offices of the Chancellor and the President. This period was also marked by all governmental bodies and the diplomatic corps moving from Bonn to Berlin. We basically worked on the move for the first half of 2000.

That was a great experience. A diplomat is a jack of all trades, if need be you interpret and translate, you drive, you handle housekeeping matters. You should not only be an expert in bilateral relations with the host country, but also be well-versed in economic matters, agriculture, aviation and other fields, even in how to move an embassy, if necessary. We hired moving companies, but still I helped them when I could to pack and carry our belongings. I was a young diplomat, and jumped at the opportunity to talk to common Germans, to some inquiries and found out that they were admitting students from various other institutions. Then it struck me: I will follow my dream, and come what may. The University of World Economy and Diplomacy was founded in 1992 to train staff for Uzbekistan’s Foreign Ministry, there was a severe lack of talents. After graduating in 1996, I straight away got into the Foreign Ministry, to the German-speaking countries section in the European Department. In early 1999 I got a long-term posting to our Embassy in Germany, where I became part of a team in charge of political relations. I worked with the German political foundations, think tanks, the Bundestag, the Foreign Ministry, offices of the Chancellor and the President. This period was also marked by all governmental bodies and the diplomatic corps moving from Bonn to Berlin. We basically worked on the move for the first half of 2000. That was a great experience. A diplomat is a jack of all trades, if need be you interpret and translate, you drive, you handle housekeeping matters. You should not only be an expert in bilateral relations with the host country, but also be well-versed in economic matters, agriculture, aviation and other fields, even in how to move an embassy, if necessary. We hired moving companies, but still I helped them when I could to pack and carry our belongings. I was a young diplomat, and jumped at the opportunity to talk to common Germans, to some inquiries and found out that they were admitting students from various other institutions. Then it struck me: I will follow my dream, and come what may. The University of World Economy and Diplomacy was founded in 1992 to train staff for Uzbekistan’s Foreign Ministry, there was a severe lack of talents. After graduating in 1996, I straight away got into the Foreign Ministry, to the German-speaking countries section in the European Department. In early 1999 I got a long-term posting to our Embassy in Germany, where I became part of a team in charge of political relations. I worked with the German political foundations, think tanks, the Bundestag, the Foreign Ministry, offices of the Chancellor and the President. This period was also marked by all governmental bodies and the diplomatic corps moving from Bonn to Berlin. We basically worked on the move for the first half of 2000. That was a great experience. A diplomat is a jack of all trades, if need be you interpret and translate, you drive, you handle housekeeping matters. You should not only be an expert in bilateral relations with the host country, but also be well-versed in economic matters, agriculture, aviation and other fields, even in how to move an embassy, if necessary. We hired moving companies, but still I helped them when I could to pack and carry our belongings. I was a young diplomat, and jumped at the opportunity to talk to common Germans, to some inquiries and found out that they were admitting students from various other institutions. Then it struck me: I will follow my dream, and come what may. The University of World Economy and Diplomacy was founded in 1992 to train staff for Uzbekistan’s Foreign Ministry, there was a severe lack of talents. After graduating in 1996, I straight away got into the Foreign Ministry, to the German-speaking countries section in the European Department. In early 1999 I got a long-term posting to our Embassy in Germany, where I became part of a team in charge of political relations. I worked with the German political foundations, think tanks, the Bundestag, the Foreign Ministry, offices of the Chancellor and the President. This period was also marked by all governmental bodies and the diplomatic corps moving from Bonn to Berlin. We basically worked on the move for the first half of 2000. That was a great experience. A diplomat is a jack of all trades, if need be you interpret and translate, you drive, you handle housekeeping matters. You should not only be an expert in bilateral relations with the host country, but also be well-versed in economic matters, agriculture, aviation and other fields, even in how to move an embassy, if necessary. We hired moving companies, but still I helped them when I could to pack and carry our belongings. I was a young diplomat, and jumped at the opportunity to talk to common Germans, to
learn more about the county and improve my language. It is especially important for German. The Germans themselves call their tongue a mathematical language. It is a difficult language: its grammar looks a lot like math formulas. But it is utterly beautiful. It is the language of the great Goethe.

MJ: What are Uzbekistan’s interests in Germany?

Germany also helps us a lot when it comes to democratic transformations and legal reforms, that creates conducive environment for foreign investment, German included. Our cultural and humanitarian ties are also rapidly developing. We have quite a big German expat community – over four thousand people. We’ve always had a connection with German culture, and German is one of the main languages in schools and universities. Germany has opened a Goethe-Institute center in Tashkent, there are lots of schools with advanced syllabus in German, those students earn sprachdiploms, that allow them to enroll into German higher education institutions.

History of our ties with Germany and its culture is fairly long. Even before the 1917 Revolution, German scientists, engineers and teachers came to Uzbekistan. For example, German agronomist, academician Richard Schröder worked in Uzbekistan in horticulture, winegrowing and winemaking. After returning to the Ministry, I got appointed as Head of the section for Central and Eastern Europe, and in four years as the Head of the Department for Europe. That is when I started attending MGIMO. After two years at the University I decided to study legal aspects of the EU energy policies in my thesis, I titled it the ‘Legal Analysis of the EU Energy Package.’

MJ: Was it somehow linked specifically to Uzbekistan?

No, we don’t work in that field, Uzbekistan doesn’t have the infrastructure, that would work with the EU, our gas is supplied via Russia’s gas transportation system. I was simply interested in analyzing the Third Energy Package, that had been recently adopted, from a legal standpoint. I used a lot of sources, predominantly German ones, which impressed the board of examiners. I think it is not by chance that I got the highest grade on my thesis.

MJ: As an ambassador, what were your accomplishments?

We contributed to the rollout of a number of investment projects. For example, we set joint ventures with Claas and Lemken. Speaking about cultural and humanitarian ties, thanks to our efforts, the Germans now know more about Uzbekistan. We succeeded in securing higher scholarships from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), as well as, increase the number of Uzbek under- and postgraduates who study in Germany. In 2013, I went back to Tashkent to head the Department for the UN and International Organizations. I learned firsthand that multilateral diplomacy was no less difficult than bilateral, since any international organization has an extremely wide reach, representing entire regions or even the whole world, the UN, for instance. However, this work was immensely engaging. It was quite challenging, I learned a lot, for before I only dealt with pretty narrow fields, but when it comes to multilateral diplomacy the scope is global, covering counterterrorism, climate issues, peacekeeping, economy, and other issues on a global or a regional scale. We held a number of important events, promoted significant initiatives. For instance, together with our permanent mission to the UN in New York we organized the visits of then-Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and his deputy, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark. We promoted the Aral Sea initiative and a program to improve the situation in the Aral Sea region. Last year, President Mirziyoyev initiated the foundation of the UN MPTF Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region, Secretary General António Guterres personally contributed to the founding process.

In early 2016, I was transferred back to my old position: the Head of the Department for Cooperation with Europe and NATO. Mutual trust between our heads of states has contributed to it greatly. The frequency of contacts between the two Presidents is a manifestation of this trust.

In 2013, I went back to Tashkent to head the Department for UN and International Organizations. I learned firsthand that multilateral diplomacy was no less difficult than bilateral, since any international organization has an extremely wide reach, representing entire regions or even the whole world, the UN, for instance. However, this work was immensely engaging. It was quite challenging, I learned a lot, for before I only dealt with pretty narrow fields, but when it comes to multilateral diplomacy the scope is global, covering counterterrorism, climate issues, peacekeeping, economy, and other issues on a global or a regional scale. We held a number of important events, promoted significant initiatives. For instance, together with our permanent mission to the UN in New York we organized the visits of then-Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and his deputy, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark. We promoted the Aral Sea initiative and a program to improve the situation in the Aral Sea region. Last year, President Mirziyoyev initiated the foundation of the UN MPTF Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region, Secretary General António Guterres personally contributed to the founding process.

In early 2016, I was transferred back to my old position: the Head of the Department for Cooperation with Europe and NATO. Mutual trust between our heads of states has contributed to it greatly. The frequency of contacts between the two Presidents is a manifestation of this trust.

In 2013, I went back to Tashkent to head the Department for UN and International Organizations. I learned firsthand that multilateral diplomacy was no less difficult than bilateral, since any international organization has an extremely wide reach, representing entire regions or even the whole world, the UN, for instance. However, this work was immensely engaging. It was quite challenging, I learned a lot, for before I only dealt with pretty narrow fields, but when it comes to multilateral diplomacy the scope is global, covering counterterrorism, climate issues, peacekeeping, economy, and other issues on a global or a regional scale. We held a number of important events, promoted significant initiatives. For instance, together with our permanent mission to the UN in New York we organized the visits of then-Secretary General Ban Ki Moon and his deputy, UNDP Administrator Helen Clark. We promoted the Aral Sea initiative and a program to improve the situation in the Aral Sea region. Last year, President Mirziyoyev initiated the foundation of the UN MPTF Human Security Trust Fund for the Aral Sea Region, Secretary General António Guterres personally contributed to the founding process.

In early 2016, I was transferred back to my old position: the Head of the Department for Cooperation with Europe and NATO. Mutual trust between our heads of states has contributed to it greatly. The frequency of contacts between the two Presidents is a manifestation of this trust.
MJ: Hasn’t NATO offered to open its base in Uzbekistan?
No. Such an offer would run counter to both our foreign policy principles and military doctrine, that clearly set forth that Uzbekistan’s foreign policy is exclusively peaceful in nature, we take part neither in military alliances nor in military actions abroad, and we will not have foreign troops on our territory.

MJ: In 2018, you were appointed Deputy Minister. What are your key tasks in this office?
I’m in charge of bilateral relations with Europe, the Asia Pacific, South Asia, the Middle East and South West Asia, Africa, as well as, of the Dunyo Information Agency. That’s what falls within my mandate.

MJ: You must be focusing primarily on China.
We maintain balanced relations with all countries across the world, that is our foreign policy principle. Still, by the end of 2018 China became Uzbekistan’s largest trade partner.
However, our top priority are our neighbors: the Central Asian countries. Russia is our main partner in the CIS, we are allies. We closely follow the developments in yet another neighboring country, Afghanistan, for our region’s security depends on the situation there, we provide support to Afghanistan in its pursuit of peace, stability and economic revival.

MJ: Russia-Uzbekistan relations have been experiencing a true renaissance lately. They are at a very high level, indeed. Naturally, mutual trust between our heads of states has contributed to it greatly. The frequency of contacts between the two Presidents is a manifestation of this trust. Let’s take President Putin’s latest state visit to Uzbekistan in 2018. I was part of the team that organized it and I know how many negotiations there were apart from the summit itself before and during the visit. We held a forum for higher education institutions, held a presentation of a nuclear power plant, that will be constructed with Russia’s participation, we hosted a business forum, where we introduced a new format of interregional cooperation, and presented the results of Russian governors’ trips to Uzbekistan and Uzbek heads of regions’ visits to Russia to attract Russian investment and boost trade.

The opening of a MGIMO branch campus in Tashkent is a milestone in Russia-Uzbekistan relations, a new page in our bilateral humanitarian and educational cooperation.

MJ: Last year MGIMO opened its branch campus in Tashkent. Is it a new page in our bilateral humanitarian and educational cooperation?
Yes, the opening of a MGIMO branch campus is a milestone in Russia-Uzbekistan relations. For MGIMO it is the first project of its kind abroad, designed to train professionals, much needed in Uzbekistan, with fairly narrow specializations: experts in business IT, systems analysis, socioeconomic forecasting, certain areas of law, intercultural communication, conference interpreters for international organizations. I would like to thank academician Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of MGIMO, for opening a branch campus in Tashkent. On the other hand, it was a natural step. Uzbekistan and Russia have close historical relations, political, economic, transportation and cultural ties. Russian language and literature have played and continue to play an important role in Uzbekistan. Some even say that Uzbekistan preserved the Russian language that came to our country almost 150 years ago.
I remember how I entered MGIMO University. It wasn’t easy, my parents only gave me their blessing to go to Moscow on one condition — if I didn’t get into MGIMO, I was to go back to Tashkent and attend a university there. Nevertheless, I got into MGIMO. During my senior year at the Institute, I decided I would do a postgraduate degree. I got permission from my parents to stay in Moscow for three more years, and entered the Institute of Economics of the World Socialist System. The studies were captivating, at the Institute we discussed the economic reforms that were taking place back then in Hungary, Yugoslavia, China at great length. But I had to honor the promise I made to my parents and went home. There I was offered to take the post of the Press Department Head at Uzbekistan’s Foreign Ministry. In quite a short period of time I worked with four Foreign Ministers.

Later I was invited to head the Department of External Relations at the Academy of Sciences, where they gave me carte blanche to manage the Academy’s external relations. That was quite a challenge, but fate had a real gift in store for me: I made it to the top 3 in the Republic’s competition for young scholars, and our prize was an internship at Harvard. Nobel Prize laureate Wassily Leontief recommended us to the Harvard Institute for International Development (HID), an institute with incredible expertise in studying market reforms in developing countries, the then director of the HID, Dwight Perkins himself, supervised our internship. He was one of the most prominent experts in Chinese Studies.

After returning from the US, I became chair of a new department at Tashkent University, the Department of International Economic Development. I taught Economics of Development and International Economics courses from the Harvard syllabus in English. At the same time, I worked as an economic counselor to Khalid Malik, the UN’s first representative to Uzbekistan, and later as the first National Director of the Macroeconomic Policy Analysis and Re-training Project at the United Nations Development Program.

In summer 1996, I was invited to Japan, to the Center for Northeast Asian Studies at Tohoku University (the third oldest and most prominent after Universities of Tokyo and Osaka). I became the first professor from Central Asia to teach at a Japanese university. In my years teaching in Japan, I wrote and published a monograph in English on development issues in Central Asia. I based my doctoral thesis on that work. To this day this is the first and the only an economist, written and then defended in English in Uzbekistan.

Then there was yet another twist of fate. Because of my MGIMO education and diplomatic experience, I was offered to work at Uzbekistan’s Foreign Ministry to be trained for the post of Ambassador to Great Britain. However, in early 2003, I was summoned by the Foreign Minister, who told me that, after a report on my candidacy was reviewed by the Ministry’s senior officials, they reconsidered, and from that day on I would be trained to take the office of Uzbekistan’s Ambassador to Russia. Before my departure I met with the President, we talked about the significance of our cooperation with Russia.

In my five and a half years of service as ambassador I took part in organizing 20 visits at the highest level to Russia, and two more to Belarus, where I was Uzbekistan’s Ambassador concurrently. We signed the two most significant, fundamental treaties on strategic partnership and alliance relations. Our new President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, during his very first meeting with President Putin said: "We are neighbors and always will be strategic partners and allies." It did justice to the two treaties.

I was lucky indeed — I was around when our relations were developing vigorously, so much was going on — you just made sure you kept up with the pace. In that period of time our trade skyrocketed 4.5 times, surpassing $4.1 billion, contracts worth billions were signed with Lukoil and Gazprom. Our migrant workers sent billions of dollars back home. To regulate their stay in the host country three important agreements were negotiated and signed—the Agreements on Labor Migration, Illegal Migration and Readmission. In 2008 in Uzbekistan there were hundreds of enterprises with Russian capital, and vice versa, in Russia hundreds of companies were founded with Uzbek capital. Russia’s share in Uzbekistan’s foreign trade grew from 16% to 32%.

Two weeks after I came back to Tashkent, I was appointed Deputy Foreign Minister for bilateral and multilateral cooperation with the CIS countries. Later I took office as National Coordinator for the CIS and for the EU. Central Asia Strategy. The most complex matters, especially in our relations with neighbors, including water and energy, borders, trade and economy also fell within my mandate responsibilities.

A lot was accomplished in slightly more than three years, however in 2011 I realized I was somewhat tired of constant strains and stresses, and switched to a calmer position at a university. I am a professor at the Tashkent branch of Plekhanov Russian Economic University and at Tashkent State Economic University. Apart from that, I give a special course on investment at the Higher School of Diplomacy, the University of World Economy and Diplomacy.

I think of MGIMO quite often. We were lucky, ours were happy times, it didn’t matter from which of the Republics you came, from what city or village, you could still get the best education available in the world, both secondary and higher. Schools were so good at teaching their pupils that the latter could go to Moscow and pass entry exams and get into any higher education institution, even MGIMO, without any additional private tutoring.

At MGIMO, they gave us fundamental education and expansive knowledge across the board, that enable us to solve problems way out of our field of expertise. At Harvard and at the other world’s best...
In 1971, I came from Tashkent in a group of other Uzbek applicants to enroll at MGIMO. Alisher Bazarov and Patokh Chodiev, future founders of the MGIMO endowment, were in constant contact with the leaders of the Mongolian and several other diplomatic missions. When preparing this operation, we were in constant contact with the leaders of the Mujahideen, including Colonel General Majid, who was in charge of the airport. When Abdusamat Haydarov enrolled at MGIMO in 1971, he got Persian as his first foreign language. Not only did this event determine his whole life, but thanks to his knowledge of the Persian language, as well as the similar to Dari language, which he mastered, he later on managed to save not only his life, but also the lives of dozens of other people.

In 1982, I ended up at the USSR Embassy in Kabul and was not only a witness, but also a direct participant in the dramatic events that unfolded. While I was the head of the Protocol Department of the USSR Embassy, our embassy was trapped. Management raised the issue of urgent evacuation of employees and their families. As the first secretary, I had to participate in this rescue operation together with other diplomats. Three Il-76 were supposed to land at the airport on the appointed day to pick up not only Russian citizens, but also employees of the Mongolian and several other diplomatic missions. When preparing this operation, we were in constant contact with the leaders of the Mujahideen, including Colonel General Majid, who was in charge of the airport.

The city was divided by groups into zones, and at the request of the embassy management I had to negotiate with those commanders whose territories our bus route to the airport ran through. The situation was aggravated by the fact that the city was shelled by the forces of Hekmatyar, so it was necessary to periodically check the status of the runway. Each time we found holes from rocket explosions on it we had to persuade the commanders, and they would allow us to bring cement, which we filled the holes with, after filling them with stones.

On the night when our planes landed, a convoy of buses, one of which my wife was in, set forward towards the airport. And they managed to get there although the shelling began and the rockets were exploding nearby. I was in charge of boarding the first plane. And the car with people was already heading towards the plane when a rocket hit it. A plane filled with fuel to the gills came to an unexpected stop (there was no fuel in Kabul) burnt down in 15 minutes! In half an hour, we managed to get people on another plane and even take off. We landed on our military base near Termez. When I was coming off the plane, I saw that a general was sitting on a chair opposite the plane. “Sorry, son,” he said, “but for the first time in my life do I see such a huge thing landing on the rims.” It turned out that the landing gear tires were cut off during the take-off because of the fragments of rockets lying on the runway, and the Mujahideen on the ground were also firing at the plane after its take-off. The pilots worked a miracle! In early 1993, I returned to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan once again. After the collapse of the USSR, the country gained independence and was facing great challenges and threats coming from Afghanistan. It was necessary to engage in the development of a new foreign policy, protect the borders and integrate into the global system of international relations. To this end, I was sent as an ambassador to Tehran.
and in 1999 I was recalled and appointed Deputy Foreign Minister. I participated in the preparation of the first Tashkent Declaration, the main official UN document on Afghanistan, which became the foundation for further steps towards finding a solution to the crisis and establishing peace in the region.

At the end of 2000, I started teaching at the Institute of Oriental Studies, where I defended my doctoral thesis: “Central Asia in Iran’s Foreign Policy” a couple of years earlier. This topic has been and remains relevant in our country and abroad. A little later I was invited to America, where in 2004 to 2005 I was engaged in research on the problems of Afghanistan, and also taught a course on security issues in the Central Asian region at the University of Georgia. In 2007, I successfully passed the competition and began working as the head of the Western regional office of the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan in Herat, and after a couple of years, the Southern region with the center in Kandahar was added to my area of responsibility, I worked there for five years. This was the most difficult period in the history of Afghanistan, there was heavy fighting in the southern provinces of the country, where the backbone of the entire opposition movement, in particular the Taliban, had been formed and the activities of the al-Qaeda terrorist organization had been launched. At that time, I had to help establish a peaceful life for local authorities, to assist in conducting regional, parliamentary and presidential elections.

And in early 2014, I was appointed head of the political department of the entire UN mission in Afghanistan and led the entire political work of the Organization in this region for three years.

I returned to Tashkent in 2016, where I worked as a professor at the Tashkent State Institute of Oriental Studies, quite often reflecting on the beginning of my path. MGIMO cultivated love for my profession in me. These skills have allowed me to benefit the people of independent Uzbekistan. I also appreciate my alma mater for the friends it gave me. All of us are united by love for our home university.

PULAT ABDULLAYEV
(International Relations, 1966)
Ambassador in retirement

Pulat Abdulayev was born and grew up in Tashkent in a family of prominent geologist, President of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. One day in the summer of 1957, when he was in Moscow during his school break, a 15-year-old Uzbek schoolboy accidentally became a guest at a dacha of a prominent Soviet official. “There was a table laid with an appetizing meal on a spacious porch, the guests were having quiet intelligent conversations, and I started talking to an elegant young dark-haired man in simple glasses who was sitting in front of me. It turned out that he was a diplomat, an associate officer of a Soviet Embassy in a Western capital and was in Moscow on a vacation. Needless to say, he was a recent graduate of the prestigious MGIMO.” When the conversation turned to choosing a career, Pulat said he had not yet chosen his path, but everything was

PULAT ABDULLAYEV
(Ambassador, In Retirement)
coming to a point that in order to uphold family succession, he would choose geology. “Do not rush into any decisions,” the other person said. “I think you have more of a humanitarian mindset and it is better to look in this direction. Why don’t you try enrolling at MGIMO?”

Pulat Abdullayev admits that he didn’t listen to a friendly recommendation and went to study geology. And only two years later, when he finally realized, that it is not his path, he transferred from MSU to MGIMO’s School of International Relations, directly to a Sophomore year. “I became a MGIMO student in 1961 and next year, my father died shy of 50. I visited him in the hospital a couple of months before his death. I remember how he introduced me to his hospital roommate: “Here is my son, he studies at MGIMO, he gave up geology and decided to become a Talleyrand.” It seemed to me that somewhere alongside the irony characteristic of my father there was a slight note of pride... My father was a man of his time and thought that a man should first master some serious profession, preferably in the engineering field, and then do whatever, including diplomacy.” Abdullayev speaks well of his professor Tarkhov, who was teaching their group political translation. “At the last phase of the war and right after it was over Tarkhov was attached as an interpreter to marshal Zhukov, who then had the need for regular communication with English and American allies. He certainly contributed significantly to us becoming language specialists.” One of Pulat’s annual language performance reviews mentioned his “no common language abilities”, which brought attention of the translation service of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where he was invited for a talk.

Abdullayev, however, did not pursue linguistic career. Moreover, it happened so, that in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs he had to work not with English language, but with French, his second foreign language that he didn’t know so well. However, during his first long travels abroad to a French-speaking Dakar (1966-1971) the situation began to change rapidly: “After two or three years I already accompanied distinguished guests from Moscow to local officials as an interpreter, and gradually reached Leopold Senghor himself, the President of the Republic of Senegal, masterful scholar of the French language, poet and philosopher. About a quarter of a century later, coming back from Cameroon he retired. In 1991, Abdullayev was the Ambassador of the USSR (later, of Russia) to Djibouti. In four years he was appointed lead advisor of the Department of Security and Disarmament of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2000, he was sent as an ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon, where he worked for six years. Pulat Abdullayev participated numerous times in multilateral disarmament negotiations within the UN (General Assembly, First Committee, Disarmament Commission) and Conference on Disarmament, and also in the Soviet-American negotiations on intermediate-range missiles (1985–1986). Soon after coming back from Cameroon he retired. In 2008–2013 he periodically taught at the School of Economics at Nancy-Université (France) where he was giving lectures on the history of Russian French relations. Abdullayev is working on memoirs, but this work, he complains, is “fair-to-middling”, “I think, in the end it could be something for family use. As a good friend and colleague of mine liked to say, there are usually five ‘suitcase carriers’ for one writer” in diplomacy. He meant, of course, diplomatic suitcases filled with important documents. Embassies certainly need both and an ideal employee is the one who can do both.”

Abdullayev’s career after Senegal was successful. In 1973–1977, he worked as the third, second and first secretary at the Department of International Organization of the USSR Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1977, he was sent to the USSR Embassy in the Kingdom of Belgium, where he subsequently worked more than once. Since 1991, Abdullayev was the Ambassador of USSR (later, of Russia) to Djibouti. In four years he was appointed lead advisor of the Department of Security and Disarmament of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2000, he was sent as an ambassador to the Republic of Cameroon, where he worked for six years. Pulat Abdullayev participated numerous times in multilateral disarmament negotiations within the

I remember how my father introduced me to someone: “Here is my son, he studies at MGIMO, he gave up geology and decided to become a Talleyrand”
Choosing MGIMO was quite natural: my father graduated from MGIMO. Of course, it is also important, that as a kid I had an aptitude for languages and humanity subjects. Besides, I grew up on prospect Vernadskogo, a couple-minutes’ walk from the new building of our alma mater. It is interesting, that its construction started in 1972, when I was five, and ended when I’ve already become a student.

Studying at MGIMO was pleasant. Regardless of the strict discipline and control we felt quite comfortable: the overwhelming majority of the students were united by the common mindset and upbringing. Subjects were interesting, professors were friendly, what else could we dream of?

The UN model was a very interesting format of the learning experience. It depicted the work of the General Assembly in the smallest of details, students played the roles of the members of different delegations, headquarters’ employees, journalists, etc. The model was full of real cases: the UN working languages were used when talking and preparing documents.

We studied mainly in the late 80s, during the years of Soviet perestroika, thus student life was eventful and very diverse, we had crazy discos, discussion clubs, combined literary attempts in Medhulara newspaper. I even produced radio programs and TV series. The cultural life was changing rapidly: the fall of the Berlin Wall, the withdrawal of troops from Afghanistan, the unilateral disarmament of the USSR, national conflicts, the deterioration of social and economic life. In the next few years I managed to work as an assistant to a deputy of the last Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, as a PR manager of the new Europa Plus radio station, and as a diplomat. In 1993, I started working in a Belgian construction company and managed its Moscow office. Then I worked in the Ministry of Press, the direction of “Special Economic Zones” of the Ministry of Economic Development, where I was responsible for investor relations. For the past few years I was managing the Severstal North group.

Choosing MGIMO was pleasant, the overwhelming majority of the students were united by the common mindset and upbringing.
My university years help me understand that one half of your success depends on knowledge, and the other half on its presentation. The same principle applies to your career, especially if you are in consulting or dealing with clients. It’s important to find the right approach and understand which points to highlight.

MGIMO also gave me an opportunity to get acquainted with charity. During my first year I learnt about the International Journalism students’ initiative supporting an orphan asylum in Polotnyany Zavod village. I was happy, as many of us want to help, but they don’t know how. We raised money, organized trips, bought New Year’s presents. Certainly, it’s not much, but for us it meant a lot. Today we support corporate social responsibility projects of our clients.

I came to the agency for an internship in summer after my second year of studies, when I was only 19. I worked for the agency during my third, fourth and fifth year, combining work and study. My schedule was exhausting, but my work motivated me a lot, and I realized that I was investing in myself. And it paid off. Even by Russian standards I got promoted very fast, and became the youngest practice lead in our company, aged 26. Sometimes international clients get confused at our first meeting, wondering why they will be consulted by a person who is 20, and sometimes 30, years younger. However, it doesn’t impede my work. Now I often give lectures to students, including in MGIMO, and I always start them with this advice: do your internship as soon as possible. Only the experience can let you understand which topic you find the most interesting and help you make the right career choice.
BEKZOD YUSUPOV
(International Economic Relations, 2012)
Founder and editor in chief of news agency UzNews.uz

Initially I was planning to enroll at one of the universities in Uzbekistan, but my father gave me sound advice: “It’s better if you enroll at MGIMO.” Especially considering that my brother was already a Sophomore here. I listened to my father and chose the School of International Economic Relations, since in high school I was good at math and economics. Besides, graduates of this school have a great variety of professions to choose from, since they receive knowledge in the fields of microeconomics, macroeconomics and finances. I would name such subjects as “Diplomatic protocol and etiquette”, “Economic geography and regional studies”, “Marketing” and “Accounting and finances” as my favorite ones and as the most needed in real life ones. I learned how to express my thoughts correctly, have a reasoned dialogue, attended lectures of many renowned Russian and foreign entrepreneurs and politicians who often visited MGIMO, I even got to meet some of them. Social life was very interesting and full of events. Starting from my Sophomore year and until I graduated from the university, I was the head of the Club of Uzbek students (about 50 people) that was a part of the “Union of Communities”.

When I returned to Tashkent, I got a job at the international audit company Baker Tilly where I began working as an assistant auditor. I’ve gained a lot of experience in the field of audit, accounting and corporate finance. However, in a couple of years I got bored and decided to switch to journalism. I registered the Russian speaking news agency UzNews.uz in 2015. Our website informs about the most relevant events in the country, we have the biggest audience of Russian speaking readers in Uzbekistan. I always joke, that there would be no agency without MGIMO. Because it was the university’s dormitory where I got the idea of writing about events happening in Uzbekistan. I was interested in what was happening in my country and started writing about relevant events for other fellow countrymen. 

BABUR KAKHAROV
(International Law, 2012)
Director of STEDI company Tashkent

It happened so that even though my elder brother was studying in MGIMO, I knew quite little about this university. It was partially due to the fact that education in our school was in English and teachers, mostly Englishmen, were advertising British colleges, in every way possible, convincing us that the choice of studying abroad is the best one. Nevertheless, after graduating from high school and under my father’s and brother’s influence I ended up deciding to enroll at MGIMO. And I didn’t regret it. There are a lot of great professors working at MGIMO, contacts with some of them have made a positive impact on my life. They tried to instill in us a responsible attitude towards work and taught us to spare no effort in searching for knowledge and achievements in our careers. I would like to especially highlight Legal English and Corporate Law. Perhaps because I became an entrepreneur. I got lucky to be the President of the MGIMO Uzbek club and one of the brightest moments of that period for me was the organization of Nowruz (holiday that marks the beginning of Spring among Turkic and Iranian peoples) that was celebrated on a large scale at MGIMO.

ZIYODILLA ALIMOV
(International Relations, 2012)
Deputy CEO Uzimex T&S Company Tashkent

The idea of enrolling at MGIMO came to my father. We have a great tradition in Uzbekistan and in the East in general not to dispute decisions of elders, especially parents. I thank God and my father for showing me this exact path. I was also quite motivated by the fact that there were a lot of my fellow countrymen among MGIMO graduates, such bright and extraordinary personalities as Alisher Usmanov and Patokh Chodiev. I remember that during an entrance exam one of the moderators told me: “Enrolling at this university is not the hardest task, the hardest one is to study...
I'm thankful to the university for an opportunity to get a beloved career and to see the world. However, most importantly thanks to my work I met a lot of extraordinary and great people. Some of them have become my friends for life.

In 1992 to 1995, due to the financial issues and economic crisis that Russia and other post-Soviet states were facing, Moscow had to make an unprecedented decision: to suspend work of a whole range of Russian foreign institutions. Embassies in dozens of African and Latin American countries were closed. Those countries were bigger and more influential than Mauritius,— a small piece of land secluded by the vastness of the Indian Ocean. However, staff members of our embassy (just ten diplomats) and our colleagues on the neighboring Seychelles Island were spared this destiny. Apparently the
MGIMO is an entire world, a community of experts who are intelligent, highly educated, committed to their cause, and, I am sure, proud to be part of the university. I felt it during my studies there, and I’ll tell you more: often I didn’t feel confident as I was afraid not to live up to these standards. But this environment where, from my point of view, I spent my best years in youth, strengthened my will power and such traits of character as ambitiousness, resolve, self-confidence. - in brief, it shaped my personality.

I recall with gratitude the attitude of professors towards us. They were not too harsh on us and at the same time demanding, pushing us to new academic heights. Once my economic theory professor Alexander Golikov learnt that I hadn’t done my homework and said: “It’s okay as you are a foreign student”. It hurt my feelings, and since then I started doing my best to be always ready for classes.

Currently I am a member of the Oversight Committee of the group of companies Universal Capital that, specializes in such directed activity, as construction, production of construction and other materials, intended as medical and hospitality services. I have always been interested in subjects related to economics. Apart from economic theory we also studied management, statistics, marketing. The acquired skills help me in my everyday life and in my business. Now I am a member of the Supervisory Board at the Universal Capital Group of Companies which specializes in construction, production of materials for construction, providing medical and hotel services.

MGIMO has always been special not only because of its strong academic and research traditions, but also thanks to a particular spirit of unity, friendship and solidarity which was maintained by the university at all levels. Students, as you know, are not very rich, and usually they run out of money before the next scholarship comes. In such cases my fellow students helped me out, be it Vladimir Medinsky, who is now Russian Minister of Culture, or Sergey Mikhalkov, who is now Director General of TASS, the biggest Russian information agency. After my graduation from MGIMO, I continued my studies at the full-time PhD programme on political science. Regional security in Central Asia was approved as a topic for my PhD thesis. The knowledge acquired in MGIMO helped in my research abroad, for example, within the framework of...
the BCA scientific programme (Japan, 1997), visiting scholar programme at the University of California, Berkeley (the USA, 2004-2005), and the research programme of the Shanghai University (China, 2018).

When I completed my PhD, I was offered a job at the press-office of the President of Uzbekistan. In 2009 until mid-2011, I was the President’s spokesperson and his State Counsellor. The knowledge and experience of information and research work, as well as team work skills that I acquired in the alma mater always helped me to be up to high standard.

Since 1998 I have participated in research and teaching at the leading university of the Republic, the University of World Economy and Diplomacy (UWED), on training experts in international relations. It was founded in 1992 as a national center for training experts in international relations, inspired by MGIMO, using its unique example and experience.

UWED takes part in many international university educational and research programmes, its alumni compete with alumni from other universities not only in Uzbekistan, but in Central Asia in general, representing the interests of our country in the leading international bank and financial, as well as, legal and business institutions. I am particularly proud that UWED closely cooperates with MGIMO, which opened its first foreign branch campus in Tashkent to provide training on a number of priority BA and MA programs.

SUNNATJON IKRAMOV
(International Relations, 2014)

PR manager
Department of Protocol and Public Relations
“Lukoil Uzbekistan operating company”

All my childhood I was growing up listening to my father’s stories about MGIMO. As my mother told me, when I was two years old, my father and I were walking around MGIMO territory, and he told me, still just a little boy: “Son, you will study here!”

I dreamed about this top-rank CIS diplomatic university and one of the best universities in the world, where outstanding politicians and diplomats who made the history of their peoples had studied. And of course, I wanted to see pride in my father’s eyes when I would finish for him the path that he had begun many years ago.

And the fate smiled in 2010, I got a one-in-a-thousand chance: I enrolled at MGIMO school of international relations. In my opinion, this is one of the most important and advanced schools in the university. And I did not regret it: over the years I have gained tremendous background, a huge bundle of knowledge and a lot of different experiences.

It is difficult to single out one memory or one vivid episode – every day was filled with something special: new knowledge, acquaintances and funny stories that happened to us. Most of all I was impressed by contact with professors – experienced ambassadors, whose careers are filled with diplomatic events and world developments of paramount importance.

I’ve acquired one more valuable thing after four years of studying in MGIMO apart from knowledge – a huge family of students and friendship that knows no boundaries. I have friends, fellow students or just acquaintances in every corner of the world.

I currently work for Lukoil Uzbekistan Operating Company as a PR manager in the Department of protocol and public relations. I also opened my own IT business. It is quite significant for me, that my partner is Mustafa Gurbanli, my close friend from Azerbaijan, whom I met at MGIMO.

MGIMO is, so to speak, a club university, everything in it was imbued with the spirit of unity and friendship and students are united by common views and values.

TEMURBEK KASIMOV
(School of International Law, 2016)
CEO of “Geco Inno” LLC
Tashkent

My parents advised me to enroll at MGIMO, but I chose the school by myself: legal profession has always appealed to me. In 2010, I came to Moscow, passed the exams and was admitted to MGIMO.

MGIMO is, so to speak, a club university, everything in it was imbued with the spirit of unity and friendship and students were united by common views and values. MGIMO developed me as a person, gave me motivation in the field of scientific research and prepared me as a professional. The MGIMO brand is well known in Uzbekistan, many doors open before its graduates at the mention of it. This, of course, is the merit of Anatoly Torkunov, the rector, and the entire academic staff of the university. They train young people just out of schools, many of whom don’t have any idea of which way to go, to become qualified specialists and give them a professional start.

Studying was difficult, the amount of information that had to be mastered was very large. I was especially interested in all subjects related to history – both general and Russian, as well as, the history of state and law. All the academic years were exciting: they included the Day of National Cuisine, sports tournaments and student clubs’ round tables. All of this had one goal: to expand students’ horizons, give an impetus to their personal growth and enrich them culturally.

Geco Inno company, where I am the CEO, is engaged in the import of innovative and unique construction materials.
solutions for the Uzbek market. And since our contractors are mainly foreign enterprises, the education received at MGIMO helps me greatly in the business affairs.

AZIZA KHAMRAEVA
(School of International Relations, 2014)
UCMAS Uzbekistan Program Development Manager
Tashkent

My grandfather, professor, academician and turkologist, Murad Khamraev dreamt of attending MGIMO, but he never had the chance. That is why he wanted so much his son, my father, Farkhad Khamraev, to get into MGIMO. My dad became a diplomat, but he graduated from a different university. It was only us, the granddaughters, who fulfilled my grandfather’s dream. My sister Camilla graduated from the International Law School in 2011. Later I also joined the ranks of MGIMO alumni.

Studying didn’t come easily to me, I was good at some subjects, but not so much at others. Nevertheless, I have fondest memories of my four years of bachelor’s degree. And if I was offered to attend MGIMO once again, I would agree without a second thought. In Uzbek, we don’t call someone who provides instruction a teacher, we use the word ustoz, which literally means mentor. Some of my MGIMO teachers really became my ustoz.

I work for UCMAS International Education Program. I love my job, because I work with the younger generation. My MGIMO education helps me a great deal. My future employer hired me during the very first interview, immediately after learning I was a MGIMO graduate. Our university lays a solid foundation for its graduates’ future careers.

RUSTAM SAIDULLAEV
(MBA MGIMO, 2019)
CEO of MY FAIR Exhibition Company
Tashkent

When Rustam Saidullaev enrolled at the “Economics and Management in International Business” Programme of MGIMO’s School of Business, he thought that it would be quite simple for him to study there, considering that the business he works in is connected with international education. “But it turned out that not everything was so easy. After some time, I realized that I was far from knowing everything. And in a year many of my friends and colleagues started noticing changes in me. ‘You are conducting a dialogue differently,’ they said, ‘you are faster at finding solutions to the problems. You are probably projecting knowledge received at MGIMO on your business processes.’” This is true. First of all, I managed to partly structure and update knowledge with such new trends as digital economy and big data work. Second of all, after finishing MGIMO, you are becoming a part of a worldwide family that broadens opportunities for business and friendly communication.” However, most importantly Rustam has got new ideas thanks to studying at MGIMO. “I’ve created the “My Mentor project” within which we were
implementing workshops held by MGIMO professors, “Personnel management” project for managers, workshops on marketing and on Digital Economy. Another new project that Rustam came up with during his so to say, MGIMO studenthood, is an educational center for studying Russian as a foreign language. “Russian language is a mode of communication in former soviet countries. If you want to work across the CIS, then by default you should preferably know Russian language apart from your native language.” Rustam is doing a business since he was a schoolboy, he started with used computers’ repair and resale. When he was a Freshman at the Tashkent Automobile and Road Construction Institute, he worked in the tourism field and was organizing tourist groups to Issyk Kul lake. His current business is connected with exhibition activities, he is the organizer of the “Education and Career” exhibition. Now the two years of the MBA programme are in the past, Rustam has defended his thesis. The thesis is related to his company’s business and addresses the prospects of the international educational market development with the account of special national management aspects in this field in Uzbekistan. What’s next? “I want to create new business processes based on the knowledge received,” says Rustam, “I hope it will bring us to a new orbit of international and Uzbek educational field and will allow us to make our fair share of contribution to the creation of partnership between Uzbekistan and other countries in the field of education.”
Viktoria Panova, who graduated from MGIMO’s School of International Relations in 2000, spoke with us after arriving from New Delhi, where she had taken part in the Raisina Dialogue, a major security conference, as well as, held negotiations with the leaders of Jawaharlal Nehru University only to continue her journey from Moscow to the Far East in a few hours. The distances she has to cover are endless.

Four years ago, Viktoria received a call in Moscow from Russky Island on the far side of the country. The then leadership of the Far Eastern Federal University (FEFU) offered her the position of director of the Institute of Oriental Studies’ School of Regional and International Studies in order to add, as they say, MGIMO DNA to the international part of the new university’s activities.

“At the time, I worked at MGIMO as Head of the Department of International Relations and Foreign Policy of Russia,” Viktoria recalled. “To be honest, I had wanted something new for a long time. When I left for Vladivostok, I thought that a few years would be enough to improve the project and I would return to my native Moscow, without which I could not imagine life. But everything turned out otherwise.”

Viktoria had long focused on the G8, a topic that was popular more than ten years ago. She had shown impressive results, a PhD dissertation and a Letter of Acknowledgement from President Putin, for her assistance in organizing the G8 in Saint Petersburg in 2006. “I coordinated the ‘security basket’ and the questions of human security. Unfortunately, due to worsening relations with the West, the topic of the G8 is no longer relevant; however, even before this, I desired to attempt to implement grand ideas. When I left for Vladivostok, I thought I wanted something new for a long time. Students from 74 countries enrolled this year. ‘Security basket’ and the questions of human security – all of this affects your lifestyle and rhythm. ‘But I still miss Moscow. If I am home for longer than a few days, I try to visit my alma mater and see colleagues and friends, as well as, give my regards to MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov, who approved my move to Vladivostok. We now face tasks on both a capital and federal scale. We want to become one of the key players in the international market for innovative educational services in the near future. In order to do so, we are launching new partnerships with leading global universities. We have an open representative office at Vietnam National University in Hanoi, which is Vietnam’s leading educational institution, and we opened an office for the Far Eastern Federal University at Tokai University in Tokyo. We launched a pilot project with MGIMO for a dual master’s program called ‘Politics and Economics in Eurasia’. We are increasing the number of English-language Master’s programs ‘for export’. Moreover, among them are not only purely humanities disciplines but scientific ones; for example, biomedicine is enjoying great popularity. Students from 74 countries enrolled this year.”

The Far Eastern Federal University is known for holding the Eastern Economic Forum to which President Putin comes every year. “We are present at the Eastern Economic Forum both as a venue and as an organizer – we are responsible for an integral and very authoritative APEC Conference on Cooperation in Higher Education that is attended by ministers, deputy ministers and rectors of leading educational institutions. In addition to President Putin, other leaders attend – for example, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan has attended three times and the president of Mongolia has attended twice. At the last forum, Xi Jinping took part. At the latest Eastern Economic Forum, our honored guest was Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India. The Koreans always participate at the level of president or prime minister.

Vladivostok is Russia’s California. There isn’t the same crazy pace as in Moscow. Asia is very close. The Eastern mentality, the interaction of cultures – all of this affects your lifestyle and rhythm. If I fail to accomplish something, I answer with my head, but no one is going to interfere with me before then.”

FAR EASTERN CARTE BLANCHE

Vladivostok is Russia’s California. There isn’t the same crazy pace as in Moscow. Asia is very close, and there is the Eastern mentality and a combination of cultures...
For Talybov, who is now a Deputy Minister of Economic Development of Russia, the Vietnamese language came into his life in the following manner. From 1984 to 1989, he and his family lived in Vietnam, where his father worked for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. “Although I was a child, I still have many impressions about how the country rebounded after the war, how Soviet funding developed its economy and how Vietnamese specialists who were taught in the USSR returned to build a new life. For me, Vietnam is still a very familiar place.” Therefore, when in 1994 Talybov learned as a schoolboy that MGIMO had decided to renew courses for rare languages, including Vietnamese, he went for an interview and was accepted. He studied at school in the morning and went to courses at MGIMO in the evening. At the end of his studies, he took an entrance exam in Vietnamese and entered MGIMO’s School of International Relations in 1995. “MGIMO was the peak of my ambition,” Azer recalled, “but it revealed new ambitions to strive for. Take, for example, meeting with leaders of countries and economies who arrived at the university to speak in front of us and answer our questions! Throughout outstanding speakers and interesting programs, the university revolved the mindset of yesterday’s schoolboy and broadened my horizons, giving me a global view of problems. The program for specialists in international relations was so complex and the courses so in-depth that what was most important for any student was finding the desire to improve one subject or another, and to deepen their knowledge. But the most important thing that MGIMO teaches the students is to study; it provides the constant motivation to improve, add new competencies and conduct serious research all by yourself.”

In 1997, Talybov had a year-long internship in Vietnam, where he graduated with high marks from the Hanoi University of Science and Technology. “Thanks to the full immersion in the language, my Vietnamese improved to a conversational level.”

When Azer Talybov started working at the Ministry of Economic Development of Russia in 2003, he had an interview with Herman Gref, the then Minister of Economic Development and current President of Sberbank. “First, he noticed my MGIMO education. Another advantage of mine was foreign languages. I speak three: French, English and Vietnamese. Gref noted that this was a good foundation.” Vietnamese at that time was not much in demand, but when Azer flew to Vietnam with the minister, his knowledge of the language was an added bonus. The young employee was not yet capable of serious insight, but he managed to introduce the minister to Vietnamese cuisine. “Ever since, when I am in Vietnam with my colleagues and friends, I lead a gastronomic tour through Hanoi’s famous establishments. They just can’t leave the country without trying pho!”

AZER TALYBOV: “I AM CLOSE TO MY ALMA MATER”

MGIMO was the peak of my ambition, but it revealed new ambitions to strive for. Take, for example, meeting with leaders of countries and economies who arrived at the university to speak in front of us and answer our questions!

In 1997, Talybov had a year-long internship in Vietnam, where he graduated with high marks from the Hanoi University of Science and Technology. “Thanks to the full immersion in the language, my Vietnamese improved to a conversational level.”

Sometimes it happens that graduates from MGIMO no longer keep up with their region or language of study. Talybov has in this sense been lucky: he oversees Russo-Vietnamese relations for the ministry, the potential of which with each year grows ever bigger. “We recently implemented a free trade zone with Vietnam, the turnover is growing at a good pace, and there is the mutual transfer of technologies. We are exporting many solutions in the electricity generation sector, as well as developing public transportation, starting with the building of metros in major cities and ending with port and road infrastructure. We receive textile products from Vietnam. The Vietnamese are investing a lot in the Russian economy, understanding that Russian reforms are of a long-term character. Our economies are working in an interconnected system, complementing each other.”

After graduating from MGIMO, his dream of working at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs didn’t come true. “There were few vacancies then, not like now. But it was a blessing in disguise since HR-people at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs told me that there was a need for specialists at the Ministry of Economic Development. And now I can surely say that I was lucky!” Herman Gref at this exact time was gathering a group of young employees, with whom he started an ambitious total reformation of the ministry. It was important to take all of the best practices from Soviet state planning and add
modern practices, answering the demands thrust upon us by society. We all spent nights in the ministry, including its leaders and the minister himself. Going home did not make sense. There were meetings until two in the morning that resumed at 9 am.”

In 2007, Gref left for Sberbank, but the transformative trend that he put in place continues on, and Talybov’s career continued to trend upwards. For the next ten years, he headed the secretariat of the next minister, Elvira Nabiullina (the current head of the Central Bank of Russia) and when she left to join the Presidential Administration of Russia, and Talybov received an offer to lead her administrative apparatus there as well. “Presidential Administration of Russia is a special structure that works exclusively for the head of state. It has a wide authority, in particular control over the practical execution of assignments for which the government is responsible. The Administration’s approach to this allowed me to realistically estimate the role of separate elements in this system, to see the points where interaction between different blocks could be closer and endeavors more focused. Moreover, the role of the Administration is not only to point out the government’s mistakes but to help to create advantageous conditions so that elements of the system work consistently and harmoniously, and so that decisions are developed to the end.

In 2014, Nabiullina left the Presidential Administration to lead the Central Bank of the Russian Federation. Talybov received an offer from her to lead her administration. Three years later, he joined the team of Maxim Oreshkin, the new Minister of Economic Development of Russia, as a deputy.

“I am close to my alma mater; I share our values and am ready to do everything in my power to help the university succeed. The ministry can help MGIMO through the competencies and range that we have.”

The second big responsibility is a targeted investment program and the development of a system for capital investments by the state. This is a complex system that the ministry worked on for decades. It allows us to track and effectively solve problems regarding the development of social infrastructure, such as schools, hospitals, etc.”

There is an international part for each of the 13 deputy ministers. Talybov oversees Vietnam, Azerbaijan and Israel, and he is the co-chair of a Russo-German working group.

He can often be seen at MGIMO events. “I am close to my alma mater; I share our values and am ready to do everything in my power to help the university succeed. The ministry can help MGIMO through the competencies and range that we have, and the university could help the ministry search for answers to current issues in our work to help us make the correct decisions. After all, an educational institution becomes a true scientific research center when it solves practical tasks, combining science with practice.”

Oversee Russo-Vietnamese relations for the ministry, the potential of which with each year grows ever bigger. We recently implemented a free trade zone with Vietnam, the turnover is growing at a good pace.
LUKÁŠ PARÍZEK: “MGIMO PRESENTS UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES”

State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic on his successful start at MGIMO

Lukáš Parízek (IR, 2012) was captivated by geopolitics while a student at the gymnasium in his home city of Bratislava, dreaming to become a diplomat. “Once my father told me that there was a renowned diplomatic university in Moscow,” recalls Mr. Lukáš. “I googled that information and came across MGIMO – one of the best educational institutions in the world specializing in international relations.” Today Lukáš Parízek is State Secretary at the Slovak MFA, where he deals with security and development policy, economic diplomacy, diaspora overseas, as well as international organizations and bilateral relations with non-EU countries. Lukáš Parízek believes that it was in MGIMO that his successful career started: he got a bachelor’s degree in 2010 and a master’s degree two years later.
CAREER

MJ: Was it difficult to enter MGIMO?
At first it seemed unrealistic, but then I learnt about the opportunity to get a Slovak Academic Information Agency scholarship. We get a quota of two people annually thanks to a Russian presidential decree. I met all of the requirements and passed the entrance exam even before I received my school certificate. Pasing my finals at school was the last step before entering the University.

MJ: What events were the most memorable and interesting? Who, among MGIMO professors, influenced you the most?
There were a lot of interesting events. Visits from prominent global leaders were of particular interest to me. Ted Turner from CNN, Crown Prince Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud from Saudi Arabia, and President of the Palestinian National Authority Mahmoud Abbas spoke before us. I am sure that no other students at MGIMO had the chance to meet with the leaders of the Middle East. I was studying Arabic until the last year of my studies as I saw myself working in the Middle East in the future. Surely, as any other student, I was dreaming about passing my exams and graduating from the university, which I managed to do.

MJ: How did your career go after graduating from MGIMO?
I spent the last semester in the OSCE doing an internship in the Actions against Terrorism Unit, where I continued to work after the graduation. Then I transferred to the Ministry of Defense of the Slovak Republic, namely Interbureau Division, and later to the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency, within its Department of Communication and International Cooperation. In 2016 I was appointed to the post of State Secretary in the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic. I am also a Special Representative of our MFA for Slovak’s Chairmanship in the OSCE.

MJ: What qualities, skills and experience did you acquire at each of these stages? Do you have any achievements that you are proud of?
As I have already said, when I left the OSCE, I joined the Ministry of Defence where I dealt with security, which is my specialization. For example, I took an active part in the completion of the White Paper on Defence of the Slovak Republic and in preparation of the Defence Strategy of the state. Thanks to working in the OSCE I understood the way the organization functions. At the same time I gained invaluable experience of working in an international institution which enabled me to open “the door to the world of diplomacy”, so I say. That experience helps me now, when Slovakia is presiding over the OSCE. Being a Special Representative of the Slovak presidency I am in charge, inter alia, of the Working Group on Scales of Contributions. Three months of hard work led us to a consensus in early April this year on the scales of contributions for 2019. As the scales did not effectively change since 2007, I consider it a significant achievement. I should add that I learnt a lot from this work. For instance, I realized again that the efforts of one person are not enough to achieve great results. You can get them only through teamwork, with the support of your colleagues. The key is to learn how to use your communication skills and find compromises on a daily basis. It is true not only for civil service, but for any work connected with international relations.

MJ: Have you ever faced a career crisis? How have you handled it?
I was appointed as the State Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Slovak Republic just before our EU Presidency started. I would call this period my personal “shock therapy”. The fact is that I transferred from the Slovak Innovation and Energy Agency to the Ministry very rapidly, so I didn’t have time to adapt. On the one hand, I was supposed to defend the interests of the Slovak Republic within the European Union and, on the other hand, manage the policy of the Ministry. Thanks to the support from my colleagues and the Ministry staff this transition was a smooth one. We managed to address all the challenges successfully.

MJ: You took up this important position when you were very young. How would you explain such a rapid promotion? I believe this is the result of a combination of circumstances such as my education, professional training, personal qualities, as well as the chances that I seized. A bit of luck!

MJ: What would you recommend to those MGIMO students who dream of professional success?
Believe in yourself and the opportunities the future holds. Do not let fear or timidity hold you back. I recommend you to try your best and jump at all chances and opportunities; you should not turn them down. Moreover, if fortune does not smile on you, you should not turn them down. Moreover, if fortune does not smile on you, you should create these chances yourself. It is important to be ambitious and remember famous words: “One must study, study and study again.” I’d like to take this opportunity to congratulate MGIMO on its 75th anniversary, and I wish my dear alma mater many happy returns of the day, and success in all endeavors.
In Mamonov’s family, no one had ever been commercially-minded: all of his relatives had been soldiers, engineers and teachers, and all had worked for the state. Therefore, he was never infected with the business fever of the early 1990s. There were many like him among the students of MGIMO at the time. “Everyone I knew in the dormitory studied non-stop. This was because all of the teachers were great. The pleasant sensations of the periodic “explosions of the mind” that occurred in their lessons inspired me to study. Indeed, the scope and boldness of thought at MGIMO, I think, has no equal. But there is only so much one can do, so the institute, making the educational program as intense as possible, needed to reduce its lecture and seminar courses. Students were responsible for finishing the material themselves, supplied with a few methodological instructions and a list of literature.”

Mamonov was always comfortable at MGIMO. “It was, possibly, the first educational institution in Russia which, while not having a Western-style campus, was gradually developing one, including fenced-off areas, small places for walking and inner lawns next to the library; indeed, the library itself was comfortable and provided a place for academic contemplation – like a Russian Cambridge.”

MIKHAIL MAMONOV: “BY BOLDNESS OF THOUGHT, MGIMO HAS NO EQUAL!”

Mikhail Mamonov, Deputy Minister of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media, graduated from MGIMO’s School of International Relations in 2003. In choosing this education, he is thankful to his “ambitious mother.” “Somehow she convinced me: ‘there’s an institute in Moscow, and you cannot even imagine someone from our city of Stavropol entering there.’ This hurt me. I even went to Moscow and visited MGIMO, where I finally understood that it was the place for me. MGIMO was one of the few educational institutes that offered a classical education. This satisfied my demands: I loved humanities, languages and history. In 1998, I applied and, lucky for me, I was accepted!

MGIMO was one of the few educational institutes that offered a classical education. This satisfied my demands: I loved humanities, languages and history.
Mamonov was assigned English and Chinese. “Chinese has always helped me. It has always impressed people. Besides being considered an intelligent and ‘well-rounded’ person, knowing Chinese as a young specialist gave you a certain charm, admitting you to sacred knowledge, inaccessible to most.”

Mamonov was appointed to the Ministry of Digital Development, Communications and Mass Media in December 2018. “I was attracted to new tasks connected with national economic activities, with a large amount of work on planning for negotiations with foreign companies that do business in Russia. I am responsible for all international matters, the digital agenda of the Eurasian Economic Union, issues of electronic commerce and the development of exports of information technologies. This is an area in which Russia has a strong competitive advantage.

Together with the Ministry of Economic Development, we created a strategy to develop artificial intelligence. Russia is one of three countries in the world with its own technological platform, the others being the US and China. Rarely do countries have their own messengers or social networks – we have V Kontakte and Odnoklassniki. Few have a powerful search engine – we have Yandex, which is available to all users who use the Cyrillic alphabet, not to mention the results we have in radioelectronics, or the global success of Kaspersky Lab. Our possibilities in cybersecurity are colossal; Russia is one of the top 30 countries by the amount of development of digital services and Moscow is the world’s leading ‘smart city’!”

Mikhail Mamonov believes that MGIMO’s role in his professional success “amounts to about 80 percent, and I am not exaggerating. My colleagues know very well that I consider MGIMO to be a very good educational institution that continues to keep its competitive edge. I hope that it will continue to do so, and not only in Russia but abroad. Not long ago I had the honor of participating in the presentation of diplomas at MGIMO and I saw many people from many different countries, meaning that we are interesting to the world.”

What can MGIMO give to young people? “Above all, it gives them a high level of empathy, the skills to understand the person they are talking to, to be understood and respectful, and to be able to make a good impression. Secondly, because of the amount of material and its range, you learn to somehow interlink everything. The result is the alignment of new neural connections that grow at the speed of thought. Finally, it gives good and thorough knowledge of a foreign language. I would also like to point out that MGIMO cultivates a way of behaving in a dignified manner. Surrounded by individuals at MGIMO whom I considered to be better than me in some respects, I felt the constant desire to catch up to them, and this made me better and more interesting. I feel that this is the merit of our rector, Anatoly Torkunov – he is trying to cultivate this atmosphere among us. At MGIMO, a culture of openness to new ideas has been well developed because you constantly face them; it is a culture of seizing opportunities. Today, my former classmates are working on a variety of different tasks: besides working for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and other foreign political structures, some work for Yandex, some work in the gaming industry, and some work for the Presidential Administration of Russia on domestic policy. What is the advantage of our education? If you are a civil engineer, then your career trajectory is more or less clear – sooner or later you will become an engineer. In order to move to a different track, you need to invest your resources and health, and change your karma; you must be very lucky. If you are an MGIMO graduate, you are universally adaptable. Colleagues of mine who work in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs know that they will come across extremely different situations and have to deal with them – from the oil industry to the Arctic. It obliges you to understand a many topics, meaning that you can become a fully rounded individual if you want. I think that MGIMO is better than other educational institutions in preparing people for a life that is diverse and unpredictable.”
On the eve of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, MGIMO-University, which hosted the Russian-French Trianon Dialogue, initiated the rapprochement of the three existing dialogue mechanisms – French, German and Austrian – of Russia’s bilateral cooperation with Western countries. This initiative was called the Trilogy of Dialogues.
A meeting of the coordination Council of Trianon Dialogue Russian-French Civil Society Forum was held in Moscow. This year, the Russian side hosted the French delegation at the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts.
Rector of MGIMO-University Anatoly Torkunov opened the meeting with words of gratitude to the owner of the site – a member of the coordinating Council and Director of the Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts, Marina Loshak. She, in turn, stressed the symbolism of the meeting in the opening days of the exhibition on “Shchukin. Biography of a Collection”, which is closely connected with French history and culture. “The exhibition tells the story of Sergei Shchukin’s collection formation – said Marina Loshak – through his personality, family biography and cultural and historical context, which help to recreate the collection of the brothers – Peter, Dmitry, and Ivan. The exhibition includes iconic works by Claude Monet, Pierre Auguste Renoir, Paul Cezanne, Paul Gauguin, Vincent van Gogh, Henri Matisse, Pablo Picasso, and others. We succeeded to make the name of Shchukin familiar only in Russian, but now it is known in France and elsewhere. The exhibition was the longest lasting of all exhibitions in France. We are ambassadors of France, ambassadors of French culture all over the world: many of the exhibitions that museums import from abroad are related to French art.” The All-Russian Public Opinion Research Center’s report devoted to the Perception of France by Russian youth through the prism of education started the discussion of the Trianon projects. The youth are interested in France and strongly associate it with its cultural dominants, as well as with the traditionally developed spheres of consumer goods. According to the participants of the study, France is traditionally associated with such industries as wine- and cheese-making, perfumery, haute couture, art, cinema, literature, philosophy, and architecture. Young people treat Paris, along with Rome, Vienna, Venice, Berlin, London, Barcelona, Florence, as the cultural capital of Europe. The cultural dominants of France, according to the participants of the discussions, are the Louvre, the Sorbonne, the Eiffel Tower, the Pompidou Center, Notre Dame Cathedral, the French cabinet, fashion weeks, various abbeys and the Cannes festival. In general, the analysis of the discussions shows a great interest of the young audience to the culture of France, as this area is the basis of the country’s perception. The co-chairs of the Trianon Dialogue, MGIMO-University rector Anatoly Torkunov, and Ambassador Pier Morel briefly described the Trianon events already held in 2019. The co-chairs paid special attention to the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum; several
Trianon sessions were devoted to the dialogue format of interaction between countries, education of the future, culture, as well as cooperation between business communities.

Alexander Orlov, the Executive Secretary of the Trianon Dialogue from the Russian side delivered a speech about the literary competition held by the Association of French specialists in the Russian language in Paris. The competition winners were awarded a trip to Sirius Education center to participate in the August literature session. The trip was organized by the Russian Secretariat of Trianon Dialogue.

Deputy Head of the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications Vladimir Grigoriev presented a Window to Russia project to promote Russian culture abroad. The project will provide foreign users with online access to unique collections of literature pieces by Russian authors, the collection of Russian movies, the largest museum collections in Russia and more.

The French member of the Council, Claudie Haignere, presented a joint French-Russian youth writing contest named Dear Tomorrow (Cher demain) with the preliminary topic of the contest “If you could address the intelligence of the future, what message would you send it?”

The French member of the Council, Claudie Haignere, presented a joint French-Russian youth writing contest named Dear Tomorrow (Cher demain) with the preliminary topic of the contest “If you could address the intelligence of the future, what message would you send it?”

Following the rules for the selection of the dialogue topic for the year, the French co-chair proposed Sustainable Development (Développement durable) as a relevant topic for the year 2020. Next year will be devoted not only to the search for effective and modern ways to solve environmental and social problems. The attitude of society and the perception of sustainable development issues will be a core topic of all next year’s projects and discussions.

After the meeting, the members of the Coordinating Council had a tour of the “Shchukin. Biography of a Collection” exhibition. It is one of the most significant collections of European modernist art, covering the most important artistic trends of the late 19th — early 20th centuries.
TRIANTON DIALOGUE AT THE PARIS PEACE FORUM

Last November Paris hosted “the Trianon week”, a series of events organized by the Russian-French Trianon Dialogue and MGIMO University.
In November 2018, French President Emmanuel Macron organized the first Peace Forum in Paris to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the end of the First World War. The leaders of European countries, including the Russian President Vladimir Putin, as well as the Donald Trump attended the Forum.

A year later, neither Vladimir Putin nor his American counterpart came to the 2019 Forum. However, the image of Trump was everywhere in Paris: on bus stops, where there were posters with his photos and a motto “Ecoutez, le monde changer!”, and on lamppost posters in the form of skull with recognizable bangs and a slogan “Trump c’est la guerre!”

Venued in the Great Hall of the parc de La Villette, the Paris Peace Forum was opened by the newly appointed 13th President of the European Commission, and the former 8th German Defense Minister Ursula von der Leyen. At home, she is considered the weakest head of the Bundeswehr in history. Why was she made head of the European Commission? Moreover, Emmanuel Macron sensationally claimed NATO’s “brain death.” Are not these facts connected?

Taking the floor, Emmanuel Macron spoke about the crisis in Europe and the world’s political and economic structure, stressing that the formed after the Second World War system had been effective for 70 years. “However, recent years have shown,” he said, “that new inequalities have appeared, they have fragmented the modern community, forming a crisis of our democracies and a doubt in all Western democracies. This has revived the unilateral policy of those who were the guarantors of this international system.”

Meanwhile, at the second level of the hall in the Masterclasses working session, The Russian Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, delivered his speech. “Undoubtedly, the world is changing,” he said. – Multipolarity is its main essence. No one – not a single state, not a group of countries like what we call the “historic West” – can rule the world alone. New centers of economic growth, financial
power, and political influence are emerging before our eyes. Naturally, our Western friends are not happy about this. Mr. Lavrov talked President Macron for an hour, concluding his speech on a positive note: “The end of history ‘triumphantly proclaimed’ after the collapse of the Soviet Union did not happen. History is alive and feels quite good, and Francis Fukuyama’s prediction of the eternal domination of the West did not come true. This reality is already recognized in numerous analytical works, and in the recent interview statements of the President of France Emanuel Macron.”

***

A series of the Trianon Dialogue meetings was opened by the performance of the musicAeterna byzantine choir (the choir artistic director – Teodor Currentzis). The unique concert was held in the ancient church St-Louis-en-l’Ile which is recognized as the monument of the national heritage of France. We begin “Trianon Days” in a remarkable place, – said Anatoly V. Torkunov, MGIMO Rector and Co-chair of the Trianon Dialogue. – This concert in one of the oldest churches of Paris makes you think once again of the unique role played by spirituality, culture, and art. The project was presented by Head of the RDI Group Board, managing director of the contemporary arts fair viennacontemporary Dmitry Aksyonov. The first expert meeting within the “Week” was a round-table “30 years since the fall of the Berlin Wall. Outcomes and Prospects” which took place in the School of International Relations HEIP on 12 November. School Director F. Kattelat kicked off the discussion. The event was attended by President of the World Association of Russian Press V. Ignatenko, Ex-foreign minister of Poland and Co-chair of the Russian-Polish Group for Difficult Issues Adam Rotfeld, Professor of Columbia University Robert Legvold, Strategy Director of the PH “Kommersnt” and Editor of the “Peterburger Dialog” newspaper Viktor Loshak, Vice-Rector of MGIMO Artiom V. Malgin, as well as executive secretaries of the Trianon Dialogue A. Orlov and N. Shibaev, and others.

A key event at the Paris Peace Forum was presentation of projects. Over 100 countries presented their projects (114 projects in total). The Trianon Dialogue project entitled “The Art of Dialogue. The Dialogue of Arts” was accepted to participate in the tender.

E manuel Macron: “Recent years have shown that new inequalities have appeared, they have fragmented the modern community, forming a crisis of our democracies and a doubt in all Western democracies”

S ergey Lavrov: “The end of history ‘triumphantly proclaimed’ after the collapse of the Soviet Union did not happen. History is alive and feels quite good, and Francis Fukuyama’s prediction of the eternal domination of the West did not come true”
Its goal is to promote culture as a tool of reflecting political trends and exposing present-day issues, as well as establishing contacts among different countries and nations, first and foremost between Russia and France. Dmitry Aksyonov presented the project. The Trianon Dialogue organized a round-table based on the topic of the project. It was attended by France’s Minister of Culture Franck Riester, UAE Minister of Culture and knowledge Development of the Nozra Al Kaabi, Director of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts Marina Loshak, the well-known collector Thomas Kaplan, General Director of the international contemporary art biennial in South America Bienalsur Aníbal Jozami, Vice-President of the Russian Academy of Arts N. Kuzmina, and Director of the Alexandrinsky Theatre and MGIMO graduate R. Dosmukhamedov.

Within the Russian-French contest “The Dear Comes Tomorrow”, over 5000 Russian and French schoolchildren can compete to become the best author writing about future and man-IT interaction.

The moderator of the discussion was Steven Erlanger, the Chief Diplomatic Correspondent for Europe for The New York Times. Another venue for the “Trianon Week” was the Paris Science and Industry Museum which gave an official start to the Russian-French project – the contest “The Dear Comes Tomorrow”.

Over 5000 Russian and French schoolchildren can compete to become the best author writing about future and man-IT interaction. The contest was kicked off by First Deputy Minister of Education, MGIMO graduate Pavel Zenkovich, Deputy Director of the Federal Agency on Press and Mass Communications V. Grigoriev, President of the French Institute, Special Representative of France on International Cultural Ties P. Buyle, and others.

A key event at the Paris Peace Forum was presentation of projects. The goal of the Trianon Dialogue project entitled “The Art of Dialogue. The Dialogue of Arts” is to promote culture as a tool of reflecting political trends and exposing present-day issues, as well as establishing contacts among different countries and nations.

The day ended at the Russian spiritual and cultural center which brought together over 200 participants. Among them were members of the French Alumni Association of MGIMO and Trianon Dialogue friends. They watched the movie premier by First Deputy Director General of TASS Mikhail Gusman “The Formula of Power. Jacques Chirac. Epilogue”. The movie is about the outstanding French politician Jacques Chirac who ruled France from 1997 till 2007. Then the guests watched another movie “MGIMO. In All Languages” shown on a Russia’s major Channel 1 and was dedicated to the 75-th anniversary of MGIMO. The event was attended by Russian Ambassador to France Aleksey Meshkov and Russian Permanent Representative to UNESCO Alexander Kuznetsov, and others.
Next day there was a discussion held at the Paris Peace Forum that was dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall. The session was attended by Hubert Védrine, Francois Mitterrand’s advisor and former Minister of Foreign Affairs of France; Andrey Grachev, press secretary of M. Gorbachev, the President of the USSR; Daniela Schwarzer, director of the German Council on Foreign Relations (DGAP) and Yoichi Suzuki, former ambassador of Japan to Singapore and France. Toma Gomar, director of IFRI, was moderating the discussion.

The opening of the first Siberian Education Salon, organized under the auspices of the Trianon Dialogue, took place at the Russian Center for Science and Culture. A. Meshkov; K. Volkov, director of the Russian Center for Science and Culture; A. Torkunov, MGIMO Rector; E. Galazhinsky, Tomsk State University Rector and A. Ilin, Deputy General Director of Campus France agency on the Promotion of French Higher Education Abroad and International Student Mobility participated in the opening session.

The meeting of the Forum’s Coordinating Council at the French Foreign Ministry was the central event of the Trianon Dialogue in Paris. A. Torkunov, MGIMO rector, and P. Morel, ambassador and Special Representative of the President of France – co-chairs of the dialogue – opened the meeting. The meeting discussed preliminary results of the Trianon Dialogue 2019, which was held under the main topic “Education and Enlightenment”. M. Kotyukov, Minister of Science and Higher Education of Russia, was a special guest of the meeting. He presented high-priority directions and projects of the Russian-French cooperation in the field of education and science. From the Russian side, the meeting was attended by K. Shakhnazarov, general director of Mosfilm film studio; V. Grigoryev, deputy head of the Federal Agency for Press and Mass Communications; B. Titov, commissioner for the President of Russia for the protection of entrepreneurs’ rights and MGIMO graduate; V. Yakunin, head of the department of Lomonosov Moscow State University; M. Lushak, director of the Pushkin Museum and others.

As for French participants, there were P. Pouyanne, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Campus France; B. Giudicelli, Minister of Higher Education, Research and Innovation; P. Charbonnier, rector of the Aix-Marseille University; P. Vella, President of the University of Montpellier; and many others.
Directors and Chief Executive Officer of Total Group; C. Brechignac, Permanent Secretary of the French Academy of Sciences; C. Haigneré, former Minister of Science and Technology of France, and others. The participants outlined the main directions of forum’s work for the next year that will have “Climate and Environment” as a central topic.

The program continued with the activities of the Choiseul Institute as part of the return trip of the participants of the Choiseul 100 Russia list to Paris. At the welcoming reception in Ritz, the participants were addressed by P. Lorot, president of the Choiseul Institute; J.-B. Lemoyne, French Deputy Foreign Minister; A. Torkunov, MGIMO Rector, and P. Sorokin, Deputy Minister of Energy of Russia.

The next day, the participants visited both houses of the French Parliament - the National Assembly and the Senate. Participants were welcomed by G. Longuet, former minister, senator, chairman of the France-Russia interparliamentary group; C. Janvier, deputy of the National Assembly of France, chairman of the France-Russia Friendship Group; A. Genevard, deputy chairman of the French National Assembly. The participants also visited Station F startup incubator and Dior boutique and held a series of meetings.

The goal of the Choiseul 100 Russia project is to establish contacts and promote experience exchange between Russian economic leaders and their foreign colleagues, who got into a similar rating in France. The project was organized by the Choiseul Institute in partnership with Sberbank and Total group under the auspices of the Trianon Dialogue.

The Choiseul 100 Russia list includes bright and talented representatives who are up to 40 years old and whose potential contributes to the modernization of the country’s economy. There were also MGIMO graduates among them. They are A. Zadorina, chief designer and founder of Zasport brand; M. Duma, founder and CEO of Future Tech Lab; E. Zhivov, deputy general director of Alfa-Capital; D. Nechaev, founder and CEO of Triton Bikes and M. Petrova, Director of the Endowment MGIMO.
Urban revolution on campus

University campuses and learning space architecture were the two main topics discussed at the Trianon Dialogue Business Program on the sidelines of the Moscow Urban Forum. The starting point for the discussion was a panel session “Greater Paris — Greater Moscow. Sustainable development practices.”

Local authorities and experts of the two capitals came together to discuss the issue of joined territories in urban development, new approaches and time-tested practices. One of the main topics was learning environment architecture.

The session was focused on the modalities of the Russian-French contest of young architects who were to present their projects of a university campus under the auspices of the Trianon Dialogue.

MGIMO’s vice-rector, Artem Malgin, addressed the participants with the overview of the work on university campuses that has already been done within the framework of the Trianon Dialogue.

Last year’s advances in urban development became a stepping stone for this meeting of the Trianon Dialogue that now revolved around the educational side of space planning. The discussion took place as part of the MIPIM property market that featured a separate session on university campuses and a workshop at the technopark of the University of Nice Sophia Antipolis.

These discussions became a foundation for a new project that was launched as part of the Trianon Dialogue program — a Russian-French contest of young architects entitled “The Architecture of Learning Environments and University Campuses”.

The participants continued discussing the issue of organizing learning environments and designing university campuses during the design session “The Architecture of Learning Environments”, which was held at the Moscow Urban Forum. The session focused on the modalities of the Russian-French contest of young architects who were to present their projects of a university campus, organized under the auspices of the Trianon Dialogue.

Malgin delivered the opening statement, highlighting the special role that university campuses play in urban development and the importance of their integration into the economy. Russia and France have the same trajectory of learning environment development; that is why the contest may become a good opportunity to find solutions to common problems in designing learning environments. Dominique Fache, board member at Sophia Antipolis, is one of the founding fathers of the unique campus in southern France; his presentation dwelt on the development of the learning environment of the technopark back in the 70s. Fache stressed that a university campus today should be open, because the very idea of a university has substantially transformed, and digital technologies are one of the reasons behind that change.

The outcomes of these discussions were duly noted and became part of the organizational plan for the Russian-French Campus Design Contest for young architects, that was adopted on the day of its official launch.
Sirius started speaking French

French school students – winners of the French association of specialists in the Russian philology contest participated in the educational program of Sirius center. There was a special “French” session created for students. It was held between 31 July and 13 August and was integrated into creative writing program called “Homo Legens: reading man”. More than 120 school students from all over Russia participated in the program. From the very first days of the session, French students merged themselves into the atmosphere of vivid creativit, inspiration and search for new ideas for Sirius whose main slogan is “Be curious! Be creative! Be victorious!”

There were several modules in the French session’s program. The first module included participation in different workshops. French participants were offered 9 options, and they chose “Paper movie” and “Theatre of stories”. French students teamed up with other Sirius students and had 4 days to create a stop-motion animated feature film and prepare a puppet show. The module ended with a workshop festival that took place in the Sirius scientific club.

During the module participants visited “Inside. Outside. In-between”, an interactive art-exhibition, workshops on preparing presentations, writing long reads, creating art-books, infographics, and so forth.

The “Text 2.0” workshop was the second module of the educational program for the French youth, where they were supposed to implement their common project on a long-read creation by telling their readers about their trip to Sirius. It turned out to be a traveler’s diary with photos and interactive content. There was a special event prepared for the participants of the program – a visit to the art exhibition of Sergey Andriaki in Sochi art museums. After the tour there was a “professional talk” between the artist and the students of the Sirius center, where the young people had a chance to ask all the questions they had about his art, his life journey, and the profession of artist as a whole. Moreover, French students participated in workshops on animal sculpture, ceramics, water-color painting and fundamentals of choreography, which were led by professionals.

A nice addition to the educational program, workshops, seminars, and interesting meetings was the students’ visit to the Carmen ice show, a concert by Julia Lezhneva, a Russian opera singer, a harp concert, and a trip to Sochi amusement park. A visit to Krasnaya Polyana – a big settlement with a ski resort that is also called Russian Courchevel – was a separate part of the program. Rosa Chutor with its star attractions – Rosa Pick and Kamenny Stolb – is the most popular and modern resort.

The “French” session ended with a farewell party, where French students presented their projects – the long read they created about their stay in the Sirius center – and received certificates upon completion of the program.

A good hundred

There was a gala-dinner of the French and Russian Choiseul 100 Russia project held in the Metropol hotel, in Moscow. This is a top list of 100 young Russian economic leaders. During that event, they met up with their counterparts from the French one hundred. The project was created by Paskal Loro, the president of Institut Choiseul (Paris) and the initiator of Choiseul 100 France and it was held within the framework of Trianon dialogue created by the presidents of Russia and France. The dinner united representatives of political and business elites from both countries: Bris Rocher, the president of Yves Rocher group; Elvira Nabiullina, governor of the Bank of Russia; Patrick Poeyyanne, CEO of TOTAL; Claude Javelier, deputy of the National Assembly, Jean-Pierre Chevénement, French minister for relations with Russia; ambassador Pierre Morel, co-chair of the Trianon Dialogue; and others. Anatoly Torkunov, MGIMO rector, spoke before the business youth of both countries and expressed his hope for this project to become a good start of closer relations between young French and Russian economic leaders.
Andrei Fursenko:
“Russia cherishes the historically important relations with Austria, and Vienna in particular”

We cannot say that the idea of holding the Sochi Dialogue as a means of interaction and communication through the institutes of civil society with overseas partners is quite new, states Andrei Fursenko, the co-chair of the Dialogue, aide to the President of the Russian Federation. “Now we have fewer barriers and constraints for this kind of communication. On the other hand, we are faced with an increasing need for direct engagement. We have no barriers in information sharing. Thus, issues related to authenticity of information and trust both towards the information and partners take on a different dimension. Cooperation in any area is nowadays primarily determined by the level of trust towards your partner.”

We cannot say that the idea of holding the Sochi Dialogue as a means of interaction and communication through the institutes of civil society with overseas partners is quite new, states Andrei Fursenko, the co-chair of the Dialogue, aide to the President of the Russian Federation. “Now we have fewer barriers and constraints for this kind of communication. On the other hand, we are faced with an increasing need for direct engagement. We have no barriers in information sharing. Thus, issues related to authenticity of information and trust both towards the information and partners take on a different dimension. Cooperation in any area is nowadays primarily determined by the level of trust towards your partner.”

MJ: Why did this trust issue arise? It is in part connected with the manner in which facts are presented, the emotional component of information sharing rather than facts themselves. Trust is what defines partnering relations, namely how much you trust the information, how much you are prepared to see and read only the true essence of this information without paying attention to the way it was presented to you. The Dialogues – St. Petersburg, Trianon and Sochi – and the contacts with Italy which are resuming in this format, are designed for people, humans rather than parties to understand and trust each other.

MJ: Why was the Forum named after the city Sochi? Was it a symbolic or practical decision?
I believe, both. Symbolism is that today Krasnodar Region is developing very fast, which is very much thanks to our Austrian partners. I mean first and foremost the Olympic complex was built owing to the active participation of Austrian firms. The practical component of that decision is the status of the region, Sochi in particular. Russia considers Sochi a very important tourist center both for summer and winter leisure activities.

Perhaps, the above-mentioned facts contributed to the idea of holding the “Sochi Dialogue”. And finally, the project was officially launched by Russian and Austrian presidents in Sochi. This city is changing greatly. It is one of the cultural and intellectual dominants of the country as well as the tourist center. I want to note the work of the Sochi-based “Sirius” educational center for talented children. It unites all Russia. It is a place for young Russian children from across the country who are talented at sports, art and science. And this is the format for engaging with Austria that we would like to promote.

MJ: At the St. Petersburg Forum’s “the Economy of Culture” Dialogue session there arose a question – which is primary: economy or culture? What do you think?
It reminds me of the eternal argument about the egg and the hen. If we take economy and culture broadly, then both appeared at the same time and cannot exist by themselves. Economy and culture are two important constituents of human existence and the development of any person and society. Speaking of the discussion itself, I’d stick to Alexandr Auzan, the well-known scholar, who...
believe that culture is a more strategic thing, it is much more stable and long-lasting. This means that culture can survive several economic formations absorbing them and remaining unique at the same time. In fact, it is a matter of taste. During the discussion, the two were answering to each other. Rather, the participants of the Dialogue voiced two crucial things. One is pragmatic—how culture is supported and conditioned economically. The other is that culture determines a person’s way of life including in economy. Culture of communication, building relationships

Culture is more strategic; it is much more stable and long-lasting. This means that culture can survive several economic formations absorbing them and remain unique at the same time.
Christoph Leitl: “The Sochi Dialogue is a platform for confidence-building”

Christoph Leitl, the Austrian co-chair of the Sochi Dialogue, honorary President of the Federal Chamber of Economics of Austria, shared interesting thoughts at the Triialog of Dialogues session, where the heads of the three dialogue formats – St. Petersburg, Trianon and Sochi one – discussed the possibility of synergy.

MJ: Russia’s President Vladimir Putin, while speaking at the inaugurating reunion of the Sochi Dialogue, said that the Forum ought to be “a new mechanism in bilateral cooperation.” What, in your opinion, is so new about it? As we all know, the whole idea of the Sochi Dialogue can hardly be considered brand new: On the one hand, there already are successful “role models” – the Dialogue platforms of Germany and France, and on the other hand, Austria and Russia have a long tradition of strong bilateral ties. With this in mind, our vision for this new established platform is not to reinvent the wheel, but to build confidence and promote dialogue. 2019 marks the birth of the Sochi dialogue, and we are eager to translate it into action.

For example, a completely new approach would be to focus on the most prominent cultural characteristics of Austria and Russia. Topics like national identity and multiculturalism. Questions like, how does Russia redefine its position in Europe? These questions, amongst many others, determine how our societies relate to each other and can be the source of trust and mutual understanding, but also of possible conflict and controversy. I am confident that we are facilitating a dialogue that truly matters, between prominent personalities and relevant topics.

MJ: How come the Sochi-Dialogue was given the name of Sochi and not after any other Russian city? Was it a symbolic, emotional decision, which is pretty Russian by nature, or was it out of practical reasons, which is pretty European? I am very sceptical of generalizations like “Russians, as emotional” vs. “Europeans, as rational”. The decision definitely had an emotional component – but not only for our Russian host. In my humble opinion, Sochi is positively associated with almost everyone who has ever visited this city! We couldn’t have picked a better namesake for our platform.

MJ: At the “Economy of Culture” session during the SPIEF, you had a minor disagreement with Russian colleagues on what should come first – culture or economy? You proved to be in favour of economy – why? And how did you reach a proper balance not to make culture a business?

“Economic questions are key” could serve as my own personal motto. I have been working in business throughout my entire career. Thus, my statement at Russia’s largest economic forum should not have been misconstrued nor surprised anyone. It is my second nature! But this does not mean that culture is negligible – on the contrary! It is also at the very centre of our forum. Not only does the private sector/economy have the power to bring people together – culture, sports and science do as well. These are the cornerstones of the Sochi Dialogue. As for “culture as a business” – we discussed this in St. Petersburg. Culture is already a business. These spheres cannot be disentangled. For example, Austrian culture is a core value for tourism. Keeping the proper balance between business and culture will be one of the challenges in the course of the Sochi Dialogue.

Leaving the cultural questions to the French? How would this make sense? Let me state, firstly, that Austrian museums and theatres – some of them are just as renowned as the ones you mentioned – are launching hundreds of events every year, cooperation with Russia being no exception. The exchange between these cultural institutions is inestimable,
and there is no doubt that cultural projects lead to more communication and a broader understanding between cultures, which is also the aim of the Sochi Dialogue. We need to differentiate between the work of concert halls, exhibition organizers, museums, festivals in both countries and our work. The Sochi Dialogue is a separate and independent format to be held annually on the highest level.

And, secondly, why focus only on the most famous and spectacular flagships of a country’s culture? There is so much more to it! Of course, the Sochi Dialogue involves some very prominent cultural institutions, but it is not only about advertising the Salzburg festival or showing artefacts from the KHM in the Hermitage or vice versa. We want to create a fresh approach, making the Sochi Dialogue an achievement in its own right.

MJ: The Sochi Dialogue pays enormous attention to youth exchange as well as the role the European young people who should play a key role in building the future of our continent. What, in your opinion, should the youth strategy be to build “a bright future”, as the Russian Bolsheviks used to call it? Who else should build the future if not the youth? Whenever I meet young people in Europe, it makes me proud to see their openness and fresh ideas. My vision of a bright future might somewhat differ from what the Bolsheviks were promoting. As a convinced European, I have initiated the EYFON youth festival in Neumarkt, where young people – including participants from Russia – are discussing the future of Europe through dialogue and exchange with peers. Only in the format of an open dialogue and uninterrupted communication, we can productively develop international partnership and achieve our goals.

MJ: At the SPIEF, you took part in the Trialogue of Dialogues round table. What do you think of the idea that MGIMO University came up with? Will the synergy of three dialogues be possible? And what do we need to do to make it happen?

It is without a doubt a good idea. Let’s see if Germany, France and Austria could find synergies in their mechanisms of bilateral cooperation with Russia. At this early stage, though, it is difficult to foresee specific steps. The Trialogue of Dialogues round table was a great chance to get to know each other. Now we can move in the same direction to “make it happen”. Maybe, in the future, also other countries will join the Dialogues with Russia.

MJ: During the SPIEF, you visited St. Petersburg Polytechnic University, where you met students, whom you gave a lively lecture on “Vectors of International Economic Development”. What subject you would choose for the MGIMO students and why?

In Russia’s major IR think tank, I would definitely choose a subject from world economy or international economic relations, because this is my major professional competence. And I would take the time to ask students of MGIMO about their ideas and visions for the future in Europe. But I am also always open for the students’ questions and thoughts.

One of the challenges that we face looking forward will be the way information is created, shaped and shared between us. It will be increasingly harder to distinguish between narratives that pursue ulterior motives, and objective and balanced reporting. It is therefore my conviction that we must establish a firm and solid foundation of trust upon which strong and long-lasting relations can foster and grow. This is one of the main purposes of the Sochi Dialogue, a platform resting on strong pillars of mutual understanding, dialogue and trust. Only then will we be able to truly and fully understand each other. The upcoming generation of diplomats, businessmen and women and journalists are the future of this initiative and we’re going to reap just what we sowed. So by planting the seeds of tolerance and respect we ensure a mutual understanding generations to come, focusing on unity, rather than division. I’m looking forward to engaging and discussing these topics with MGIMO students.
The Petersburg Dialogue is an established public and legal discussion forum set up in 2001 by Russian president Vladimir Putin and former German chancellor Gerhard Schröder. The idea behind the forum is to deepen the understanding between Russia and Germany, stimulate contacts between the two countries, and build constructive dialogue among members of all public life domains. In these almost 20 years, the Dialogue has become a major platform for discussing all topical public issues, as well as questions that have to do with the Russian-German relations. The Petersburg Dialogue also acts as a basis for joint projects in all kinds of areas ranging from economy to health care and culture. The Dialogue operates in the form of annual conferences that are held by turns in Russia and Germany. Throughout the year, ten working groups regularly gather to work on their corresponding tracks, which are Politics, Economy, Science and Education, Mass Media, Civil Society, Churches in Europe, Workshop of the Future, Culture, Health, and Ecological modernization. Wide-ranging exchange in experience and knowledge creates the conditions for the development of a major expert platform which is ready to respond to any challenge of the modern world, said Viktor Zubkov. Undoubtedly, this helps to carry out proper analysis of the global agenda.
This dialogue brings together different generations; a number of youth projects have been set up within the framework of the forum.

The forum exerts serious influence on the entire agenda of the Russian-German relations. It facilitates direct contacts between the two nations’ civil societies.

The forum exerts serious influence on the entire agenda of the Russian-German relations. It facilitates direct contacts between the two nations’ civil societies.
Polish Gambit

There is a chess opening called the Polish Gambit. Its goal is to get a lead by sacrificing a pawn and launching an attack. This opening is considered to be a trap. Russian-Polish relations to some extent resemble the above-mentioned opening, which seems to have lasted for several centuries. The Russians brought independence to the country, saved it from the Nazis, but the Poles are constantly acting as if they were a rabbit trying to put the skids under a bear instead of simply having a good talk. There is no real dialogue, but there is the Centre for Russian-Polish Dialogue and Understanding. Its employees, MGIMO graduates, do their work to let the people communicate against all odds.
When I received the offer to become the director of the fund, I thought it over for some time. Leaving my alma mater as my place of work was, perhaps, one of the most difficult decisions. At MGIMO, I received not only my theoretical knowledge but my first practical skills. During my master’s, I was moonlighting as press secretary for the Alumni Association, and I then worked for five years in the secretary team as an assistant to the rector.

The Russo-Polish cooperation came into my life unexpectedly, but quite naturally. My first experience was to organize tours to Warsaw and Gdansk for the MGIMO theater-studios where I acted during my student years. I afterwards learned more about Poland and prepared Russo-Polish conferences at MGIMO. I met prominent Slavic experts from Poland, with several of whom I became friends.

Being appointed director of the Russo-Polish Center for Dialogue and Understanding was a great responsibility as well as a big challenge. After all, Russo-Polish bilateral relations are undergoing a difficult and tense period. It is impossible to deny that there have been public and explicit anti-Russia provocations by Polish media. Unfortunately, statements by official figures and actions undertaken by Poland in relation to Russia have again convinced us that nothing conciliatory or constructive can be expected at this moment at the highest level.

But Polish society is heterogeneous, and we have not observed widespread Russo-phobia. My colleagues turned to me as I knew Polish. I was told to take a vocational retraining course to become a special correspondent, and I was sent to Poland. This trip was a complete U-turn in my career. I had a feeling that on election day I was to go to the Warsaw Club, where the “Civil Platform” opposition party and its followers were waiting for the results of the elections. It stood little chance of success, which is why they were easy to come up to and speak with. They were modest and available. Ultimately, it was the “Civil Platform” that won the elections. So, I gave my business cards

Unfortunately, my favorite interlocutors – ex-president of Poland Wojciech Witold Jaruzelski, and director Andrzej Witold Wajda – are no longer alive. But people come and go, so I always have a lot of work to do.

The Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper

ALExANDRA GOLUBOVA (International Relations, 2012; Master’s in 2014) Director of the Russo-Polish Center for Dialogue and Understanding, as well as a teacher at MGIMO

The Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper

ARIADNA ROKOSOVSKAYA (International Journalism, 2002)

I graduated from MGIMO with a knowledge of German and English languages. I learnt Polish basically at home, in the family. When I was an intern at the European Office of TASS, I made friends with a lot of Polish journalists specializing in Russia, and I always spoke Polish as if it were my mother tongue – I simply switched from one language to the other.

The Russo-Polish cooperation came into my life unexpectedly, but quite naturally. My first experience was to organize tours to Warsaw and Gdansk for the MGIMO theater-studios where I acted during my student years. I afterwards learned more about Poland and prepared Russo-Polish conferences at MGIMO. I met prominent Slavic experts from Poland, with several of whom I became friends.

Being appointed director of the Russo-Polish Center for Dialogue and Understanding was a great responsibility as well as a big challenge. After all, Russo-Polish bilateral relations are undergoing a difficult and tense period. It is impossible to deny that there have been public and explicit anti-Russia provocations by Polish media. Unfortunately, statements by official figures and actions undertaken by Poland in relation to Russia have again convinced us that nothing conciliatory or constructive can be expected at this moment at the highest level.

But Polish society is heterogeneous, and we have not observed widespread Russo-phobia. My colleagues turned to me as I knew Polish. I was told to take a vocational retraining course to become a special correspondent, and I was sent to Poland. This trip was a complete U-turn in my career. I had a feeling that on election day I was to go to the Warsaw Club, where the “Civil Platform” opposition party and its followers were waiting for the results of the elections. It stood little chance of success, which is why they were easy to come up to and speak with. They were modest and available. Ultimately, it was the “Civil Platform” that won the elections. So, I gave my business cards

The Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper

ARIADNA ROKOSOVSKAYA (International Journalism, 2002)

I graduated from MGIMO with a knowledge of German and English languages. I learnt Polish basically at home, in the family. When I was an intern at the European Office of TASS, I made friends with a lot of Polish journalists specializing in Russia, and I always spoke Polish as if it were my mother tongue – I simply switched from one language to the other.

The Russo-Polish cooperation came into my life unexpectedly, but quite naturally. My first experience was to organize tours to Warsaw and Gdansk for the MGIMO theater-studios where I acted during my student years. I afterwards learned more about Poland and prepared Russo-Polish conferences at MGIMO. I met prominent Slavic experts from Poland, with several of whom I became friends.

Being appointed director of the Russo-Polish Center for Dialogue and Understanding was a great responsibility as well as a big challenge. After all, Russo-Polish bilateral relations are undergoing a difficult and tense period. It is impossible to deny that there have been public and explicit anti-Russia provocations by Polish media. Unfortunately, statements by official figures and actions undertaken by Poland in relation to Russia have again convinced us that nothing conciliatory or constructive can be expected at this moment at the highest level.

But Polish society is heterogeneous, and we have not observed widespread Russo-phobia. My colleagues turned to me as I knew Polish. I was told to take a vocational retraining course to become a special correspondent, and I was sent to Poland. This trip was a complete U-turn in my career. I had a feeling that on election day I was to go to the Warsaw Club, where the “Civil Platform” opposition party and its followers were waiting for the results of the elections. It stood little chance of success, which is why they were easy to come up to and speak with. They were modest and available. Ultimately, it was the “Civil Platform” that won the elections. So, I gave my business cards

The Rossiyskaya Gazeta newspaper

ARIADNA ROKOSOVSKAYA (International Journalism, 2002)

I graduated from MGIMO with a knowledge of German and English languages. I learnt Polish basically at home, in the family. When I was an intern at the European Office of TASS, I made friends with a lot of Polish journalists specializing in Russia, and I always spoke Polish as if it were my mother tongue – I simply switched from one language to the other.

The Russo-Polish cooperation came into my life unexpectedly, but quite naturally. My first experience was to organize tours to Warsaw and Gdansk for the MGIMO theater-studios where I acted during my student years. I afterwards learned more about Poland and prepared Russo-Polish conferences at MGIMO. I met prominent Slavic experts from Poland, with several of whom I became friends.

Being appointed director of the Russo-Polish Center for Dialogue and Understanding was a great responsibility as well as a big challenge. After all, Russo-Polish bilateral relations are undergoing a difficult and tense period. It is impossible to deny that there have been public and explicit anti-Russia provocations by Polish media. Unfortunately, statements by official figures and actions undertaken by Poland in relation to Russia have again convinced us that nothing conciliatory or constructive can be expected at this moment at the highest level.

But Polish society is heterogeneous, and we have not observed widespread Russo-phobia. My colleagues turned to me as I knew Polish. I was told to take a vocational retraining course to become a special correspondent, and I was sent to Poland. This trip was a complete U-turn in my career. I had a feeling that on election day I was to go to the Warsaw Club, where the “Civil Platform” opposition party and its followers were waiting for the results of the elections. It stood little chance of success, which is why they were easy to come up to and speak with. They were modest and available. Ultimately, it was the “Civil Platform” that won the elections. So, I gave my business cards
to my new friends – I was surrounded by future lawmakers, ministers and even one of them the future Polish president! My special report was praised by the editorial board as one of the best contributions. I returned to Moscow in a new capacity – a journalist specializing in Poland, which I am now.

I enjoy some popularity in Poland and I managed to earn a good reputation there. I have made friends among Polish colleagues who will always support me and give me a helping hand.

In 2014, Bronislaw Komorowski, the then president, awarded me with the Order of the Polish Republic "for the contribution to creating in Russian society a positive image of Poland, unbiased and professional coverage of events in the country".

But what I appreciate most is communication with interesting people – directors Krzysztof Zanussi, Juliusz Machulski, Jerzy Hoffman, actors Jerzy Oskar Stuhr, Daniel Marcel Obrychcki and Beata Tyszkiewicz. Unfortunately, my favorite interlocutors – ex-president of Poland Wojciech Witold Jaruzelski, and director Andrzej Wiśniewski – are no longer alive. But people come and go, so I always have a lot of work to do.

ANNA CHERNOVA
School of International Journalism
(MGIMO, 2008), research degree
(MGIMO, 2014)
Spokesperson for the Centre for Russian-Polish Dialogue and Understanding

I have always had this bond with Poland. When I was a child, we often went there with my family, and also with a Scout unit – Polish Scouts are called ‘harcers’, and scouting is a very popular movement there. When I first came to Poland I camped out and slept in a sleeping bag. They say that the Poles feel with their heart, while the Russians, with their soul. I believe that we feel alike, and my friends and acquaintances in Poland will bear witness to it.

I didn’t spend much time on studying Polish; I just picked it up quite easily. Whenever I came to Poland I started speaking Polish, and that’s it. Later on I had the opportunity to study Polish at Jagiellonian University in Krakow. I specialized in other languages at MGIMO, but my graduate thesis was on Polish issues. I went to Warsaw especially for that purpose, to get acquainted with the work of Poland’s national news agency – PAP. When I was a junior student I started working for RIA Novosti news agency in Russia, and it was of interest for me to compare its work with that of a large news agency in Poland.

Having graduated from MGIMO and defended my graduation thesis on Polish issues, I decided to go on with my PhD research; my scientific supervisor was Artem Malgin, MGIMO Vice-Rector for General Affairs and Corporate Relations, an expert on Poland.

In the international division of RIA Novosti news agency, I also dealt mainly with Poland; while working in the pool of the Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs under Sergey Lavrov, I flew to Warsaw, among other places, as a member of the delegation. And the pinnacle of my Polish way in journalism was the position of a staff reporter in a news agency in Warsaw.

There have been so many meetings! I fondly remember the interview with Andrzej Wajda. He celebrated his 85th anniversary that year; his schedule was extremely tight with almost no time for meeting journalists. It was my colleague, Valery Masterov, who helped organize that meeting. All of a sudden I got a phone call and was informed that Mr. Wajda made some time for the meeting. I vividly remember how I rushed to “Illusion” cinema in Warsaw, my car skidding on the first ice, as I had not yet changed my summer tires to winter ones. We talked about his films, Russia, and his life in cinematography: “Dostoyevsky taught me everything I know about people”, he said.

It was through Pyotr Dostoevsky’s works that Andrzej Wajda discovered Russian art. He believed that the Russian writer “knew absolutely everything about people”. I remember celebrating Catholic Christmas at the house of my old friend, Pavel Lipkewich. Trying 12 traditional fish dishes and attending a midnight Mass in the cathedral are part and parcel of Christmas Eve in Poland. Warsaw is, indeed, a very special place to me… I got married there, and Pavel was the only witness at our wedding, except for Warsaw, of course, – it will remain on our wedding photos forever. A year and a half ago I was offered a position of the Spokesperson for the Centre for Russian-Polish Dialogue and Understanding. MGIMO helps us a lot in this work, as through the MGIMO community you can easily find the person you are looking for – it does work, indeed. And the “Polish community” in Moscow is rather small – everyone knows each other, or at least has heard about each other.

Here, at the Centre for Russian-Polish Dialogue and Understanding, we are engaged in an extremely important work – helping to build people-to-people ties between Russia and Poland. I am happy to see that the Polish people are eager to attend the Russian cultural festival SPUTNIK OVER POLAND, which we annually sponsor, or for instance, how Russian and Polish youth meet at the events we organize, as there are many like-minded souls in every country. It seems to me that Russian-Polish dialogue should start, first and foremost, between young people, who are sincere in their assessment and free from prejudice.

I remember how utterly surprised I was a while ago to find out that there were some prominent people among those between Poland and Russia. Young people are very flexible in this regard; they do not put up artificial barriers.

I am trying to make the work of a spokesperson more creative – for instance, now at the Centre we have a series of interviews “Culture of Russia in the Prism of People’s Lives”. I interview different interesting people from Russia and Poland – people of creative professions, whose lives are connected with both countries. In these interviews they share personal examples illustrating how we can find common ground and describing this interaction the way they see it. Interpersonal communication is the key to holding Russian-Polish dialogue under the given circumstances.

I believe that feeling with one’s heart and feeling with one’s soul is one and the same thing, but most importantly we shouldn’t engage in cold calculation and harboring resentment towards each other. Let others do it if they wish. There is practically no official dialogue between our countries at the moment, but we do know that, in fact, it has never stopped.
The decision to establish the discussion forum was made when the president of the Czech Republic Miloš Zeman visited Russia in 2017. This forum was meant to become a suitable platform for open informal discussions between civil societies on a wide range of issues related with global politics, shared history, and current bilateral relations.

In June, MGIMO hosted the Second Russian-Czech Discussion Forum. The forum brought together the co-chairmen, MGIMO’s rector Anatoly Torkunov and the director of the Institute of International Relations in Prague, Ondrej Ditrych, Special Representative of the Russian President for International Cultural Cooperation, Mikhail Shvydkoy, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic to Russia, Vitezslav Pivonka, Representative of the Office of the Czech President Petr Perunchik and others.

In his opening address Anatoly Torkunov, the rector of MGIMO, said that since the first forum held in Prague, meaningful cooperation has been established with the Czech colleagues on a number of tracks. That day MGIMO became a meeting point for heads of museums, art galleries, and major libraries. “We would like to continue developing our cooperation. Today, we will focus more not on the ties between states and not on political cooperation, but on something that lies at the foundation of any bilateral relations, and that is cross-cultural interaction and convergence of cultures,” said Torkunov.

Ondrej Ditrych, co-chairman of the forum, underscored the importance of topics that were chosen for discussion, which were “Cultural cooperation between Russia and the Czech Republic”, and “The Czechs in Russia and the USSR, and the Russians in Czechoslovakia and the Czech Republic.” Mikhail Shvydkoy reminded the participants about the centuries-old relations between the two countries and shed light on Russia’s cultural presence in the Czech Republic, as well as, expressed his hope for the increased presence of the Czech culture in Russia. He also read aloud the welcoming letter from Russia’s Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, who acknowledged the forum “as an increasingly useful platform for building up dialogue between the civil societies of Russia and the Czech Republic.” Petr Perunchik, in his turn, addressed the audience with the letter from the President of the Czech Republic Miloš Zeman, which stated that even though the forum was initiated by the leaders of the two countries, it is in no way a presidential project. “This Forum is a non-political platform for open and frank discussions. I call upon you to help eradicate old clichés and stereotypes, to seek open and fact-based dialogue without any ideologization of history,” read the letter.

Miloš Zeman, “Help to eradicate old clichés and stereotypes, seek open dialogue without any ideologization of history”
MJ: Mr de Montbrial, when I opened the book on a random page, the first word that caught my eye was “Samarkand.” By coincidence, MGIMO is organizing a forum for its alumni in May in Tashkent and Samarkand. It has changed a lot since I came there for the first time in 1984.

MJ: Indeed, and there is no USSR now. Independent states rose from its ashes, such as, Uzbekistan. You know, the strange thing is that initially they didn’t want to leave the USSR, but then Boris Yeltsin said that the Russian Federation should declare independence. Imagine Charles de Gaulle announcing in the middle of the Algerian War of Independence that France should become independent from Algeria. That’s how bizarre Yeltsin’s proposition sounded.

At the end of the day, these five Central Asian countries became independent, even though the way they were governed hadn’t fundamentally changed since the Soviet times. The leadership itself came from the Soviet elite, and Nursultan Nazarbaev is the most representative example. These countries didn’t see any democratic revolutions, they didn’t become fully independent in the blink of an eye, it took them some time to formulate their own foreign policies and national interests, as well as, decide on their own path of economic development. These countries’ interests were quite obvious, they wanted to have closer ties with Russia, and, of course, foster relations with China and the West.

Step by step, Russia worked out a new ideology for these Asian countries, which was named the Eurasian ideology. By the way, for Russia, the very meaning of the word “Eurasia” is different to that what we in France think it is. When I say “Eurasia”, I mean Europe and Asia, while the Russians limit that notion to the European and Asian part of the former Russian Empire. The idea behind this Eurasian ideology for Russia is to reinforce and expand relations with the former Soviet republics. However, in my mind, this ideology seems to be failing today because these countries are becoming increasingly aware of where their own interests lie. The situation we see is quite complicated and to some extent it resembles how the European powers competed for control over Central Asia in the 19th century, even though it’s still a far cry from that famous Great Game.

You mentioned the forum of MGIMO graduates in Uzbekistan. I can tell you that such events surely help Russia to forge closer ties with former USSR republics. I’ve been maintaining good friendly relations with MGIMO and its rector Anatoly Torkunov for quite some time already, and I know that the network that MGIMO’s alumni have formed is a powerful political force. Actually, the President of Azerbaijan Ilhan Aliyev and I discussed that phenomenon when we first met.

MJ: When was your first encounter with Russia?
I stepped on the Soviet soil for the first time in 1976 when I landed at Sheremetyevo Airport and spent several hours in the transit area on my way to Tokyo. Until then, the USSR was something absolutely abstract for me. Let me tell you a story. When I listened to the radio as
MJ: The overwhelming majority of MGIMO graduates dreamt of working in the international relations domain from childhood. Did you have the same dream? Absolutely not. It was quite a long journey for me. On the one hand, I was always attracted to some abstract scientific research, while on the other hand I never wanted to be working in one field all my life. I really liked creating something, I remember that I wanted to become an architect, and then, when I was 14, I thought I’d become president of the French Republic. This contradiction between doing something abstract and something very concrete is not unusual, many people run into it. Those who solve this problem become happy and succeed in life. Only if you overcome that contradiction can you find your way and do something that would make you whole. I did it, I solved it for myself by becoming both a researcher and, to some extent, an architect – I created a research institute that specializes in international relations and economy, as well as, a very powerful set of methodological tools for research. I think I am a very lucky person, and I am happy.

MJ: Your family name, de Montbrial, is not an ordinary one. You must belong to the aristocracy, to the political elite rather than the scientific elite that, let’s say, serves it. Is it another contradiction?

It is true that I belong to a very old French family, its roots can be traced back into history for a thousand years. My father was sometimes referred to as count, even though he didn’t occupy any of the highest positions at the Bank of France. He didn’t really like his job much because he was a poet, he wrote books. He was born in Nantes in 1912, where his father, my grandfather, worked at the French colonial administration.

MJ: The Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union. I would think of Nikita Khrushchev, Stalin and other major political figures holding sessions at some high place. It was some kind of mystery, and I actually never tried to solve it, never asked anyone about what that Supreme Soviet might be. Perhaps, deep inside I was afraid, like any other child, that if I get the answer, the mystery would disappear. Time and again the news featured some Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, and I would think of the same dream? Absolutely not. It was quite a long journey for me. On the one hand, I was always attracted to some abstract scientific research, while on the other hand I never wanted to be working in one field all my life. I really liked creating something, I remember that I wanted to become an architect, and then, when I was 14, I thought I’d become president of the French Republic. This contradiction between doing something abstract and something very concrete is not unusual, many people run into it. Those who solve this problem become happy and succeed in life. Only if you overcome that contradiction can you find your way and do something that would make you whole. I did it, I solved it for myself by becoming both a researcher and, to some extent, an architect – I created a research institute that specializes in international relations and economy, as well as, a very powerful set of methodological tools for research. I think I am a very lucky person, and I am happy.

MJ: Your family name, de Montbrial, is not an ordinary one. You must belong to the aristocracy, to the political elite rather than the scientific elite that, let’s say, serves it. Is it another contradiction?

It is true that I belong to a very old French family, its roots can be traced back into history for a thousand years. My father was sometimes referred to as count, even though he didn’t occupy any of the highest positions at the Bank of France. He didn’t really like his job much because he was a poet, he wrote books. He was born in Nantes in 1912, where his father, my grandfather, worked at the French colonial administration.

MJ: The overwhelming majority of MGIMO graduates dreamt of working in the international relations domain from childhood. Did you have the same dream? Absolutely not. It was quite a long journey for me. On the one hand, I was always attracted to some abstract scientific research, while on the other hand I never wanted to be working in one field all my life. I really liked creating something, I remember that I wanted to become an architect, and then, when I was 14, I thought I’d become president of the French Republic. This contradiction between doing something abstract and something very concrete is not unusual, many people run into it. Those who solve this problem become happy and succeed in life. Only if you overcome that contradiction can you find your way and do something that would make you whole. I did it, I solved it for myself by becoming both a researcher and, to some extent, an architect – I created a research institute that specializes in international relations and economy, as well as, a very powerful set of methodological tools for research. I think I am a very lucky person, and I am happy.

MJ: The Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union. I would think of Nikita Khrushchev, Stalin and other major political figures holding sessions at some high place. It was some kind of mystery, and I actually never tried to solve it, never asked anyone about what that Supreme Soviet might be. Perhaps, deep inside I was afraid, like any other child, that if I get the answer, the mystery would disappear. Time and again the news featured some Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, and I would think of the same thing.

MJ: The overwhelming majority of MGIMO graduates dreamt of working in the international relations domain from childhood. Did you have the same dream? Absolutely not. It was quite a long journey for me. On the one hand, I was always attracted to some abstract scientific research, while on the other hand I never wanted to be working in one field all my life. I really liked creating something, I remember that I wanted to become an architect, and then, when I was 14, I thought I’d become president of the French Republic. This contradiction between doing something abstract and something very concrete is not unusual, many people run into it. Those who solve this problem become happy and succeed in life. Only if you overcome that contradiction can you find your way and do something that would make you whole. I did it, I solved it for myself by becoming both a researcher and, to some extent, an architect – I created a research institute that specializes in international relations and economy, as well as, a very powerful set of methodological tools for research. I think I am a very lucky person, and I am happy.
It was evening on December 31, we simply had no other option but to drive further looking for a village or else. And we found one! The village was called Shoshone. It was already past midnight when we stopped at a motel and got a room, a very modest one. There was a restaurant right across the street with lots of people celebrating New Year. We went there, sat at a free table and ordered T-Bone Steak, that huge American steak. We were spending that night practically right the way we planned.

Suddenly, a waiter came up to us and asked much to our surprise, the way we planned.

MJ: Which is you most beloved creation?

IFRI, of course. This institute ranks highly in the reputable think tank index compiled by the University of Pennsylvania. IFRI is only 40, it’s still young. The Chatham House, for example, will be celebrating its 100th anniversary next year! So, my goal is not only to celebrate a centenary with IFRI in 60 years from now, but to help it become a more powerful analytical center for international studies that would be respected in France, Europe, and the whole world.

MJ: Why did you decide to create the World Policy Conference?

It was over ten years ago that I noticed that these kinds of closed forums stem from the Cold War, with confrontation and the standoff between two powers separated by the Atlantic in their very DNA. My personal experience of working with Russia convinced me that the Cold War is over and we are living in a new world. My aspiration was to create an organization that wouldn’t be caught up in alliances and confrontation, but would be working towards an open world in the long term. To use an old political science concept, it would promote the idea of peaceful coexistence, but with a new substance that would have nothing to do with the Cold War constructs. This new substance would imply that we should work together to benefit from our relations without imposing respective mindsets on our partners, recognize our differences and respect each other’s way of life. I used that idea of tolerance to build the foundation for the conference. This year, we’ll see its 12th iteration, as we call it, and every time I always try to engage Russia. Our first successful attempt was in 2008, when I managed to have Dmitry Medvedev, he was the Russian President at the time, and French President Nicolas Sarkozy address the conference. It was a resounding success, because both presidents wanted to meet unofficially on neutral territory to discuss the Georgian issue (i.e. Georgia’s aggression against South Ossetia) and they had the chance to do it. And it helped us launch our project!

Since then, I’ve always sought to encourage our Russian counterparts to participate in the conferences more actively, so we can move beyond the current disagreements and problems in this mini Cold War that we unfortunately have on our hands today.

MJ: Are you satisfied with how IFRI is doing in the year of its 40th anniversary?

My answer is yes, quite so. At the same time, I’d like to add that nothing in life should be taken for granted. A project like this is very hard to launch and very easy to lose. I want to underline that the WPC has no ties to the French government, it’s a completely independent platform managed by IFRI. It can very easily wilt and die if we don’t work on bolstering it. And I very much hope that Russia and MGIMO will lend it their friendship and support.

MJ: For decades, you’ve been interacting and working with MGIMO alumni. Could you describe what kind of people they are?

In a way, they are the best product of the Soviet system. They are very well-educated people with a sense of reality and the ability to maintain civilized relationships. It was MGIMO alumni that showed me something amazing: people who studied France in the USSR spoke splendid French without ever visiting France or indeed any foreign country! By the way, it was the same in China.

MGIMO survived a number of difficult times, first and foremost the turbulent ’90s. I remember very well how challenging it was for rector Torkunov, and it’s not that easy today either, I’m sure. So, I’d like to express the respect I feel for him, since one of the reasons we understand each other so well is because we’ve faced similar challenges. MGIMO is an outstanding brand. I know this year the university celebrated its 75th anniversary. I believe what you’ve achieved over this time is highly commendable. It’s an absolutely marvelous asset.

MJ: What’s your take on the Trianon Dialogue?

It’s a good initiative, but you know how many similar initiatives came to nothing. The Trianon Dialogue still exists largely thanks to the personal involvement of Anatoly Torkunov and MGIMO on Russia’s side and my longtime colleague Pierre Morel on the French side. When smart people on both sides seriously put their minds to it, there is a good chance of a fruitful dialogue. Always remember that even the best ideas are nothing unless they are promoted by competent enthusiasts.
Modern agriculture,” says Levin, “is a high-tech sector and one of the most rapidly developing ones not only in Russia, but in the world economy as a whole. One billion people – which is one fourth of the world’s working population – are working in AIC, and annual value of production amounts to 3 trillion USD. Today many people are talking about economic crisis and growth slowdown, but people will always need high-quality products. The population is growing, thus considering the growing demand, agriculture will keep developing and modernizing.

AIC is a sector of big money and, despite all the stereotypes, of high technology. Today, the sector successfully uses big data and artificial intelligence in managing all stages of agricultural production, UAVs – for monitoring and treatment of crops, unmanned autonomous tractors and combines, and robotic farms.

AIC technological development is driven by the need to increase its efficiency. The planet’s population is at 7.7 billion people and, according to UN forecasts, will increase up to 11 billion by the end of the century. It means production and sales growth for agriculture. Logistics and product delivery methods are developing and more and more people are getting access to all kinds of information thanks to the Internet and modern technology. Huge data bases are being accumulated about all elements of production and consumption. It leads to the fact that the market gets more and more players, competition is escalating, and trade is developing. As a result, the world trade volume in agricultural products and provisions has increased by 13% in the last 6 years and has surpassed 3.2 trillion USD.

Over the past few years Russia has lived through more than one crisis, and the only economic sector that hasn’t “plummeted” during these years was agriculture. There was a constant growth in the AIC during all of these last years. Russian AIC today is holding its ground against all leading countries. Domestic output is constantly growing and, as a result, so is export – last
year it accounted for almost 26 billion USD. Russia is the leader in terms of world’s wheat export; we are in the Top-3 in terms of total grain sector and in the Top-10 in terms of meat.

Russia’s domestic demand is fully satisfied when it comes to the majority of key products. In business language, it means that we saturated the market – within the country we have nowhere to grow. At the same time, while our market demands were being met, major agricultural companies have grown and compete with the world’s major players in business and technology.

Moreover, our country occupies the majority of black soil – the world’s most productive land. We have all the prerequisites to become the real “breadwinner” of the world. That’s exactly why starting from 2016 the first subprogram on export support was created. Its aim was to provide fundamental conditions for the support of our exporters. This subprogram was successfully implemented: in 2017 the country was supposed to reach export revenues of 17.9 billion dollars, but in fact exceeded this figure by more than a billion.

Last year Vladimir Putin, the president of Russia, set a new ambitious task – to increase agricultural export up to 45 billion dollars by 2024, in other words – to double today’s volume. To implement this task, the Government of Russia has approved National and Federal export development projects.

Future agricultural attachés and heads of agricultural representation offices abroad will be solving the most complicated task of eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers that are limiting import of Russian products to foreign markets. Food is the product that is most difficult to sell abroad, because the number of veterinary and phytosanitary restrictions runs into the thousands, and they also differ from country to country.

Almost all countries in the world have a system of agricultural representation offices. The US is the world’s main exporter of agricultural products. And there is a special Federal Foreign Agricultural Service in the States under the Ministry of Agriculture. It has 95 offices and it represents States’ interests in 171 countries.

We should also act upon world’s experience. Therefore, there is a special part within our “Export of agricultural products” project that includes the creation of a national agricultural export support system. Asia, more specifically China, is our number one market. It had 1.5 billion consumers whose well-being is growing with each year and who are changing their food preferences. Africa is the second most important market for us. In addition, we are working closely with CIS, European Union countries, and also considering South America.

Future agricultural attachés need to have knowledge in agriculture and international studies – two disciplines that are not at all connected within a standard educational program. You won’t find a person in Russia, who was taught to speak Swahili and to know the specifics of grain processing technology – it has just never existed before! That’s why Russia needs new and unique human resources in order to implement these ambitious tasks. “Attaché on agricultural issues” is a unique individual program that includes the most relevant modules adjusted for a very short studying period, as 2020 is when first graduates should already start working abroad.

"Attaché on agricultural issues" is a unique individual program that includes the most relevant modules adjusted for a very short studying period, as 2020 is when first graduates should already start working abroad.
AGRIATTACHE – A NEW MGIMO PROGRAM

They came to this program from different universities, but they are united by the desire to become specialists in international affairs that no university has yet trained. The Attaché of the Agricultural Issues program is as innovative as it sounds.
The Global Agrarian Markets, the unique program in which 40 students started this year, is run by MGIMO’s Department of International Agrarian Markets and Foreign Economic Activity in the Agro-Industrial Complex for the Russian Ministry of Agriculture in collaboration with Stavropol State Agrarian University, the Timiryazev Moscow Agricultural Academy and Kuban State Agrarian University. In July, the future AgriAttachés were sent to southern Russia, where the export potential of Russia’s agricultural industry is forged. The field training module started at Stavropol State Agrarian University prior to then moving to the Kuban. Lessons were held over a week and split into four educational modules focused on the specifics of agriculture, the development of agrarian production, and international and national statistics in the field of agriculture, as well as, on the basics of phytosanitary and veterinary requirements and on the economics of agricultural enterprises. The program also took place “in the field” at leading agricultural enterprises.

In July 2018, MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov and Minister of Agriculture Dmitry Patrushev signed a cooperation agreement on training a wide network of AgriAttachés. Lessons were held over a week and split into four educational modules focused on the specifics of agriculture, the development of agrarian production, and international and national statistics in the field of agriculture, as well as, on the basics of phytosanitary and veterinary requirements and on the economics of agricultural enterprises. The idea of creating a new department to prepare international agricultural specialists came to life a year ago. “In July 2018, MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov and Minister of Agriculture Dmitry Patrushev signed a cooperation agreement,” said Natalia Cherner, the director of the program. “According to the minister, by 2024, Russia will have a wide network of attaches in the agro-industrial complex. In order to increase exports of agricultural products and reduce production costs when entering new markets, as well as, to increase the competitiveness of domestically-produced goods exported abroad, expanding the breadth of goods exported. MGIMO has always prepared qualified personnel for the international sphere, so we therefore are tracking the needs of the market and the priorities of Russia’s state policy.”

What is unique about this absolutely new product on the education market is that the program was developed around the juncture of three disciplines – agriculture, management and diplomacy, Cherner said. “It includes a basic set of the foundational disciplines provided by MGIMO’s own educational standards...
we consider the economy of the Russian agricultural sector in the context of the world division of labor

Stavropol State Agrarian University graduates of the World Economy master’s program have the competencies to work with foreign partners in agricultural markets. Within the framework with MGIMO-University, they will train students of the joint master’s program the skills that allow navigating in the economy of agricultural enterprises, to understand the production features, crop sale, and livestock products to form an idea about the organization of agricultural raw materials processing.

Our University closely collaborates with a variety of agricultural enterprises of the Stavropol Kray. Thus, training sessions and workshops based on our partner enterprises will be a mandatory element of the training within the International Agricultural Markets master’s program. The knowledge and skills allow you to fully understand the economic foundations of agricultural production and to know the demands of foreign customers.

The learning process in the program is therefore built on the theoretical basis received in lectures that are supported by practice. These two components were especially close during the module in

Thanks to the selection of professional competencies, graduates will be recruited into Russia’s state organs and the business sector

For example, in Stavropol, we learned about the system of quality control for food enterprises that meet all international standards and then got some practical experience at the Stavropol Dairy Plant, where we observed the entire technological process and were provided with details on how to exert control over the whole production chain, from the field to the feeding stage and finally to production. Enough time was allotted to the basics of phytosanitary controls over the ecosystem and plant-based products. We learned about phytosanitary monitoring, plant diseases and different types of damage caused by insects, as

The future image of the agro-industrial complex will be very diverse,” Trukhachev said. “The Internet of things and the so-called “internet of everything” already unites the entire production chain into a single ecosystem: from the creation of new fertilizers, breeds of animals and plants to the production of products that can radically improve human properties. Industry 4.0 robotic technologies allow using most of the agricultural machinery in an unmanned mode. International Agricultural Market’s program graduates will need to consider global trends and sustainable trends that have a significant impact on the medium – and long-term prospects for the development of agriculture. The educational process in the program is planned in such a way that it integrates the competencies that are difficult to combine at first glance. Graduates are to be well-versed in the peculiarities of the modern Russian agriculture development to assess the opportunities of domestic producers and restrictions existing on world markets to increase the production of competitive agricultural products. They need to be keen upon modern marketing technologies, including methods of product promotion, as well as ways to increase sales based on the constant demand study and possible competitive advantages of agricultural products in the socio-economic conditions of specific countries. As professionals working in the digital economy, the program graduates should use management tools based on big data to make effective management decisions to promote Russian goods in international markets.

Krasnodar, where we had the opportunity to speak with producers.

For example, in Stavropol, we learned about the system of quality control for food enterprises that meet all international standards and then got some practical experience at the Stavropol Dairy Plant, where we observed the entire technological process and were provided with details on how to exert control over the whole production chain, from the field to the feeding stage and finally to production. Enough time was allotted to the basics of phytosanitary controls over the ecosystem and plant-based products. We learned about phytosanitary monitoring, plant diseases and different types of damage caused by insects, as

Nowadays, the agro-industrial complex claims to be the main demonstration site of the new technological revolution results says the rector of Stavropol State Agrarian University, professor Vladimir Trukhachev. Stavropol State Agrarian University, located in the South of Russia is one of the MGIMO-University partners in the implementation of the International Agricultural Markets master’s program of the Russian Ministry of Agriculture.

“The future image of the agro-industrial complex will be very diverse,” Trukhachev said. “The Internet of things and the so-called “internet of everything” already unites the entire production chain into a single ecosystem: from the creation of new fertilizers, breeds of animals and plants to the production of products that can radically improve human properties. Industry 4.0 robotic technologies allow using most of the agricultural machinery in an unmanned mode. International Agricultural Market’s program graduates will need to consider global trends and sustainable trends that have a significant impact on the medium – and long-term prospects for the development of agriculture. The educational process in the program is planned in such a way that it integrates the competencies that are difficult to combine at first glance. Graduates are to be well-versed in the peculiarities of the modern Russian agriculture development to assess the opportunities of domestic producers and restrictions existing on world markets to increase the production of competitive agricultural products. They need to be keen upon modern marketing technologies, including methods of product promotion, as well as ways to increase sales based on the constant demand study and possible competitive advantages of agricultural products in the socio-economic conditions of specific countries. As professionals working in the digital economy, the program graduates should use management tools based on big data to make effective management decisions to promote Russian goods in international markets.
Alexander Trubilin, the rector of the Kuban State Agrarian University situated in the south of Russia, believes that the benefit of the training program for specialists who are not only able to work in the agro-industrial complex of Russia but also to understand the features of international agricultural markets is quite obvious. The Kuban State Agrarian University has become one of MGIMO-University’s partners in the implementation of the International Agricultural Markets master's program.

Network programs are the most effective way to train highly qualified specialists in a relatively short time,” Alexander Trubilin stresses. “This task can be solved only by joint efforts if each module of the program is led by the most qualified teachers using the best practices that have been accumulated by leading universities. Together with our colleagues, we will be able to give the participants of the program a comprehensive idea of how agriculture is developing in Russia and abroad, and what major industry trends should be paid attention to. The strong points of MGIMO-University and Kuban State Agrarian University are good facilities and resources while the Kuban State Agrarian University is proud of two effectively functioning educational and experimental farms: Kuban and Krasnodarskoye. After all, to promote domestic products, equipment, technologies in both plant and cattle breeding. Both farms have well-equipped classrooms that provide the best opportunity for education and practice. We use them for educational purposes.

The program was designed in such a way that the knowledge gained complemented what we learned in the Kuban, such as, the specifics of international and national statistics in agriculture, the economics of agriculture, international legal regulations in agriculture and the specifics of legal and arbitration practices regarding international and foreign rights as applied to the agrarian sector.”

***

“Russian agriculture,” said Dmitry Rodriguez-Popov, a student, “is witnessing great export potential among all sectors of the Russian economy. However, as shown in discussions with representatives from major enterprises (the Rodina and Rossiya collective farms), they have not yet figured out how to enter foreign markets. In us, the future agricultural attaches, they see those who will ensure and guide their activities abroad. I remember learning about the foundations of growing crops and raising animals, as well as, about phytosanitary regulations and legal support on deals in the agro-industrial complex, not to mention lectures on topics such as General
characteristics of agricultural legislation in Russia and abroad” and “Procedures for mediating regulatory issues in the agro-industrial sector” with their detailed exposition of theory, which we later practiced in a case involving a dispute between two commercial organizations. Students performed as both sides in the dispute and as the mediator. We sometimes wonder whether anyone could have imagined a year ago that MGIMO master’s students would be walking among cowsheds and not along the corridors of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, learning about the conditions for maintaining livestock or listening to a fascinating lecture by an agronomist in Sad Gigant gardens about cultivating apples.

The southern hospitality we received throughout all of the modules deserves special mention. In Stavropol, each excursion ‘in the field’ included plentiful meals with several courses consisting of dozens of dishes. The food was exclusively natural, homegrown, harvested and prepared by our hosts. We lived in luxurious rooms in the university’s dormitories and had free access to the university’s sports facilities. In Krasnodar, the meal at the Fanagoria factory, which included a similarly festive spread, was accompanied by a performance by a Cossack ensemble. It was unforgettable!”

Nikita Sklyarov saw an announcement about the AgriAttaché program on the MGIMO website, and it immediately drew his interest. “I was a student in my second year of the International Political
Consulting Master’s program and I was thinking about how I would make it work in the international relations sector. This program looked like a great opportunity for this. Moreover, a background in political science is not useless but, in turn, I believe it will allow me to locate stakeholders in the agriculture sector in the target country, to understand how the players have a direct influence on the ‘rules of the game’, which become specific legislation and regulations for agriculture. This understanding allows for the building of a more effective work strategy in regard to the promotion of our agricultural products in a particular country. That aside, knowledge of political science gives an understanding of the specifics of working with state organs in other countries and an understanding of which ministries and institutions regulate issues and which affect the interests of our producers.

I am convinced that this program will be a wonderful addition to my education. I would consider its greatest advantage to be the combination of the theoretical and the practical in the learning process. At the Rossiya collective farm, we became closely acquainted with the process of maintaining and breeding the remarkable Hereford cows. It is interesting that some of them are hornless, and that this is a competitive advantage since it keeps the cows from injuring one another in case of conflict. It was interesting to learn about daily weight gain and how often they feed them. The farm has a high pedigree, and their livestock is ideal for purchasing and breeding. They presented the pride of the farm to us, a bull called Mars that weighed as much as a car at 1,600 kilograms and that regularly represents the farm at different exhibitions. Because of his weight, the bull can’t run and live among the herd, as cows can’t bear his weight.

The experience gained from speaking with practitioners during the final away module will play an important role in our professional development. In particular, we discussed the Russian grain industry in a roundtable format with representatives of state organs of the Krasnodar Region, representatives of European businesses in Russia (e.g. Syngenta, Klaas and others), and Russian grain business. They emphasized the importance of the path we were preparing for, and they said that what they would expect from us in the future would be an active dialogue with state organs of other countries with the goal of removing barriers for our products, as well as, to explain the benefits provided by our companies in their markets. 
A MGIMO delegation took part in the Saint Petersburg International Economic Forum, initiating the Trilogy of Dialogues.
The development of Russia in all fields is underway in accordance with an upgrade program as life dictates. However international relations specialists say this is due to external pressure.

Anatoly Torkunov. “Therefore, we in the Trianon Dialogue started first by creating a powerful Internet portal for greater cooperation. It is in great demand, and we are constantly working on it.”

“The Sochi dialogue, the ‘youngest’ of the three, is ready to pass on the experience of its fellow,” said Christoph Leitl, President of Eurochambres, the Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry. “Countries and governments either sign contracts or, in reverse, initiate conflicts, but people are always interested in stability, peace and friendship, and the goal of the dialogues is to help them in this. The problems we have should be solved by politicians, and we can support them fully at the civil society level, where relations between those united by culture are important. As for multilateral projects, there are many possibilities for cooperative, active work. I really like the name ‘Trialogue’, because we are inviting other countries to it.”

Andrei Fursenko, an aide to President Putin and Co-chair of the Sochi Dialogue – who in his role as Minister of Education and Science worked as a co-chair of the Austrian-Russian Intergovernmental Commission emphasized that humanitarian relations between countries not only go together with the development of economic and political agendas but define bilateral relations as well. “In the modern world, interpersonal humanitarian relations not only follow behind economics, but they very much define them,” he said. “Political conflicts are far more economic than ideological.”

The discussion of issues of public diplomacy continued as part of the press conference “MGIMO’s Beyond Diplomacy: Informal Dialogues and Interdisciplinary Skills”. Torkunov spoke about the new Master’s programs with interdisciplinary...
features that the university is offering in collaboration with Microsoft, ADV and NVIDIA, MIPT, Karakan Invest and MISiS, including in sports diplomacy and global agrarian markets.

The round table “The Economics of Culture”, part of the Austrian-Russian Sochi Dialogue, was also interesting. Zelfira Tregulova, General Director of the State Tretyakov Gallery, spoke about the special role of museums. “This is a place where, on the one hand, a person experiences unbelievably strong emotions that they might lack in life, but they also form a different view. A dialogue with real art leads to thinking outside the box, and it impels people to be more creative, which is the key to the future of the country. People feel this instinctively and go to museums, from a feeling of self-preservation.”

Sabine Haag, General Director of the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna, supported Tregulova. “Culture is the medium for everyone,” she said. “It helps individuals develop, and we need creative leaders in all fields. Culture is absolutely directed towards the future.”

Concerning the declared theme of “The Economics of Culture”, some interesting figures were discussed at the session. For example, the share of state funds in museum budgets in Russia has decreased, but the share of sponsorship money is growing “at an unbelievable rate”. While state funds accounted for 68 percent of the Tretyakov Gallery’s budget in 2014, the share of state financing had dropped to 32 percent by 2018. Today, in the Pushkin Museum, the Tretyakov Gallery and most museums, all exhibitions, publications and educational projects are organized with funds from sponsors. This is creating a serious problem, as no one knows for how long this funding can continue, while the government can think, “Well, they can manage without us.” However, the maintenance of a museum, its development, and changes to its infrastructure are the responsibility of the state, because museums educate people about the future on which they will rely.

Another important function of museums is to speak when the guns fall silent. “Today, when political relations are tense,” said Marina Loshak, Director of the Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, “when economic ties are failing, we all see how intense cultural contacts are. We have a special mission these days, as well as, the mission to introduce the world to Russian art.”

The discussion then turned back to the initial argument about what is more important: culture or economics? It started with the renowned academic Alexander Auzan. He considers culture to
be more important than economics. “The costs of cultural changes compared to the transformation of economic systems is very high, at least forty years. The prophet Moses was right when he took forty years to complete the first such cultural operation in history.”

Leitl, being an economist, did not agree with this thesis, but he did make a concession. “We are not here to decide what is more important – the chicken or the egg. We want to think systematically. I consider both culture and economics to be important. For me, the decisive factor is that culture leads to the development of creativity, which we combine with all of our thinking. From this comes innovation and improvements in the standard of living.”

Why does business support culture? “Major businessmen support the future,” Tregulova said. “This is a powerful internal impulse, and they have a different horizon of thinking. This includes not only financial support but at times incredible, interesting ideas.”

The delegation from MGIMO attended the forum over several busy days. At the ceremony to give awards for international cooperation and the development of foreign economic activity, Anatoly Torkunov, Rector of MGIMO, received an award for his prominent contribution to the development of Russia’s human resources in regard to foreign economic directions and the development of high standards of education in international business.

Torkunov met with UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres and signed agreements with the governments of the Leningrad, Ryazan and Penza regions. The agreements foresee collaboration between MGIMO and the Russian regions to develop the best traditions of potential of the regions. Governors Alexander Drobotenko (Leningrad Region), Ivan Belozertsev (Penza Region) and Nikolai Lyubimov (Ryazan Region) all took part in the signing ceremony.

At the MGIMO stand with Sergey Levin, Deputy Minister of Agriculture, the signing of an agreement with Corteva Agriscience to develop the Master’s program “Global Agrarian Markets” took place. MGIMO’s Economic Club presented a model to attract investment called “Russia and the World: Creating a Competitive Edge 4.0”. Andrey Baykov, Vice-Rector for Masters and International Programs, took part in the session on the “Role Played by Young Scientists in Implementing International Scientific and Technological Projects”. Viktor Sumsky, Director of the MGIMO ASEAN Center, moderated an EAEU-ASEAN business dialogue.

MGIMO Rector signed coordination agreements with the governments of the Leningrad, Ryazan and Penza regions
Lyudmila Potushanskaya was born on May 24, 1918. Her mother, Bella, worked as a primary school teacher, spent all day at school, and was not interested in her family. “Mom took all our books to school. "Why do we need books at home? my mother asked. “Schoolchildren need them much more.”

Thinking about her future career, Lyudmila remembered her father’s French education and entered the Moscow State Linguistic University. “I fell in love with this language immediately and I adore it throughout my life. It is as beautiful as Russian. But most of all I loved the grammar, the structure of the language which gives it transparency and clarity.”

She was at the Institute, when she heard the news about the start of the Great Patriotic War. “It was Sunday, June 22, 1941. I came to the exam, and the terrible news hit like a bolt out of the blue. So, I returned home. When the evacuation began, dad was sent to the city of Kokand in the Uzbek SSR. He began to work there as a Deputy Director of a chemical plant, and I got a job as a quinizer there. There were outbreaks of malaria in Central Asia, and quinine was extremely necessary.”

Life was a challenge, we were starving. “I was always hungry, so my mother asked me to go to bed early. I remember my father, who was a very intelligent and good-mannered man, that could not cope with constant hunger so he picked up cabbage leaves from the floor to eat.”

Returning to Moscow, Ludmila resumed her studies in the Institute but soon moved to the Military Institute of Foreign Languages, where they had teaching courses for those who were going to work in female classes of the Soviet military schools. Then she was recommended to the French Department at MGIMO University. “When I was in the office of the rector, Mr. Ryabensky, he suddenly asked me: “Are you going to wear a coat in the class?” It was a joke. "If you are not going to hire me, I won’t take it off.” I answered. “And I don’t know whether you will hire me or not.” Mr. Ryabensky realized that the only hunger in his office was his one, and appreciated my diplomatic approach. He liked me, so he just asked his secretary: “When should Lyudmila come to start her work?”

First of all, speaking about her work at MGIMO University, Lyudmila Putushanskaya always kindly mentioned those with whom she worked and those whom she taught. “I was very lucky to meet wonderful people, and they always enjoyed my company, no one ever hurt me. I loved all my students, always stood up for them. If it is my student, he or she is untouchable!”

Lyudmila Putushanskaya was proud of her friendship with MGIMO University legend Vitaly Kalator, who was a Professor of Law. “I loved him very much. He was a perfectly benevolent man, with not a whit of envy in him. He was a very elegant man, striking in his beauty. But he had been seriously wounded and had lost both hands on the battlefield. Can you imagine, that he went on his business trips alone? It’s unbelievable! He has never experienced any household problems, as he had perfected a self-service system, he could do everything himself! I will never forget our MGIMO University trip to France. When our group returned to Moscow, I talked about Vitaly more than about the country of my dreams! He was absolutely amazing! He helped me with the chair when we were at the restaurant. When we got off the bus and he cared about my coat. This man had an amazing cultural background! A sense of humor is what I like in people the most. Once Vitaly was looking at the Paris photo, in which I stand next to the statue of Venus de Milo in the Louvre. “My God, is that you?!” he exclaimed. I grasped his joke and played him along: “Alas, no!”
Elena Zeltyn is one of the founders of the English teaching tradition at MGIMO-University. She began teaching at MGIMO-University in 1944, the very year of its foundation.

The English teaching tradition at MGIMO is a brand created by Elena and her colleagues. “We created such an educational system to give our students the maximum practice of the English language. They have to understand, speak, write, and translate correctly.”

In London, at one of the universities where I wanted to go, I was told after the conversation: “We have nothing to teach you, you know everything.”

On the other hand, our students have a certain passion, the desire to know the language better, as they are going to become diplomatic workers in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

For 60 years of her work at MGIMO-University, Elena Zeltyn never climbed the academic hierarchy: “I have never wanted to hold ranks; I was a senior lecturer. Other things were more important to me: I wanted to be useful to MGIMO because I devoted my whole life to it; it was my home, and the English Department was my family.”

What is the most pleasant thing that you remember over the decades of work at MGIMO? “Of course, it is when graduates thank you for knowledge,” – she says. “Once at the University I met Julius Vorontsov. He was a remarkably gifted and good-mannered student, a great intellectual. He has become a talented, great diplomat.” Julius told me: “When I became the Ambassador to India, Indira Gandhi was really impressed by my splendid English. And I answered that I had had a great teacher.”
12th RISA Convention at MGIMO

Last year’s Russian International Studies Association (RISA) Convention was a unique platform that brought together more than 1,500 Russian and foreign experts and scholars for over 70 sessions devoted to various issues regarding international relations.

Alexander Torkunov, MGIMO Rector and RISA President, opened the first plenary session with a statement. Among the speakers were Hang Choon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport of the Kingdom of Cambodia; María Fernanda Espinosa, President of the United Nations General Assembly; and Andrei Melville, Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

President of the United Nations General Assembly, for the 73rd session; Alexander Yakovenko, Rector of the Diplomatic Academy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs; and Rinat Gogonov, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences, spoke about their experience working together more than 1,500 Russian and foreign experts and scholars for over 70 sessions devoted to various issues regarding international relations.

Session was devoted to great Soviet and Russian diplomats. As the minister noted, a number of milestones of great Soviet and Russian diplomats are being celebrated this year, such as those of Andrey Gromyko, Anatoly Dobrynin, Oleg Troyanovsky, Evgeny Primakov and Yuri Vorontsov. These people made history not just in diplomacy but for Russia in general. They made an invaluable contribution to ensuring the security of our country and creating the conditions for its progressive development.

"We are doing our best to make the names of our remarkable colleagues remain a part of our national heritage," Lavrov emphasized.

In this respect, the opening of a monument dedicated to Evgeny Primakov will be a landmark event. An exhibition devoted to Andrey Gromyko, a former head of the Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs, opened in September. 

"Our goal is not only to pay tribute to our senior colleagues whose achievements are now in textbooks on diplomacy and international relations, but also to ensure intergenerational continuity, which is even more important," Lavrov said. Anatoly Torkunov, MGIMO Rector, also recalled the names of famous diplomats, all of whom, to an extent, have a connection to MGIMO. "All of these people are not just names that we respect. It’s very important for us to continue working and keeping their memory alive," the rector noted.

Relatives, diplomats, scholars and politicians came to the event to share their memories about their colleagues and mentors. Alexey Gromyko, Director of the Institute of Europe and a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences, spoke about his grandfather, Andrey Gromyko, a Soviet and Russian diplomat. Sergey Krylov, an MGIMO professor and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, shared his memories of the elder Gromyko as well. Suzanne Massie, Special Advisor to the President of the United States (1984-1988), and Alexander Bessmertnykh, President of the MGIMO Alumni Association, President of the International Foreign Policy Association, and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, shared stories about Anatoly Dobrynin, Alexander Panov, Head of the Department of Diplomacy at MGIMO and Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, told the audience about Oleg Troyanovsky and his family. Dobrynin and Primakov told Torkunov about their experience working with distinguished diplomats.

Leonid Slutsky, Chairman of the Committee on International Affairs of the State Duma of the Russian Federation, also recalled his colleagues. The speakers were accompanied by unique photographs that captured moments from the lives of those being commemorated.

At the end of the session, Polad Bulbuloglu, Azerbaijan’s Ambassador to Russia, congratulated MGIMO on its 75th anniversary and presented Anatoly Torkunov with a medal dedicated to "100 Years of the Republic of Azerbaijan’s Diplomatic Service" in accordance with an order by Elmar Mammadyarov, Azerbaijan’s Minister of Foreign Affairs.

The convention’s cultural program was remarkable for all attendees, as well as for MGIMO faculty and students. MGIMO students prepared a special show, Grigory Leps performed a concert in the Conference Hall and Nikas Safronov, an Honoured Artist of the Russian Federation, opened an exhibition titled "The World Through the Eyes of MGIMO Students and Alumni". In the atrium of the new building was a personal exhibition by Igor Liyev, a senior teacher in the department, called "A Circle Squared: Unusual MGIMO".

***

Within the frameworks of RISA Convention MGIMO hosted "Academic
Diplomacy: The Place and Role of Leading Russian Universities”, which was organized by the Russian Association of Leading Universities and the Russo-French Trianon Dialogue.

The main topic of discussion was the role of the academic community in improving dialogues in international civil society. The conference included three sessions. The opening session, “Track Two Diplomacy and Dialogue in Civil Societies”, brought together representatives of five dialogues. Among the speakers were Anatoly Torkunov, MGIMO Rector and Co-chair of the Trianon Dialogue; Ernesto Ferlenghi, President of Confindustria Russia and Co-chair of the Russian-Italian Civil Society Dialogue Forum; Nobuo Shimotomai, a professor at Hosei University and a co-author of Russian-Japanese Relations as Parallel History; Inna Tsoi, Head of the Directorate of the Russia-Republic of Korea Dialogue Forum; Thomas Spazier, Counselor at the Embassy of Austria in Russia; Olivier Kempf, Founder of La Vigie, an analytical publication, and a researcher at the Foundation for Strategic Studies (France); and Caroline Galactéros, Director of Geopragma, a think tank. Artem Malgin, MGIMO Vice Rector and Program Coordinator for the Trianon Dialogue, moderated the session.

The discussion focused on the place of dialogue mechanisms in Track Two diplomacy and their efficiency, the objectives of existing dialogues and the role of universities in their agenda.

The second session, “Beyond University: The New Role of the University and the Experience of Russia and France”, brought together representatives of leading universities and educational experts. The participants shared their vision of the role of universities in the modern international context. Presentations were given by Sergey Andryushin, Vice Rector for International Affairs at St. Petersburg State University; Sébastien Leoni, Director of European and International Development at the Conservatoire national des arts et métiers (CNAM); Boris Zhelenev, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education’s Department of International Cooperation; Caroline Lehni, Deputy Director for International Relations at the Institute of Political Studies (Sciences Po Strasbourg); Viktoria Panova, Vice Rector for International Relations at the Far Eastern Federal University; Marina Petrova, Director of the MGIMO Environment, Anne de Tinguy, Professor Emeritus at the Center for International Studies of Sciences Po (CERI Sciences Po); Igor Bartsits, Director of the Institute of Public Administration and Civil Service at RANEPA; and Vera Vishnyakova, Head of the School of International Regional Studies at the Higher School of Economics.

The final session, which was organized by RANEPA and the ASEAN-Russia Forum on Education, was a platform for discussing international cooperation in the education sector, which often serves as a mechanism to iron out differences between countries. The session was opened by MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov and his counterpart from RANEPA, Vladimir Mau. The participants included Zoya Zaitseva, Regional Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia at QS; Anna Kuznetsova, Children’s Rights Commissioner for the President of the Russian Federation; Kyi Shwin, Rector of Yangon University of Foreign Languages; Pierre Clive Agius, Ambassador of Malta to Russia; Javier Torres, Education Adviser at the Embassy of Spain in Russia; Boris Zhelenev, Deputy Director of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education’s Department of International Cooperation; Oleg Ziborov, First Deputy to the Head of the Kikot Moscow University of the Interior of Russia; Ekaterina Beresneva, Deputy Executive Director of the Alliance of Russian and Spanish Universities; Walter Ferrara, First Counselor for Cultural Affairs at the Embassy of Italy in Moscow; Igor Sinyakinka, Director of the Moscow Office of CampusFrance; and other experts in international educational cooperation. The moderators were Igor Bartsits, Director of the Institute of Public Administration and Civil Service at RANEPA, and Tamara Shashikhina, Director of MGIMO’s European Studies Institute.
The first plenary session was opened with a statement by MGIMO Rector Anatoly Torkunov. Among the participants of the opening ceremony were Robert Matheus Michael Time, Deputy Secretary-General of ASEAN; Pavel Zenkovich, First Deputy Minister of Education of the Russian Federation; Hang Chuon Naron, Minister of Education, Youth and Sport of the Kingdom of Cambodia; and Leonor Briones, Secretary of Department of Education of the Republic of the Philippines. The session was moderated by Viktor Sumsky, Director of MGIMO ASEAN Centre.

In his welcome speech Anatoly Torkunov noted that “in 2018 Russia and ASEAN agreed to elevate their Dialogue Relations to a Strategic Partnership. Ironically, global and regional contexts contribute to a new understanding between Russia and ASEAN that they need each other amid growing tensions in international relations”. The Rector also stressed that Russia and South-East Asia face an important challenge to renew and strengthen relations, to make them more substantive through joint practical actions.

MGIMO’s Rector also spoke about the Forum on Education which aims to
The first session of the Forum was devoted to the best practices in basic education and moderated by Roman Kotov, MGIMO Gorchakov Lyceum. Among the speakers were Nepomuceno Malaluan, Undersecretary of the Department of Education of the Republic of the Philippines; Dmitry Savin, Deputy Head of the Sirius Educational Centre; Ilan Asqolani, Senior Project Officer at ASEAN Foundation; Gerald Rybkin, Deputy Director of the Department of General Secondary Education of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Kingdom of Cambodia; Elena Zelenina, Deputy Director of the Boarding School for Gifted Children named after N. N. Dubinin; Chotima Nooprik, Educator at the Department of Basic Education of the Kingdom of Thailand; and Larisa Tokareva, Deputy Director of Stavropol School No.45.

The moderator of the second session entitled “Best Practices in Student Mobility” was Andrey Baykov, Vice-Rector for Graduate and International Programs at MGIMO. The list of speakers included Dmitry Korotkov, Founder of the International Scientific Communication Consortium; Ludhini Volva, Programme Support Officer at ASEAN Foundation; Olga Yaroshenko, Vice-Rector for International Affairs at South Ural State University; Baiduri Widanarko, Chairperson of ASEAN University-Netwerk–ASEAN Credit Transfer System; Alexander Tamitskiy, Director of the School of Social Sciences, Humanities and International Communication at Northern (Arctic) Federal University; Somkiat Kamolpan, Educator at the Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation of the Kingdom of Thailand.

The afternoon RISA plenary session entitled “Diplomacy: Experience and Legacy” was opened with a statement by Sergey Lavrov, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs. The work of the ASEAN–Russia Forum on Education would continue on October 22d. The participants discussed cooperation in technical and vocational education training (TVET) and in teaching STEM disciplines (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics). One of the sessions was to be organized by the Association of Leading Universities and was to deal with the features of cooperation in education in the modern international context. The programme of the second day also included a Thailand–Russia roundtable on the peculiarities of raising gifted children.

The Forum was organized under the sponsorship of the Russian Ministry of Higher Education and Science and Ministry of Education.
R. Duterte Conferred MGIMO Honorary Doctorate

On October 5th the University hosted a solemn ceremony, granting President of the Philippines, Rodrigo Roa Duterte, an Honorary Doctorate degree. Among the officials present during the meeting were Deputy Foreign Minister Igor Morgulov; Vice-Rector Artem Malgin; Russian Ambassador to the Philippines and MGIMO graduate Igor Khovaev; Ambassador of the Philippines to Russia Carlos Sorreta; Ambassador of the Kingdom of Thailand to Russia Thanatip Upatising; Ambassador of Malaysia to Russia Datuk Mat Dris Haji Yaacob; Ambassador of Brunei to Russia Haini Hashim; Ambassador of Myanmar to Russia Ko Ko Shein; and others.

Having received an Honorary Doctorate degree, Rodrigo Duterte gave a lecture to students and professors. He said: “Russia has a special place in my heart. It’s a great honor for me to speak here today before the future leaders of Russia. I believe that Russia as well as the Philippines has always been fighting for the right to exist and for its independence. This is what brings our peoples together.” The President also talked about security issues, stressing the importance of multilateral cooperation in countering international terrorism and transnational crime.

Russia-ASEAN Youth Summit in Manila

Between November 26th-30th, the fifth Russia-ASEAN Youth Summit, organized by the National Youth Council with the support of MGIMO’s ASEAN center, took place in the Philippines. A special event in the summit program was the President of the Philippines Rodrigo R. Duterte’s invitation of the delegates to the Presidential Palace. Greeting the guests, President Duterte spoke about his recent trip to Russia and his visit to MGIMO. One of the sessions of the Summit was devoted to economic and trade cooperation. During the working sessions, the participants discussed practical issues and prepared the draft of the final Declaration. The Russian delegates made some key suggestions, which were incorporated into the final document.
MBA & Executive MBA

mba.mgimo.ru