

Russian Spies Are Recruiting MGIMO Students – Proekt

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Russian intelligence services are actively recruiting students from the prestigious Moscow State Institute of International Relations (MGIMO), the independent Proekt online outlet [reported](#) in an investigation Thursday.

MGIMO is considered one of Russia's elite academic institutions, training future government leaders and diplomats, as well as businesspeople, journalists and thinkers. Its alleged ties to Russia's secret services came into focus last year when Poland's foreign ministry said it had [fired](#) hundreds of MGIMO graduates as part of a large-scale overhaul.

Related article: [Poland Fires All Russian Diplomatic School Graduates From Foreign Service, Minister Says](#)

"It's no secret that they recruit into the security agencies at MGIMO," Proekt [quoted](#) an unnamed graduate, who reportedly attended a recruitment drive in 2010, as saying.

Another student recounted a 2015 meeting with a recruiter who drew attention to his “unique” knowledge of the Montenegrin language and urged him to think about “the future, the motherland and a career.”

Intelligence services around the world regularly recruit graduates from top diplomatic schools, prizing them for their language and analytical skills.

The Proekt investigation came ahead of President Vladimir Putin’s visit to the Gerasimov State University of Cinematography (VGIK) Thursday, where he [called](#) Russian students’ work abroad a “major soft power.”

Putin also [lauded](#) MGIMO alumni’s “patriotism and fidelity to duty while protecting our country’s foreign policy interests” on the 75th anniversary of its founding earlier this week.

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