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## IFE INFO hosts H.E. Sergey I. Kislyak, Ambassador of Russia

Another perfectly timed INFO! The live streaming of Vladimir Putin's inaugural ceremony on Monday morning, May 7<sup>th</sup>, at the Russian Ambassador's Residence was capped by a talk and lively Q&A with the Ambassador of the Russian Federation, H.E. Sergey I. Kislyak. Ina Ginsburg, IFE International Diplomacy Award recipient, introduced the Ambassador as part of the Institute for Education's Global Connection Series.



Ambassador Kislyak reminisced about the challenges Russia has overcome over the last 20 years, as it has evolved into a "European style democracy," and remained hopeful that U.S. – Russian relations will continue to improve. He was accepting of the differing opinions the Russian people have about their leadership, chalking it up to their relatively new state of democracy. He predicted that Russia will enjoy becoming a member of the WTO and that his country's innate ingenuity and world class scientific establishments will contribute to alternative energy discoveries, among other high technology developments. However, he asked for patience, as the new Russia is 20 years young, and structural changes still need to be made towards privatization and moving the country towards new stages of democratization. He likened this mission to Moses leading his people towards the promised land and living the desert for 40 years, implying it will take two generations for real change to set in.



Ambassador Kislyak commented on his personal encounters of the negative stereotypes that Americans have of Russians and visa versa, hoping that they will be erased over time. He raised another goal towards building a better U.S. –Russian relationship: the United States and Russia should work on developing a more economically interdependent relationship, which he believes is completely possible.

Afterwards the Ambassador opened his floor to his guests and accepted questions including those posed by Jennifer Griffin, FOX News; H.E. Jan Matthysen, Ambassador of Belgium and IFE Diplomatic Steward; and Abderrahim Foukara, Al Jazeera. Other notables and world leaders in attendance included H.E. Erlan Idrissov, Ambassador of Kazakhstan; H.E. Ritva Koukku-Ronde, Ambassador of Finland; H.E. Elena Poptodorova, Ambassador of Bulgaria; H.E. Wegger Strommen, Ambassador of Norway; Ambassador of Philippines, H.E. Jose L. Cuisia; Ambassador of Austria, H.E. Dr. Hans Manz, Ambassador of Austria and IFE Board of Stewards Jerry Jasinowski, Marci Robinson, Chris Caine, Les Deak, Moshira Soliman, and IFE Founder, Jim Valentine. IFE interns and fellows also attended the breakfast, with Nick Gaines, IFE intern and founder of [GovHub.org](http://GovHub.org), taking photos.

*By IFE Interns Skyla Lilly and Jenny Shore, Next Gen Founder.*

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