

В США сенат конгресса оправдал Трампа по делу об импичменте

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Representatives of business, science, culture and political elite of the United States on the closure of the Consulate General in Vladivostok

Photo [https://vladivostok.sm.news/Olga Kuskova](https://vladivostok.sm.news/Olga_Kuskova), <https://ru.usembassy.gov/> from the museum funds of the V.K. Arsenyev Museum <https://vostokmedia.com/>

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Vladivostok is in third place after Moscow and St. Petersburg in terms of the number of diplomatic institutions. There are 22 consulates-general and honorary consuls in the city. But on the eve of the New Year holidays a lot of noise made a message about the possible closure of the U.S. Consulate General in Vladivostok. As it turned out, Americans have a lot of questions and misunderstandings about this.

A bit of history



The appearance of the U.S. diplomatic establishment in Vladivostok is closely intertwined with the history of the city on the banks of the Golden Horn. The very first American consul, William Morton, was appointed to Vladivostok in 1875. And it was not just the U.S. consul, but the first foreign consul in Vladivostok. The diplomatic establishment worked until 1923. Then the country of the Soviets went to a bright future, especially in the dialogue with capitalists was not interested. The second time the U.S. consulate was in 1941. At that time, diplomats oversaw the Lend-Lease program, which supplied military aid through Vladivostok and other points of the Far East to the front line, where Soviet troops fought Nazi Germany. Once again the consulate was closed in 1948, at the peak of deteriorating relations between the United States and the USSR. A new era in the work of the American diplomatic mission began in 1992. Vladivostok is no longer a closed port.

And the U.S. has always been interested in this region. The possibility of establishing comprehensive contacts here attracted their attention. And all this time the consulate acted as a kind of link in the movement of countries towards each other. What's in the "biography" of the relationship? Participation in international forums and exhibitions,

business meetings, organizing exhibitions, creative meetings with writers, musicians, athletes, the development of popular diplomacy, the opportunity to study young Far Easterners at the University of Alaska with big seats, etc.

Like a snuus on the head



At the end of December 2020, as snow on his head, the news of the possible closure of the Consulate General in Vladivostok. In other world, all the achievements and achievements were negligible compared to the decision taken by the Trump administration. "It really saddens me. We had such wonderful programs in the Far East and I enjoyed spending time with you. I consider you my friends and you have become a family to us. We miss you so much! I hope to visit Vladivostok sometime after the pandemic," Consul Darren Thiess wrote on his FB page. During The Work of Darren in Vladivostok, the city was "covered" by the cultural wave - touring jazz groups, eminent writers, photographers, actors. Consulate staff actively participated in all the activities that took place in the region, to the point that they plunged into the hole at Epiphany and baked pancakes on Maslenitsa. That is, we tried to understand the country through its history, traditions and culture.

As explained by the head of the Foreign Ministry's office in Vladivostok Andrei Brovarets, the decision of the U.S. State Department to terminate the activities of the Consulate General in Vladivostok was one-sided, and if all formalities are observed, it can be implemented by mid-spring 2021.

Business "beats the bang"



Relations between the U.S. and Russia have experienced many ups and downs, in some issues consensus was reached, in some there was a categorical confrontation. But at the same time, even in the most difficult times, countries continued to seek common ground. And even the sanctions adopted by the United States, although they became a brake, they could not block the "oxygen" relations of people.

"I was at the opening ceremony of the consulate in Vladivostok and saw the important role that the consulate played during these 30 years in the development of cultural and business relations between our countries. The consulate represented us and the state of Alaska on PITE, it issued visas to tourists, families, sailors, flight crews, students. Now, in a period of rather difficult relationships it is more necessary. We need more channels of communication, more active dialogue to eliminate differences. It's a pity if the consulate is closed. But the decision was made by the Trump administration after he lost the election. But I'm sure Biden will reconsider that decision," Corr said. SM-News regional director of InterPacific Aviation and Marketing Mark Dudley.



Topics of cooperation in a variety of areas of the economy - Arctic development, ecology, tourism, science, energy, trade, people's diplomacy, etc. - were constantly raised at the meetings of the Russian-American Pacific Partnership ([RAPOP](#)). Regions, businesses and ordinary citizens were involved in improving relations between our countries.

"The U.S.-Russia Relations Board is categorically opposed to the proposal to permanently close the consulate in Vladivostok, as it is contrary to the interests of the United States and American businesses and citizens," said Derek Norberg, president and founder of the Council of U.S.-Russian Relations, and Executive Director of RAPTOP.

In general, the business did not stay away. A letter was sent to the Biden-Harris administration, in which more than 125 signatories, including six former U.S. ambassadors who worked in Russia over the years, were sent. Representatives of business structures express hope that the authorities of the country will treat the letter carefully and with understanding.

"Russia's Far East divides the Pacific with the states of the West Coast of the United States and Alaska. The parties have for almost 30 years maintained a broad relationship in the fields of environment, trade, tourism and education. We stress the

importance of these mutually beneficial relationships. The role of the U.S. Consulate General in Vladivostok is vital to maintaining and supporting these relations," the signatories note in their letter.



The closure of the consulate and the minimization of relations with Russia in various spheres by the United States so far resembles some momentary desire of politicians or settling scores. And if this step is made, the relations between Russia and the United States will fall back a long way.

Everything that has been achieved over the years in different areas will be self-in-favour. The sense of moving forward will disappear. We are talking about seasonal air communication, which supports tourism, trade, scientific and cultural exchanges between Alaska and the Far East of Russia since 2009, relations with several twin cities (e.g.: Vladivostok's twin relations with Juno, Tacoma, San Diego), the "Common Heritage Program of Beringia" of the National Park Service.

It should not be forgotten that in the Russian Far East there are American companies, including Exxon Neftegas Limited ("daughter" ExxonMobil and the largest U.S. investor in Russia). It is unlikely that the business will like that the invested money will not be able to pay off.

In addition, we should not forget that the Primorsky region is more than 50% of VED participants registered in the DFO. Vladivostok is the venue for major regional and federal events in the Russian Far East. Take at least the Eastern Economic Forum, which annually (note: 2020 does not count) on its platform gathers leaders of the Asia-Pacific countries, where representatives of state corporations and the largest business, where the international economy of the Asia-Pacific region is formed and the vector of the region's development is set.

In general, the business expresses hope that the Biden-Harris administration, having studied the situation thoroughly, will consider the possibility of canceling the proposal to close the consulates.

Culture and science advocate for Vladivostok

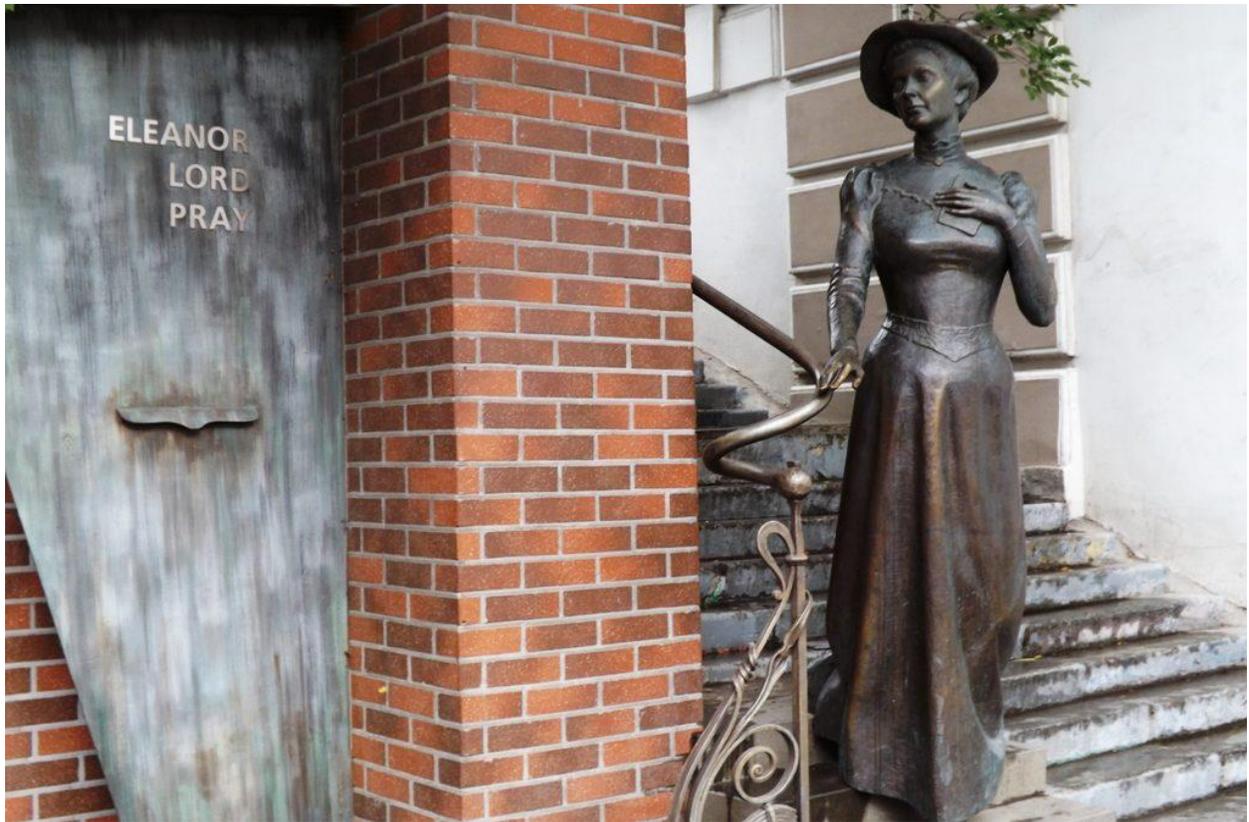


In the summer of 2018 in Vladivostok was the American writer David Ramseur, a participant in "Friendship Flight", the author of the book "Melt the Ice Curtain." The book describes the role of popular diplomacy, which played an important role in the warming of relations between the two superpowers. The number of projects and exchanges in **business**, science, culture, education, military and political spheres was unprecedented.

According to Ramseur, this era can serve as a model for reducing tensions and restoring trust between the United States and Russia. Now Ramseur in the pages of *The Seattle Times* bitterly states that the final closure of the U.S. consulate in Vladivostok is the last erroneous foreign policy move of the Trump administration, and the losers will be the residents of the Pacific Northwest. Relations between the U.S. and Russia have deteriorated to the worst in half a century.

Birgitta Ingemanson, a well-known Russian scholar from the United States, who has lectured in Vladivostok several times since the 1990s, disagrees with the decision of the American government. In her "baggage" works and projects, which were supported by diplomats working on the shores of the Gold Horn Tom Armbruster, Eric Holm-Olsen, Michael Case and Luis Crishok. She wrote a book about the family of the U.S. Vice Consul in Vladivostok, Federica Shenstone, who worked in the city until the closure of the diplomatic establishment, i.e. until 1923.

Birgitta Ingemanson is the author of the book *Letters from Vladivostok*, which presents unique letters and photographs of American Eleanor Prei, who lived in Vladivostok in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This book is still in demand among the Vladivostokots and visitors of the city, on the central street of the Far Eastern capital there is a monument to Eleanor, and in the museum Arsenyev there is an exhibition dedicated to this American woman. In her letter to Secretary of State Michael R. Pompeo, Professor Ingemanson noted that "the closure of the consulate in Vladivostok would be an unreasonable, possibly dangerous situation for all Americans who work in the Far East (including Rock Brynner, the son of Yul Brynner, who was born there), and cancel most of the joint work of Americans and Russians who built the consulate." A guest and friend of Vladivostok, Birgitta Ingemanson, is convinced that the closure of the U.S. consulate in Vladivostok will delay and hinder any improvement in relations between the countries. After all, communication, cooperation, implementation of many projects have always been out of politics.



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The Associated Press writes that the closure is due to restrictions imposed by Russian authorities in 2017 on the number of U.S. diplomats allowed to work in the country. The final closure of the consulate in Vladivostok will save \$3.2 million a year - American personnel will be transferred to the embassy in Moscow, local will be fired, there will be no lease of buildings and various representative expenses. But at the same time, the closure of consulates will leave the United States without diplomatic missions in the vast territory of Russia and will create serious inconvenience for American travelers in the Far East of Russia, as well as for Russians in the region who want to obtain visas to enter the United States. For some reason, America is not particularly concerned about the geographical location of the consulate. After all, near Japan, China, which is rapidly expanding its influence in the Asia-Pacific region, North Korea with its unpredictability. And if the diplomatic institution will be only in Moscow, and even if all employees with their experience, developments are transferred there, you will not go to the east of the country.

By the way, the U.S. holds Russia responsible for the current situation. It was Russian visa restrictions on U.S. diplomatic personnel that forced the United States to take this step. According to Ambassador John Sullivan, who headed the U.S. Embassy in Russia in February 2020, paperwork in Vladivostok and Yekaterinburg was suspended due to COVID-19 restrictions, but the 455 visa

restriction previously imposed by Moscow for all U.S. diplomatic visas forced the authorities to decide to close consulates. The tar in the honey barrel of relations is called Russophobia, the situation with the "newcomer", Skripal, Navalny, Paul Wilan, cyberattacks, closure of Russian consulates in the United States, etc.

But on the background of this for some reason it is not clear: what to do Russians who have applied for a visa to the U.S. and paid the corresponding fees. A tourist visa is \$160, learning English with intensive language for more than 20 hours a week will cost \$510 (even if you go to a language school for a month). At first there was information that these fees are valid for a year. But a year has passed, and the cart is still there. It's time to ask the question: "Where is the money, zin?" especially if you have to fly to Moscow for visas now.



Sullivan, who was second at the State Department before being confirmed as ambassador to Russia, is not ready to say whether he will remain in office or leave office. Typically, U.S. ambassadors apply for resignation upon the arrival of a new president. However, RFE/RL quotes a US diplomat as saying: "It is safe to say that there is a breach of trust between the US government and the Russian government. But I personally know that many Americans trust and trust the Russian people. I hope that the closure of the consulate is temporary, and that we will be able to stop digging the hole that has been dug on our sides, restore confidence and take advantage of this broader and deeper relationship between the United States and Russia."

Now the new president is in power in the United States. Joe Biden has held the post since January. The composition of the Congress has also been partially updated.

Gregory Meeks, who now headed the Committee on Foreign Relations, considers the closure of the consulate a big mistake on the part of the United States. Before that, he chaired the Oversight Committee, which has repeatedly clashed with the Trump administration over impeachment, arms sales, the management of the U.S. State Department and other issues in the past. In his new position, he is preparing to become an ally for the new Biden administration. And at the same time he is going to follow the following course - to correct mistakes, so that there would be no repetition.

One of the biggest challenges for the new Biden administration - and for Congress - will be U.S. and Russian politics, which over the years have cast a shadow over the White House.

As FOREIGN POLICY writes in its [pages](#), one of the most influential publications in the field of U.S. in the field of international relations, Gregory Meeks called on the State Department to change course and leave consulates open even amid heightened tensions between Washington and Moscow. "I believe in diplomacy. Diplomacy means you still have to talk, and you need to know what's going on on the ground," Meeks said.

If you look through the American press, there are plenty of statements that the closure of consulates in Russia is not a far-sighted step, and there is a lot of concern about budget savings or personnel cuts at the top of the agenda.

"These consulates serve as an example of U.S. cultural footholds with direct access and connections with local people and officials. By functioning regardless of whether a relationship is good or complex, their presence helps maintain practical contact with the population of the host country, thereby helping to lower the temperature during times of tension and crisis. That's why we need to keep the consulates of Vladivostok and Yekaterinburg open," said retired Brigadier General Peter Swak, who served as the U.S. military attache to Russia from 2012 to 2014. Moreover, he pays special attention to Vladivostok because of its geographical location - Transsib, the gateway to the Asia-Pacific region, the proximity of the Celestial Empire, the growth of cross-border trade, joint Russian-Chinese military maneuvers, etc.

In his narration in the pages of The Hill, which focuses on congressmen, lobbyists and other participants in American politics, the general noted that during his trip to the Far East, he felt invaluable help and support of the Consulate General in Vladivostok - providing the necessary

information, organizing speeches at universities, meetings with representatives of science, people's diplomacy, with Russian veterans and businessmen. In general, the hope that the administration of the new U.S. President will reconsider this decision, because it is at odds with the general objective trends of the development of international cooperation of the Primorsky region with foreign partners, nourish many.



And if the fate of the U.S. Consulate General is still in limbo, it does not affect the presence here and the opening of new diplomatic missions. Vladivostok's role on the world stage is by no means episodic. Vladivostok has become the capital of the Far Eastern Federal District, is preparing to move the office of the Embassy of the Republic of Belarus, a decision has been made to open a trade office in Mongolia, and a candidate is being sought and agreed upon to replace the post of honorary consul of France. In general, it would be an honor offered.