

# ‘Don’t Be Ashamed’ to Learn From Americans, Russian Regional Head Says

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Aysen Nikolaev [Telegram/aisen\\_nikolaev](https://t.me/aisen_nikolaev)

The head of Russia’s Far East republic of Sakha (Yakutia) has called on state employees to “not be ashamed” of studying at American universities, calling it an opportunity to “learn from the enemy” to improve things at home.

“Don't be ashamed of going abroad to learn something — including from our enemies — [especially] if you haven't learned to do it better [than them] yourself,” Sakha’s head Aysen Nikolaev was [quoted as saying](#) Tuesday at the Eastern Economic Forum in Vladivostok.

“I sent members of [my] creative industries development team to study at MIT in Boston,” Nikolaev added, noting that he also attributes the success of [Sakha’s film industry](#) to this study abroad endeavor.

Since its February 2022 invasion of Ukraine, Russia has designated several [Western universities](#) and [U.S.-run exchange programs](#) as “undesirable” organizations, meaning citizens could face criminal prosecution for studying and participating in them.

Many Russian officials have also been barred from traveling abroad over fears that foreign powers could gain access to sensitive information through them, [according](#) to Reuters.

The U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Washington's last remaining diplomatic mission in Russia, [halted](#) its issuance of tourist, work, student and other non-immigrant visas in 2021 due to Russian limits on employing foreign nationals, forcing Russians to obtain these visas at U.S. embassies in third countries.

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