What is RIAC?

• The Russian International Affairs Council (RIAC) is the most influential foreign policy think tank in the Russian Federation.

• Scholars and expert members of the group work to devise suggestions in the fields of diplomacy and international strategy for the Russian government moving forward.
RIAC
Russian International Affairs Council

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Intern Responsibilities

• Editing and polishing English translations of Russian articles to be published on the website.
• Maintaining a personal blog on a foreign policy topic of my choosing.
• Writing condensed abstracts for the works published online.
• Outlined detailed plans on how I thought the foreign readership of the RIAC website could be increased.
• Wrote two reviews of American think tank reports and how they relate to policy decisions moving forward. So far, my first piece has been published as an expert’s column!
Trading the Iron Curtain for Iron Shackles: Russian and the U.S. National Security Strategies
“Do I need to know Russian for this internship?”

• NO!!! In fact, I’ve never taken a course in Russian ever!

• While speaking the native language is immensely helpful in day to day life, the majority of the RIAC staff is fluent in English.

• If you have Russian language skills, however, this could potentially broaden the scope of your intern responsibilities, which is a plus!
Impact of the Internship on Myself

• I was fascinated by my exposure to ideas that are so much different than those I heard during lectures or discussions at Princeton.

• Looking at the same issues through a new lens was extremely interesting, and allowed me to try and walk a mile in the shoes of a country that is not an ally with the United States.

• General job skills and my own analytical writing skills were improved as well.
The Impact I Had On RIAC

• As an intern, it is sometimes difficult to feel as if you have contributed to the greater discussion or successes of the operation.

• Personally, I think that my ability to offer an perspective that was not blindly patriotic, while still being an American, was an aspect that had not been heavily present in its body of literature and research.

• The best I can hope for is that some of the ideas that I presented could be read by the other members, allowing for some trace of influence to find its way into a policy guideline!
Impact Of RIAC: Career Goals and Future Plans

• I became even more interested in the crossroads between defense and security strategy and international law due to the fact that I was given near complete autonomy on what I could research.
  – Solidified my decision to go to law school!
• I could definitely see myself conducting research with a think tank somewhere down the line in my career.
• My thesis topic will definitely relate to some of the research that I conducted at RIAC.
Life in Moscow

- Closer to the Red Square the better!
- Kremlin, St. Basil’s Cathedral, and more.
- Quick plane ride away from St. Petersburg (about 7 hours by train)
- Plenty of grocery stores if you’re planning to cook your own meals.
- Tap water should only be used when boiled!
- Has many of the same amenities that urban areas in the U.S. have.
Cultural Awareness and Experiences

• As an American who does not speak Russian, many aspects of my day to day life were a bit difficult. My roommate did most of the talking, and I struggled when I was alone.

• I took great care to ensure that I did not disrespect the culture whenever possible (i.e. it is a Russian tradition to not wear shoes in one’s home, so I adhered to that in my own apartment that I was renting)

• Of course there are areas and situations that are unsafe, just like in any major city! Diligence and planning ahead are necessary to make sure that you have a safe experience.
References

- https://www.google.com/maps/place/ul.+Bolshaya+Yakimanka,+1,+Moskva,+Russia,+119180/@55.7510511,37.5981868,14z/data=!4m5!3m4!1s0x46b54b0072131fd:0x3af7634dff99de13!8m2!3d55.741241!4d37.614323