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Tim Barrow Named British Ambassador to Russia

By Alexey Eremenko

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The British Foreign and Commonwealth Office has appointed Tim Barrow, a career diplomat with previous experience in Russia, as the country's new ambassador to the Russian Federation, the agency said Tuesday.

Barrow will take up office in November, replacing Anne Fyfe Pringle, who was British ambassador to Russia since 2008 and the first woman to hold the job in the 450-plus years of diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The statement on the British foreign ministry's web site gave no reason for the reshuffle and specified no new appointment for Pringle.

Barrow, an Oxford graduate who worked at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office since 1986, was the second secretary at the embassy in Moscow from 1990 to 1993 and headed the Russian section at the ministry for a year after that.

He has held various diplomatic jobs since, mostly at the agency's central office, and was British ambassador to Ukraine from 2006 to 2008. He proceeded to become Britain's representative at the EU's political and security committee following the Kiev job and held that post until his current appointment.

"I am very pleased to be returning to Russia," Barrow said of his appointment, the ministry's web site reported. "I have good memories of working in Moscow in the early '90s. I look forward to getting to know again this vast and dynamic country and to continuing the steady work of developing relations between our two countries."

Russian-British relations took a nosedive in the mid-2000s, fueled by several scandals, including harassment of then-envoy Antony Brenton by the pro-Kremlin youth movement Nashi and the poisoning of ex-FSB officer Alexander Litvinenko, a staunch Kremlin critic, in London in 2006. British officials blamed his death on his former colleagues, whom Moscow refused to extradite or prosecute.

Both countries worked to improve relations since David Cameron became British Prime Minister last year, though they failed to entirely avoid new scandals, among them espionage accusations against a Russian aide to a British parliament member and the brief and unexplained deportation of The Guardian's correspondent in Moscow, Luke Harding, in February.

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