

Kirk Talks Russia in Singapore

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Ron Kirk

The Obama administration is working to stop the application of a United States law on Russia in a bid to help American businesses compete there and also wants China to open its market further, U.S. Trade Representative Ron Kirk said Thursday.

He added that President Barack Obama's administration is seeking to terminate application of the Jackson-Vanik amendment with respect to Russia so that American businesses "can compete on a level playing field in Russia as other members of the World Trade Organization."

The Jackson-Vanik amendment regulates trade between the United States and "nonmarket" economies that restrict emigration and other human rights.

In a speech to business executives in Singapore, Kirk said: "We firmly believe that China can contribute even more to global prosperity, if it opens its markets with the same dedication that has characterized its pursuit of entry into other countries' markets over the past 10 years."

On the planned Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) pact on trade and investment that the United States is promoting, Kirk called on governments to "make the tough choices necessary to achieve our ambitious goals."

"Ultimately, our success will not be judged on whether we can conclude an agreement per se; rather, success will be judged on whether the final TPP agreement actually meets the high standards we originally set out to achieve and bring about economic benefits for all our partner countries," he said.

The TPP talks currently include nine countries — the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Chile, Peru, Singapore, Malaysia, Vietnam and Brunei — which have a goal of reaching an agreement by the end of the year.

Mexico, Canada and Japan asked to join the talks last November.

New Zealand Prime Minister John Key said during a visit to Singapore last week that he was not confident the TPP agreement could be completed this year as there are "some big issues that need to be knuckled out by many of the players."

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