

White House Appoints 'Hardline' Jon Huntsman as Ambassador to Russia

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Governor Jon Huntsman **Chris Keane / Reuters**

The White House has appointed Jon Huntsman, a former envoy to China, as the new Ambassador to Russia, it [said](#) Tuesday in an online statement.

The pick of Huntsman, who was envoy under the Obama Administration and two-time governor of Utah, has not come as a surprise.

As early as in March, there were reports that Huntsman would be Washington's preferred candidate.

Russian media and officials at the time portrayed Huntsman as a "hardliner." Alexei Pushkov, the former head of the State Duma international affairs committee and now a senator [told](#) the RBC news outlet: "Trump has surrounded himself with people who don't want to improve relations with Russia," saying Huntsman was "definitely no dove."

But foreign policy expert Vladimir Frolov

[predicted](#) in an op-ed for The Moscow Times that the choice would be “welcomed by Moscow.”

“At a minimum, the decision will reduce the unpredictability of U.S.-Russia relations,” he said.

Huntsman is taking up the post at a time when the Trump Administration is mired in scandal over its links to Russia.

News of his appointment has quickly been trumped by a report that the U.S. and Russian presidents had a second, until now unknown, meeting at the G20 summit in Hamburg.

Before he moves to Moscow, Huntsman’s appointment will still have to be confirmed by the U.S. Senate.

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