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New U.S. Ambassador Huntsman Says 'No Question' Russia Meddled in Elections

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Jon Huntsman **Gage Skidmore / Flickr (CC BY-SA 2.0)**

In a nomination hearing before the U.S. Senate on Tuesday, U.S. Ambassador to Russia nominee Jon Huntsman said he was certain Moscow had interfered in the 2016 presidential elections.

Earlier this year, U.S. intelligence unanimously concluded Moscow undermined the U.S. electoral system to sway the outcome of U.S. elections last November in favor of President Donald Trump.

Huntsman, the former U.S. Ambassador to China under President Barack Obama, is expected to take over from sitting Ambassador John Tefft this month after being officially nominated by the White House on July 18.

In Moscow, he is widely known as a ‘hardliner,’ sent to Moscow at a time of souring relations

between the two countries.

“There is no question that the Russian government interfered in the U.S. election last year,” Huntsman said in his testimony to the Foreign Relations committee, adding that the meddling had undermined trust between Moscow and Washington.

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In his role as ambassador, Huntsman said he would “not hesitate to remind [Russian] government officials that they are accountable for their actions.”

Huntsman named “resolving the crisis in Ukraine” as one of his top priorities, “in a way that respects Ukraine’s sovereignty and restores its territorial integrity.”

The nominee also said he would put reaching out to the Russian population at the top of his agenda.

“People to people exchanges and private interactions are an important way to show that our disagreements are with the government of Russia, not with its people,” he said.

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