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New U.S. Ambassador to Russia Embarks on Tough Task of Restoring Ties

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US Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman and President Vladimir Putin(Mikhail Metzel / TASS)

The new U.S. Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman is willing to work to overcome the "low point" in bilateral relations, according to the video introduction published by the embassy on Monday.

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“I look forward to engaging Russia's leaders to find practical solutions to the many challenges that face today’s relationship,” Huntsman said in the embassy’s video.

Huntsman arrived in Moscow a week ago on a promise to cultivate a “necessary” relationship with Russia at a time of precarious diplomatic ties. He presented credentials to President Vladimir Putin at the Kremlin the following day.

Described as a hardliner, Huntsman said during his confirmation hearing in September that he planned to meet with Russian dissidents, end human rights abuses and help solve the conflicts in Syria and Ukraine.

“Where we don’t agree, I’ll represent America’s values and interests with straight talk,” the U.S. envoy added in the video address. "And I’ll listen with respect and an open mind.”

Huntsman said he looks forward to meeting Russians from a variety of backgrounds. “And I’m ready to get to work. I even learned an important Russian saying: дорогу осилит идущий,” he said, referring to a phrase that translates as “Walk and ye shall reach” and “A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step.”

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