

Top Russian Official Tells U.S. Ambassador to Stay Out of Crimea Question

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Jon Huntsman Jr. (Sergei Konkov / TASS)

Senior Russian lawmaker Alexei Pushkov said on Thursday that it is not up to the United States to decide Crimea's sovereignty.

Russia annexed Crimea from Ukraine in March 2014 following a controversial referendum that was largely rejected as illegitimate by the international community. Ukraine considers Russia's presence in the Black Sea peninsula an illegal occupation.

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On Tuesday, the U.S. Ambassador to Russia Jon Huntsman answered a question on Twitter by saying that Crimea belongs to Ukraine, according to international law.

Since his confirmation as ambassador in September, Huntsman has said that Moscow must restore the territorial integrity of Ukraine for U.S.-Russia relations to be restored.

"It's not for the U.S. Ambassador to determine who Crimea belongs to," Pushkov, a senator in Russia's Federation Council, [tweeted](#).

"The U.S. has nothing to do with Crimea or with those who live there."

Crimea's deputy prime minister Dmitry Polonsky also responded on Thursday, saying that Huntsman should check his geography and history before making statements, the state-run RIA Novosti news agency [reported](#).

"Huntsman's colleagues at the Atlantic Council assured me that he was serious about improving relations with Russia," Pushkov [wrote](#) in another post on Twitter.

"It doesn't look like he's chosen the right path."

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