

U.S. Ambassador to Russia Cancels Speech at St. Petersburg Economic Forum

By [Reuters](#)

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

The U.S. ambassador to Russia said he would not speak when he appears on the panel of the St. Petersburg economic forum (SPIEF) next week which he was to participate in with Viktor Vekselberg, a Russian oligarch recently added to a U.S. sanctions list.

"While I will not be participating in any panel discussions at SPIEF, I will be meeting as many people as possible to discuss the road ahead," the envoy, Jon Huntsman, said in a video posted by the U.S. Embassy in Moscow on Twitter.

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Russian media said earlier that Huntsman was scheduled to give a speech at the

forum's Russia-USA panel session where Vekselberg is one of the participants. The Russian businessman and his Renova Group were added to the list of U.S.-sanctioned individuals and entities on April 6.

The official program of the forum, which runs from May 24-26, included Huntsman as panelist, Russian media reported in May. As of Thursday, he was no longer on the list.

The United States imposed major sanctions against 24 Russians deemed close to President Vladimir Putin in one of Washington's most aggressive moves to punish Moscow for its alleged meddling in the 2016 U.S. election and other "malign activity."

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