

# Reports of Imminent Resignation False, U.S. Ambassador Says

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Michael McFaul was nominated as U.S. Ambassador to Russia by U.S. President Barack Obama in 2011.

U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul plans to ring in the New Year in Moscow for the first time in his life, combining Russian and U.S. traditions, he said in an interview published Wednesday.

McFaul, who's been in Russia since early 2012, also said that the reports of his resignation were greatly exaggerated, adding that new reports about his supposedly imminent resignation surfaced nearly every week for no apparent reason, Kommersant reported.

"All diplomats leave at some point, but I'm still here," McFaul said, according to a Russian text of his interview. The newspaper did not specify what language the ambassador was speaking.

He also summarized some of the highlights of the past year in U.S.-Russian relations

and named a few of the White House administration's priorities for 2014, including cooperation with Russia on curbing Iran's nuclear program, destroying Syria's chemical weapons, carrying cargo to and from Afghanistan, and developing trade and economic ties.

McFaul, who took leave from his political science professor position at Stanford University to accept his post in Moscow, said he would devote more time to considering the highs and lows in the countries' bilateral relations when he returns to his academic career, but said that the relations so far have been generally mixed. Talks with Russian officials often tended to be tense and emotional, he added.

McFaul mentioned disputes over Syria, a Russian ban on beef and turkey imports from the U.S. — a restriction that Moscow said it was partially lifting last month — and the ban on U.S. adoptions of Russian orphans among some points of contention that came up during the past year.

Cooperation on Afghanistan, North Korea and Iran, some joint trade and investment deal and even a few humanitarian projects came up among the year's accomplishments.

McFaul said that for the first time in his life he would not travel to his mother's house in Montana for the holidays, but is planning to ring in the New Year at his Spaso House residence in Moscow, combining U.S. and Russian traditions in the celebration.

Whether or not the menu would include the trademark dishes of the Russian New Year's Eve party — olivier salad or "herring in a fur coat" — hasn't been decided yet, he said.

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