

Statement of Samuel D. Heins
Nominee for Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 22, 2015

Thank you Chairman Johnson, Senator Shaheen, and members of the Committee for the opportunity to appear before you today. I would also like to thank Senator Klobuchar & Senator Franken for their generous remarks. I hope I can live up to the standards they set as exemplary public servants.

I would also like to thank President Obama and Secretary Kerry for their trust and confidence in me. I'm extraordinarily grateful to the President for nominating me to be Ambassador to Norway, and I'm honored and humbled that the Committee is considering my nomination.

I'd like to introduce my wife and partner, both professionally and in life, Stacey Mills. I wouldn't be here today without her love and support. I'm also joined by some wonderful members of our family, my stepson Clark Newman, and my nieces Elizabeth Potter and Nicole Mills, and nephew Noah Potter. My mother, who is 97, is watching and is very proud that I have the honor to appear before you today.

If confirmed by the Senate, I intend to be a reliable, diligent, and energetic representative of the United States to Norway. I will undertake those duties recognizing the vital importance of our bilateral relationship and

the utmost seriousness of the work of a U.S. Ambassador. As a key part of this responsibility, I will ensure the safety and security of U.S. citizens and our embassy communities. Norway holds a unique place in the world, and its relationship with the United States is of tremendous value and significance. Norway is one of the world's great democracies, and its leadership publicly declares that the United States is its closest Ally. If the Senate confirms my nomination, I will devote every effort to enhancing this remarkable relationship.

I know from my own experience that our friendship extends beyond the formal relations between sovereign nations. There are more than 800,000 proud Norwegian-Americans in my home state of Minnesota alone. They share their culture, history, and pride in their heritage with the rest of us. We Minnesotans are happy to think of ourselves as honorary Norwegians. We are proud of the admirable Norwegian culture that is an intrinsic and historic part of our State.

In facing the challenges that confront us as a nation, we know that Norway is a dependable and responsible partner. As a founding member of NATO, Norway is a longstanding and steadfast Ally. Norwegian and American military personnel have served side-by-side in operations in Afghanistan, Kosovo, over the skies of Libya, and beyond. Norway has

repeatedly demonstrated its military readiness and commitment to interoperability through regular joint exercises with U.S. and other Allied forces. Former Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg is the current NATO Secretary General, a testament to the respect of the Alliance for Norway's dedication to transatlantic security.

Norway has been fully committed to the joint U.S.-EU approach to support Ukraine, imposing all rounds of sanctions against Russia despite the economic burden. Norway has also repeatedly called for full implementation of the Minsk Agreement, and is supporting Ukraine's reform efforts.

Norway is a strong partner in the Coalition to Counter ISIL, contributing military trainers for Iraqi Forces, as well as millions of dollars in humanitarian support for both Iraq and Syria. In addition, Norway is at the forefront of our efforts to combat violent extremism, hosting a two-day Summit in June to further the agenda of the White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism held in February of this year.

Norway and the United States are substantial investors in each other's business enterprises. Over 300 U.S. companies have a presence in Norway, and Norway is the fifth fastest growing source of foreign direct investment in the United States. If confirmed, I intend to expand this relationship and

work to create even more opportunities for U.S. businesses and American workers.

We share with Norway vital economic and environmental interests in the Arctic. We are fortunate that our staunch friend Norway works closely with us on the Arctic Council, sharing our goals for responsible stewardship of the region and strengthening international cooperation.

Norway has established itself as a peacemaker and peacekeeper, as well as a generous activist in the alleviation of humanitarian crises and the promotion of human rights around the world. I know from my work over the last 30 years with human rights and humanitarian NGOs that in the international arena, Norway commands principled, moral high ground. It has earned its reputation as an honest broker. If confirmed, I look forward to working with Norway in pursuit of these important undertakings.

Throughout my career I have been a business manager, an advocate, and a negotiator. I will bring those skills to bear if the Senate confirms me as Ambassador to the Kingdom of Norway.

Norway's partnership and alliance with the United States requires ambassadorial representation in Oslo that is hardworking, informed and dedicated to advancing what can only be described as an extraordinary international friendship.