

**Statement by Judy Rising Reinke  
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Montenegro  
Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
August 16, 2018**

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member Murphy, and distinguished members of the Committee, thank you for allowing me this opportunity to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for U.S. Ambassador to Montenegro. I am deeply grateful for the confidence that the President and Secretary Pompeo have placed in me. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with you to advance our nation's interests in Montenegro.

I'm proud to be accompanied by my family, specifically my husband, Edwin Reinke, and my daughter, Katherine. They have been at my side throughout my career and have been my most energetic and committed supporters; I want to thank them for their patience and love every step of the way. Katherine was a 3-month-old baby when we moved to Jakarta, Indonesia, and grew up in a Foreign Service environment, moving frequently and saying goodbye to more friends than I can count. She is now a sophomore at Johns Hopkins University, and I am grateful and proud that the Foreign Service experience has shaped a future leader who is as committed to the United States and our strong place in the world as I am.

The path to my career as a public servant was shaped by my own upbringing. The daughter of an Army Officer and a nurse, I was raised with the words "Duty, Honor, Country" ringing in my ears. If that sounds familiar, it is because that is the motto of West Point, and I am proud that my grandfather, my father, two uncles, and my brother, Harry Rising, are all West Point graduates who proudly served their country. I might have been in the first class of women at West Point, but I chose my own path towards public service with an international focus, an interest sparked by time spent in Frankfurt, Germany as a little girl. The Foreign Service has been like a home to me for 25 of the 35 years I have been a public servant. I have been proud of each opportunity I have had to represent America while stationed abroad.

I am deeply honored to have been nominated for the position of U.S. Ambassador to Montenegro, and I am committed to representing the interests of the United States there to the best of my ability. While the majority of career Foreign Service officers who appear before this committee come from the Department of State, I am proud to have served in the Foreign Commercial Service of the U.S. Department of Commerce. In fact, I am only the fifth Commerce

Department officer to sit before this Committee for consideration as a Chief of Mission, and the first woman. I am proud to represent the men and women of the FCS who bring a unique set of skills and experiences to the Foreign Service of this country. This nomination demonstrates to each of these colleagues the value of their service as officers advancing the commercial and diplomatic goals of the United States overseas and the importance of their hard work supporting free, fair and reciprocal trade and investment flows to help grow jobs and prosperity in America.

My experience as a Foreign Commercial Service officer overseas and the skills I've developed while leading our worldwide programs as the Deputy Director General of the FCS have prepared me for the position to which I am nominated. My early assignments were in Europe, and later I returned to manage the regional operations of our Western Europe and EU programs. From my early postings in Switzerland and Germany in the early 1990s, I watched the fall of the Berlin Wall and later the dramatic breakup of Yugoslavia and transformation of the Western Balkans as war engulfed the region. My career then took me to Asia, but I watched from afar the work of my former Ambassador, Richard Holbrooke, as he brokered peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and learned from my new Ambassador, Robert Gelbard, who arrived in Jakarta fresh from implementing the Dayton Peace Accords. I admired my Foreign Service colleagues who partnered with the people of the Balkan region to rebuild and enter a new era of independence and growth.

Montenegro re-emerged as an independent country in 2006 and has shown itself to be a positive example in the region. The people of the country are strong and independent, and they have bravely embarked on the vital path of Euro-Atlantic integration and the principles that this decision represents. Their commitment to freedom and democracy was cemented by Montenegro's accession to NATO in June of last year, and the country's pledge to contribute to the mutual defense of its alliance partners was demonstrated well before its accession. Members of the Montenegrin armed forces have served side by side with U.S. troops in Afghanistan since 2010, and this newest NATO member is firmly on track to meet its two percent of GDP target to NATO by 2024.

Thus, while the country is small in size, it has demonstrated an outsized commitment to mutual defense operations, and it continues to play a constructive and stabilizing role in the Western Balkans. Stability and security are good for Montenegro's economic development and investment climate, and this, in turn, is good for America. Montenegro's accession to NATO reflects the country's embrace of democracy, rule of law and strong institutions that benefit all its

people. And, just as Montenegro has committed to the mutual defense of its alliance partners, if confirmed, I will reassure our Montenegrin partners of our robust commitment to the principle of mutual defense as enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty.

The next step in the country's path to Euro-Atlantic integration is Montenegro's application for membership in the European Union, which is well underway. If confirmed, I will provide U.S. support and guidance, as needed, to assist with this process. Supporting the integration of Montenegro into Euro-Atlantic institutions has been an overriding priority of the U.S. government to date, and this will certainly be my own top priority as Ambassador.

My second priority flows from the first: to support the government of Montenegro's efforts to liberalize and strengthen its economy, including stamping out the scourge of corruption and bureaucratic overreach. As Montenegrin reforms begin to create a more effective and transparent legal and regulatory structure, economic growth and prosperity are sure to follow. American firms want to partner with Montenegro, and will look for a commitment to stability, rule of law and growth. U.S. businesses also seek transparency and predictability in business practices; programs such as the recent Balkan Coordinated Border Management workshop in Podgorica organized by the Commerce Department's Commercial Law Development Program in collaboration with the Customs Committee of Montenegro and its regional partners is an example of how our countries can work together to successfully strengthen and facilitate trade flows within the region. I see other exciting developments in the country, such as the Krnovo Wind Farm which is the first in Montenegro and the most powerful in the region. Funded through the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, this project, proudly powered by 26 General Electric turbines, came on-line in November of 2017 and is now supplying electricity to 45,000 households. Thanks to this project, Montenegro can now deliver 40 percent of its domestically generated electricity from clean energy sources. There are many more opportunities for U.S. firms to partner with Montenegro in sectors such as energy, tourism, health and agriculture and, if confirmed, I will commit the U.S. Embassy in Podgorica to help make these deals happen.

Finally, my third goal as U.S. Ambassador to Montenegro will be to assure a deepening and broadening of our public engagement in the country to help the people of Montenegro understand American values, policies and principles. I commit to personalized engagement with the government, with civil society, and with people on the street with a goal of building trust and correcting

misperceptions. Working with the Embassy's stellar staff of American and Montenegrin professionals, we will build on my predecessor's effective legacy of people-to-people engagement. I am personally driven to explore partnerships that will help to preserve this country's rich cultural patrimony, to advance inclusion and diversity, and to address environmental issues that threaten to degrade the country's precious touristic resources.

The people of Montenegro have been engaged in a vital and exciting dialogue on the direction of the country's future, and the team at the U.S. Embassy is working hard to support these important discussions. I am eager to join them. If confirmed, I commit myself to demonstrate to the people of Montenegro by my words, and by my actions, that the U.S. is a friend, a partner and a committed Ally. Moreover, I assure the committee that I will protect American interests, ensure the fair treatment of American citizens, and promote American values with every engagement I have with the government of Montenegro and its people. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you, and I look forward to answering your questions.