

Statement of Luigi Rinaldi
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Uruguay
Senate Foreign Relations Committee
June 12, 2025

Chairman Daines and distinguished Committee Members, it is an honor to be here with you today.

I am grateful to President Trump for nominating me to be the next U.S. Ambassador to the Oriental Republic of Uruguay, and to Secretary of State Marco Rubio for his support throughout this process. I also want to thank my family for their support, including my wife of 50 years, Lorie, who is here today; my three children Michael, Angela, and Louis; and my seven grandchildren Ariana, Giovanna, Luca, Roman, Leo, Vincent, and Sienna. And while he is no longer with us, our beautiful son Robert, whom we lost to cancer in 2013, is here with us in spirit.

I grew up in Uruguay and I know the culture and the people well. In 1973, I walked into the U.S. Embassy in Montevideo as a teenager with almost nothing and was issued a visa to the United States. That building inspired me—it stood for hope and freedom. More than 50 years later, I appear before you as the nominee to return to that same building as the United States Ambassador. This is the honor of a lifetime, and I share this with you in the hope that it inspires others. After immigrating to the United States, I was fortunate to build a successful business and start a family in a country that provided me with incredible opportunities. I am grateful for all that America has given me. I take this responsibility seriously and I am committed to advancing America's prosperity, strength, and security in close partnership with Uruguay.

From day one, President Trump created a foreign policy vision that puts the U.S. national interest at the center of our foreign policy. It reinforced our strong commitment to reaching peace through strength while putting U.S. values, independence, and safety first.

When Secretary Marco Rubio addressed this committee, he laid out this vision by creating a simple approach:

Does it make America safer?

Does it make America stronger?

Does it make America more prosperous?

If I am confirmed, I will help advance American national interests and make America safer, stronger, and more prosperous.

The U.S.-Uruguay relationship is rooted in shared values, common interests, and over a 150-year history. Uruguay is a valued partner that has a large middle class, a stable democracy, and a growing high-tech sector. Boasting some of the strongest democratic institutions in South America, Uruguay can play a regional leadership role to promote the rule of law and guard against democratic backsliding elsewhere in the region. Uruguay's new government has made clear it wants to maintain close ties to the United States. On this solid foundation, I intend to advance the interests of the United States by focusing on three key areas: enhancing economic ties between our two nations, improving public security in our hemisphere, and working with Uruguay to support democracy and human rights elsewhere in the region and around the world.

The United States is one of Uruguay's largest trading partners and an important investor. The United States buys over 80 percent of Uruguay's IT services exports, estimated at a value of \$1.7 billion dollars. Uruguay looks to American companies for investment and expertise. A good example is Google's investment of \$850 million dollars in a data center. New technologies and industries are growing quickly in Uruguay, and the United States will continue to be a key partner. If confirmed, I will focus on cementing the important economic relationship between the United States and Uruguay and expanding commercial opportunities for American companies.

We cannot build long-term economic growth for both of our countries without improvements to public security. President Trump has promised to

crack down on transnational criminal groups—something the new Orsi Administration in Uruguay also supports. If I am confirmed, I will use every diplomatic tool available to help fight transnational criminal organizations and all forms of trafficking and money laundering.

Uruguay is a strong and steady democracy that plays an important role both in our region and around the world by speaking up for democracy and human rights. For many years, it has been a leader in protecting free elections and fair government in the Americas. If I am confirmed, I will support Uruguay in using its strong voice to stand firmly against authoritarianism in Cuba, Venezuela, and Nicaragua, and to continue defending the values we share.

I recognize the responsibilities that I have to the American people, the Constitution, President Donald J. Trump, Secretary of State Marco Rubio, and to the U.S. Congress. I look forward to continuing our discussions on advancing U.S. foreign policy in Uruguay and answering any questions that you have today. Thank you very much for this opportunity.