

**Statement of Kevin Kim**  
**Nominee for U.S. Representative to the Association of Southeast**  
**Asian Nations, with rank of Ambassador,**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**March 26, 2026**

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Merkley, and distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee to be the Representative of the United States to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

I am grateful to President Trump and to Secretary Rubio for their confidence and trust. I also appreciate the careful consideration Members of this committee have given to my nomination. Should I be confirmed, I pledge to continue close consultations with this committee on issues related to ASEAN.

My three children—Austin, Archie, and Arthur—are here today, along with my wife and best friend—Naeun Lee. Their love and support continue to be a source of inspiration. I would also like to honor my parents—Wonyong Kim and Heesook Kim. They are my biggest cheerleaders, and they booked the first flight out of Korea to attend this hearing.

In January 2012, I started as an intern in the Bureau of Intelligence and Research. Like many young people, I did not know exactly what I would be doing, but I wanted to contribute. Most importantly, I wanted to work for America. Since then, I have devoted my career to advancing our country's national security with a focus on the Indo-Pacific, including my time here in the U.S. Senate and the State Department. I am grateful to have the opportunity—if confirmed—to continue that work.

As Secretary Rubio stated at the ASEAN Regional Forum last year, “the history of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will largely be written in the Indo-Pacific and particularly in Southeast Asia.” ASEAN member states have a combined GDP of \$4 trillion and represent the fourth-largest export market for American goods, creating more than 600,000 American jobs. Southeast Asia straddles the sea lanes through which a third of global shipping passes every year. The demographics of Southeast Asia are young, and there will be enormous growth in the labor pool and number of workers.

For our security and prosperity, the United States must build on our engagement in Southeast Asia. ASEAN, as a multilateral institution, is where many of our engagements with the region take place.

Last October, the world saw what was possible when the United States and ASEAN work together. President Trump's diplomatic initiative to pursue a ceasefire between Thailand and Cambodia, combined with Malaysia's role as the ASEAN Chair, was a resounding success. The Kuala Lumpur Peace Accords—signed by the United States, Thailand, Cambodia, and Malaysia—continues to provide the path forward for a lasting peace in the region. I am proud to have played a small role in that process.

The United States and ASEAN have enjoyed nearly 50 years of partnership. Recently, we reached a major milestone, upgrading our relationship to a Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. If confirmed, my goal will be to set the course for the next half century by implementing the U.S.-ASEAN Joint Vision Statement, which President Trump and ASEAN leaders adopted at the ASEAN summit last year.

To make America safer, I will prioritize working with ASEAN to ensure that the Indo-Pacific remains free and open. To make America more prosperous, I will fight for fair and reciprocal trade, strengthen our supply chain resilience, grow our shared digital economy and U.S. AI exports, and unleash affordable and abundant energy for the region.

If confirmed, I will ensure the United States remains ASEAN's partner of choice for the most pressing challenges we face. And I particularly look forward to working with our treaty ally, the Philippines, as the 2026 ASEAN Chair.

In sum, with its dynamic economies, youthful populations, and shared values of industry, innovation, and creativity, ASEAN is key to unlocking the Administration's goals across Southeast Asia. With the 50th anniversary of U.S.-ASEAN relations approaching next year, I hope to lead our team at the U.S. Mission to ASEAN to create opportunity, peace, and prosperity for our combined one billion citizens.

Distinguished Senators, thank you again for your time today. If confirmed, it would be an honor of a lifetime to serve the people of the United States of America as the President's representative to ASEAN. Thank you.