

**Statement of
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Nominee to be Assistant Secretary of State for
East Asian and Pacific Affairs
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Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Menendez, and Members of the Committee: Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you. I would also like to thank President Trump and Secretary Pompeo for their confidence and support.

Peaceful and mutually beneficial relations with East Asian and Pacific nations have been a U.S. strategic priority for generations. Recognizing this, as well as the region's more competitive environment, this Administration has identified maintaining a Free and Open Indo Pacific as a top priority. If confirmed, I am committed to realizing a vision for the region that more actively advances longstanding U.S. interests, bolsters the freedom of East Asian and Pacific nations to choose their own path, and brings them together to form a strong and prosperous core of a vibrant region.

America's vision is built on enduring principles: ensuring the freedom of the seas and skies; insulating sovereign nations from external threat or unlawful use of force or coercion; promoting market-based economics, open investment environments, and free, fair, and reciprocal trade; and supporting good governance and respect for human rights. If confirmed, I will work tirelessly to promote these principles.

Our network of like-minded allies and partners is key. Our strong alliance relationship with Japan continues to flourish as we cooperate economically, confront shared challenges, and strengthen bilateral trade ties. Our iron-clad and decades-long alliance with South Korea is now global in reach, and has only strengthened as we coordinate more closely to achieve the final, fully verified denuclearization of North Korea and welcome it into the family of nations. And Australia continues its tradition of mateship by addressing new challenges in innovative ways—Australia is reaching beyond its historical areas of interest, linking up with traditional and non-traditional partners to attack common threats.

In Southeast Asia, there is great potential to further expand cooperation with treaty allies Thailand and the Philippines, as well as other partners like Vietnam and Singapore. As the Vice President's trip to the region last fall showed, we recognize the importance of Pacific Island Countries to achieving a free and open Indo-Pacific, and are committed to working with them to tackle global and regional challenges. We work closely with New Zealand on the Pacific and across the region more broadly.

The Trump Administration is committed to maintaining ASEAN centrality at the core of our engagement with broader regional institutions such as the East Asia Summit, the ASEAN Regional Forum, and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum. If confirmed, I will prioritize longstanding relationships based on our shared interests and values.

While East Asian and Pacific nations have generally enjoyed peace for decades, critical security challenges remain. The most urgent is North Korea's nuclear and missile programs. If

confirmed, I will work with Special Representative Biegun and others to maintain international pressure on North Korea.

As a strategic competitor, China presents a longer-term challenge. We will cooperate with China where it advances our interests, as in a denuclearized North Korea and counter-narcotics, but we must compete vigorously where our interests diverge. As the President's National Security Strategy makes clear, we are concerned by China's use of covert, corrupt, and coercive means to interfere in affairs outside its borders, as well as its use of military threats to compel other states to heed its agenda. China's actions often undermine national autonomy, whether through commercially unviable projects that indebt other countries, or militarization of the South China Sea.

China also should stop its pressure and coercion and resume dialogue with the democratically elected authorities on Taiwan. If confirmed, I commit to working to show China a better way to achieve its goal of national rejuvenation that includes respect for human rights, freedom of religion, and other nations' sovereignty, while insisting on fairness and reciprocity in our bilateral relationship. I also will make clear that the United States expects that any resolution of cross-Strait differences must be peaceful and based on the will of the people on both sides, in accordance with the Taiwan Relations Act and the Three Communiques.

Despite these significant challenges, the region is also bright with opportunity, with a quarter of the global economy, some of the world's fastest growing economies, and several of the United States' largest export markets and investment destinations. As Vice President Pence noted in Singapore in November, our trade grows with the region's middle class, topping \$1.83 trillion in 2017. This helps U.S. businesses, workers, and farmers who can offer valuable goods and services to the region's growing markets.

The United States will work with East Asian and Pacific nations, as part of our broader Indo-Pacific approach, to create the conditions needed to attract greater private investment. This engagement allows us and our partners to advance an economic and trade architecture that opens markets; promotes high standards; and achieves free, fair, and reciprocal trade.

If confirmed, I will work with my colleagues in the interagency to foster private sector-led development over state-dominated approaches that impinge on national sovereignty and local autonomy. In particular, I will work to implement the numerous economic initiatives the President, the Vice President, and Secretary Pompeo have announced. These promote fair and reciprocal trade, and expand sustainable investment in infrastructure, energy, and the digital economy.

Continued prosperity and autonomy are rooted in good governance and transparency. The United States supports strong civil society, efforts to counter corruption, judicial sector and legal reform, responsible borrowing, and honest procurement and contracting practices, among other aims.

We are also concerned about backsliding on human rights and democracy, including the plight of Rohingya from Burma's Rakhine State, China's repression of Muslim minorities in Xinjiang, and banning of the political opposition in Cambodia. If confirmed, I will continue to promote openness, rule of law, and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Finally, the United States is working with East Asian and Pacific partners to strengthen maritime security and domain awareness, humanitarian assistance and disaster response, and peacekeeping capabilities, as well as to counter transnational crime. If confirmed, I will continue to deepen these important partnerships.

Ensuring success for U.S. objectives in this region will require the full spectrum of our capabilities, including diplomatic initiatives, public diplomacy, capacity building, economic cooperation and commercial advocacy, and military cooperation. If confirmed, I am committed to using all of our tools to advance our strategic priorities and increase engagement with allies and partners.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, this Administration is working to ensure that East Asia and the Pacific continues to be a free, open, secure, and prosperous region. If confirmed, I am committed to working together with the dedicated professionals at the Department of State and our missions in the region to ensure this continues under my tenure as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs.

Thank you for inviting me to testify today and I look forward to your questions.