

## NOMINATIONS

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THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2026

U.S. SENATE,  
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN RELATIONS,  
*Washington, DC.*

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:04 a.m., in room SD-419, Dirksen Senate Office Building, Hon. Bill Hagerty presiding.

Present: Senators Hagerty [presiding], Ricketts, McCormick, Scott, Merkley, Shaheen, Kaine, and Duckworth.

### **OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. BILL HAGERTY, U.S. SENATOR FROM TENNESSEE**

Senator HAGERTY. We are here to consider the nominations of Mr. Ademola Adewale-Sadik—you will help me with that a little bit later—nominee to be our director for the African Development Bank; Ms. Catherine Dillon, nominee to be the Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs; and Mr. Kevin Kim, who is our nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, ASEAN.

As we begin today's agenda, I want to remind everyone of the ground rules for these committee hearings. We have very important work to do here, and we have limited time.

As a result, we will not tolerate any demonstrations or disruptions or any way that would disrupt or slow down or affect the business of this committee.

If you do choose to interrupt our proceedings, you will be removed and barred from attending these public hearings for 12 months. I appreciate your understanding and look forward to a productive hearing.

First, I want to recognize a couple of our colleagues that are here to introduce nominees. First, I am going to recognize Representative Virginia Foxx from North Carolina to introduce Ms. Cate Dillon.

### **STATEMENT OF HON. VIRGINIA FOXX, U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NORTH CAROLINA**

Representative FOXX. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

It is a great honor to appear before you today to introduce Cate Dillon, who is being considered for the important role of Assistant Secretary of Education and Culture in the State Department.

First and foremost, Cate is a patriot, a patriot who loves America and one who will always meet the moment so that our nation can be successful in all ways.

It was my pleasure to have Cate as an essential part of the House Education and Workforce Committee during my tenure as Chairwoman of the committee. She did a fantastic job, first as Staff Assistant for the committee and then as the Chief Clerk and Director of Finance for the committee.

I am quite certain that the members of this committee understand what a vital role that is and I have seen that at work this morning with your staff.

Alongside her duty of ensuring that the committee's members had the materials and documents they needed, Cate was an indispensable resource for entry level staff.

She mentored them and helped them develop their own capabilities. It is clear to me and everyone who is fortunate to know her that she is steeped in the value of lifelong education.

Since departing the committee, she has had a succession of very important positions which have further prepared and molded her for the State Department position.

In each role that she has assumed she has been successful, and I firmly believe she will be equally successful as Assistant Secretary.

In a moment of personal privilege, I must say I see a lot of myself in Cate. She can be tough as nails for all the right reasons, but she also has a lot of compassion for others and the willingness to go to great lengths to support them.

And she is quite agreeable. One of our common points of consensus when we worked alongside one another was about the silliness of wearing shoes that could not get you where you needed to be to get the job done quickly.

Cate has my complete and total endorsement. I also have it on good authority that she is a Taylor Swift fan, so you will understand when I say she is the real thing.

It is my hope that she will be confirmed for this position unanimously.

Thank you again, Mr. Chairman, for allowing me to be here today.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you, Representative Foxx.

I turn now to the Chairman.

**STATEMENT OF HON. ROGER F. WICKER,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM MISSISSIPPI**

Senator WICKER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, and it is delightful to be here and also to be at the table with my former colleague Chairman Foxx. So thank you very much.

And what a privilege to be able to introduce Kevin Kim to this committee and to recommend him wholeheartedly as the next Ambassador to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Mr. Kim will excel in this office, and I can say so with authority because he excelled working in my jurisdiction. Kevin received his bachelor's and master's degrees at Johns Hopkins University, but he is a Texan at heart who leans toward being a devoted fan of the Aggies.

And speaking of college football, it is worth noting that my team acquired Kevin through something of a transfer portal. Before he joined my office, Kevin had been serving as a State Department fel-

low on behalf of a man named Bill Hagerty, who later on became Chairman of this distinguished body.

And so we were glad to have Kevin, and we were glad to keep him in the Southeastern Conference for a time. But now we can say that Kevin is one of the State Department's most experienced and knowledgeable experts on Asia with a cumulative 15 years at the department.

In the first Trump administration, Kevin was a key part of the negotiating team with regard to North Korea, equipping him with intimate knowledge of one of the world's most dangerous situations.

When Kevin returned to the State Department in the second Trump administration, he hit the ground running. Listen to this. On the first day in office for Secretary Rubio, Kevin organized a Quad meeting with the United States, Japan, Australia, and India on day one.

Since then, Kevin has served as a Deputy Assistant Secretary responsible for Japan, Korea, Taiwan, and China issues, and then a Senior Bureau Officer for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Bureau.

He played the lead role—the lead role—in organizing the peace talks between Thailand and Cambodia, talks which, of course, President Trump has expressed great appreciation and brought to a successful conclusion.

Mr. Kim's performance in facilitating the talks was so outstanding that he was selected as the chargé d'affaires in Seoul, South Korea. He was tasked with ensuring the success of President Trump's visit to South Korea for a summit with Xi Jinping.

Simply put, Kevin has been a go to guy at the State Department since day one of the Trump administration. I cannot imagine a person who is more qualified for this particular job.

He will now use his policy chops, his political savvy, and his leadership skills and his brain to represent our interests before ASEAN in Jakarta.

The representative of the United States at ASEAN must use all elements of statecraft: economics, trade, defense, and politics. Kevin can do that.

Our representative to ASEAN will play a key role in countering Chinese expansionism in Southeast Asia. I cannot think of an official more qualified for that task.

And then I want to make a special expression of gratitude to Kevin and to his family for taking on this charge.

It is no small matter to uproot a young, beautiful family who are present with us today and move them halfway around the world, and I know they do so in service to their nation, and I am just delighted about it.

Five more lines, Mr. Chairman. A brief anecdote.

In early 2023, I had just become the Ranking Member of the Armed Services Committee. Kevin was intimately involved in preparations for the first speech I would give in that capacity.

In that speech, I articulated America's objectives in Asia, outlined the threat from China, and forcefully defended Taiwan's freedom. That speech helped set the tone for our work together on the committee.

It has endured. When I visited Taiwan last year, President Lee Teng-Hui handed me a printed copy of those very remarks. That speaks volumes. It is a testament to Kevin's contributions, and it is a sign of what he is able to do and what he will do as ambassador, and I urge in an unqualified way my colleagues to cast an enthusiastic yes for this nominee.

Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you. Thank you.

And Chairman Foxx, Chairman Wicker, thank you so much for being here. I know that you have very busy schedules, and we would, of course, be more than delighted for you to stay as long as you like, but I understand if you need to excuse yourselves.

And now I would like to exercise my prerogative as the Chair to offer an introduction myself, and that would be, again, for my good friend, Kevin Kim. And before I get to my remarks that are prepared, I would just like to say to my colleagues up here, I have had a unique opportunity to see Kevin at work before he ever came on my team.

This is when I was serving as United States Ambassador to Japan at a very challenging time. I think you all remember back in 2017 when Kim Jong-un was claiming that his button was bigger than our President's. Intercontinental ballistic missiles were flying over Japan.

It was a very tense time, and I got to know Kevin very well then as he served as Chief of Staff to our Special Envoy to North Korea. I saw the professionalism that he used. He devoted himself to the cause, extraordinarily competent and capable, and he was one of the first people that I had on my list that I wanted to be on my staff when I came to the U.S. Senate.

And it has been a delight, Kevin, to see you and to see your career evolve. It has been wonderful to get to see you and your young family grow, too, and I cannot wait to see what you will achieve in your next role should you be confirmed, and I am here to support you every step of the way.

I would also like to say this to the staff. Kevin Kim is an example of what so many of you do in terms of dedicating his time, his energy, and his resources to service those of us here in this committee and here in the Senate, and I think he will serve us very well.

He has already, and I think he is going to be an excellent ambassador. But I hope that many of you will take this to heart as you aspire to perhaps the next step, the next role that you will play, because this is just the type of thing that I hope to see many of you do over time.

Back to the specifics here. Kevin, your nomination comes at a very critical time for our nation's engagement in Southeast Asia. If you think about it, ASEAN sits at the center of the Indo-Pacific. It is home to over 685 million people, and some of the world's fastest growing economies are located there.

It is also a region where competition is intensifying and where U.S. leadership and our presence are more important than ever. At this critical point, I cannot think of anybody that is better qualified to represent the United States at ASEAN than Kevin Kim.

Kevin currently serves as Senior Advisor to the Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs where he helped shape our global diplomatic posture last year. Kevin served as chargé d'affaires at our embassy in Seoul. In that role, he did an outstanding job supporting President Trump's leader level visit to Seoul, Korea, and he helped advance key outcomes at APEC in 2025.

Kevin also played an integral role in negotiating the U.S.-Republic of Korea joint fact sheet that actually strengthened our cooperation in important areas like shipbuilding, civil nuclear energy, and alliance modernization.

He previously served as the Senior Bureau Official for the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs. In that role, Kevin was the lead negotiator for the Kuala Lumpur Peace Accords that helped to end a long running border conflict between Thailand and Cambodia at a very critical time.

He also conducted shuttle diplomacy across the region including with Malaysia as ASEAN chair to broker that agreement on behalf of President Trump. Earlier in the second Trump administration, Kevin served as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Japan, Korea, and Mongolia, and held multiple senior roles focused on North Korea.

Kevin also brings valuable experience from Capitol Hill. He served as a professional staff member on the Senate Armed Services Committee under Chairman Wicker. He helped the Chairman oversee the Department of War's Indo-Pacific Command.

I was proud to have him serve as a national security fellow in my office for 2 years. There, I had the opportunity to see firsthand Kevin's judgment, his work ethic, and his commitment to advancing U.S. national security interests.

I believe strongly that Kevin is going to be uniquely qualified to serve as the next U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN, and I am happy to urge my colleagues to support his nomination.

Before we turn to Senator Merkley's opening statements and to our panelists for their introductory remarks, I would also just like to begin by thanking all of you for your willingness to serve the greatest nation in the world. Whether you are based here in Washington, Asia, or Africa, we will need your steadfast leadership to safeguard U.S. interests, to promote American values, and deliver results for the American people and for our partners.

Mr. Adewale [sic], if you are confirmed as the U.S. Executive Director of the African Development Bank, you will be responsible for ensuring the bank promotes transparent, market based development projects that are aligned with U.S. objectives.

Ms. Dillon, the Assistant Secretary of State for Education and Cultural Affairs oversees a range of programs like Fulbright that tie people and cultures together and can help build U.S. soft power if it is targeted well.

And Mr. Kim, as I mentioned a minute ago, the U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN is an important role in a region that is as strategic as it is competitive. We need a skilled diplomat there. I look forward to a productive hearing this morning.

Senator Merkley, I would like to turn it over to you.

**STATEMENT OF HON. JEFF MERKLEY,  
U.S. SENATOR FROM OREGON**

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you very much, Mr. Chair, and welcome to each of you, Mr. Kim, Mr. Adewale-Sadik, and Ms. Dillon.

I appreciate your interest in public service, the public service you have had to date and that vision in the future. It is an exciting moment for you and for your families, and families get to share both the exciting potential moments and the challenges of taking on these various roles.

It is a critical time for the United States and the world. We are in the middle of a war, a war that includes not only bombs falling in Iran but also falling in—well, at least five nations in the Middle East where we do not currently have an ambassador.

And in Africa, 30 ambassadorships—roughly, 30—are empty at a time that certainly China is in full gear exercising its influence. I look forward to each of your comments about why you are interested in these roles and the expertise that you bring to them.

Certainly, I am very concerned about us being able to ramp up in response to China's Belt and Road Initiatives. I am excited to see a development role in Africa potentially be filled.

And Ms. Dillon, long before I ever envisioned running for office, I was at the World Affairs Council of Oregon, also known as World Oregon, where we hosted about 500 people a year under the international leadership program that brought people from all kinds of perspectives to experience connections in three states and saw the impact that had in terms of the relationships that served us well throughout the world.

So I know that is a piece of what you will be managing, so I will look forward to your comments on that.

And in terms of ASEAN, I had the chance a couple years ago to go to Vietnam to champion our war legacy programs, and those programs I would certainly like to hear your perspectives on.

They created the foundation for a growing diplomatic and economic relationship with Vietnam, which is very important in all kinds of ways including supply chain, including countering to some degree China's influence in Southeast Asia.

So welcome to each of you, and let us get on with this hearing.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

As I turn to the panelists, I want to remind all of you to keep your opening remarks to less than 5 minutes.

And Mr. Adewale-Sadik, I will start with you.

**STATEMENT OF ADEMOLA ADEWALE-SADIK, OF NEW YORK, TO  
BE UNITED STATES DIRECTOR OF THE AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT  
BANK FOR A TERM OF FIVE YEARS**

Mr. ADEWALE-SADIK. Thank you, Senator.

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Merkley, and distinguished members of this committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for United States Executive Director of the African Development Bank.

Allow me to begin by thanking President Trump for the trust that he has placed in me by offering this opportunity to serve our country. I would also like to thank Treasury Secretary Bessent for

his confidence and support, as well as the members and staff of this committee for their engagement in advance of this hearing.

Watching these proceedings from home is my wife of over 7 years, Mrs. Morenike Adewale-Sadik.

Morenike, thank you for the love and companionship that we have shared since we first met. Alongside Morenike is our daughter and first child, Arabella, whose arrival last month brought us immense joy.

My parents, Mr. Abiodun and Dr. Omowunmi Sadik, are here today. They raised me on hard work, education, and Christian values, and I am grateful for that upbringing.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my parents-in-law, Mr. Oluseyi and Dr. Omobola Johnson, who have joined us remotely. The Johnsons have always treated me like a son, and I appreciate the care with which they nurtured their daughter into the woman I married.

There is perhaps no better role for a naturalized American born in Lagos, Nigeria, than the position of United States Executive Director of the African Development Bank.

The American dream has brought me untold opportunities, and if confirmed I hope to contribute to building those same opportunities across the continent.

Africa's vast potential stretches from critical minerals and digital infrastructure to transportation and energy abundance. Under a coherent mandate to underwrite that potential and with strong American participation, the AfDB can be an important instrument of economic mobilization.

President Trump has outlined a clear and consistent vision whereby responsible members of the marketplace of nations will find both a listening ear and a deal making hand at the White House.

My time on the African continent has proven to me that it is full of such nations, and because Africa is home to the plurality of our planet's resources, durable relationships across the continent are critical to American economic and national security.

The AfDB is the natural arena in which to cultivate such relationships. The United States is also the bank's second largest shareholder and the bank enjoys a AAA credit rating in part because of our position. These facts bring me to three central beliefs.

First, American taxpayers deserve value for their dollars deployed at the AfDB.

Second, I have the utmost conviction in the ability of America's world class private sector and Africa's ambitious economies to deliver that value together.

And third, the Trump administration has a unique opportunity to advance commercial ties between our country and the African continent, and seizing this window is a worthwhile endeavor.

Our influence at the AfDB can be central to President Trump's economic agenda, and the AfDB's success will bring mutual benefit to both the United States and our African allies.

If confirmed, I will leverage my business and legal backgrounds to advocate for American interests at the bank and across the region every day. I will also bring relevant firsthand experience with

me to Abidjan because I have seen, invested in, and lived the developmental imperatives of the African continent my entire life.

If the AfDB is effective, then Africa will unlock endless possibilities for itself and its trading partners, and the AfDB will be effective if it focuses exclusively on its core economic development and poverty reduction missions, is backed by American leadership, and is governed with collective accountability.

I have always marveled at the enduring power and extraordinary ingenuity of American commerce. It is the very exceptionalism that makes America the sole indispensable counterparty.

It is also what we can bring to bear by way of the AfDB. I believe that Africa's development is the single greatest expansion opportunity for global GDP. Our positive, proactive involvement on the continent will determine the direction of American, African, and world affairs for decades to come.

If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this committee on those vital considerations.

I once told my father-in-law that the best time to be alive is always tomorrow. I know that America's best days are in the future. The same holds true for an Africa that is closely aligned with the United States.

I am passionate about drawing the continent of my birth closer to the country that adopted me and further from our adversaries. The chance to do this at the AfDB would be the privilege of a lifetime.

Thank you again. I look forward to answering your questions, and if confirmed, to working closely with this committee.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Additional Nominee Questions**

1. Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from your office available to the Committee when invited?  
Answer: Yes
2. Do you commit to keeping this Committee fully informed about the activities under your purview in a timely manner?  
Answer: Yes
3. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?  
Answer: Yes
4. Do you commit to responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff as soon as practicable?  
Answer: Yes
5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?  
Answer: Yes



Printed Name: Ademola Adewale-Sadik

Date: March 26, 2026

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[The prepared statement of Mr. Adewale-Sadik follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Ademola Adewale-Sadik**

Chairman Risch, Ranking Member Shaheen, and distinguished Members of this Committee: it is an honor to appear before you today as President Trump's nominee for United States Executive Director of the African Development Bank. Allow me to begin by thanking President Trump for the trust that he has placed in me by offering this opportunity to serve our country. I would also like to thank Treasury Secretary Bessent for his confidence and support, as well as the Members and staff of this Committee for their engagement in advance of this hearing.

Watching these proceedings from home is my wife of over 7 years, Mrs. Morenike Adewale-Sadik. Morenike: thank you for the love and companionship that we have shared since we first met. Alongside Morenike is our daughter and first child, Arabella, whose arrival last month brought us immense joy. My parents, Mr. Abiodun and Dr. Omowunmi Sadik, are here today. They raised me on hard work, education, and Christian values, and I am grateful for that upbringing. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my parents-in-law, Mr. Oluseyi and Dr. Omobola Johnson, who have joined us remotely. The Johnsons have always treated me like a son, and I appreciate the care with which they nurtured their daughter into the woman I married.

There is perhaps no better role for a naturalized American born in Lagos, Nigeria than the position of United States Executive Director of the African Development Bank. The American Dream has brought me untold opportunities, and if confirmed I hope to contribute to building those same opportunities across the continent. Africa's vast potential stretches from critical minerals and digital infrastructure to transportation and energy abundance. Under a coherent mandate to underwrite that potential and with strong American participation, the AfDB can be an important instrument of economic mobilization.

President Trump has outlined a clear and consistent vision whereby responsible members of the marketplace of nations will find both a listening ear and a dealmaking hand at the White House. My time on the African continent has proven to me that it is full of such nations. Because Africa is home to the plurality of our planet's resources, durable relationships across the continent are critical to American economic and national security.

The AfDB is the natural arena in which to cultivate such relationships. The United States is also the Bank's second-largest shareholder, and the Bank enjoys a AAA credit rating in part because of our position. These facts bring me to three central beliefs:

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Second: I have the utmost conviction in the ability of America's world-class private sector and Africa's ambitious economies to deliver that value together.

Third: The Trump Administration has a unique opportunity to enhance commercial ties between our country and the African continent, and seizing this window is a worthwhile endeavor. Our influence at the AfDB can be central to President Trump's economic agenda, and the AfDB's success will bring mutual benefit to both the United States and our African allies.

If confirmed, I will leverage my business and legal backgrounds to advocate for American interests at the Bank and across the region every day. I will also bring relevant firsthand experience with me to Abidjan, because I have seen, invested in, and lived the developmental imperatives of the African continent my entire life. If the AfDB is effective, then Africa will unlock endless possibilities for itself and its trading partners. The AfDB will be effective if it focuses exclusively on its core economic development and poverty reduction missions, is backed by American leadership, and is governed with collective accountability.

I have always marveled at the enduring power and extraordinary ingenuity of American commerce. It is the very exceptionalism that makes America the sole indispensable counterparty. It is also what we can bring to bear by way of the AfDB. I believe that Africa's development is the single greatest expansion opportunity for global GDP. Our positive, proactive involvement on the continent will determine the direction of American, African and world affairs for decades to come. If confirmed, I pledge to work closely with this Committee on these vital considerations.

I once told my father-in-law that "the best time to be alive is always tomorrow." I know that America's best days are in the future. The same holds true for an Africa that is closely aligned with the United States. I am passionate about drawing the continent of my birth closer to the country that adopted me and further from our adversaries. The chance to do this at the AfDB would be the privilege of a lifetime.

Thank you again, I look forward to answering your questions and, if confirmed, to working closely with this Committee.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.  
Ms. Dillon.

**STATEMENT OF CATHERINE DILLON, OF MARYLAND, TO BE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS**

Ms. DILLON. Thank you.

First, I want to thank Dr. Foxx for her kind introduction. I am incredibly grateful for her mentorship.

Mr. Chairman, Ranking Member, distinguished members of this committee, I am truly honored to appear before you today as President Donald J. Trump's nominee for Assistant Secretary of State for Educational and Cultural Affairs.

I am deeply grateful to the President and Secretary Rubio for entrusting me with leading this vital component of our country's foreign policy.

I would like to thank my parents John and Diane and my boyfriend Andrew, who are seated behind me. I would also like to thank my sister Alexandra and many friends watching from the audience and at home. Without your unconditional love and support, I would not be here today.

My professional experience has ensured complex organizations deliver on their promises. From Chief Clerk and Finance Director in the House of Representatives to a Director of the 2024 Republican National Convention, I have led in environments where success is not theoretical. It is measured in discipline, execution, and meaningful strategic outcomes.

During my time at the Department of State, I have applied that discipline to ensure State's vast personnel and resources serve the President's agenda and the American people.

If confirmed, I will bring that same rigor and clarity of purpose to the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs by leading with four core priorities.

First, strategic alignment. Every ECA program and initiative must clearly advance America First priorities and our strategic national interests. In this period of great power competition, our exchange programs cannot be treated as legacy institutions running on autopilot.

They are strategic assets, they are instruments of national power, and they are critical tools for advancing the interests of the American people. They must be administered as such.

Second, fiscal stewardship. I am experienced at managing high stakes budgets. I will continue to apply fiscal scrutiny out of respect for the American taxpayer and my leadership of ECA to ensure efficiency and impact of every dollar spent.

If a program is not delivering an adequate return on investment for the American people, we will reform it in accordance with all applicable laws.

Third, championing American excellence. As we approach our nation's 250th anniversary and other major milestones like the FIFA World Cup and the 2028 Summer Olympic Games, ECA is uniquely positioned to tell the American story.

We will capitalize on these historic opportunities to showcase American excellence in innovation, education, and culture.

Finally, if confirmed, I commit to prioritizing the safety and welfare of our American exchange participants abroad and to working at every level from our U.S. embassies to our interagency partners to guarantee that our foreign exchange participants are selected with intention and merit, vetted for our security, and are as respectful of our country as guests as we are as hosts.

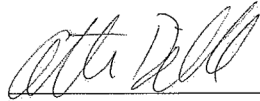
Mr. Chairman, I also remain committed to ensuring the Bureau is cooperative with this body and responsive to your inquiries. I am honored by this opportunity and humbled by the trust that President Trump and Secretary Rubio have put in me to ensure our exchange programs are at the core of advancing our national interests.

I stand ready to begin achieving that vision on day one. Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

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Answer: Yes
  
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Answer: Yes
  
5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?  
Answer: Yes



Printed Name: Catherine Dillon

Date: 03-26-2026

[The prepared statement of Ms. Dillon follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Catherine Dillon**

Thank you, Dr. Foxx, for your kind introduction. I am incredibly grateful for your mentorship.

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I am deeply grateful to the President and to Secretary Rubio for entrusting me with leading this vital component of our country's foreign policy. I would like to thank my parents, John and Diane, and my boyfriend, Andrew who are seated behind me. I would also like to thank my sister, Alexandra, and many friends watching from the audience and at home. Without your unconditional love and support, I would not be here today.

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Mr. Chairman, I also remain committed to ensuring the bureau is cooperative with this body and responsive to your inquiries.

I am honored by this opportunity and humbled by the trust that President Trump and Secretary Rubio have put in me to ensure our exchange programs are at the core of advancing our national interests. I stand ready to begin achieving that vision on day one.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

Mr. Kim.

**STATEMENT OF KEVIN KIM, OF TEXAS, TO BE REPRESENTATIVE OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA TO THE ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS, WITH THE RANK AND STATUS OF AMBASSADOR EXTRAORDINARY AND PLENIPOTENTIARY**

Mr. KIM. Chairman Hagerty, before I begin I would like to thank you and Chairman Wicker for the kind introduction. It was a privi-

lege to work for both of you here in the U.S. Senate, and I am very grateful to be here today.

Chairman Hagerty, Ranking Member Merkley, and distinguished members of the committee, I am honored to appear before you today as a 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 Kim, Archie Kim, and Arthur Kim—are here today behind me, 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 two Texas Longhorns, unlike what Senator Wicker said, 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 at the department, 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, and 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 21st 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 each year.

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 the 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 worked 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, and 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 in 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 together, 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 the 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 1 billion citizens.

Senators, thank you 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.

NOMINEE COMMITMENT QUESTIONS

**Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
Additional Nominee Questions**

1. Do you agree to appear before this Committee and make officials from your office available to the Committee when invited?  
Answer: Yes
2. Do you commit to keeping this Committee fully informed about the activities under your purview in a timely manner?  
Answer: Yes
3. Do you commit to engaging in meaningful consultation while policies are being developed, not just providing notification after the fact?  
Answer: Yes
4. Do you commit to responding to requests for briefings and information requested by the Committee and its designated staff as soon as practicable?  
Answer: Yes
5. Do you agree to ensuring that Chiefs of Mission fully support CODELs and STAFFDELS, with exceptions only for simultaneous or overlapping visits by the President or First Lady of the United States, the Vice President, or the Secretaries of State or Defense?  
Answer: Yes

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Yeock (Kai) Kim

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

3-26-26

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[The prepared statement of Mr. Kim follows:]

**Prepared Statement of Kevin Kim**

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 21st 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.

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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.

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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.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you to our nominees.

I am now going to start a round of 5-minute questions with each of the Senators. I will start off myself.

Mr. Kim, I will stay with you. You just articulated the strategic and economic criticality of the ASEAN region. I would just like you

to articulate your top priorities, should you be confirmed—your top priorities in Jakarta.

Mr. KIM. Senator, thank you for the question.

As stated, Southeast Asia is a critical region for the United States, not just from a geostrategic standpoint but from an economic standpoint, given the combined 1 billion citizens between the United States and Southeast Asia.

If confirmed, my top priority would be to ensure that we remain the partner of choice for all ASEAN member states, that the norms and the rules of the road, which ASEAN as a multilateral institution would pursue, favor that of the United States and those of our allies and partners in the region.

And of course, ensuring that American economic access to the region is expanded will be a priority as well.

Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. I have always been impressed with your negotiating skills. You have had some very unique negotiating experiences this past year that you have been in the State Department.

Could you elaborate on how that experience is going to inform your position, should you be confirmed as Ambassador to ASEAN?

Mr. KIM. Senator—

Senator HAGERTY. And you might just explain to the body here your recent negotiating experience.

Mr. KIM. Senator, it is certainly an experience and a lesson to be negotiating with the North Koreans, the Russians, as well as pursuing peace between Thailand and Cambodia where the border issue has lasted for more than a few centuries.

So trying to de-escalate violence and tensions is a critical component of being a skilled negotiator. ASEAN as an institution operates based on consensus, which means that it is important to seek common ground among all 11 ASEAN member states.

From a negotiating standpoint, that means understanding where our leverage lies, unlocking which of our allies and partners can help advance American objectives, and if confirmed, that is the type of expertise and skill that I hope to apply.

Senator HAGERTY. Good. Thank you.

Mr. Adewale-Sadik, I want to talk to you a bit about the African Development Bank. If I think about China's role in Africa, how hard they are competing in the region, the inroads that they are attempting to make, particularly in development projects, I really am interested how you think our posture toward China should be relative to the African Development Bank.

Mr. ADEWALE-SADIK. Thank you for the question, Senator.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, we are the second largest shareholder at the African Development Bank, and of course, that has to mean something.

If I am confirmed to this position, when I think about my priorities, procurement reform will be one of those priorities.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, it will be my job to make the case for America at the bank and in the region every day, and I believe that as the second largest shareholder at the bank, our private sector, which is world leading and gold standard setting, should have a role in projects and initiatives that take place at the bank.

Specifically to your question regarding China, you know, our private sector may not always win on price but we will always win on value, and so if confirmed it will be my job to make that case so that our allies that are regional member states at the African Development Bank understand the benefits of working with the American private sector in projects at the bank.

Senator HAGERTY. An obvious area of focus for you is going to be critical minerals. I think about the presence of and the richness of the African continent there.

And if you think about your approach to critical mineral assets and how you might work with the DFC and with the Eximbank, I would like to hear you articulate that posture.

Mr. ADEWALE-SADIK. Thank you, Senator.

I mentioned procurement a moment ago as one of my main priorities. You know, there are several other priorities, and certainly, working closely with DFC and Eximbank, which are two strong, you know, executive branch bodies that are set up to work on the African continent and elsewhere, is also one of those priorities.

And so if confirmed, it would be an honor to work closely with both DFC and Eximbank in order to once again make the case for the American private sector, for the American people, for the American taxpayer at the African Development Bank and also generally in the region.

Senator HAGERTY. I will encourage you to work closely with them, and our office will be more than happy to facilitate that if we can be.

Ms. Dillon, I would like to come to you. If you think about what you will be managing at the Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs, these programs are designed to promote ties between Americans and people from other countries around the globe.

And if you could just articulate how those programs will advance America's interest, in your view, should you be confirmed.

Ms. DILLON. Senator, thank you so much for that question.

Yes, ECA hosts a lot of great exchange programs. There are some wonderful legacy programs like Fulbright that will be celebrating its 80th year this year. I have met a great network of Fulbright alumni, actually, meeting with the staff of the Senators on this committee.

So ECA has a great reach and a lot of things that it can do. There are also—American Spaces is something that ECA manages, and that is a way for the United States to be represented all across the world.

They host fun things like NFL watch parties. They also are where we can teach English across the globe, and there is certainly a body that we can use while China sets up its Confucius Institutes to make sure that the United States is at the table and combating China every step along the way.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

Ranking Member Merkley.

Senator MERKLEY. Well, thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

And Ms. Dillon, the authorization law for these programs stated that the department must ensure that education and cultural affairs programming shall be non-political in character and shall be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political,

social, and cultural life, maintaining scholarly integrity and meets the highest standards of academic excellence.

In administering these programs, do you pledge to follow the law to make sure they are non-political in character and balanced?

Ms. DILLON. Senator, thank you so much for that question.

I certainly want to make sure that these implementers meet all of the requirements that are necessary and that we follow the law when we are choosing these implementers and looking at our current implementing institutions so that they comply with the law.

Senator MERKLEY. It is a little simpler question. Do you pledge to follow the law to make sure these programs are non-political in character and balanced?

Ms. DILLON. Senator, thank you so much for that question.

I certainly intend to follow the law.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

So the law also requires that the funding that was approved be administered within the fiscal year as authorized and funded. If you are confirmed, will you commit to spending the funds at the levels Congress appropriated?

Ms. DILLON. Senator, thank you so much for that question.

I certainly commit to spending the money that Congress appropriates and following the law.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Mr. Kim, I mentioned the war legacy programs in Vietnam. Are you familiar with those four programs?

Mr. KIM. Senator, I am familiar with the war legacy programs, having previously worked on them as a professional staff member on the Armed Services Committee.

Senator MERKLEY. So one is cleaning up Agent Orange residue. We have come a long way on that, but more work to be done. A second is supporting individuals who have suffered birth defects or injuries from cluster munitions.

A third is cleaning up the cluster munitions, and the fourth is the martyrs program, which we use the best DNA to help out returning any remains that are found back to their families.

Those four programs, do you support those four programs?

Mr. KIM. Senator, yes, I do support those programs. I have been nominated for the position of ASEAN. I do think those programs are more within the context of our bilateral relationship with Vietnam.

Nevertheless, supporting war legacy programs to heal the wounds from the war that lasted a long time in the 1970s to ensure that our relationship with ASEAN member states move forward is important.

Senator MERKLEY. And they also serve as a foundation actually for elevating our economic relationship and diplomatic relationship to the comprehensive strategic partnership. It was a big deal for us to achieve that in partnership with Vietnam.

I did want to mention in regard to the Philippines human rights groups estimate that Duterte's extrajudicial killings killed about somewhere between 12,000 and 30,000, mostly young men, on the streets of the Philippines.

In your work, will you commit to raising the importance of accountability and transparency for the victims of Duterte's death squads?

Mr. KIM. Senator, if confirmed as a representative to ASEAN, I commit to continue supporting and advancing issues related to human rights, and to the extent possible that issues related to the Philippines emerge, I will continue to work on them.

Senator MERKLEY. OK. That was somewhat vague.

Are you familiar with the extrajudicial killings in the Philippines, and is it something you would raise in conversations? The Philippines will be leading ASEAN.

Mr. KIM. Senator, first and foremost, I have not been nominated for the position for U.S. Ambassador to the Philippines.

Nevertheless, within the ASEAN context, the United States has always supported human rights related issues in Southeast Asia and will continue to do so.

Senator MERKLEY. I think you are aware that in this position you will be discussing individual issues that affect each and every one of these nations.

So even though it is not an ambassadorship to a specific nation, you will be engaged in all of those issues, and we certainly hope you will represent issues of human rights in that context.

Mr. Adewale-Sadik, so a lot of contracts from the bank went to Chinese state owned companies, and in essence China is running a parallel operation to the African Development Bank through their own funds as they are engaging in economic enterprises.

How do you see that dynamic between the bank and China's operations both in terms of the contracts they control within the bank but also their operations outside?

Mr. ADEWALE-SADIK. Senator, thank you for that question.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, if confirmed, it will be my job to make the case for America at the bank and in the region every day.

We are the second largest shareholder at the African Development Bank, and once again, as I mentioned a few moments ago, that has to mean something.

The procurement process and also generally our relationship with our important allies that are regional member states at the bank, these are things that I wish to—if confirmed, to focus on, and I certainly take your concern, and if confirmed the concerns of this committee will be my concerns, and I pledge to working closely with you in order to address them.

Senator MERKLEY. Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Mr. Scott.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thank you, Chairman.

First off, congratulations to each of you. I think you are going to enjoy each of these jobs, and I know each of you will do a great job.

So, Mr. Kim, as nominee to the United States Representative to the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, you will be at the forefront of growing our relationship and partnership with allies in a region of great importance to our country's economic and national security.

Can you talk about the importance of the ASEAN and specifically how you see this relationship fitting into our larger Indo-Pacific strategy?

Mr. KIM. Senator, thank you for the question, and I also want to say thank you for your continued interest in the region. I know you visited the Philippines a few years ago. I think my trip to Manila was a few weeks afterwards, and the embassy in Manila was highly appreciative of your visit and your efforts to advance our alliance.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Great ally. Nice people.

Mr. KIM. Indeed.

Senator, with respect to your question, Southeast Asia and ASEAN as a multilateral institution that represents the region is located in an extremely critical geostrategic area where the sea lanes—more than a third of global commerce passes through it each year.

That means that the rules and norms and the values that underpin that subregion are free and open, and if confirmed my objective would be to ensure that ASEAN as a multilateral institution continues to support the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. How are you going to work with ASEAN to—you know, on maritime security? How would you deal with it? Because it is—you know, as you just talked about, it is the biggest issue down there right now.

Mr. KIM. Yes, Senator. Maritime security is one of the most critical issues that the region faces as well as the United States and the Indo-Pacific.

First and foremost, each ASEAN member state has a specific position with respect to maritime security where those interests overlap with that of the United States.

For instance, the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, they all have claims in the South China Sea, and they all have certain territorial disputes with China and amongst each other as well.

So the question really will be how do we resolve these issues in a peaceful way that still preserves our unfettered access to the region.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Let me follow up with Mr. Adewale-Sadik. Let me follow up with what Senator Merkley brought up.

There is no doubt that relationships in the region are of great importance to Africa. Communist China is clearly not our friend. They try to use whatever power they—whatever involvement in any organization they can to take American money for their own purpose.

So we are seeing that play out in Africa right now, right? So as the nominee of the U.S. Director of the African Development Bank, what is your plan to counter this by ensuring African countries see the bank versus Communist China as their preferred long term partner?

Mr. ADEWALE-SADIK. Senator, thank you for that question.

The African Development Bank is perhaps the continent's most important financial institution and should be and must be central to the continent's development.

Once again, we are the second largest shareholder at the bank, and that has to mean something, and so, you know, I spoke earlier about priorities of mine. I talked about procurement.

I also talked about, you know, working closely with DFC and Eximbank so that our—as a country so that our involvement and engagement on the continent is coherent and is coordinated.

Another priority of mine, if confirmed, is transparency. And on a personal level, I commit to being the most transparent possible United States Executive Director to the African Development Bank but also to working to ensure that the bank itself works in a transparent manner.

The concerns that you just outlined are important, and I appreciate them, and I thank you for outlining them, and if confirmed, these are concerns that I look forward to working with this committee on at the bank.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Why is this important to you? Why is our relationship with Africa important to you personally?

Mr. ADEWALE-SADIK. Thank you for that question. It is a pleasure to answer it.

As I mentioned in my opening statement, I am a naturalized American citizen born in Lagos, Nigeria. The continent of Africa, which is a place where I am well traveled, a place where I have invested in, lived, and experienced, is important to me on a personal level for that reason.

And the African Development Bank is, once again, the most important financial institution on that continent and must be, as I mentioned, closely focused—keenly focused on its twin goals of economic development and poverty reduction.

If confirmed, I look forward to working with this committee in order to accomplish that in line with American interests.

Senator SCOTT OF FLORIDA. Thanks.

You all three are going to do a great job. Congratulations.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

Senator Shaheen.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and congratulations to our nominees today and thank you for your willingness to serve the country.

Ms. Dillon, I would like to begin with you to follow up on Senator Merkley's questions about following the law, because last year the entire Fulbright Foreign Scholarship board resigned because of the Administration's influence and interference in the selection of grantees.

According to the Fulbright-Hays Act, which created the Fulbright program, as I am sure you are aware, that responsibility to select grantees lives exclusively with the board.

Now, it has been publicly reported that more than 200 Fulbright scholars who had been selected by the board were subsequently rejected by the State Department. I assume you had no role in that when you were at the State Department. Is that correct?

Ms. DILLON. That is correct, Senator. I did not have a role in that.

Senator SHAHEEN. But what this means is that there are fewer Americans who are pursuing research, who are representing

United States interests in places where China is more and more sending people and spending billions of dollars on disinformation.

So I want to follow up on Senator Merkley's question about the specific law that you will be charged to follow if you are confirmed for this position.

So do you commit to following the Fulbright-Hays Act including ensuring that there is not political influence in the selection of Fulbright grantees?

Ms. DILLON. Senator, thank you so much for that question. I certainly commit to follow the law.

Senator SHAHEEN. That particular law with respect to Fulbright grantees?

Ms. DILLON. All laws, yes.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

You were the senior bureau official in the Office of Global Women's Issues last year when the Administration disbanded that office, and one of the commitments that—or the positions that Secretary Rubio and the department have maintained is that the expertise of the office has not been lost because regional offices are now taking over the work of advocating for women.

So can you tell this committee if there is an individual in each regional bureau who is dedicated to addressing concerns of women and girls in the department?

Ms. DILLON. Senator, thank you so much for that question.

As you said, Secretary Rubio moved a lot of the responsibilities of offices like—

Senator SHAHEEN. Right, but you were not involved in implementing that decision. So do you know if each regional bureau has someone who has got that responsibility?

Ms. DILLON. I was uninvolved in the reorganization, but I am confident in our staff in the regional bureaus, and I am sure that there are experts in these regions that can address any concerns that you and your staff or members of this committee have.

Senator SHAHEEN. Well, do you know who is responsible for ensuring that that is the case that we can get to provide us with a list of who all those people are?

Ms. DILLON. Senator, thank you for that question.

I am unaware of the individual's name, but I am certain that we can work within our regional bureaus, and usually within the region then there is someone who is assigned to the specific country who is aware of these issues and can provide answers to the staff.

Senator SHAHEEN. We can figure that out, I am sure, without your assistance, but thank you for that.

Mr. Kim, China views ASEAN as a critical platform for diplomacy, as you pointed out, and it has sought to position itself as a leader in shaping a new regional order there.

Beijing has also increased assistance to countries where they assume leadership roles within regional organizations when they assume leadership roles, and as noted in a report that the minority of this committee did recently, China's total trade with ASEAN grew by 7.4 percent in 2025.

This is the report. I would encourage you to look at it if you have not because it lays out the opportunities that we have lost that China is taking advantage of.

While ASEAN—while China has grown its trade with ASEAN, the United States has moved to increase tariffs on parts of Southeast Asia and China has advanced regional free trade initiatives.

You pointed out that you think the United States should remain the partner of choice for ASEAN countries. So how will you address those differences, and how will you do that if you are confirmed for this role?

What kinds of initiatives do you see that can mitigate China's growing influence in the region currently?

Mr. KIM. Senator, first and foremost, I did previously see the report that your committee and the staff have produced.

Senator SHAHEEN. This is a new one that just came out a couple of weeks ago.

Mr. KIM. Yes, I believe I saw it on one of your staffers' LinkedIn pages. So I did get a chance to review it.

Senator SHAHEEN. Good.

Mr. KIM. You correctly note China's economic influence in Southeast Asia. Fundamentally, America, however, has underlying advantages that we must leverage, moving forward.

First and foremost, while total trade with China is larger than that of the United States with the region, we still remain the largest provider of FDI into the—into Southeast Asia.

So we still retain significant ability to shape the rules and norms of the region.

Second—

Senator SHAHEEN. But only if we are actually at the table in terms of international bodies and organizations that are setting rules. Would you not agree with that?

Mr. KIM. Senator, I—

Senator SHAHEEN. And I understand that if you are confirmed, you will be at the table at ASEAN. But unfortunately there are many other international entities where we are no longer—we have either withdrawn or we are no longer providing representatives to those organizations.

Mr. KIM. Senator—

Senator SHAHEEN. So I guess my fundamental question is how—it is important for the United States to be at the table to do the kinds of things you are talking about. Is that correct?

Mr. KIM. Senator, that is why I believe that the President and Secretary Rubio have nominated me for this position, to go do that exact work in Southeast Asia.

Senator SHAHEEN. Thank you.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

Senator Ricketts.

Senator RICKETTS. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, and thank you to all of our nominees here for your willingness to serve our great nation, and I appreciate the willingness as well for your families who will be sacrificing alongside you as you serve our country. So thank you.

As the Philippines is going to be the chair for ASEAN in 2026, it does so against the backdrop of escalating aggression from communist China, certainly, especially in the West Philippine Sea:

ramming vessels, deploying maritime militias, intimidating fishing vessels, attempting to rewrite international law through coercion.

And we just saw this play out again on Tuesday near Scarborough Shoal where more than 20 Filipino fishing boats were harassed by a coordinated Chinese presence.

For years, ASEAN has pursued a voluntary code of contact that Beijing has slow rolled and watered down all while continuing to militarize disputed features and intimidate its neighbors.

Now under Philippine leadership there is a renewed push to finally a legally binding code of conduct alongside a dramatic expansion of the U.S.-Philippines military cooperation.

That dual track approach reflects a clear reality that diplomacy without deterrence has failed to constrain communist China's behavior. The question is now whether ASEAN can produce something credible and enforceable or whether this becomes yet again another agreement that Beijing ignores and continues on its path of coercion.

Mr. Kim, how can ASEAN ensure that any future code of conduct includes enforcement mechanisms rather than vague commitments that Beijing can ignore?

Mr. KIM. Senator, first and foremost, deterrence is based on both credibility and capabilities, so it is critical that ASEAN member states and particularly those with a stake in the South China Sea have the capabilities to bolster deterrence.

Second, with respect to credibility, I think that is where the diplomatic components and the soft elements of national power come in.

In terms of ASEAN's ongoing, quite frankly, decades long negotiations with Beijing on the code of conduct, there is a reason why the two sides have failed to reach an agreement, because ASEAN is an organization—is an institution that operates based on consensus.

So for all 11 governments to form consensus on what the region's outlook on maritime issues vis-à-vis China are is very, very difficult. Based on open reporting—open source reporting, the Philippines and—the Philippines as the ASEAN chair has had conversations and discussions with China regarding the South China Sea.

My understanding is that those discussions are ongoing. What is important from the United States perspective is that whatever outcomes, if they are agreed upon, and throughout the process that we remain engaged and coordinated with all members of ASEAN, particularly the Philippines which is a treaty ally of the United States, to ensure that our interests, which is primarily based on the fact that the sea lanes of Southeast Asia must remain free and open for the entire world and not dominated by a single hegemonic power, that should be our overriding objective, Senator.

Senator RICKETTS. So given that consensus based nature of ASEAN, how can you specifically help the Philippines in pushing along some of this code of conduct that actually would be legally binding? What can you specifically do?

Mr. KIM. I think, if confirmed, what I could specifically do—the role that I could play is ensure that the Philippines understands what the objective of the United States is and that any negotiating

done between the chair along with other ASEAN member states reflects that of the United States, to understand exactly what our interests are, what the Philippines can and cannot or should not pursue, and to the extent possible, apply all elements of national power to ensure those objectives.

Because as noted in my statement, the United States, in order for us to be safe and prosperous moving forward, we need continued unfettered access to the region.

Senator RICKETTS. We are seeing a growing divide within ASEAN. Some nations, particularly those economically dependent on Beijing, have grown increasingly aligned with communist China.

Others are trying to hedge between the United States and communist China while Beijing continues to build artificial islands, militarize disputed territory, and interfere with lawful maritime activity across the South China Sea.

Communist China's strategy is not about partnership, it is about dominance—you had mentioned it before. It uses its economic leverage, coercion, and ICAD tactics to bend countries to its will, and when ASEAN fails to respond collectively it only reinforces Beijing's belief it can act with impunity.

If left unchecked, this dynamic risks turning ASEAN into a forum that accommodates Chinese aggression rather than constrains it.

How will you push ASEAN partners to recognize that China's actions, particularly those in the South China Sea, pose a direct threat to their sovereignty and long term security?

Mr. KIM. Senator, ASEAN member states clearly understand the threats that they face better than anyone else. They live it each day. You mentioned the disputes and the actions that the Philippines, their sailors, their fishermen, have to endure on an ongoing basis.

So fundamentally it is about maintaining open channels of communication and ensuring that our diplomatic engagements with ASEAN member states are fundamentally rested on shared transparency about what is happening in the region.

All we have to do is very simple, which is to show what the Chinese are doing in the region and the actions speak for themselves.

Senator RICKETTS. Well, I look forward to working with you because obviously this is something that is incredibly important, as you mentioned, to the United States but also to some of our treaty allies like the Philippines.

Thank you.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

Senator KAINE.

Senator KAINE. Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thanks to our witnesses.

I have one topic for each of you so about a minute and 40 seconds per person. I am going to start with Mr. Adewale-Sadik.

You have talked about how the U.S. is the second largest shareholder in the bank. The largest is Nigeria, correct?

Mr. ADEWALE-SADIK. Thank you, Senator. That is correct.

Senator KAINE. So there are 81 members of the bank, 54 African nations and 27 from outside Africa. My numbers suggest that the U.S. as the second largest shareholder contributes about 6.5 per-

cent of the bank's commitments through both callable capital and paid in capital. That makes us the second largest.

China, by comparison, contributes about 1 percent of the bank's commitments, but the PRC accounts for 25 percent of the bank's civil work contracts. So the bank is awarding projects.

This lesser participant is getting the lion's share of the contracts, and I wanted to just put some sort of flesh on this issue, Mr. Adewale-Sadik, that you were mentioning about how being the second largest shareholder has to mean something.

We are a big contributor, and yet U.S. firms are not receiving the benefit of that, and I know that will be a strong priority. I do not need you to repeat that. You said it already, but I wanted folks to understand the magnitude of this.

Ms. Dillon, in your opening testimony you described the Fulbright program as a flagship program. Why did you use that phrase?

MS. DILLON. It is one of our most notable programs within ECA, and it has been around for 80 years, and I think that it is the program that most people recognize when they think of ECA is why I used that phrase.

Senator KAINE. I was really happy to hear you mention it, and I followed your communication with Senator Shaheen. It is a notable program worldwide that provides opportunities for American scholars but also scholars from around the world to come to the U.S., develop favorable impressions of the U.S., and then they can be small lane ambassadors for the U.S. when they go home.

I was troubled when last year the State Department proposed in its budget—the President's budget that came over—a massive reduction in the funding for your office, which includes Fulbright funding.

The funding in fiscal year 2025 was \$741 million. What the State Department asked for in fiscal year 2026 was \$50 million, a reduction of staff by 63 percent, and it would have essentially meant a slashing of the Fulbright program.

And so in addition to the resignation of Fulbright board members, it did not send a good message about the commitment to this flagship program.

So I was heartened to hear you call it a flagship program, and I was heartened in your responses to Senator Shaheen, and I hope you will continue to have this program be as strong as it has been for the last 80 years.

Finally, if I could, to Mr. Kim, many, many countries in ASEAN, you have gotten a lot of questions about the Philippines, and I am going to pile on on that.

Senator Hagerty and I worked on an act, the PERA Act, that actually I think you might have done some work on as you were working with Senator Hagerty, that really celebrates—it celebrates but then works to continue an in depth military partnership between the United States and the Philippines, which we think can be a really important part of promoting regional stability.

Talk a little bit about the PERA Act and the virtues of that bill.

Mr. KIM. Senator, number one, thank you for your leadership along with Senator Hagerty on the Philippines Enhanced Resil-

ience Act. I was personally glad to see it adopted into statute last year as part of NDAA.

As I mentioned earlier, deterrence is fundamentally based on credibility and capabilities, which means that the capabilities of the Philippines armed forces is critical to bolstering deterrence in the region.

Based on my time on the Armed Services Committee as a professional staff member, we were able to see firsthand, when equipped properly, what kind of role the Philippines could play with U.S. security assistance in ensuring that they can play the role of an amplifier, a force multiplier in the region.

And fundamentally it is their maritime domain. It is their security interests that must be protected while, of course, the United States also has a tremendous interest in the region that we have unfettered access to the South China Sea.

So statutes like PERA, security assistance to the Philippines, is absolutely critical to ensuring that our treaty ally the Philippines remains sovereign and free from coercion.

Senator KAINE. Three nominees, three topics. I yield back 1 second.

Senator HAGERTY. Senator Duckworth.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Kim, I appreciate your willingness to sit down with me recently for an extensive conversation earlier this week. I would like to follow up on a couple of the topics we discussed.

I think I made it pretty clear in our meeting that I see the role of U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN as a critical one and not one that should be traded for political favor to inexperienced nominees.

The reason I feel so strongly about this is that I know just how important our relationship in Southeast Asia are to the United States' national security and how often they get overlooked and undervalued.

Now, your predecessor was also an inexperienced political nominee when it came to ASEAN, but he grew into the position, and I think from our conversation that you likely will as well.

Although you lack experience in Southeast Asia, given your experience in Northeast Asia, perhaps you will bring in real understanding of the true risks and opportunities, but also especially the risks when we do not show up in Southeast Asia or when we act like a bully rather than as an ally or a partner.

We cannot always be the big brother in relationships with the member states of ASEAN.

Mr. Kim, in your assessment, what do we risk when the United States turns our attention away from Southeast Asia, leaving a vacuum that the PRC clearly seeks to exploit and fill?

And if confirmed, how will you influence an Administration that has clearly deprioritized the Indo-Pacific region, let alone ASEAN? How will you prioritize and convince them that we still do believe in ASEAN centrality and that it is not just a series of meaningless platitudes from a President who clearly has turned his attention away from the region?

Mr. KIM. Senator, thank you for taking time to meet with me the other day, and if confirmed I look forward to hopefully seeing you in the region.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Oh, you will.

Mr. KIM. I believe the commitment was that we will go eat chicken in clay pot together. I think that was a commitment.

[Laughter.]

Mr. KIM. But at the core, the Administration has, continues to, and will remain focused on the Indo-Pacific, particularly in Southeast Asia.

Senator DUCKWORTH. He just deprioritized it in the NDS. The latest NDS reduces its role—its importance.

Mr. KIM. Senator, I cannot speak on behalf of the National Defense Strategy, which would be covered by a different department, but there is a reason why President Trump traveled to Malaysia last year to attend the U.S.-ASEAN summit.

The President was able to exhibit incredible diplomatic leadership by brokering a peace deal between Thailand and Cambodia, and there is a reason why leaders of Southeast Asia, Indonesia, Cambodia, and Malaysia showed up to the President's diplomatic initiative with respect to the Board of Peace.

And we continue to exhibit such leadership, especially when Secretary Rubio travels to Malaysia last year for the ASEAN Regional Forum and specifically states that the history of the 21st century will be written in the Indo-Pacific, particularly in Southeast Asia.

So I feel comforted and confident in knowing that this Administration's priorities will be in the Indo-Pacific as well as Southeast Asia.

Senator DUCKWORTH. I hope you will keep that focus for the Administration.

You have spoken about your appreciation for how the State Department works, given your personal experience in various roles, combined with your time on the Hill.

I hope we will see you effectively using the levers of our government to achieve the goals of the mission to ASEAN.

Talk to me a little bit about how you will advocate for additional resources and unlock additional tools to make your tenure as Ambassador to ASEAN the most effective it can be, both in terms of working with the secretariat and as well as the bilateral missions with our ASEAN partner countries.

Mr. KIM. Senator, thank you for the question. Our focus and our presence in Southeast Asia as well as ASEAN cannot be simply a State Department role. It must encompass the whole of government.

So that means working with the Development Finance Corporation. That means working with the Eximbank to see how we can unlock American financing for additional infrastructure projects or other types of financial tools that the United States can leverage so that the quality of American investments can be seen and felt by people in Southeast Asia.

Within the tools of the State Department, foreign assistance is one element that should be looked at and leveraged, and whether or not we can expand our foreign assistance, moving forward, to Southeast Asia should be a—would be a priority of mine.

Senator DUCKWORTH. That is good to hear.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator HAGERTY. And Senator Duckworth, my office will be working with hopefully soon to be Ambassador Kim's team on the financing components of this as we expand the role of DFC.

So I welcome your engagement in that as well.

Senator DUCKWORTH. You can count on me.

Senator HAGERTY. Thank you.

Senator DUCKWORTH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Senator HAGERTY. Thanks very much.

And I want to thank everybody for their time here today. It is an impressive hearing. I understand why you all have been selected by the President for the roles that you have been nominated for.

To all of the families here, I appreciate your dedication and your support for these nominees. It is an important undertaking that they are engaging in.

Speaking from personal experience, I can tell you the families do not often get recognized, but their role is absolutely critical. So thank you to all of them.

Before closing, I would like to ask unanimous consent to add any letters of support that the committee has received to the record. That sounds good.

[The information referred to was not received at press time.]

Senator HAGERTY. And for the information of the members of the committee, the record will remain open until close of business tomorrow, Friday, March 27, for members to submit questions for the record.

With that, this hearing is adjourned.

[Whereupon, at 11:16 a.m., the hearing was adjourned.]

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### **Additional Material Submitted for the Record**

#### RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CATHERINE DILLON BY SENATOR DAVID MCCORMICK

*Question.* In April 2016, Ekpar Asat, a Chinese Uyghur entrepreneur, philanthropist, and app developer, who participated in the State Department's International Visitor Leadership Program, was arrested and sentenced to 15 years in prison in China just weeks after his return to the country. Do you believe there should be any consequences for China's harassment and unjust imprisonment of State Department exchange program alumni, to include a suspension of PRC participation in these programs until Asat is released?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will carefully review these and other individual cases and consult closely with the relevant offices within the Department.

*Question.* If confirmed, will you commit to raising Ekpar Asat's imprisonment at the highest levels within the Trump administration and to advocate for his release?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with the appropriate Bureaus on this case and with my colleagues at the Department to keep Congress fully informed about the Department's efforts through the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

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#### RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED TO CATHERINE DILLON BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

##### *FY25 Funding and OMB Review Processes*

*Question.* The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) withheld Fiscal Year 2025 funding for twenty-two ECA programs last year. These programs have still not

received their Fiscal Year 2025 funding. When will those twenty-two programs receive their Fiscal Year 2025 funding, and if confirmed, do you commit to working to ensure any such programs receive full funding and move forward?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure ECA obligates and expends appropriated funding to support exchange programs in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

*Question.* OMB is requiring that it review and approve every Fiscal Year 2026 ECA grant, but there is no timeline for OMB to finalize these reviews, nor are there any guidelines for what OMB is even reviewing. Because of this, OMB involvement is causing severe delays in the Fiscal Year 2026 process at ECA, again putting programs at risk. Without a clear timeline or defined role in the process, OMB is essentially able to assert virtual veto power over the programs that would become your responsibility, which is not what Congress intends for ECA. If confirmed, will you implement guardrails and time limits to ensure that OMB's review does not cause major delays to programming, and what is the projected timeline for completing Fiscal Year 2026 program grants?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with OMB and other interagency partners to avoid delays in the execution of exchange programs. I am committed to obligating and expending funds promptly in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Because I am not currently in the position, I am unable to provide any specifics on the Fiscal Year 2026 grants; however, if confirmed I will assess and inform Congress appropriately through the Bureau of Legislative Affairs.

#### *The Future Leaders Exchange and Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange*

*Question.* The Future Leaders Exchange (FLEX) and Congress Bundestag Youth Exchange (CBYX) programs are among programs at risk as they continue to wait for OMB clearance on their Fiscal Year 2026 awards. If FLEX does not receive its award soon, the program will not have time to find placements and host families for the students selected to participate in the program for the 2026–2027 school year. Further, if CBYX does not receive its award soon, the program will not be able to begin recruitment for next year's exchange. Will you push to move these grant reviews through the process as soon as possible to ensure they have time to plan their next cohorts?

Answer. If confirmed, I am committed to work with interagency partners to avoid delays in the implementation of exchange programs. I understand the importance of timely reviews and awarding of grants so program administrators can plan and carry out future cohorts effectively, in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

#### *Russia Exchange Participants*

*Question.* The Russian Federation has designated the Institute of International Education, American Councils, and Cultural Vistas as so-called “undesirable” organizations, indicating that they are concerned how our exchange programs expose ordinary Russians to alternative ideas and American-style democracy. How would you continue to engage Russian alumni of those organizations and other alumni from countries hostile toward the United States in a way that both keeps them connected to the United States and keeps them safe?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work with Embassy Moscow and the Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs to continue to support Russian exchange alumni both inside and outside of Russia while taking into consideration privacy and security concerns.

#### *Young African Leaders Initiative*

*Question.* The Young African Leaders Initiative (YALI) helps us compete with Chinese influence in Africa. However, twenty-four countries in Africa are subject to full or partial travel bans. In the first Trump Administration, the Secretary of State granted waivers to facilitate YALI or other exchanges. If confirmed, would you seek any necessary waivers on travel restrictions to facilitate the operations of YALI and similar programs?

Answer. The Department is committed to ensuring national security across borders and promoting U.S. prosperity at home. If confirmed, I will work in consultation with the Bureau of African Affairs, and other regional bureaus, to identify countries for 2027 program participation. National interest exemptions to Presidential Proclamation 10998 may be made on a case-by-case basis for qualified individuals for whom the Secretary of State determines, in his discretion, that their travel would serve a U.S. national interest. ECA works with regional bureaus to identify individuals who may meet that standard.

*Global Women's Issues*

*Question.* Per our exchange, at the hearing, please identify each individual charged with carrying out the functions formerly executed by the Office of Global Women's Issues at each regional bureau.

Updated Answer. Secretary Rubio has been clear in his commitment to reduce bureaucracy and ensure the Department moves at the speed of relevancy. The Department has promoted efficiency by empowering regional bureaus to lead on policy issues, including weaving in formerly specialized functions into a coherent policy framework. Many regional bureaus have an office dedicated to regional and global issues where these specialized policy issues are incorporated into the everyday policymaking of the bureau.

(i.e. in NEA, the Office of Regional and Multilateral Affairs carries the portfolio. In EUR, the Office of Policy & Global Issues carries this portfolio, in SCA, the Office of Foreign Assistance, in EAP, the Office of Foreign Assistance, in AF, the Office of Regional and Multilateral Affairs and Office of Commercial and Economic Affairs, in WHA, the Office of congressional Affairs, and in IO, the Front Office.)

In addition, certain functional bureaus—such as Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor—also provide programming which carry out the functions formerly executed by GWI.

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RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO CATHERINE DILLON BY SENATOR BILL HAGERTY

*On Advancing Entrepreneurship Through Exchange Programs:*

*American entrepreneurship is an essential part of American culture. Southwestern Advantage, a company in Tennessee, has hosted—over the past 33 years—more than 12,000 foreign students as Exchange Visitors working as independent contractors in door-to-door sales roles. Through these placements, participants gain firsthand experience with American entrepreneurship and return home equipped to start businesses of their own—helping both the U.S. economy and their home countries. Collectively, Southwestern Advantage alumni have launched hundreds of businesses worldwide, employing thousands of people. The program is widely regarded by ECA staff as a gold standard within the J-1 portfolio, and the company has worked closely with the Department to develop protocols that ensure a safe and successful exchange experience.*

*Question.* How will you work to ensure that programs like these—focused on building entrepreneurship skills and delivering high-quality exchange experiences—continue to be supported and available to Exchange Visitors?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that exchange programs reflect the strengths that made America great: entrepreneurship, hard work, innovation, and personal responsibility. When carried out in a manner consistent with the purpose of the Exchange Visitor Program, these programs can provide participants meaningful exposure to the American model of free enterprise, deepen appreciation for the values that have long contributed to our country's success, and advance U.S. interests abroad. If confirmed, I will work to ensure that exchange opportunities in this area are consistent with the Department's responsibilities, the goals of the program, and the broader interests of the United States.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO CATHERINE DILLON BY SENATOR TIM KAINE

*The Secretary's Office on Global Women's Issues (S/GWI) at the State Department was disbanded under Secretary Rubio's broader reorganization. However, during your nominations hearing, you mentioned that the State Department has not lost the expertise the Office provided, since the remaining bureaus are incorporating GWI professionals into their offices.*

*Question.* Can you please confirm whether you will have a dedicated lead for GWI issues under your supervision?

Answer. The Department has promoted efficiency by empowering regional bureaus to lead on policy issues, including weaving in formerly specialized functions into a coherent policy framework. Responsibility for these functions now rests with

the relevant regional office, led by regional desk officers and coordinated through office directors and Front Offices. These teams incorporate considerations related to women and girls into their diplomatic engagement, including political, economic, consular, and public diplomacy efforts. This integrated model ensures these priorities are addressed as part of our broader policy objectives across the region.

*Question.* If so, what are the specific policy priorities they would oversee?

Answer. N/A

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO CATHERINE DILLON BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

*(Non-political programming):*

*The State Authorization Act passed last year requires the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy to “ensure that educational and cultural affairs programming shall be nonpolitical in character and shall be balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life and that academic and cultural programs maintain scholarly integrity and meet the highest standards of academic excellence or artistic achievement.” You report to the Under Secretary.*

*Question.* In your words, what does it mean for an exchange program to be “balanced and representative of the diversity of American political, social, and cultural life”?

Answer. Consistent with the President’s direction that foreign policy and international engagement advance an “America First” approach while faithfully reflecting the breadth of American institutions and values. I believe a “balanced and representative” exchange program should select participants on the basis of merit, reflect a broad range of American ideas, communities, and institutions, and present those perspectives in a way that is faithful to the Constitution, including being protective of free expression and freedom of religion, and not dominated by any narrow ideological, regional, or institutional slice of American society.

*Question.* What specific actions will you take to ensure that ECA programs comply with the requirements set forth in the State Authorization Act?

Answer. I am committed to following the law. If confirmed, I will ensure ECA takes all steps necessary to implement these new provisions. Working through the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, I will maintain communication with this committee, and other relevant congressional committees, on how ECA is implementing the Department of State Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 and will promptly address any concerns that Members or staff may raise.

*Question.* Do you commit to ensuring exchange program participants are selected based on excellence and achievement and that partisan political considerations will not influence participant selection for any program?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure ECA activities comply with all applicable laws and regulations for participant selection.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO CATHERINE DILLON BY SENATOR CORY A. BOOKER

*Question.* The Office of Management and Budget’s (OMB’s) interference in Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) programs has been one of the bureau’s biggest challenges in the past year. Last year, Senator Collins and I sent a letter to Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Director of OMB Russ Vought to demand that OMB release the Congressional Notifications for 22 of ECA’s Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) international exchange programs that it unlawfully withheld. These awards were ultimately released to ECA prior to the end of Fiscal Year 2025, and in early 2026, Senator Collins and I received a response letter from ECA.

In that response, ECA affirmed that the 22 programs held by OMB had been aligned with the President’s priorities and several executive orders, and that the “Department has authorized” many of the programs to move forward. To date, none of those held 22 programs have received any Fiscal Year 2025 funding. Some of the programs do have activities happening this calendar year, but those activities are funded with Fiscal Year 2024 funds. Some of those programs have had their Fiscal

Year 2026 awards posted on grants.gov, but the award amount does not account for the funds lost in Fiscal Year 2025.

If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that all 22 of the programs held by OMB last year will receive their funding for both Fiscal Year 2025 and Fiscal Year 2026 so that they can resume activities as soon as possible?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work closely with OMB and other interagency partners to avoid delays in the execution of exchange programs. I am committed to administering appropriated funds in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. Because I am not currently in the position, I am unable to provide any specifics on the status of grant award issuance; however, if confirmed I will work with the Department's Bureau of Legislative Affairs to assess and inform Congress appropriately.

*Question.* During your nominations hearing before this committee, you repeatedly committed to "following the law." In your role, you will be legally obligated to administer funds appropriated by Congress within the Fiscal Year for which they have been appropriated.

If confirmed, do you commit to administering funds within the Fiscal Year for which they have been legally appropriated?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure ECA administers appropriated funding to support exchange programs in accordance with applicable laws and regulations.

*Question.* During your opening statement, you committed to "prioritizing the safety and welfare of our American exchange participants abroad." According to reports in April 2025, there had been an internal State Department document that proposed closing nearly 30 embassies and consulates.

Do you agree that U.S. embassies and consulates play a critical role in protecting the safety and welfare of citizens abroad, including exchange participants?

Answer. ECA maintains close coordination with CA, our Embassies, and implementing partners to ensure the safety and welfare of all program participants around the world. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize the safety and well-being of all American participants on exchange programs overseas.

*Question.* Do you agree that eliminating access to an embassy or consulate would limit a citizen's ability to obtain critical resources and assistance during emergencies or crises overseas?

Answer. ECA continues to work closely with U.S. embassies and consulates, regional bureaus, and the Bureau of Consular Affairs (CA) to ensure participants have the most up-to-date security information and promptly inform participants of any necessary actions in response to changing security conditions.

*Question.* Do you commit to ensuring that international exchange participants maintain proximate access to U.S. embassies and consulates while abroad?

Answer. ECA maintains close coordination with our Embassies and implementing partners to ensure the safety and welfare of all program participants around the world. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize the safety and well-being of all American participants on exchange programs overseas.

#### *Health and Wellbeing*

*ECA program staff are responsible for overseeing the design and administration of exchange programs, maintaining and building country partnerships, and ensuring the health, safety, and welfare of program participants. However, ECA staff have suffered from mass layoffs at the Department of State, reducing the bureau's ability to execute these responsibilities.*

*Question.* Do you agree that ECA staff help protect the health, safety, and welfare of program participants?

Answer. ECA maintains close coordination with our Embassies and implementing partners to ensure the safety and welfare of all program participants around the world. If confirmed, I will continue to prioritize the safety and well-being of all American participants on exchange programs overseas.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that ECA is staffed at levels that ensure timely and adequate protection of the health, safety, and welfare of program participants?

Answer. The Department's reorganization resulted in a consolidation of programs and staffing that created a more efficient and lean organization. If confirmed, I will ensure that ECA staff continue to maintain close coordination with our Embassies

and implementing partners to ensure the safety and welfare of all program participants around the world.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that ECA is staffed at levels that ensure timely communication with and response to implementing partners?

Answer. The Department's reorganization resulted in a consolidation of programs and staffing that created a more efficient and lean organization. If confirmed, I will ensure that ECA staff maintain prompt communication with all implementing partners.

*Question.* During your nominations hearing before this committee, you were critical of ECA's professional implementing partners who are awarded, based on merit, the opportunity to run ECA's exchange programs.

If confirmed, do you commit to upholding ECA's impartial and merit-based award and selection process for implementing partners?

Answer. This Administration is committed to ensuring U.S.-taxpayer-funded programs are merit-based and open to all qualified participants. If confirmed, I will ensure ECA activities comply with all applicable laws and regulations for implementing partner selection.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to ensuring that ECA implementers are qualified to receive an ECA award?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure ECA activities comply with all applicable laws and regulations for implementing partner selection.

*Question.* If confirmed, do you commit to keeping ECA's programs bipartisan and apolitical by declining to award ECA's programs and funding to organizations with a clearly partisan mission, even if they're technically qualified to receive an ECA award?

Answer. This Administration is committed to ensuring U.S.-taxpayer-funded programs are merit-based. If confirmed, I will ensure ECA activities comply with all applicable laws and regulations for implementing partner selection.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO CATHERINE DILLON BY SENATOR CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

*The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) has been slow-rolling ECA's awards process by withholding Congressional Notifications. Due to OMB's interference, the Young African Leaders Initiative's (YALI) Mandela Washington Fellowship, ECA's flagship program for sub-Saharan Africa, was held up in 2025 and will not happen this year. Before the House Foreign Affairs Committee, Under Secretary Rogers testified that YALI was "on track," but the Summit she pointed to is for alumni and funded under Fiscal Year 2024 money. The program itself is not taking place and therefore, is not "on track."*

*Question.* YALI has broad bipartisan support in Congress and its own earmark for Fiscal Year 2026. Will you commit to ensuring that YALI will receive its award prior to July 31, to enable it to resume activities in 2027?

Answer. If confirmed, I will review the status of the Young African Leaders Initiative and inform Congress appropriately, working closely with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, and I commit to working with interagency partners to avoid program implementation delays.

*Question.* When the Mandela Washington Fellowship resumes, its participants, who are selected competitively based on merit and outstanding leadership in their communities, come from countries facing travel bans and prohibitively expensive visa fees. Will you advocate for participants in your programs to receive travel ban and fee waivers so they can participate?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that ECA continues to work in consultation with the Bureau of African Affairs and other regional bureaus to identify countries for 2027 program participation. As the Under Secretary stated, national interest exemptions to Presidential Proclamation 10998 may be made on a case-by-case basis for qualified individuals for whom the Secretary of State determines, in his discretion, that their travel would serve a U.S. national interest. ECA works with regional bureaus to identify individuals who may meet that standard.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO CATHERINE DILLON BY SENATOR JACKY ROSEN

*Promoting American Leadership and Maintaining Our Competitive Advantage:*

*As we celebrate the 250th anniversary of our Nation's founding, the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs' (ECA) role in promoting American leadership and maintaining our long-term competitive advantage—especially in relation to foreign adversaries—is critical. That is why I have introduced two pieces of legislation to strengthen ECA's interagency coordination, focus on key national security priorities, and support long-term strategic success:*

*The Critical Mineral Mining Education Act of 2026 (S. 3612) would support students pursuing advanced degrees in STEM fields or mining-related disciplines—including geological mapping, exploration, financing and permitting, mine construction, mineral processing, and materials reclamation and recycling—by placing them in countries with leading mining programs. This initiative would help build capacity in the U.S. mining workforce, address gaps in the growing domestic critical mineral supply chain and reduce U.S. dependence on foreign energy and mineral sources.*

*The American Decade of Sports Act (S. 3676) calls on the Department of State to develop a comprehensive sports diplomacy strategy that leverages the major global sporting events the United States will host over the next decade—establishing a “Mega-Decade of Sports Diplomacy”—and creates an Office of Sports Diplomacy within ECA.*

*Question.* Will you commit to working with me and my co-sponsors to advance these bills?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will, through the Bureau of Legislative Affairs, work closely with this Committee to provide the Committee and its designated staff with requested information, consistent with all applicable laws and regulations.

*Question.* Will you make yourself and your staff available to work with my team and provide necessary briefings to ensure we continue to leverage ECA's unique programs and capabilities to advance U.S. leadership through education and exchanges?

*Answer.* Yes. If confirmed, I commit to working with the Bureau of Legislative Affairs to appear before this Committee when invited.

*Question.* Supporting Women and Girls: ECA has a strong track record of developing impactful programs that support women and girls, particularly in environments where they are unable to work, study, or lead. Tailored educational and exchange programs—such as TechWomen, TechGirls, and the International Women of Courage program—do not disadvantage men and boys; rather, they help create a more level playing field in contexts where women and girls face cultural, structural, political, or economic barriers.

Do you believe that exchange programs tailored to women and girls create inequity or disadvantage men and boys?

*Answer.* Merit-based exchanges deliver stronger results for the United States across our core objectives. When programs are open to all qualified participants, we can better address challenges that affect entire societies, expand economic opportunities for U.S. businesses by engaging full workforces and markets, and build durable educational and institutional partnerships that endure over time.

*Question.* Do you agree that such tailored programs are important for supporting marginalized populations, particularly in countries where women and girls cannot fully participate in academia, politics, business, and other sectors?

*Answer.* Merit based programming reflects the full strength of society, promotes fairness and opportunity, and is more effective in supporting security, prosperity, and influence abroad.

*Question.* Do you support ending programs specifically designed for women and girls?

*Answer.* Programming that is exclusive to women-participants fails to recognize that security and economic outcomes require engaging entire communities, including men. By extending eligibility to a larger audience, regardless of gender, we will maximize the chances of achieving our foreign policy goals.

*Question.* Do you believe that programs focused on women and girls are inherently incompatible with merit-based participant selection?

*Answer.* This Administration is committed to ensuring U.S.-taxpayer-funded programs are merit-based and open to all qualified participants. Programs that exclude

individuals based on gender risk limiting opportunity, reducing program effectiveness, and failing to reflect the full strength of American society.

*Question.* Timely and Efficient Exchange Program Management: I have heard directly from Nevada-based organizations that implement ECA exchange programs that ongoing delays by the Department and the Office of Budget Management in approving programs, issuing Congressional Notifications, and posting funding opportunity notices have significantly slowed—or even halted—critical exchange programs. As a result, implementing organizations are operating with uncertainty, losing valuable planning and evaluation time, and leaving host schools and families without clear information.

Beyond calling, emailing, or meeting with others in the administration who are causing delays, how will you cut through bureaucratic barriers and red tape to ensure these programs are implemented in a timely manner?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work closely with stakeholders in the interagency review and implementation process to ensure timeliness, transparency and compliance with all applicable laws and regulations.

*Question.* Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board Selection: In June 2025, 11 of the 12 members of the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board resigned in protest, citing political interference by the Trump administration. Their resignation letter stated that the administration denied Fulbright awards to a substantial number of selected candidates for the 2025–2026 academic year and subjected an additional 1,200 foreign recipients to unauthorized post-selection reviews. Affected fields included architecture, biology, engineering, agriculture, animal sciences, medical sciences, music, and history. The Fulbright-Hays Act clearly grants the Board sole authority to select program participants—authority not delegated to the State Department or any other Federal entity.

Do you commit to managing all ECA programs in accordance with the law?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I commit to fully complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

*Question.* If State Department processes circumvent the law, will you commit to realigning those processes to ensure compliance?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I commit to fully complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

*Question.* If directed by the President, the Secretary of State, or others to override the Board's decisions, would you uphold the law and preserve the Board's final authority?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I commit to fully complying with this and all other applicable laws and regulations.

*Question.* Censorship of Exchange Participants: The Fulbright-Hays Act guarantees recipients of Fulbright Academic Exchange and Humphrey Fellowship awards full academic and artistic freedom, including the freedom to write, publish, and create. No award may be revoked or diminished based on a recipient's political views or lawful scholarly or artistic activity.

Do you commit to protecting the freedom of speech and expression of all U.S. government-funded exchange participants, including Fulbright and Humphrey recipients—even when they disagree with or criticize U.S. policy?

*Answer.* As Under Secretary Rogers stated before the House Foreign Affairs Committee—we are making clear to foreign publics that freedom of speech is foundational to prosperity, innovation, and long-term stability. If confirmed, I commit to fully complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

*Question.* How will you ensure that exchange participants are not targeted—through revocation or threats of revocation of scholarships or program participation—based on their views?

*Answer.* As Secretary Rubio has stated, coming to the United States on a visa is a privilege, not a right. The United States has long considered the viewpoints and associations of foreign nationals vying to come into the country when we allocate that privilege. If confirmed, I commit to fully complying with all applicable laws and regulations.

*Question.* Promoting U.S. Higher Education: U.S. colleges and universities not only demonstrate the Nation's exceptional academic leadership but also generate significant economic benefits, supporting nearly 355,000 jobs nationwide. International students contribute approximately \$55 billion to the U.S. economy, including over \$67 million in Nevada.

Do you commit to protecting the work of EducationUSA and other ECA programs that promote U.S. higher education?

Answer. If confirmed, I will ensure that ECA programs continue to support U.S. universities and colleges, community colleges, and vocational-technical institutions; promote American excellence in education; and expand American educational exports and global partnerships.

*Question.* How will you coordinate with counterparts across the Department, including the Bureau of Consular Affairs, and the broader government to increase international student enrollment?

Answer. If confirmed, I will commit to working across the State Department, including with the Bureau of Consular Affairs, and in cooperation with other U.S. agencies, to ensure only top talent enters our Nation, which is key to the United States remaining the global leader in international higher education while protecting national security.

*Question.* Supporting American Families and Businesses through BridgeUSA: ECA's BridgeUSA programs provide substantial benefits to communities across the United States. In 2023 alone, participants in the Au Pair, Camp Counselor, Summer Work and Travel, Intern, and Trainee programs contributed nearly \$8 million to Nevada's economy.

How will you work across the Department and interagency to ensure that BridgeUSA programs continue to support U.S. businesses and families?

Answer. If confirmed, I will work across the Department and with interagency partners to keep BridgeUSA strong, secure, and responsive to U.S. businesses and families. This includes coordinating with Consular Affairs on visa processing and the highest level of screening and vetting to protect America, working with DHS and others on vetting and compliance, and ensuring sponsors protect participants and uphold program integrity. It also means engaging sponsors, employers, host families, and communities so BridgeUSA continues to meet its statutory purpose, address legitimate temporary needs where appropriate, and advance U.S. economic and foreign policy interests.

*Question.* Specifically, how will you coordinate with the Bureau of Consular Affairs to ensure visa appointment wait times do not hinder these programs?

Answer. Visa appointment capacity and scheduling are managed by Consular Affairs (CA), which oversees global appointment availability, including for student and exchange visitor visa applicants. The Department's scheduling of nonimmigrant visa interview appointments facilitates core American interests. Consular sections constantly adjust their schedules to allow for sufficient time to fully vet applicants to ensure our visa operations around the world uphold the highest standards of national security and public safety. The Department encourages applicants to apply as early as they can and to anticipate additional processing time. Although ECA does not control visa appointment scheduling, it does provide sponsors with the necessary application materials in advance of scheduling appointments. This year, ECA released those materials earlier than in previous years, allowing applicants to secure visa appointments well in advance of their program start dates. That earlier release helps provide sufficient time for required screening and processing. If confirmed, I will ensure ECA continues to coordinate closely with CA to support visa operations that put America and its interests first.

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RESPONSE TO AN ADDITIONAL QUESTION FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO ADEMOLA ADEWALE-SADIK BY SENATOR JEANNE SHAHEEN

*African Development Fund*

*Question.* The Treasury Department has not delivered previously approved and appropriated Fiscal Year 2025 African Development Fund money to the Bank. This funding was supported on a bipartisan basis. Can you commit to working with this Committee to ensure that Fiscal Year 2025 money is delivered to the Bank?

Answer. Budget obligations are outside the purview of my nomination of Executive Director to the African Development Bank.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO KEVIN KIM BY SENATOR DAVID MCCORMICK

*Question.* Mr. Kim, you noted in your opening remarks that the history of the 21st century will largely be written in Southeast Asia and keeping the Indo-Pacific free and open. A sentiment I wholeheartedly agree with, and which illustrates the importance of our unmatched network of partners and allies across Asia. This is especially timely given that our ally, the Philippines, will Chair ASEAN in 2026. What specific steps would you take as U.S. Representative to work with the Philippines, and our other regional allies, to prioritize countering China's repeated harassment of vessels in the South China Sea, advance freedom of navigation and maritime security, and uphold respect for international law within the construct of ASEAN's principle of centrality?

*Answer.* The United States, the Philippines, and other regional allies share an interest in maintaining peace and stability, respect for sovereignty and sovereign rights under international law, unimpeded lawful commerce, and upholding the freedoms of navigation and overflight and other lawful uses of the sea.

If confirmed, I will work with the Philippines and other ASEAN claimant states to strengthen their maritime security capabilities and oppose China's expansive and unlawful maritime claims. I will also work through ASEAN forums, including the ASEAN Regional Forum and East Asia Summit, to protect Americans and our interests in the region. I look forward to working with Congress on developing additional tools to bolster our partners in the face of China's on-going dangerous and destabilizing activity.

*Question.* You highlighted in your opening statement growing the shared digital economy and U.S. AI exports in the region. If confirmed, how will you position the United States as ASEAN's preferred partner in digital transformation, artificial intelligence governance, and emerging technologies, while protecting intellectual property and data security?

*Answer.* ASEAN's digital economy, which was worth \$300 billion in 2025 and is expected to grow threefold within the next 5 years, is a critical driver of growth for both ASEAN and U.S. businesses. If confirmed, I will continue the Administration's efforts to accelerate ASEAN's adoption and deployment of the full U.S. AI technology stack, promoting the AI Exports Program, America's AI Action Plan, and the Presidential Memorandum on Winning the 6G Race. These efforts will help ensure that regional digital regulations are aligned with U.S. interests and U.S. businesses enjoy a level playing field.

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RESPONSES TO ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD SUBMITTED  
TO KEVIN KIM BY SENATOR JEFF MERKLEY

*Question.* If confirmed, will you commit to engaging ASEAN as an institution and its individual member countries to advance democracy and human rights?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will work with ASEAN to advance stability and prosperity across the region and advance the priorities President Trump endorsed last October in the U.S.-ASEAN Joint Vision Statement. This joint vision includes a commitment to cooperation on good governance and human rights, recognizing that this makes the United States and ASEAN stronger.

*Question.* In your dealings with the government of the Philippines as the 2026 ASEAN Chair, will you commit to raising issues of transparency and accountability for the victims of Duterte's war against drugs, including ongoing concerns about continued killings and impunity under the current Marcos administration?

*Answer.* If confirmed, I will commit to raising these issues. The United States closely follows reports of human rights abuses in the Philippines and encourages the Philippines to accelerate its accountability efforts, defend the rule of law, and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms. These issues were discussed at the most recent Bilateral Strategic Dialogue on February 16 in Manila. Progress in these areas will further strengthen our Alliance. At the same time, advancing U.S. interests in the Indo-Pacific requires a comprehensive approach—one that prioritizes enhancing deterrence and supporting U.S. economic strength over a range of other shared challenges. The Department will continue to engage the Marcos administration on human rights and good governance even as we unwaveringly pursue our core U.S. foreign policy interests with our Philippine Allies.

*Question.* How should the United States engage with ASEAN on Burma, given the junta's continued violence and ASEAN's limited enforcement of its Five-Point Consensus?

*Answer.* ASEAN is an important stakeholder to engage in resolving the ongoing conflict in Burma. The United States and ASEAN share deep concerns about the crisis and the challenges it poses to regional stability. If confirmed, I will work closely with the Philippines as ASEAN Chair and Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teresa Lazaro as the ASEAN Special Envoy, noting our shared concerns about Burma's recent elections and the need for political dialogue. I am open to engaging with all stakeholders to resolve the conflict in a way that brings lasting peace.

*Question.* If confirmed, how do you plan to engage with ASEAN on Rohingya refugee issues?

*Answer.* The United States remains the largest provider of life-saving assistance in the world. In December, the United States pledged \$2 billion through OCHA pooled funds to administer humanitarian aid more effectively. Funding through OCHA pooled funds will support humanitarian assistance in Burma and Bangladesh. ASEAN member states hosting refugees from Burma should allow livelihood opportunities to reduce the burden on the international community—and this is what refugees themselves want.

