

**Testimony of Joseph Yun  
Ambassador-Designate to Malaysia  
Before the  
Senate Foreign Relations Committee  
July 23, 2013**

Chairman Cardin, Senator Rubio, and distinguished Members of the Committee, it is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to be the next Ambassador to Malaysia. I am deeply grateful to President Obama and to Secretary Kerry for placing their confidence in me with this nomination to serve the United States of America.

With your permission, Mr. Chairman, I would like to take this opportunity to introduce to you and the committee my wife of 35 years, Melanie, who has stood by me in all our foreign and domestic assignments. Our son, Matthew, could not be here today, because he is gainfully employed in Oregon; he grew up as a "foreign service brat," moving from country to country, school to school. Melanie and Matt exemplify our foreign service families—we ask a lot from them—and I cannot thank them enough.

Mr. Chairman, this nomination is very meaningful for me because, as a career member of the Foreign Service, I have devoted 27 years of service to promoting American interests abroad, mostly in Asia. My main motivations for joining the foreign service in 1985 were two. First was the example of my father, who was a medical doctor, devoting most of his professional life in Africa, working for the World Health Organization, establishing hospitals and clinics; he exemplified public service, and I wanted to follow in his footsteps. Second was the searing impression made on me by the 1979-80 Iran Embassy hostage crisis, especially the courage shown by the men and women of our Embassy Tehran—I wanted to belong to such a community that exemplifies honor and loyalty.

If confirmed, I will have an opportunity to lead such a community; I cannot think of a higher honor. The men and women who work in our missions overseas—whether they are American or locally engaged staff, whether they are from the State Department or other USG agencies—are our greatest assets. If confirmed, I pledge to maintain high ethical and managerial standards. I will insist on the best possible security for our personnel, property and national security information. I will also insist on full, clear and transparent communications between the Embassy and Washington, including with you, members and staff of this committee.

Mr. Chairman, over the past four years, I have worked as deputy assistant secretary and principal deputy assistant secretary—and last six months as acting assistant secretary—for the East Asia and Pacific Bureau. In that capacity, I have testified in front of your committee on several occasions and I have discussed various aspects of the Administrations Asia policy with you and committee staff on many occasions.

Much of our discussions have focused on the Administration's strategic commitment to rebalance our policy toward the Asia-Pacific. I want to take this opportunity to thank you and members of committee and staff for your support and counsel, which I have greatly valued.

The Administration's policy in Malaysia is very much consistent, indeed an integral part, of our Asia rebalance policy. This policy is founded upon expanding trust and understanding, growing mutual prosperity, and ensuring peace and security in the broader region. I know Malaysia has become an important supporter of the U.S. rebalance to Asia-Pacific; if confirmed, I will work to make the US-Malaysia relationship stronger still, because I firmly believe that we have much to gain through expanded trade and investment, people-to-people exchanges, and deeper cooperation in issues such as climate change, energy security, counter-terrorism, and non-proliferation.

The United States has extensive bilateral and multilateral cooperative agenda with Malaysia. We are working together to increase the security of our populations and the safety of our borders. Our law enforcement cooperation has increased in recent years, as we have jointly fought terrorism, proliferation, trafficking in persons and narcotics, and other serious crimes. We are continuing to improve an already strong military relationship through exercises, security dialogues, ship visits, military education, and joint training.

Malaysia is also an important commercial and economic partner for us. Our bilateral trade totals over \$39 billion. This year we look forward to concluding our first free trade agreement with Malaysia, through the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). We are engaging all our TPP partners, including Malaysia, to secure commitments to achieve a high-standard agreement that expands market access and establishes common rules for a level playing field. We also are thrilled with Malaysia's hosting of the fourth Global Entrepreneurship Summit in October. This important presidential initiative will energize, empower and connect entrepreneurs from around the region and around the world.

Our growing people-to-people connections reflect the overall growth of the bilateral relationship. Most significantly, the Fulbright English Teaching Assistant program— our third-largest program of its kind – Malaysia currently hosts 75 English Teaching Assistants who are placed in Malaysian communities, and that number is set to increase to 100 next year.

Travel to the United States by the Malaysian people is also on the upswing. Since fiscal year 2010, there has been a 23 percent increase in the number of Malaysians applying for visas (tourist, student, and work) to visit the United States temporarily, and this increase cuts across all major ethnic groups in the country.

On the political side, while we were extremely pleased to see large voter turnout in a hotly contested election earlier this year, we noted with concern allegations of voter fraud and arrest of opposition members.

Advocacy for democratic freedoms is a central pillar of what we do abroad. Throughout my 27-year career I have worked toward this end; most recently as the point man in the Department for reforms in Burma. If confirmed, I will strongly uphold this objective in Malaysia.

Another area in which we can work together with Malaysia is on human trafficking. Malaysia just entered its fourth consecutive year on the Tier Two Watch List for human trafficking. If confirmed, I will prioritize working with the Malaysian government and civil society to help improve its trafficking victim protection regime.

Malaysia is an important partner for the United States. If confirmed, I look forward to representing the United States as our Ambassador, leading our embassy, and enhancing our relationship with Malaysia.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today, and I welcome any questions you may have.