

**Testimony of Craig Allen
Ambassador-designate to Brunei
Before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee
July 29, 2014**

Chairman Coons and Members of the Committee:

It is a great honor to appear before you today.

Before beginning my testimony, it is my privilege to introduce you to my family: my wife, Micheline Tusenius and our two children, Christopher and Caroline.

Please also allow me to introduce you to my very proud 90-year-old mother, Betty Allen; my brother, Scott Allen; and, my sister, Sara Bowden.

As a veteran Foreign Service Officer with six previous overseas assignments, I want to thank my family for their extraordinary flexibility, patience and many sacrifices.

I am especially grateful to my wife, Micheline, who has forsaken her own career for our family – giving me the opportunity to serve the American people overseas.

This month marks my 29th year in government. During this period, I have worked at the Department of Commerce on issues associated with Asia for 25 years. In the course of my work, I have visited Brunei twice and been intimately involved in our trade relationship with Brunei, ASEAN, APEC, and the region.

Indeed, it is fair to say that I have been preparing for this moment for 29 years, and thus I am grateful to you for considering this nomination.

Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, it would be an honor to serve my country as the United States Ambassador to Brunei.

The United States and Brunei have enjoyed strong and prosperous relations since 1850, when our two countries signed the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Commerce, and Navigation. Still in effect today, the treaty has underpinned our close cooperation for the last 164 years. More recently, the United States was one of the first countries to recognize Brunei's independence from the United Kingdom in 1984. In the 30 years since then, the United States and Brunei have worked

together to promote and foster peace, stability, and development, and if confirmed, I hope to continue that tradition and strengthen our relationship for the 21st century.

Today, the United States' relationship with Brunei rests on two central pillars. The first is our longstanding, robust, and growing economic partnership. This economic cooperation is manifest through the continuously expanding trade between our two countries, to the great benefit of both. In 2013, United States companies exported \$559 million of goods and services to Brunei, and we regularly enjoy annual trade surpluses. Our positive cooperation is further demonstrated by the continuous and increasing investments U.S. companies are making in Brunei, including \$116 million worth in 2012. Recent Bruneian purchases of U.S. military and civilian aircraft totaling \$600 million further attests to the strength of the economic relationship. Finally, Brunei was a founding party in the launch of the Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations and is a key part of current efforts to finalize a high-standard TPP agreement that will promote jobs and growth in the United States, Brunei, and across the Asia-Pacific region.

The second pillar of the relationship is our engagement with Brunei on regional issues. Brunei was the chair of ASEAN last year and has long been an active and positively engaged member of the region. Recently, the United States and Brunei have cooperated to address a host of matters important to Southeast Asia. Together we launched the English Language Enrichment Project for ASEAN, a \$25 million, five-year initiative – funded by the Bruneian government – that seeks to strengthen ASEAN's global engagement through improved English language capacity and advanced educational and teaching opportunities in the region. In 2012, Brunei and Indonesia joined us in founding the U.S.-Asia Pacific Comprehensive Energy Partnership, which supports efforts to bring cleaner, more reliable sources of energy to the Asia-Pacific region by focusing on four priorities: renewables and cleaner energy, power markets and interconnectivity, the emerging role of natural gas, and sustainable development including rural electrification and energy efficiency. In support of those goals, a recently signed Memorandum of Understanding between the Export-Import Bank of the United States and the Energy Department of Brunei's Prime Minister's Office calls for information sharing and up to US\$1 billion in Ex-Im Bank loans to finance U.S. exports in support of selected projects in the region. In these ways we are moving forward with Brunei to address regional issues vital to the maintenance of stability and growth.

In addition to these programs, the United States and Brunei cooperate on a host of other issues. We have an active and growing defense cooperation relationship,

highlighted by Bruneian participation in annual exercises with U.S. Pacific Fleet, including the Cooperation Afloat Readiness and Training exercise and, in 2014, for the first time, RIMPAC (Rim of the Pacific Exercise). In addition, in 2013 Brunei hosted a large Humanitarian Assistance/Disaster Relief exercise which brought together service members from the United States and the region. The importance of this kind of training was clearly demonstrated just a few months later by the tragedy of Typhoon Haiyan, for which both the United States and Brunei offered assistance. Strides have also been made elsewhere: in 2013 Brunei was removed from the Special 301 Watch List in recognition of its efforts to protect intellectual property. Lastly, cultural, educational, and people-to-people ties continue to grow and define our bilateral relations in new and positive ways. Of particular note, the U.S.-Brunei English Language Enrichment Program for ASEAN is a novel way to improve English language skills throughout the region. Together, these programs highlight a multifaceted relationship that is both deep and broad, and one that is central to both promoting U.S. interests and the region and fostering the peace and stability that continue to bring economic growth.

Certainly, there are challenges in the relationship. The United States has serious concerns regarding certain provisions of Brunei's Sharia penal code, the first phase of which went into effect on May 1. We are concerned that the code criminalizes several aspects of freedom of religion, including apostasy, and we are concerned over some of the punishments that have been announced for future implementation. We are also concerned that it criminalizes same-sex conduct between adults. Freedom of expression and freedom of religion, which includes the right to change one's religious beliefs, are human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. While we understand that no physical punishments have been implemented under the current phase of the law, Brunei should ensure that its law prohibits torture or other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. While Bruneian officials have offered assurances that the standards that will be applied under the Sharia system will be so exacting that it will be almost impossible for there to be a conviction that would result in sentences such as stoning or amputation, the threat of such punishment still raises concerns. To these ends, we regularly communicate with Brunei regarding fundamental human rights and encourage the government of Brunei to uphold its international commitments. We are watching closely to see how the law is being implemented. Mr. Chairman, if confirmed, I will focus on working with Brunei authorities on these important issues, using every tool available to me to encourage Brunei to move expeditiously toward full compliance with international human rights standards.

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, thank you for inviting me to testify before you today and for giving my nomination your serious consideration. I am pleased to answer any questions you may have.