

**Statement of Jonathan Eric Kaplan  
Nominee to be U.S. Ambassador to Singapore  
Before the Senate Committee on Foreign Relations  
October 20, 2021**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, and Distinguished Members of the Committee. I am proud and honored to be asked to serve our country as the Ambassador to Singapore and it is a privilege to appear before you today.

I'd like to begin my remarks by thanking President Biden and Secretary Blinken for their trust and confidence in me. I'm also grateful to share this day with my friends, family, and especially with my daughter, Samantha. Finally, I'd like to thank Senator Hickenlooper for his words of introduction and to the hardworking professionals at the State Department and the White House for their steadfast support of my nomination throughout this process.

Over the past several decades, I have had the pleasure to visit more than 75 countries, 22 of them within Asia. I've been a successful executive, entrepreneur, and philanthropist. I've built diverse teams with common purpose and have led large organizations through difficult times and within challenging environments.

As Vice President Harris noted during her August visit to Singapore, our world is embarking on a new era – one with many new challenges and exciting new opportunities. Our partnership with Singapore is critically important to strengthen our relationships and defend our positions within the Indo-Pacific region. U.S.-Singapore diplomacy has fostered a strong friendship, a mutual respect, and a steadfast commitment to one another.

For 55 years, the United States and Singapore have forged an enduring partnership based on our mutual economic interests, robust security and defense cooperation, and strong people-to-people ties. Our two countries are close partners in support of a rules-based economy and unwavering security throughout the region.

Mr. Chairman and members of this committee, Singapore is a vital economic partner for the United States. More than 5,400 U.S. companies are registered in the city-state, and these businesses provide responsible, sustainable investment for the region and directly support more than 215,000 American jobs here at home. In 2003, the United States and Singapore signed a Free Trade Agreement, our first bilateral goods and services agreement with an Asian country, and the cornerstone of a now more than \$90 billion trade partnership.

The United States is the largest foreign investor in Singapore, with more than \$270 billion in direct investments and making Singapore the largest recipient of U.S. investment in the Indo-Pacific. If confirmed, I plan to strengthen our bilateral trade relationship, advance an economic agenda that promotes a shared prosperity, further secure economic resiliency and our access to supply, and work with Singapore to tackle the climate crisis.

Singapore is a critical partner in enabling a strong U.S. security presence in the region. It is Southeast Asia's largest purchaser of U.S. military equipment, with more than \$20 billion

invested in both direct commercial sales and foreign military sales over the past decade. Singapore's agreement to purchase the F-35B aircraft highlights the historically close relationship between our air forces and exemplifies our close partnership. The cornerstone of our security cooperation is the 1990 U.S-Singapore Memorandum of Understanding, which governs our presence in Singapore and allows for the rotational deployment of both U.S. littoral combat ships and Navy P-8s. If confirmed, I will look for opportunities to strengthen our security partnership and defend the rules-based international order, which has supported peace and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific

The United States and Singapore have also benefited from a robust law enforcement and homeland security partnership that strengthens the security of our citizens, our companies, and our nations by combating the complex challenges of commercial crime, terrorism, cybercrime, border security, and illicit trade.

Personal relationships are a foundation of a strong and secure Indo-Pacific region. U.S.-Singapore people-to-people ties are robust, and Singaporeans are active participants in U.S. educational and exchange programs. Prior to the pandemic, more than 4,000 Singaporeans were studying in U.S. universities, while more than 1,000 Americans studied in Singapore. In addition, more than 350 Singaporeans participated in other cultural and educational exchanges in the United States in 2019, most notably through the Fulbright Program, the Young Southeast Asian Leaders Initiative, and the Southeast Asia Youth Leadership Program. More than half of Singapore's cabinet ministers have studied in the United States, including the current Prime Minister who studied at Harvard University. Over the past decade, the United States and Singapore have partnered together through the Third Country Training Program to provide technical assistance and educational opportunities for over 1,500 ASEAN officials, drawing on the depth and breadth of U.S. and Singaporean friendship and expertise.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with this Committee to advance the U.S. interests in Singapore, to create even stronger relationships between our two countries, and help to further a secure and rules-based Indo-Pacific region overall.

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to appear here today, and I look forward to your questions.