

STATEMENT BY DAVID L. CARDEN

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(ASEAN)**

**SUBMITTED TO THE U.S. SENATE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN
RELATIONS**

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Madam Chair and Members of the Committee,

I am deeply honored to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee to serve as U.S. Ambassador to ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations. I appreciate the confidence that the President and Secretary Clinton have shown in me by this nomination.

Before I continue, I would like to thank my wife of 28 years, Rebecca Riley, and my children, Dylan and Meredith, without whose love and support I would not be sitting here today. There is no one I respect more than my wife.

The President has nominated me to be the first resident Ambassador to ASEAN in Jakarta, where ASEAN has its headquarters. I would also like to acknowledge the important role the Senate played in recognizing the growing importance of ASEAN as an institution and its role in Asia by proposing the creation of this position. Those actions underscore the importance of ASEAN and of the region to the United States.

I deeply appreciate the interest of many Senators and Members of the House in the historic changes that are taking place in Asia, and the recognition of the vital interests that the United States shares with ASEAN member countries in their continued pursuit of stability, peace and prosperity. If I am confirmed, I look forward to consulting closely with Members of Congress as we pursue these common interests.

President Obama is the first American President to meet with all the leaders of ASEAN nations together. He has done so twice, most recently in September of this year.

Secretary Clinton visited Southeast Asia, including the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta, on her first overseas trip as Secretary. Her engagement with ASEAN and its member nations has continued. Secretary Clinton signed the ASEAN Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in 2009 and most recently, she participated in the East Asia Summit in Vietnam in October.

In another first, Secretary Gates met with his ASEAN counterparts and others in the first ASEAN Defense Minister Meeting Plus. That meeting opens up a new area of cooperation that would have been thought unlikely just a few short years ago. Cooperation with ASEAN and others in the region on security issues will become an ongoing feature of our relations.

Southeast Asia is a dynamic region that has long been of importance to our country. ASEAN includes U.S. allies and several long-time partners and friends. ASEAN's ten member nations have a combined population of nearly 600 million. Their rapidly growing economies have a combined GDP approaching \$1.5 trillion. Exports to ASEAN countries, totaled \$54 billion in 2009. ASEAN countries were the location of \$123 billion U.S. foreign direct investment in 2009. Given these economic realities, ASEAN is an obvious area of opportunity for the President's National Export Initiative.

ASEAN member nations are on a path to create an ASEAN Community by 2015 built on three pillars: political/security, economic, and socio/cultural. ASEAN governments understand that this community building effort is essential if they are to compete internationally and if ASEAN is to maintain its relevance. ASEAN leaders took an important step along to achieving their Community in 2008 when they ratified the ASEAN Charter, which provides a legal basis for the organization and offers the political tools to play a much more significant and positive role in the future.

ASEAN is undertaking an ambitious regional integration effort that the United States wholly supports. It will be a development of immeasurable importance not just Southeast Asia, but to the United States, the region, and the world. We must be at the table to support our ASEAN friends in their historic effort.

As an attorney for over thirty years, I have a particular interest in the fundamental principles embodied in the ASEAN Charter, including commitments to "strengthen democracy, enhance good governance and the rule of law and to promote and protect human rights and fundamental

freedoms...." Living up to these important commitments will be necessary if ASEAN is to realize its full potential. In this regard, we have welcomed ASEAN's creation of a human rights body – the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights. ASEAN human rights officials just completed a very successful study tour to Washington and New York on November 19. Creation of the Commission and its visit to the U.S. is a great example of how our cooperation advances our common interests.

If I am confirmed, I hope for your continued support and involvement as we pursue U. S. interests in ASEAN integration. As Ambassador to ASEAN, I will also seek to engage state and local governments, our businesses, non-governmental organizations, educational institutions and individuals to advance the interests of the broader American society in Southeast Asia. Working together we can enhance U.S. interests as well as find new ways to build ties to ASEAN and to the dynamic Asia region.

Madam Chair, I would consider it a great privilege to serve the United States as the first Ambassador to ASEAN in Jakarta.

Thank you for considering my nomination. I look forward to your questions.