

# **Duckworth Secures Commitment From DoD Nominee To Help Strengthen Military Coordination With Southeast Asian Partners**

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WASHINGTON DC - During a U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) hearing today on U.S. Department of Defense (DoD) nominees, combat Veteran and U.

S. Senator Tammy Duckworth (D-IL) secured a commitment from nominee to be Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Derek Chollet to help prioritize funding and resources for programs aimed at strengthening military coordination in Southeast Asia. These critical efforts would build on the success of a military cybersecurity partnership with Southeast Asian partners that Senator Duckworth created in 2020—and could be expanded through her *Southeast Asia Partnership Expansion Act* that was included the Senate-passed *Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA)* if that legislation is signed into law. Full video of Senator Duckworth’s committee remarks is available [here](#).

“During my recent Congressional Delegation to Southeast Asia, I spoke with U.S. servicemembers advising partner militaries in the region and heard there is a huge demand for additional training that could increase coordination—like English language training, cybersecurity training and more,” said Senator Duckworth. “I’m glad nominee Derek Chollet agreed how important these programs are for coordination and committed to working with me to prioritize and adequately resource more of these programs so we can build on our ties in Southeast Asia.”

In response to Senator Duckworth’s questioning on the importance of strengthening ties in Southeast Asia, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Derek Chollet replied: “In the last two and a half years at the State Department, I’ve done around eight trips to Southeast Asia because I believe those partners are critically important to our national security and our posture in the Indo-Pacific. I think we’ve made some very, very important strides in deepening those relationships, but I think there is much further to go and I would, if confirmed, look forward to working with you closely on some of the innovative ideas you and others have had and what we can do deepen those partnerships.”

Duckworth is also a proven leader on strengthening our relations with Indo-Pacific nations and security in the region while successfully securing significant international investments in Illinois. Building on her successful trip to the region [earlier this year](#), Duckworth led a Congressional Delegation to Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines [last month](#) to meet with government and business leaders and discuss opportunities that would increase cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as economic investments, regional stability and national security.

Duckworth’s [Southeast Asia Partnership Expansion Act](#) is [included](#) in the Senate-passed FY2024 NDAA, which would help expand and fund critical training opportunities to build interoperability with our Southeast Asian partners, improving our cooperation on cybersecurity.