



**H.E. Dr. Kao Kim Hourn, Secretary-General of ASEAN**

**Remarks as the Guest of Honour at the  
Celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the  
Independence of the United States of America**

*11 June 2026, Residence of the United States Ambassador to Indonesia, Jakarta*

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***Your Excellency Yusril Ihza Mahendra, Coordinating Minister for Law, Human Rights, Immigration, and Corrections of the Republic of Indonesia,***

***Your Excellency Christopher Landau, Deputy Secretary of State, US Department of State,***

***Your Excellency Kevin Kim, Ambassador of the United States to ASEAN,***

***Ambassador Peter Haymond, Charge d’Affaires ad interim of the US Embassy in the Republic of Indonesia,***

*Excellencies, Ministers of the Government of Indonesia, Ambassadors, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Good evening. Allow me to begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Embassy of the United States to Indonesia and the US Mission to ASEAN for the gracious invitation to join this celebration of the 250<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of American Independence.

In sports, reaching a quarter-century is impressive. Reaching a century is extraordinary. Reaching 250 years is truly Hall of Fame territory. Tonight's theme of American sporting excellence is especially fitting — because sports and nationhood share more than we might first suppose. Both are built on dreams, freedom, resilience, innovation, optimism, and an enduring belief in the power of people to shape their own future.

These are values that have greatly defined the American story across two and a half centuries. They are also values that resonate deeply across ASEAN. Sports, at its finest, do something more: they connect. They bring together people of different nations, cultures, religions and backgrounds — and for the duration of a match, a season, or an Olympiad, reminds us of our shared humanity. The United States has long understood this too, very well.

Its joint hosting of the FIFA World Cup this week, and the 2028 Olympic and Paralympic Games in Los Angeles in 2028, reflects that understanding — an open invitation to the world to gather, compete, and celebrate together — a goal; no pun intended; that ASEAN strongly shares. And ASEAN, like the rest of the world, will be watching with great excitement. For the World Cup, millions across our region will set early alarms, cheer improbable victories, debate refereeing decisions, and perhaps arrive at work a little more bleary-eyed than usual. I confess — I am already reconciled to more than a month of 3 AM alarms. A small sacrifice for special moments that stay with us for a lifetime.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

The same spirit of connection animates the ASEAN-United States relations, cooperation and partnership. For nearly six decades, the United States has been one of ASEAN's most valued and most dynamic Dialogue Partners — working alongside us in support of peace, stability, and shared prosperity. Together, we have built a strong partnership spanning economic cooperation—with the US as ASEAN's second-largest trading partner and second-largest source of foreign direct investment in 2025—as well as education, innovation, health, and much more.

Yet, as every sports fan knows, statistics alone do not tell the whole story. The true strength of any partnership lies in its people. In the students who have crossed oceans to learn from one another. In the young leaders, entrepreneurs, researchers, and athletes who build friendships that endure long after any single programme has concluded. It is in the spirit of these human connections — quiet, cumulative, and lasting — that form the deepest foundation of what we have built together for the benefits of our one billion peoples.

Looking ahead, we have much to anticipate and to appreciate. Next year, we will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ASEAN-US Dialogue Relations and the 5<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of our Comprehensive Strategic Partnership. I hope that ASEAN and the U.S. will have the Commemorative Summit next year to celebrate this half-of-decade and half-of-century milestones. These are meaningful milestones — moments to reflect on how far we have come, and to reaffirm our commitment to our enduring partnership as well as to what lies ahead.

*Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,*

Two hundred and fifty years ago, a declaration launched a great nation. Tonight, we celebrate not only that historic moment, but the countless connections and enduring friendships it has since inspired across the world. On behalf of the ASEAN Secretariat, I extend our warmest congratulations and best wishes to the Government and people of the United States of America on this truly remarkable Anniversary.

Two hundred and fifty years in — the whistle has not blown. The game goes on. It will go on. Happy 250<sup>th</sup>, America! May God always bless the United States of America!

Thank you and have a wonderful evening.

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