

**STATEMENT BY JONATHAN N. STIVERS
NOMINEE FOR ASSISTANT ADMINISTRATOR FOR ASIA
UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE
JUNE 17, 2014**

Chairman Cardin, Ranking Member Rubio, Distinguished Members of the Committee:

It is an honor to appear before you today as President Obama's nominee for Assistant Administrator for Asia at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). I am grateful for the trust placed in me by President Obama and Administrator Shah.

I am joined today by my wife Ramsey Alwin and my daughters Josephine and Parker. The best decision I made in life was convincing Ramsey to marry me. Her encouragement and support is my bedrock. Everything I do in my professional life is in the hope that someday my daughters will look back and be proud of their father. I also would like to thank my family who could not be here today, my father Richard Stivers, my mother Sharon Stivers, and my siblings Adam and Emily Stivers.

I would like to also recognize Denise Rollins, the Acting Assistant Administrator of the Asia Bureau who has served our country with great distinction for over 25 years, and Nisha Biswal, the current Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, who previously served as USAID's Assistant Administrator for Asia, for her advice and guidance throughout the process.

For the last 15 years, it has been a privilege to work on Asia policy and our foreign assistance initiatives at the highest levels of the U.S. Congress. I believe that my experience in the legislative branch and my background in Asia have prepared me well for the responsibilities of leading USAID's Asia Bureau. I will always be grateful that Leader Nancy Pelosi placed her faith and trust in me to lead on foreign policy priorities in her office. I am proud to have played a leadership role on numerous legislative initiatives including the landmark reauthorization of PEPFAR that tripled funding levels to fight global AIDS, the JADE Act that tightened sanctions on the Burmese government after the Saffron Revolution, and the initial development assistance inside Tibet and to the then newly-created country of East Timor.

For almost two decades, my second home has been in Congress. Over the years I have learned that initiatives are strongest when they are bipartisan, that open communication, transparency and trust are crucial between the Administration and Congress, and that making the case for foreign assistance in a manner that relates to the everyday lives of the American people is essential. I can assure you that, if confirmed, I will proactively reach out to Congress to ensure that we are working together to promote our national interests and our values.

I believe deeply in USAID's mission of partnering to end extreme poverty and promote resilient democratic societies while advancing our security and prosperity. The moral case alone is reason to address these global challenges, but in a more interdependent world, we are preventing instability, fighting extremism, stopping the spread of infectious diseases while promoting economic and job growth at home.

Administrator Shah's strong leadership is rebuilding USAID as the world's premier development agency. In a time of budget constraint, USAID is effectively leveraging funding by building public-private partnerships, utilizing multi-lateral and regional approaches, and taking advantage of science

and innovation. If confirmed, I pledge to work tirelessly with the dedicated men and women of USAID to ensure that U.S. taxpayer money is spent effectively and wisely.

USAID's Asia Bureau works in 32 countries—excluding Afghanistan and Pakistan—with a program budget of approximately \$1.1 billion. It is an exciting and pivotal time for U.S. policy in Asia. Asia is a vibrant, diverse region with some of the strongest and fastest growing economies in the world. The region includes mature, consolidating, budding, and troubled democracies, along with authoritarian governments, struggling post-conflict nations, and emerging regional powers—all in the shadow of the rise of a great power.

The development challenges in Asia are enormous. Home to half of the world's population, the Asia region also struggles with 60 percent of the world's hungry and 70 percent of the world's malnourished children. The region is susceptible to natural disasters and the effects of climate change, pollution and pandemics. It has a vast array of governance difficulties including fragile institutions, human rights concerns, gender inequality, and human trafficking challenges that hold back the region from achieving its full potential. At the same time, trade volume in Asia is expected to double in the next decade, and by 2050, the region's share of global GDP is predicted to almost double.

The President's Asia Rebalance recognizes that our future prosperity and security are inextricably tied to this region. At its core, the rebalance policy is about strengthening our relationships with countries, and more specifically the people of the region. If confirmed, I will place a premium on four key priorities: promoting resilient, democratic societies; institutionalizing the Presidential Initiatives—Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, and the Global Climate Change Initiative; supporting basic education and empowerment for women and girls; and fostering greater regional economic connectivity.

First, we know that government by the people offers the best chance for freedom and prosperity. The U.S. also has stronger partnerships with stable, democratic countries that respect human rights. Fighting extreme poverty is often less a question of funding but in effectively addressing the underlying structural problems of governance that hold back many developing countries from becoming resilient, democratic societies.

I believe that the solutions to the challenges facing Asia will ultimately come from the people of Asia themselves and that our best chance in promoting democratic change is to empower the reformers by helping them build institutions that can withstand non-democratic events.

Over the next three years we will learn a lot about democracy in Asia as many countries will hold national elections. Already this year, India has experienced the largest democratic exercise in human history, and next month, Indonesia, the most populous Muslim-majority country, will mark another significant democratic milestone with the expected transfer of political power. While the recent elections in Bangladesh, unrest in Thailand, and unrealized democratic hopes in Cambodia represent challenges for democracy, the expected national elections in Burma, Nepal, the Kyrgyz Republic and the Philippines will further determine the future of democracy in Asia.

But democracy promotion is more than elections. USAID has been active in the region doing the difficult work strengthening civil society, providing technical support for good governance, combatting corruption and promoting human rights.

Second, Administrator Shah has provided exemplary leadership in promoting President Obama's three initiatives—Feed the Future, the Global Health Initiative, and the Global Climate Change Initiative.

Through Feed the Future, USAID is supporting country driven approaches that address the root causes of poverty and hunger by focusing on agricultural productivity. We know that growth in agriculture is at least twice as effective at reducing poverty as other sectors. For example, in Bangladesh, a country with one of the highest malnutrition rates in the region, USAID has trained hundreds of thousands of small farmers on improved technologies and increased crop yields by 20 percent through a fertilizer deep placement project. In Cambodia, new horticulture techniques have raised household incomes of over seven thousand farmers by an average of 250 percent. This type of assistance is particularly valuable because it promotes economic growth while at the same time feeding hungry and malnourished men, women, and children.

The Global Health Initiative is aimed at addressing regional health priorities, including ending preventable child and maternal deaths, preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria, as well as improving surveillance and response capacity for pandemic influenza and other emerging threats.

In February 2014, U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry highlighted the urgency of addressing climate change. In a region of the world that experiences over 60 percent of the world's natural disasters, and with more than 10 billion pounds of airborne pollutants from Asia reaching the U.S. annually, it is imperative that we continue to reduce emissions from deforestation, promote sustainable and resilient societies, and foster clean energy in the Asia through the Global Climate Change Initiative.

If confirmed, I will make it a priority to build upon these gains in food security, health, and environmental well-being for both the people of Asia and the United States.

Third, the empowerment of women and girls through education is one of the most effective development tools and one of the best strategies to boost economic growth. While many Asian countries have recently made progress, nearly 20 million children in Asia—a third of the world's children—do not have access to primary school. Millions of children in Asia lack basic reading and writing skills thereby holding back the region for reaching its full potential. I am proud to have promoted basic education while in Congress and, if confirmed, this will continue to be a key priority. As Administrator Shah noted on International Women's Day, "If we are going to truly achieve the goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030, we cannot leave behind half of the global population. We have to invest in women and girls as champions of development who can lift their families out of extreme poverty."

And finally, we must continue to promote an effective regional architecture that strengthens regional stability, connectivity and economic growth through regional initiatives such as USAID's Almaty Consensus which supports the New Silk Road Initiative by increasing regional economic connectivity between South and Central Asia to bolster Afghanistan's stability; the Lower Mekong Initiative that provides a regional forum the development challenges that cross national boundaries; and by working with regional institutions such as ASEAN and APEC.

I would like to highlight a few priority countries where USAID operates.

In Bangladesh, the 2013 Rana Plaza collapse sparked outrage all over the world. Members of Congress led the way in calling for action to address labor and building safety conditions in the country. I played a role in this effort on a staff level working to call on corporations to improve building safety standards in Bangladesh and asking the Administration to suspend the Generalized System of Preferences program until reforms are made. Please be assured that, if confirmed, workers' rights and safety will be a high priority for me throughout the region.

In Burma, we have seen historic political and economic reforms during this critical period of transition. The country faces a long and difficult road ahead, as transitions are never smooth nor are they ever easy. The next two years will be challenging in regards to national reconciliation and the national election in 2015. The USAID mission in Burma—which was re-opened in 2012—is committed to supporting reform that will bring lasting peace, stability, justice and improve the welfare of the people of Burma. If confirmed, my priorities in Burma will be to deepen USAID's engagement with civil society, expand economic opportunity, support reconciliation efforts, help the country prepare for the 2015 national elections, and continue providing humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable in the country.

In India, USAID helped secure a major success in the battle against polio when the World Health Organization officially removed India from the list of countries where the disease was active. In the coming years, USAID hopes to move more towards a 21st Century partnership where USAID and India join together in tackling development challenges both in India and in the region.

When Typhoon Haiyan hit the Philippines, USAID had already been working for decades to strengthen disaster management and response capabilities. A USAID team was pre-positioned, enabling an immediate response and ensuring a coordinated relationship between USAID, the Department of Defense, and other USG actors. Through relief efforts, USAID provided food assistance to more than three million people and helped save countless lives. If confirmed, I will continue to make both short- and long-term assistance to the Philippines a top priority.

While Vietnam is an emerging power with a high economic growth rate and a strategic position in the region, it is also a country with serious human rights concerns. USAID is continuing to focus its assistance to support the Vietnamese people as they confront the significant challenges they face related to health, susceptibility to climate change, and natural disasters. USAID also supports programs focused on economic governance and trade, and addressing legacies of the war between our two countries through the remediation of dioxin contamination.

Four years ago, President Obama set forth a new vision of results-driven development focused on achieving measureable results. Under the visionary leadership of Administrator Shah, USAID has risen to this challenge, pioneering a new model of development that brings a greater emphasis on partnerships, innovation, and results. In conclusion, if I am fortunate enough to be confirmed to this position, I will tirelessly pursue policy solutions that make our foreign assistance more effective in line with this new model.

During my almost two decades working in the Legislative Branch, I have learned the importance of engagement with Congress and, if confirmed, I can assure you that I will seek out, early and often, advice and guidance from you and your staff.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear before you today, and I welcome any and all questions you might have.