

STATEMENT OF MARK MONTGOMERY, NOMINEE FOR ASSISTANT  
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ASSISTANCE UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
BEFORE THE SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE  
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Chairman Isakson, Ranking Member Shaheen, and Distinguished Members of the Committee, I am honored to appear before you today as the nominee for Assistant Administrator for the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict, and Humanitarian Assistance (DCHA) at the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). I am grateful for the trust and confidence President Trump, Secretary Pompeo, and Administrator Green have in my leadership for a Bureau so central to the United States' humanitarian, development, democracy and foreign policy objectives. If confirmed, I will continue to work to support the country's national security and the Administration's agenda.

I also want to thank the Members of the Foreign Relations Committee for your strong support of foreign assistance. I would also like to recognize the service of the extremely dedicated USAID staff who have led the DCHA Bureau superbly over the last 18 months, most recently Rear Admiral Tim Ziemer. Their leadership has been invaluable as USAID has responded to the threat of famines in South Sudan and Nigeria; the ongoing Rohingya crisis; and the humanitarian disasters in Yemen, Syria, and Venezuela.

My thanks also to my family, friends, and colleagues who have provided me unfailing support and encouragement over the years, and for those who are able to be here today. I especially want to thank my wife Lucinda, my son Jack, and my daughter Claire. They have been a family dedicated to service and country, sacrificing their needs and desires to support my lengthy United States Navy career. No group sacrifices more for our military service members than our families, and I am incredibly grateful for their continued love and support.

When I decided to retire from the Navy after more than 32 years of active duty, I knew I wanted to continue to serve our country and I specifically wanted to work in a role that emphasized our exceptional American values and commitment to democracy and humanitarian assistance. Only one thing stood in my path, and that was Senator John McCain, who had asked me to come work on his Senate Armed Services Committee (SASC) Staff. I shared his zeal for oversight on national security issues, and we had a number of common challenges we wanted to work on within our national security programs. As you know, we have recently completed the Fiscal Year 2019 National Defense Authorization Act, which bears the Senator's name, and I am excited to return to my goal of working on democracy and development issues, if confirmed.

I am particularly honored to be nominated to lead the DCHA Bureau. I previously had the opportunity to see USAID's work with democracy and governance in my first flag officer tour at U.S. European Command, where I led the Combatant Command's political-military programs in the Baltics, Balkans and Caucasus. In this assignment, I worked closely with the State Department and USAID country teams, and I was able to observe, and support, the positive progress of U.S. democracy and stabilization efforts in these nascent and transitioning democracies. This assignment taught me the valuable role that the U.S. Government, and, more specifically, USAID, has in building stable, resilient democracies, and how the development of these democracies contributes to the stable international order the United States both supports and relies on.

DCHA's Center of Excellence on Democracy, Human Rights and Governance helps nations build effective institutions and robust civil societies so they have better potential to provide security and justice, economic opportunity, and political freedom for their people. As Administrator Green has said, the crises we see today so often reflect a lack of democratic foundations, effective governing institutions, and respect for human rights. Ensuring democratic foundations is critical to the work USAID does around the world, and is pivotal for the journey to self-reliance.

During my career as a nuclear trained surface warfare officer in the United States Navy, I had the privilege to work with USAID during the responses to numerous disasters. DCHA's responsibilities when disaster strikes are significant, as the U.S. Government's lead for humanitarian response through the Offices of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and Food for Peace (FFP). Collectively, they responded to disasters in 53 countries around the world last year, to provide life-saving food, shelter, medical care, and other essential services.

There is no more powerful and iconic symbol of America abroad than when USAID sends a Disaster Assistance Response Team (DART) into the heart of an emergency. I witnessed DCHA's capabilities up close during the U.S. response to Typhoon Haiyan in 2013 in the Philippines. At the time, I was serving as the Commander of the Carrier Task Force in the Western Pacific, embarked on the USS GEORGE WASHINGTON. I was immediately assigned as the Maritime Force Commander, and, in that role, led the response on the part of the U.S. Navy, working side by side with OFDA's DART to respond to the typhoon. The DART deployed even before the super typhoon made landfall, and, throughout our interactions, I saw the incredible value USAID's expeditionary teams bring to a disaster response. OFDA and FFP brought speed, expertise, resources, and the spirit of the American people to a disaster that threatened tens of thousands of Filipino lives.

Additionally, as the Director of Operations at U.S. Pacific Command from 2014-2017, I worked with the DCHA Bureau again in USAID's response to the Nepal earthquake in 2015. I helped

organize and coordinate the extensive military airlift support to USAID as part of Operation Sayhayogi Haat, during which USAID deployed a DART to provide relief supplies and conduct search and rescue operations to find survivors.

While at PACOM, I worked very closely with the humanitarian and civil-military advisors from DCHA's Office of Civil-Military Coordination embedded in the combatant command. These USAID staff provided expertise and support, helped two national security entities speak the same language, and brought their unique capabilities to bear on addressing the developmental and democracy challenges throughout South and South East Asia.

DCHA also assists nations with the difficult task of post-crisis political and social transition, and works to address the root causes of instability before conflicts become humanitarian emergencies. The Office of Transition Initiatives, for instance, has programs in places such as Libya, Nigeria, Nicaragua, and Somalia, where its partners work with national and local leaders to provide basic services and give a voice to people in marginalized communities. The Conflict Management and Mitigation office assesses the prospects of conflict, and works with local and international organizations to reduce the risks of violence by supporting grassroots demands for peace. Teams from across DCHA continually analyze risk, whether of famine, mass atrocities, communicable disease, or flooding, to build resilience in our partner nations.

The Office of American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program within DCHA directly supports some of the leading global education and health facilities, investments that contribute to U.S. public diplomacy efforts and foster strong civil society institutions and excellence in higher education and innovation.

Taken together, the offices across the DCHA Bureau represent the core capabilities required to provide rapid and effective assistance to those suffering from disaster and conflict, to help foster a faster and more durable recovery and, importantly, to shore up democracy and governance as the most critical means of preventing further conflict and lessening the devastation of natural disaster.

If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with Congress, the interagency, and the international community on three key areas.

The first is enhancing the coherence of the U.S. Government's response to conflict, which includes: improving the Administration's ability to identify fragile states and provide corrective, mitigating measures; institutionalizing the Stabilization Assistance Review with the Departments of Defense and State to leverage diplomatic engagements, defense, and foreign assistance effectively to stabilize conflict-affected areas; and further strengthening civil-military collaboration within Washington offices, the Combatant Commands and in the field.

The second is emphasizing USAID's efforts to tackle food and humanitarian assistance as prevention and deterrence challenges, while continuing the Agency's significant response efforts. These efforts can improve resilience, reduce fragility and develop relationships.

The third is strengthening and elevating the U.S. Government's humanitarian voice, both highlighting the leadership role of the United States, and by encouraging consistent participation by key allies and partners in this global effort.

I would like to briefly mention the proposed USAID Transformation, which I have discussed with Administrator Green and others at USAID. The Transformation would change the DCHA Bureau, particularly through the proposed creation of the Bureaus for Humanitarian Assistance and Conflict-Prevention and Stabilization. Both proposed Bureaus would oversee USAID functions that currently fall under DCHA, so, if confirmed, my role as Assistant Administrator would also change, pending approval of the reorganization.

The intent of the proposed structure is to further strengthen USAID's efficient and holistic approach to programming across the spectrum of disaster preparedness, response, mitigation and prevention. The Agency also believes this would elevate USAID's voice with interagency colleagues on these issues. I look forward to learning more about and implementing the proposed changes as Congress approves them. I believe they will help ensure USAID remains the world's premier international development Agency, and continues the important work it does to protect America's future security and prosperity.

As Administrator Green has said, in a world as complex as ours, with our national security under greater threat than ever, we must bring to bear the entirety of our statecraft toolbox, including our most sophisticated development tools. Senator McCain often reminded us that the United States is a great and powerful country, and with that great blessing comes great responsibility. I can think of no more important place to carry out this responsibility than with the team of professionals at USAID.

I am honored to be considered for this position, and humbled by the responsibilities it entails. If confirmed, I look forward to joining the ranks of the many dedicated and courageous men and women who are working around the world, the DCHA Bureau, and the rest of USAID. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to appear before you today. I welcome any questions you might have.