

**Testimony of Paul J. Bonicelli, Ph.D.  
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U.S. Agency for International Development  
before the  
Committee on Foreign Relations  
United States Senate  
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Mr. Chairman, it is indeed an honor and privilege to appear before you and the Committee today with my colleagues as President Bush's nominee. I thank you for considering my nomination to serve as Assistant Administrator for the Latin America/Caribbean Bureau of the U. S. Agency for International Development (USAID).

In my current capacity as Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance, I have become quite familiar with the challenges we as a government face in promoting development around the world. Should I be confirmed, I would look forward to returning my attention once again specifically to this hemisphere as I have in the past during my academic career and during my time here at the Congress as a professional staff member of the House. Throughout my career I have considered this hemisphere to be of utmost importance to the United States. We are neighbors not only because of geography, but also because of the centuries of strong and even now strengthening ties of commerce, family, and friendships, and importantly, a shared commitment to the democratic way of life. While the region continues to battle poverty and other development challenges, we have together enjoyed many successes, not least of which is that there are elected leaders in all but one country in the hemisphere. Moreover, the region boasts several countries that have made great strides toward self-sufficiency. Nevertheless, I believe our task is to redouble our efforts to consolidate gains and to achieve more in the hemisphere. This is especially true now that democracy is being questioned by those who have not yet seen the material gains that are the very real results of democracy. We should counter the trend toward instability,

populism and isolationism--evident in some quarters--with concrete actions that inspire hope.

I believe we are better able to do this now because we are embarking on an historic reform of our foreign assistance program. With the first-ever U.S. Director of Foreign Assistance, Ambassador Randall Tobias, we are crafting the tools to assure that State and USAID resources are fully integrated both in Washington and the field. This is a strategic change that is creating a more rational budgeting process. Having been involved with development and democratization throughout my career, I can say that this is what is needed to help us better fight the scourges of poverty, illiteracy, tyranny, instability, terrorism, and illegal narcotics trafficking. If confirmed, I pledge to do everything in my power, and in consultation with the Congress, to ensure that U.S. assistance to our neighbors is carried out effectively, equitably, in coordination with our partners around the world whenever possible, and with concern for fiscal responsibility that the taxpayers are due.

Over the years that I have been involved with this work, I have come to believe that the goal of our development work must be to assist countries in their transition to stable, well-governed and prospering democracies. I want to emphasize that I believe all of those terms are important, and none more important than democracy, for it is the democratic society that can best promote and sustain development. In short, there is no development without good governance, but there can be no good governance without democracy.

A government that does not have to worry about losing power does not have to really care whether poverty, inequality, illiteracy, disease and violence are remedied. To think otherwise, I submit, is to put too much trust in the goodness of a given set of leaders to do the right thing. By saying this I do not mean that some of our programs are more important than others—for example, promoting democracy without concern for socio-economic needs is a losing enterprise. I mean only to say that development should be seen as a holistic enterprise founded on the idea that dysfunction in any sector is often

caused by--and is definitely compounded and sustained by--dysfunction in the body politic. We can no longer spend our foreign assistance dollars on various efforts without appreciating the need to encourage transformation in all sectors so that improvements in health or education or the rule of law can be sustained; indeed, so that the citizens who have an interest in these things can demand that they be sustained or get themselves new leadership that is competent and cares. Further, democracy encourages the outside world to have confidence in a particular society, increasing capital flows and mutually beneficial ties between citizens of different countries. Democratization is a catalyst of development, especially when accompanied by assistance in the socio-economic arena.

I am heartened by the fact that this administration and this Congress appreciate the role that development has in furthering our national interests. We help people around the world, and in doing so, we are a part of making the world better. USAID and its very talented staff of technical experts is the primary implementer of US foreign assistance programs and therefore has a special role to play, particularly in the Western Hemisphere where we have been at work for many years.

It is a great honor for our country to be asked to aid our friends in the region as they build democracy and economic prosperity, not simply because such is in the strategic interest of the United States, but also because of the many ties between our peoples I referred to at the outset. We know each other as buyers and sellers of goods and services; we know each other as allies in the defense of democracy. But millions of us in this hemisphere know each other on a personal, cultural and sometimes familial basis, with some of those ties stretching back to our common and successful struggle to win our independence. We have accomplished much, each nation on its own, and much by working together. If confirmed, I look forward to working closely with you, Mr. Chairman, and the Committee, in order to help continue this work for the benefit of all the Americas.

Please allow me to conclude my testimony by taking a moment to honor my parents and grandparents for all that they sacrificed so that I might be in a position to serve our country: Louis and Ernestine Bonicelli, Robert and Dorothy Ramsey, and Elizabeth

Patterson; only my mother survives and she is not able to be here. Surviving the Great Depression, service in two wars, and a son who cost them seemingly endless education bills, they are prime examples of our country's good people who invest in others. They and my brother Matt and his family have always supported me. I'd also like to thank my friends who have constantly encouraged and uplifted me, some of whom attended the hearing today.

Mr. Chairman. I would be happy to answer any questions that you or the Senators might have for me.