

RELEASE IN FULL

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To: H
Subject: Raj Shah

¶ **Ex-Gates Foundation exec named foreign aid chief**

¶ **Obama administration picks former Gates Foundation official to run US foreign aid**

¶ **By MATTHEW LEE**

¶ **Associated Press**

¶ **11-10-2009 13:46**

¶ SINGAPORE (AP) _ The Obama administration will nominate a young former executive with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to run America's top foreign assistance program, ending months of speculation and complaints about who would take the vacant post, U.S. officials said Tuesday.

¶ President Barack Obama has chosen Rajiv Shah, a medical doctor and currently a senior official at the Department of Agriculture dealing with food security, to run the U.S. Agency for International Development, the officials said.

¶ The officials spoke on condition of anonymity pending notification to Congress and a formal public announcement of the choice.

¶ Shah's selection, which must still be confirmed by the Senate, would end a 10-month leadership vacuum at USAID, which has been operating with an acting director since Obama took office despite his campaign pledges to have the agency play a greater role in foreign policy.

¶ Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton have said USAID is crucial to deploying their preferred "smart power" foreign policy strategy, which envisions more equal roles for diplomacy and development alongside defense. They plan to double the amount of foreign aid.

¶ The agency will play a key role in the administration's efforts in Afghanistan and Pakistan, where officials believe the civilian component must be strengthened.

¶ But the top job at the agency has remained vacant until now, with several prime candidates withdrawing from consideration amid a White House vetting process that Clinton denounced in July as "ridiculous," "a nightmare," and "frustrating beyond words."

¶ Shah, 36, whose family immigrated to the U.S. from India, is now the Under Secretary for Research, Education and Economics and Chief Scientist at the Agriculture Department where he manages a budget of more than \$2.6 billion and more than 10,000 staff around the world.

¶ Before that, he had several positions at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, including managing its \$1.5 billion contribution to a global vaccination fund and helping launch the foundation's Global Development program where he oversaw a \$1.3 billion investment portfolio.

¶ The lingering USAID vacancy, particularly after several leading candidates pulled out, had upset development experts and Congress. Some lawmakers had suggested that Obama choose someone who had already gone through the vetting process.

¶ Shah fits that bill and has important political credentials, having worked with or for several leading Democratic politicians.

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