

Remarks by Karen Aguilar

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Terry Barnich

On Memorial Day 2009 I set out on an inspection tour in Fallujah with two extraordinary colleagues and remarkable men. I had spent nearly every waking hour of the previous year in the company of one or the other of them and was with them later that afternoon in the convoy in which they lost their lives. I've not known more honorable, courageous and impressive men than these and it was a privilege to have been their leader and their friend.

One of them was Terry Barnich, my deputy and advisor on utilities and related legal and regulatory matters. Terry was one of the most extraordinary talents I have ever known. His mind was nimble, innovative, able to synthesize and integrate elements into solutions that were obvious to him and invisible to others. I told him once that if I had to go into a negotiation, I would rather have him at my side than most of the professional diplomats I have known. During his two and a half years in Iraq he was widely respected professionally and greatly beloved by those who knew him personally. He was exquisitely mannered, fanatically fit, insanely well groomed and dressed for a combat zone (the only guy in Baghdad who took the plates out of his body armor so he could put it in the washer). He was a deeply intuitive reader of his fellow man, and one of the most irreverently funny humans on the planet. He had a remarkable generosity of spirit and a self-deprecating sense of humor. Although he could not have taken his Mission more seriously, he lived in dread of taking himself too seriously. Although he had become a critical part of shaping the future of transition in Iraq, he was always reluctant to acknowledge it.

He loved his work in Iraq; in his last days he told me he had never been happier or more fulfilled professionally. He knew the work in Iraq was temporary, but he said he just "wanted to be useful" while he could be. When it finally became clear to him that he was not only useful but necessary, he said "as far as I am concerned, that is the only thing in life worth being."

It was not Terry's job to go to Iraq; he volunteered, joining the Department expressly to support this mission by helping the Iraqi government to help its people, interrupting his own life and career to do so. He respected the military and wrote admiringly of their dedication to duty, of their courage, but he also recognized the importance of what he called in his own writings "the civilian counter-insurgency:" those who, like him, were "assisting the Iraqis to create conditions from which the institutions of a free society will one day spring." Those conditions included electricity, telecommunications and water and the regulatory frameworks that support them. On that foundation, he told me, all other political, economic and social gains would one day stand.

Danger is a special part of such work when it takes place in a war zone. Terry understood this. After his training session in Washington about the dangers of work in Iraq, Terry wrote "I'd be less than honest if I didn't admit to more than one moment of "What the Hell am I thinking?" But he came anyway because he utterly believed that the work was too important for him to be paralyzed by fear. The week he was killed he told me that he knew his job was dangerous, but that it was worth the risk. "Everybody," he said, "dies one day, but not everybody's death has meaning. To die for something you believe in," he said, "gives both your life *and* your death meaning." He said, "If I weren't willing to die for this cause, I wouldn't be here." Because he understood the danger and decided the job was worth the risk, I never think of Terry as a victim, but as a hero.

It is therefore fitting that this award should be named after him, acknowledging as it does both the value of his sacrifice and the importance of his mission. Which now must truly fall to others to continue.