

**REMARKS OF PAUL J. ROBERTI
COMMISSIONER, RHODE ISLAND PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION
RECIPIENT OF 2015 TERRY BARNICH AWARD
FOR PROMOTING COOPERATION AMONG UTILITY REGULATORS
AND DEVELOPMENT OF PROFESSIONAL REGULATION**

February 14, 2016

Chairman Hoskins, Executive Director White, Director Hamel, NARUC staff, fellow commissioners and colleagues, let me first say that it is a great honor to be the recipient of the Terry Barnich Award. Indeed, it represents the highest honor in my public service career.

Let me begin with the person for whom this award was created – Terry Barnich. I never had the opportunity to meet Terry, but I did some research and want to share what I learned about his exceptional public service commitment, and the personal attributes that made him such a great man.

“Disarmingly intellectual, a gifted communicator, well read, and passionate ...”

“Honorable, courageous, impressive, and beloved ...”

Terry strongly believed in his Iraq mission and knew it was dangerous, but was quoted as saying; *“everyone dies one day, but not everybody’s death has meaning. To die for something you believe in, gives your life and your death meaning.”* Terry was indeed a brave, fearless hero serving the cause of freedom. And while my work on the international front pales in comparison to his accomplishments, I am so humbled to stand before you today as a recipient of the award named for him.

When I took my first assignment to Moldova, I didn’t know what to expect. Traveling to a faraway land, meeting with regulators that speak a different language and use different regulatory terms. Spending days giving presentations and sharing regulatory experiences, learning their culture and understanding their challenges in the midst of translators, I will admit that I was challenged and sometimes a bit nervous. Looking back now, I would have to say it was some of most rewarding work of public service career. My experiences shaped me as a regulator, but even more importantly, they changed me as a person. What I learned is that amid all of the challenges each country faces, they all had one thing in common: they look up to the

United States of America, they respect us, admire our market-based economy, our institutions, our system of property rights and our adherence to the Rule of Law. It emphasized to me that our nation needs to remain deeply engaged in world affairs, because when we are not, it is conspicuous to those nations who depend on us, who must, without our assistance, find help from other countries, or worse, none at all.

NARUC's regulatory partnerships create relationships that emanate throughout governmental institutions of the nations we assist. We act as ambassadors, advancing good regulatory policies that foster investment, advancing the availability of essential public utility services and bringing the positive American spirit that defines our nation. My experiences made me realize that what we have in this country is truly remarkable: security, peace, prosperity, and the availability of ubiquitous utility services at "just and reasonable" rates.

Reading about Terry's life and sacrifice, I remember being in Georgia during the immediate aftermath of Russian tanks rolling into Ukraine. And I'll never forget seeing the look of despair in their eyes. It was a moment when I was overcome with a feeling of wanting to do more to help – like Terry Barnich had done in Iraq. That feeling remains in my bones to this day.

Whether it be the challenged nations of Eastern Europe where Russia's presence still dominates, or Nigeria with the threats of Boko Haram and lack of electricity, or India where in the months preceding our visit there were twelve major power outages due to a spate of collapsing transmission towers, or the challenges in Jamaica or Mexico, I learned that we have some very important things in common with our counterparts: we all take very seriously the responsibilities entrusted to us and we all truly care about doing the right thing for ratepayers and citizens. There is no doubt that NARUC's and USAID's work is exceedingly important to the cause of strengthening public regulation around the world. It has been an privilege to be part of the effort, and I am grateful to NARUC, USAID and the exceptional staff within NARUC's International Programs to whom I remain indebted for helping me succeed in the important work we do on behalf of our nation.

Washington DC