

A Tribute to Frank Carlucci

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Frank Carlucci was an extraordinary public servant. In multiple agencies and departments, through multiple Republican and Democratic presidencies, Frank was a remarkable problem solver – that rare person in Washington who had a magic touch for actually making bureaucracies work effectively. He was not a shouter or a table-pounder; he knew how to quietly motivate people to do their best and had the guts to hold them accountable when they didn't. Frank was usually easy-going, but also tough as nails. You do not run the American Intelligence Community, the NSC and Department of Defense as effectively as Frank did without the hide of a rhinoceros, without knowing how to plant your feet and be immovable, and without the smarts to negotiate the labyrinth of Washington politics and bureaucracy.

Initially my boss, and then friend and colleague for more than forty years, I worked for Frank when he was deputy director of Central Intelligence, and then with him when he was deputy Secretary of Defense, National Security Adviser and Secretary of Defense. As DDCI under Stansfield Turner in the Carter administration and deputy secretary of Defense to Cap Weinberger under President Reagan, Frank worked for highly opinionated, controversial bosses. Always loyal, he nonetheless tempered their instincts and worked diligently to translate their ideas and desires – and their whims – into effective action. On more than a few occasions, Frank found ways gracefully and without drama to channel bad ideas into bureaucratic oblivion. The physical courage Frank demonstrated as a Foreign Service Officer in Portugal, where he was stabbed during a riot, was matched by his moral and political courage in Washington fighting for policies and decisions he thought to be right and in the best interest of the United States.

With Frank's reputation for integrity, courage and effective leadership of complex government enterprises, it was no surprise President Reagan turned to him in the aftermath of the Iran-Contra scandal to right the national security ship – the National Security Council and its staff and White House relationships with the Departments of State and Defense, as well as CIA. With the help of another experienced, adept leader as his deputy – then-Lieutenant General Colin Powell – Frank Carlucci played a big role in the significant foreign policy achievements of the last two years of the Reagan presidency, the last year as Secretary of Defense.

As every new president soon discovers, leading any part of the modern American government, getting it to perform effectively and to accomplish the president's agenda is a daunting task – especially in a time of polarized politics and 24/7 cable news coverage. It is not a task for amateurs. Every president needs a utility in-fielder like Frank Carlucci for the toughest jobs - - tough, professional, skilled, experienced, politically adept but always putting the national interest

first, and wickedly funny. Such men and women have always been scarce; they are now an endangered species.

Frank Carlucci's friends and colleagues will miss him greatly, but not nearly so much as the country he loved so deeply and to which he devoted his life.