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News Release

USCIS DIRECTOR EMILIO GONZALEZ RECOGNIZES TWO OUTSTANDING AMERICANS BY CHOICE

Department of Veterans Affairs Site of Awards Presentation and Special Naturalization Ceremony for 25 New Americans, Including 13 U.S. Military Members

WASHINGTON—During a special naturalization ceremony for 25 new Americans today at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), two outstanding *Americans by Choice* were recognized by U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Director Emilio Gonzalez.

“By recognizing and honoring outstanding naturalized Americans, we highlight the significant contributions that they and other have made to strengthen the fabric of our Nation,” Gonzalez said. “America’s newest citizens can take inspiration from the dedicated spirit of citizenship and accomplishment exemplified by our two honorees.”

The VA hosted event honored two naturalized U.S. citizens for their outstanding achievements and citizenship. *American by Choice* awards were presented to Major General Antonio M. Taguba, United States Army (Retired), (*Philippines*) and Katja Bullock, (*Germany*).

Originally born in the Philippines, General Taguba commanded the 2nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood, Texas. In 2004, he directed and conducted an informal investigation into the allegation of detainee abuse at Abu Ghraib Prison in Iraq. Taguba recently retired following a 34 year career.

Born in Germany, Katja Bullock serves as a Special Assistant to the President for Presidential Personnel at the White House. Bullock, who held the same position in the Administrations of President Ronald Reagan and President George H.W. Bush, was detailed to Iraq as Director of Civilian Personnel to help set up the Coalition Provisional Authority government in Iraq and returned later to prepare for the formal transition of the government to Iraqi leaders.

The *American by Choice* initiative recognizes the significant achievements of naturalized U.S. citizens through civic participation, professional achievement, and responsible citizenship. Recipients of this honor have demonstrated their commitment to our nation and to the common civic values that unite us as Americans.

The day was also special for 25 men and women – including 13 members of the U.S. military – who took the *Oath of Allegiance* and became the newest U.S. citizens. The new Americans are originally from Argentina, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Egypt, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Iraq, Mexico, Nicaragua, Pakistan, and the Philippines.

USCIS naturalizes nearly 700,000 individuals a year. More information about *Americans by Choice* and the [naturalization](http://www.uscis.gov) process is available at www.uscis.gov.