

Association For Intelligence Officers

The Tom Smith New Mexico Chapter

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President

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FEBRUARY MEETING
WEDNESDAY, 10 FEB 2010
CALICO CAFÉ (VERNON'S STEAKHOUSE), 4TH ST, 1/4 MI NORTH OF OSUNA
11:00 AM — SOCIAL TIME AND PLACE LUNCH ORDERS
11:30 AM: MEETING CALL TO ORDER

President's Corner:

On the Intelligence front, this year looks like it's shaping up into a "good news – bad news" year.

On the "good" side, our key Intelligence producers (and those of our allies) are in high gear, and Law Enforcement Agency relationships with Intel are working more smoothly. The perceived absence of terrorist activity within our borders is a credit to the proactive stance and collaboration among Intelligence and Law Enforcement Agencies—not to mention the under-the-radar activities of the various Special Operations Forces (outside the US, of course). This is not, however, reason for complacency. Witness the numerous (and growing) arrests around the country, which are just the tip of the iceberg, and note the uncharacteristically straightforward warning from DNI Dennis Blair that a terrorist attack in this country in the near future is "certain."

On the "bad" side, the investigation of the attempted bombing of Flight 253 by the "hot pants bomber" highlighted one of the most embarrassing of all eventualities for Intelligence analysts—failure to "connect the dots." Despite the usual bureaucratic assurances that everyone is dedicated to "fixing the problem," my own view is that such assurances are hollow. The Intelligence Community is bedeviled by its very size and complexity, by a fractured leadership structure, and by the many appendages that have been stitched to it since 9/11.

Creation of the NCTC (National Counter-Terrorism Center) was an essential step forward, but it also added another large node to the web of information/Intelligence-sharing agencies. Additionally, the creation of some new departments and agencies has blurred the line between Intelligence producers (those who collect, process, analyze and disseminate) and Intelligence consumers. And, although we can debate the security clearance issues, the fact remains that the all-source producers operate in the highly complex and sensitive TS/SCI domain, while most consumers are cleared only to SECRET. This is, of course, a bucket of worms, but all the above, taken together, illustrate some of the problems we have yet to overcome in order to make our Intelligence activities more streamlined and responsive.

The views presented above are entirely my own, and do not represent those of AFIO or any government agency

THE JANUARY MEETING

In truth, I find I am not up to the note-taking and capture of detail that Brendan mastered over the years. My main goal at the meetings is to participate, moderate, and try to stimulate discussions on matters of current Intelligence and/or

National Security interest. That is at odds with the requirements of a recording secretary, so I once more invite someone to take on that responsibility until Brendan returns.

That being said, I want to acknowledge the quality and depth of the wide-ranging discussions at the January meeting. Everyone present engaged in animated discussion on 1) the nature of the Intelligence enterprise, and 2) the institutional difficulties encountered in the past and in the current, somewhat murky situation. We have a tremendous breadth of experience in this Chapter, as evidenced by the anecdotes and the details offered by members. Several people indicated they would like to continue this kind of discourse and, on those occasions when we do not have a guest speaker, I heartily agree. Thank you all.

OTHER CHAPTER BUSINESS

CALLAGHAN MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP:

The AFIO NM Scholarship Fund is growing, thanks to the generosity of several AFIO members. From within the Chapter, Adolph Saenz pledged \$100 (through SiSi Miranda) at the last meeting, and we have recently received a letter from Ron Cuellar with a donation of \$250. In addition, AFIO National advises that several members of the national organization have also made pledges to this fund. This is a notable step forward for us, and a tribute to Dick Callaghan's broad range of friends and contacts.

On a related note, I'm pleased to report that the Scholarship Committee (Joe Cantergiani, Joe Yardumian and I) met recently to go over the UNM ROTC submissions for 2010. Two were excellent, and two others left a good deal to be desired. Joe Cantergiani is following up with his usual diligence, and we will have further progress report on this year's awards in March.

PERSONNEL NOTES:

Ruby Ellen Smith remains in the rehab center, coaxing a recalcitrant leg into cooperating. She is in good spirits and coming along well, and looks forward to rejoining us, perhaps in a couple of months. Anyone wishing to cheer her on can reach her at: 293-3676.

Brendan O'Donovan will be undergoing chemotherapy, and may be out of touch with the group for a while. Nonetheless, Brendan retains his quiet optimism, and seems well prepared, mentally, for the coming discomfort. We wish him well, and hope to see him back soon.

Ron Cuellar is doing very well, down in Texas, but looks forward to returning to New Mexico, perhaps in 2013. I am fortunate to get to speak with him now and then, and he always makes me laugh. He has kindly donated a laminating machine to the Chapter (which arrived on my doorstep yesterday), and I invite suggestions from the members on how best to use it.

See you all at the meeting. Respectfully submitted, Pete Bostwick

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Pete Bostwick - President
(Vacant) - 1st Vice President, Programs
Jerry Monahan – 2nd Vice President, Public Relations
Brendan O'Donovan (On Leave) – Secretary, Newsletter
Judith Mead – Treasurer