



AFIO NEW MEXICO CHAPTER

Co-Presidents

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FEB MEETING -- WED FEB 11, 2015

“The Egg & I” -- 6909 Menaul Blvd (just East of Louisiana)

Sign In and Order Lunch: 11:00 / Pledge of Allegiance, Call to Order 11:30

DECEMBER & JANUARY RECAP:

These were two excellent, substantive meetings. Present at one or both of these meetings were: Al Baye, Joe Cantergiani, Tom Dyble, Mike & Lynn Ford, Ken Moorehead, Hamid Rad, Adolph Saenz, Sam Shaw, Richard Sullivan, Joe & Jean Yardumian, and Pete Bostwick. We opened the floor for free discussion on current topics, in both meetings, and rediscovered the caliber of exchanges that can occur when you give a group of widely experienced professionals free rein to discuss any current topic. Discussions touched on Iran, ISIS, Islam, Russia and Ukraine, Saudia Arabia, Intelligence collection, and others – we ran out of time. The levels of expertise, experience and interest confirm the value of having a focal point like AFIO to draw people like this together.

NEW MEMBER:

We are pleased to welcome a new member to the AFIO New Mexico Chapter: Mr. Hamid Mansouri Rad. Mr. Rad is a current AFIO National member, and a PhD candidate at New Mexico State University. His dissertation topic concerns “the intersection of rhetoric, cognitive biases in decision making, and intelligence analysis.” He is a Proposal Development Specialist in the Office of Research Development, VPR/NMSU. We are delighted to have him on board, and acknowledge the effort he has to make to attend our meetings by driving from and back to Las Cruces on our meeting days. Thank you, Hamid, for your interest and participation.

THE SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM:

Good news on this front. Thanks to the unselfish initiative of Joe Cantergiani, our new and improved (we think) scholarship program is not only afloat, but steaming ahead. We anticipate worthy entries this year from both the UNM ROTC program and students in Professor Frank Gilfeather’s Office of Strategic Programs at UNM. As noted previously, we are consolidating all our scholarship funds into a single award this year, meaning that one from among the universe of contenders will receive a \$1,000.00 scholarship award from the Tom Smith New Mexico Chapter of AFIO. The Scholarship Committee (Sam Shaw, Joe Yardumian, Mike Ford, and Chmn Joe Cantergiani) have primed the pump and are waiting for the submissions.

THE INTELLIGENCE UNIVERSE

The challenges facing our IC (Intelligence Community) are as diverse as I (Pete) have ever seen. Africa’s going to hell in a hand basket, the Middle East is faced with an “ISIS crisis” of unanticipated—and perhaps as yet unknowable—dimensions, Putin is playing a risky and deadly game with Ukraine and Central Europe, Israel in its most difficult position in years, and there are

numerous other, smaller trouble spots around the globe. In addition, the insidious challenges of cyber security are an increasingly complicating factor for Government, the military, the corporate world, and the financial sector. Where are the resources going to come from to meet all these challenges.

This brings us to one particular, imminent Intelligence challenge for the United States. The Patriot Act is about to expire. This Act is widely despised by segments of the population who are largely ignorant (and therefore distrustful) of the IC and its law enforcement counterparts. Edward Snowden's revelations clearly damaged some of our relations with other countries, and cast suspicion upon all national collection activities, especially those targeting American citizens. This is partly our own fault, since we have historically treated compartmented programs as inappropriate for any exposure to the public at large. Generally speaking, that is understandable, but it seems to me we may have missed opportunities to reveal the nature of some operations, carefully, without exposing their sources and methods. Law enforcement agencies now face the same problem. The nature of the revealed programs caused those unaware of their nature and purpose to assume that they, personally, were at risk of being targeted. Many citizens now take it as an item of faith that the NSA is listening in on all their calls, reading their emails, and even watching them and listening to them at home through their computers and cell phones. The obvious downside is that such capabilities have been revealed at all. The corollary risk is that ordinary law-abiding citizens now believe they cannot trust their own government to protect their privacy.

Law breakers and terrorists should not have any expectation of privacy; they should be targeted by any and all means available, no matter what. Government agencies, however, seem inclined to disregard the ability of people to be brought on board, as it were, to support programs that have actually been designed to keep them safe. The public trust is eroded, for instance, by the indiscriminate spread of license plate readers, the ability of Border Patrol agents to spoof cell phone towers and capture calls, or the news that DEA was thinking of surveilling all attendees at gun shows. It is not that these capabilities are not valuable for—and perhaps essential to-- the public good; the problem is that the average civilian does not understand that they are not the intended targets of these programs. They need to be reassured that the data collected will only be used in the pursuit of unlawful activities, and that collected data not relevant to any actual investigation will be deleted from the system. This would require a sea change in the attitudes of some agencies, whose leaders believe they should be entitled to retain any information collected, pertinent or not, simply because of the perceived value of the most inclusive possible database they can construct, just because they can.

This brings us full circle to the Patriot Act. If it is allowed to expire and the ability of the FBI, for instance, to collect receipts, photos, surveillance footage and other evidence to support ongoing investigations covertly, law enforcement agencies will be severely hampered in their ability to develop actionable cases. There is more to this Act, of course, but the bottom line is that investigative agencies at all levels must have the tools to do their jobs to keep the rest of us safe. The other side of that coin is that they must simultaneously reassure law abiding citizens that their (our) privacy and Constitutional rights are being fully protected. The prevailing attitude of "us against them" in investigative agencies alienates the public whose support they need. Consider this a small opening gambit in a much larger debate.

Respectfully submitted, Co-Presidents Pete Bostwick and Mike Ford