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NEXT MEETING: Wed 12 June 2013

Lunch at “The Egg & I” (Menaul just East of Louisiana)

11:00 AM: Arrive, socialize, order lunch **11:45** Meeting Program

AN OVERVIEW FROM THE PRESIDENT’S “OFFICE”

First, Please note the new, official letterhead design (1 of 2 available) from AFIO HQ, with a nod to Mr. C. Emerson Cooper, Board Member from Las Vegas, NV, who compiles and produces the AFIO Handbook and Presentation Graphics. This brings the NM Chapter in line (finally) with the official organization title of “Association of Former Intelligence Officers.”

Next, an acknowledgement that the array of perverse Intelligence quagmires has not diminished one iota since we last addressed them. Pick any geographic region and choose your topic. Radical Islam not only remains ascendant, but merits more attention than ever. Iraq appears to be slipping back into a period of secular warfare unseen since the Saddam era, and the Taliban have not disappeared from Afghanistan. Egypt is slipping further into “Muslim Brotherhood” mode, and Syria’s President Assad remains intractable, fostering a brutal civil conflict likely to prevent any reconciliation even if he were forced out. In addition, missiles from Russia, foreign fighters from Iran, and Hezbollah’s statement of support for Syria’s government bode ill for Middle East peace. The addition of Hezbollah in the mix is particularly troubling, as this large, well-armed and generally disciplined group is also a potential threat to Israel. The “Arab Spring” looks likely to turn into “Winter.”

Closer to home, the Boston Marathon bombing, the incredible murder of a British soldier on a London street, and the slashing of a French security officer—all by Islamists who represent the worst (and most dangerous) aspects of the Muslim faith, may be only the tip of a home-grown iceberg in the West. Kudos to our law enforcement agencies, especially the FBI, NSA, the NCTC (Nat’l Counter-Terrorism Center), and other engaged agencies. As the Intelligence challenges increase, however, I admit to a degree of unease about the extraordinary expansion of Intelligence nodes. Intelligence analysis is not an undertaking that can be improved simply by throwing money and manpower at it.

On the home front, I’m personally in favor of drones, and their clear advantages for law enforcement, agriculture, wildfire fighting, etc. I have been astonished, however, to discover how many Americans of all persuasions—military, civilian, conservative, liberal, male, female—simply do not trust this expansion of official surveillance capabilities not to be misused! Holy cow. This mindset is deeply troubling, because it is inherently inimical to the proper pursuits of law and order and Intelligence gathering. Professionals (ahem, like us) need to be heard more clearly in support of the legitimate use (and oversight) of these tools, for our own well-being and those of our less well-informed neighbors and communities. AFIO members can provide a real service to the uninitiated (of whom there are many), but we must be willing to speak up in public forums to do it. Who do YOU know who can help?

On that happy note, I look forward to seeing you and your guests at the meeting.

Respectfully, Pete Bostwick

