

Association For Intelligence Officers

The Tom Smith New Mexico Chapter

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President

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MARCH MEETING

Wednesday, 13 March 2013

The Egg & I, Menaul just East of Louisiana

11:00 AM: Arrive, Sign in, Order Lunch **11:45 AM:** Guest Speaker

FEBRUARY WRAP-UP

Many thanks to COL, USA (Ret.) Roger Mickelson for an interesting—and entertaining—presentation of the pursuit of an Intelligence gathering mission from beginning to end. Getting a tip on a new missile radar is one thing, but developing the requirements for collecting on it and being able to follow the cycle through to the actual collection of its parameters—including teasing the missile battery into firing on the collection platform—is something few of us have experienced. It was a great story, and especially interesting for the fact that Roger was able to cobble together an inter-agency team to carry out the collection mission, despite the fact that the collection platform would be at significant risk. Doing that today would be practically impossible.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

After 9/11, we in the Intelligence Community were very much focused on al Qaeda (of course), but it didn't take long for splinter groups to begin to appear. For some time, we were unsure how to integrate the activities of these upstart groups into our analysis of the War on Terror because they tended to be viewed as sideshows to the main focus. Soon, however, we learned to accord them status as "al Qaeda-affiliated" groups, and awareness of an expanding radical Islamist threat soon followed. Yemen, for instance, has been a thorn in our side for years, though we tended to view it as more of a distraction than a threat. How times have changed. Now, we are forced to recognize a whole new paradigm of Islamist threats in Africa, not just because they have the potential to become active threats to us, but because they are destabilizing a large segment of the African continent and have the potential to become active across wider geographic areas. The concerns of the IC, therefore, are not just with instability in the Middle East, or with a growing (and possibly under-appreciated) Chinese military assertiveness, or with North Korea's ramp-up of its nuclear capabilities, but with a new wave of global unrest that taxes our friends and allies, and will put additional burdens on our rapid deployment forces and our Intelligence gathering capabilities. We live in interesting times, indeed, and my sense is that the American public, in general, is mostly ignorant of the ill winds blowing around us. We here in the hinterlands are pretty well removed from the centers of power and discussion, but it doesn't mean we can't engage with those around us to try and clear away some of the cobwebs that cloud public awareness. There are those among us with extensive geographic, intellectual and professional backgrounds whom I would encourage to use public forums to draw informed attention to some of today's pressing issues. Perhaps it's a herculean task, like swimming up a waterfall, but I wonder if—under the AFIO umbrella—we shouldn't give it a try. I am, of

course, thinking out loud to a trusted group, and you can feel free to tell me I've lost my mind! It just seems to me there's a lot of talent being wasted, here, that could find avenues of outreach and public expression to shine light into the dark corners of the national security arena...even if it appears to be unwanted. You may have noted that there is a growing sense of insecurity and frustration within this country, as well as high levels of uncertainty about external threats to our way of life. This is, IMHO, unhealthy. Can we, as a group, do anything about it? That's this month's question for you....

Owing to the delayed forwarding of this newsletter, I'll sign off for now, and look forward to seeing all of you—and whatever guests might like to dip a toe in our waters—for a good lunch and an interesting talk at the meeting next week

Respectfully yours,

Pete Bostwick