

*Association For Intelligence Officers*



*The Tom Smith New Mexico Chapter*

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**CHAPTER NEWSLETTER - SEPTEMBER 2009**

**PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

First, a hearty "welcome back" to all AFIO members. To kick off this year's newsletter, I'd like to pose to all of you some Intelligence issues I believe are worth discussing, and solicit your thoughts.

On a philosophical level, the following issues have really caught my attention: (1) a debate between the new Director of National Intelligence (ADM Blair) and the new CIA Director (Panetta) about who will have oversight of our Intelligence personnel working overseas; (2) the on-again, off-again enthusiasm of the new Attorney General to pursue inquiries into the actions of CIA agents in interrogating enemy combatants; and (3) the proper role of the Dept. of Homeland Security in this country.

In a practical vein, I note that we (U.S.) are either interested or involved in, ongoing conflicts in several different areas. All of these have implications at some level or other for our Intelligence Community, and I would be interested in hearing your views on how well you believe we are (or are not) prepared to address or assist with these problems. Some of the most pressing that come to my mind are: a) Afghanistan; b) Russia (Chechen and South Ossetia conflicts); c) Burma (N. Korean involvement?); d) Indonesia (Jemaah Islamiyah); e) South Thailand (ongoing insurgent violence and domestic political unrest); f) China & India (economic and political implications); g) the Mexican cartels and violence on our border.

There are other possibilities, of course, but I thought this might be enough to make a few synapses fire, to begin with. I look forward eagerly to the next couple of years, and to your robust participation in our Chapter events.

Respectfully, Pete Bostwick

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

Hi to all AFIO Members,

It is dues time again. Actually it is past dues time and I need you to pay your \$10.00 as soon as you can. You can mail me cash or a check. My address is Judith Mead, 1515 Soplo Road SE, Albq 87123.

I would like to remind the members what the By-laws say about payment of dues.

"The annual dues of each member shall be \$10.00 payable in advance of the **first day of July and shall become delinquent on the first day of August**. Members whose dues are not paid by September 1 shall forfeit voting rights in the Chapter."

Members can also be suspended for non-payment of dues.

I am hoping to hear from all of you very soon.

Judith Mead, Treasurer

With the summer break coming to a close, several Chapter members told us that they were really looking forward to getting back into the old routine of our monthly luncheons.

### SEPTEMBER MEETING

Our upcoming Chapter luncheon will be at **11:30 am on WEDNESDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER**, at the same restaurant: the Calico Cantina/Vernon's Steakhouse. You will find it at 6855 4<sup>th</sup> Street, on the west side of the road, about ½ mile north of Osuna. It is adjacent to the El Camino Motel (the El Camino dates back to the 1920's when 4<sup>th</sup> Street was part of the northern extension of Old Route 66. We'll again meet in the back room of the Café behind the package store.

### VACATION READING – BOOK REPORT

A recent book on Cuba caught our attention during the summer break: **Havana Nocturne** is published by Harper Collins, New York. The book's author, T.J. English, delivers a riveting and true account of what post WWII Havana was like, when it was referred to as the Pearl of the Antilles. At the time, Havana attracted visitors from around the world. The city even took a cue from Monte Carlo, and began hosting an annual Formula One auto race that attracted top drivers, including the legendary Argentine racer, Juan Fangio. The island of Cuba, itself, enjoyed the status of the wealthiest nation in Latin America due to huge annual sugar crops that supplied half the world's demand during the 1940's and 1950's. Also contributing to the island's good fortunes were the world class hotels and gambling casinos scattered throughout Havana. These venues delivered a staggering windfall of profits to the military dictatorship of strongman, Fulgencio Batista. This was a regime that never stopped trying to pass itself off as a legitimate government of Cuba.

Just scratching the surface at the time, one could see how only the Cuban elite, numbering about five percent of the population, really benefited from the country's financial bonanza. Additionally, the entertainment and gambling venues and hotels in Havana were all controlled by American mobsters from the East Coast and South Florida.

To keep a lid on any widespread discontent from the Cuban man-on-the-street, military intelligence and secret police squads roamed the island at all hours in their trademark olive-green Oldsmobiles.

#### Havana Shuts Down

In the early morning hours of New Year's Day, 1959, advance units of a guerrilla army led by Che Guevara entered the outskirts of Havana, encountering little or no resistance. By the end of the day, Cuba's largest city was shut down and began taking on the pallor of a military garrison. While the city was being secured by Che Guevara's forces, Fidel Castro and his brother, Raul, were leading a victory march of their main force guerrilla units through the provinces. They would arrive in Havana the following week to take over control of the country.

Just a few hours before Che's forces entered Havana, Fulgencio Batista and his inner circle boarded a military plane that flew them to the Dominican Republic and safety. This was not Batista's original plan. He had always intended – when the time came – to seek safe passage out of Cuba to Daytona Beach, Florida, where he owned an estate. Having had close and cordial relations with Washington for many years, he was taken aback when the State Department refused to issue him a visa and residency permit, telling him they would reconsider at a later date, when "the dust settled". Washington never did follow up on that promise.

#### Improved Relations

In view of what appears to be a slow but steady warming of relations between Havana and Washington, and the opening up of some of the Cuban economy to foreign investment, this book can provide a glimpse of the kind of

free market changes that might be in store for the island when Fidel and Raul are no longer with us. Some observers speculate that the young technocrats now holding down policy positions in the Cuban government may well direct their energies towards reestablishing Havana as a world-class destination for both vacationers and businessmen.

It's interesting to note that during the past week, a delegation from Santa Fe, led by New Mexico Governor, Bill Richardson, flew into Cuba for trade talks. With Richardson's reputation as a successful diplomat and his periodic work as a middleman between North Korea and the U.S., we expect that he and his delegation will be well received in Cuba. Considering the island's close and cordial relations with Russia, any expanded U.S.- Cuba contacts via trade are probably going to be positive in the long term.

Edna Fowler

We should mention here that one of our Chapter members, Edna Valverde Fowler, was stationed at our Embassy in Havana during the 1950's. She served as a bilingual assistant to our Air Attache, and can attest to the accuracy of this book. Edna describes that era in the 1950's as Havana's "golden age".

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## RETURN OF THE MILITIAS

As if our security people didn't have enough responsibilities keeping track of and neutralizing Middle East operatives and sleeper cells, now over the past few months, our own domestic radicals, the militiamen, as they like to call themselves, are once again becoming active. It appears that policies emanating from the new administration have energized this group to once again take center stage and call for armed preparedness as a defense against what they perceive as threats to their Constitutional Rights.

The militias are believed to operate in some 40 states with membership in the 15-20,000 range; and the movement continues to grow. Some hard-core militiamen are considered extremely dangerous. The militia movement has traditionally attracted a cross-section of under educated and somewhat marginalized individuals from rural areas of the country. Despite this backwoods image, the militias have fully embraced the computer age and use electronic bulletin boards on the internet to coordinate policies and generally share information with militia members across the country. Some militias have even used public access radio and TV to attract recruits.

Here in New Mexico, the militias operate in rural areas near Albuquerque and Santa Fe with a sizable group in the northwest quadrant of the state. Hardcore neo-Nazi and white supremacist groups are believed to reside in the Farmington area. To the east of Albuquerque, in the Tijeras region, militiamen periodically publish anti-Semitic flyers, posters and newsletters.

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