

The Role of National Intelligence in the 21st Century

Scribed by Zarina Dawood

Admiral Dennis Blair started off with how the intelligence agencies were formed. Following the attack on Pearl Harbor, the government decided that we needed more intelligence systems so the Central Intelligence Agency, or CIA, was created. The primary purpose of the CIA was to watch over the Soviet Union so there wouldn't be any surprise attacks during the Cold War. They were able to recruit spies, collect evidence, and fund programs such as the U2 aircraft program, deep-sea mining company, and the hacking of the Soviet Unions commanding officers telephone communication systems.

The purpose of having individual agencies was to have each one collect different clue's in the way people try to put together a puzzle. One gets one piece; the other gets another; and for a while it worked. But, there was a conflict between the programs for things like their budgets and decisions, and what started as a playful rivalry turned into a bitter rivalry. They had a lot of troubles sharing information properly. At first they refused to share a significant amount of information. Then, they shared so much information that a terrorist attack happened before they were able to pick out the main point in the information shared. Eventually they figured out the perfect balance.

As far as main topics go, the technologic changes inside the intelligence agencies were close to the top. It made it easier for the CIA and other organizations to hack into the Soviet Union's communication systems and gave them an advantage. But another thing that still affects our communities today is 9/11. After this terrible tragedy occurred, the government decided it would be in the best interest of the people for there to be an overall director of all of the intelligence agencies. When this was put into action, the CIA was able to go to a preferred place to share reports. For some cases, it was better for them to go to the White House and deliver the reports there, and other times it was more convenient to tell them to the director.

Everyone has heard of Edward Snowden right? Well, it seems that even though he thought he was doing America a favor by leaking private information, a lot of people beg to differ. Admiral Blair is one of those people. He believes that it was not a heroic move to tell the world about the NSA and how they are listening in on our calls. Snowden believed that it is wrong and should be stopped, but as the Admiral said, it is a meaningless proposition.

It is all part of a larger picture. While the NSA has the ability to collect some information, Google, Amazon, and Facebook can find out much of our personal information within seconds. Admiral Blair said that he believed in forming tighter laws on how that information can be used. He also said that when the NSA looks at your calls, an innocent person can't have any harm done to them even if they happen to be making a call from a terrorist phone. It would take a significant amount of evidence to convict a person.

The last topic that was talked about during Admiral Dennis Blair's speech was the use of drones. These drones are used only against enemies on the intelligence unit's "hit-list." On this list, there are the names of the worst criminals; the ones with murderous intentions - the drones are used to eliminate the danger. In addition, the drones are fired at times when the least amount of innocent bystanders are near. The process to get the permission to use the drones is a long one, which, according to our esteemed speaker, should be shorter. The Department of Defense should be able to launch the armed drones since they are the ones responsible for the helping the security of civilians.

2013-2014 Program Topics / Schedule

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| May 15 | The Future of the Transatlantic Relationship from a European Perspective |
| May 20 | Greek Embassy Trip |

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|-------------------|--|
| President: | Dr. Clem Gilpin 944-4913
ceg5@psu.edu |
| Vice Pres: | Dr. Michele Sellitto 968-1995
msellitto@comcast.net |
| Secretary: | Hattie Ann Glasscock
hglasscock07@comcast.net |
| Treasurer: | Frank Matunis 526-4747
frankx912@verizon.net |

Newsletter: Kevin Springman 975-2562
kevintspringman@gmail.com

Web Editor: Lou Thieblemont
lou.lynn@comcast.net

Nominations are now being accepted for new board members.

Also see attached flyer for details about the May 20th Trip to the Greek Embassy in Washington, DC.