

JUNE 2007

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25 YEARS
SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE

Business Executives For National Security

“Making Our Nation Stronger”

On 25th Anniversary, BENS Celebrates Past Successes & Future Mission

During an unprecedented two days of policy, praise, pomp and circumstance, hundreds of BENS members and friends gathered in Washington, DC May 9-10 to mark BENS' 25 years of achievement and the first-ever passing of the Chairman's gavel.

Weiss & BENS: Saluted for “Passion to Serve” – Praising BENS members for devoting their “time, energy, and commitment to making our nation stronger,” Deputy Secretary of Defense Gordon England headlined the May 9 black-tie Eisenhower Dinner by presenting Founder Stanley A. Weiss with the **Department of Defense Medal for Distinguished Public Service**, its highest honor for civilians, for his “visionary leadership.” In a **special tribute**, following toasts from BENS board members, former BENS President & CEO and longtime counselor Larry Smith said that “Americans are safer” because of Weiss’ “quiet passion to serve.” Weiss, who upon stepping down the next day as Chairman assumed the title of Founding Chairman, used his **final address** to urge Americans to embrace the spirit of BENS – “a sense of debt and duty to country.”

Robert: New Chairman Plans “New Era of Growth” – Accepting the chairman’s gavel from Stanley Weiss at the Board of Directors meeting the following day, Joseph E. Robert, Jr. became only the 2nd Chairman in BENS’ history. Robert – a BENS member who Weiss praised as “an entrepreneur of passion and patriotism” – is the founder, chair, and CEO of J.E. Robert Companies. Noting the “extraordinary” success of BENS’ first 25 years, Robert used his **inaugural message** to the Board to call for “a new era of growth” – specifically, doubling the BENS membership and increasing revenue by two-fold. “New members and new revenue will allow BENS to keep faith with its defining mission,” said Robert, so that BENS can “meet the unprecedented threats of our time.”

Honored Guests: “Extraordinarily Important People” – In a moving reminder of the individuals behind the institutions that BENS works to strengthen, BENS President and CEO Chuck Boyd welcomed to the Eisenhower Dinner **four service members** from the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines, calling them “a category above VIP – extraordinarily important people.” Highly decorated for their valor as medics, rescue jumpers and infantrymen in Iraq and Afghanistan, the honorees, Boyd said, have dedicated their lives “so that we, those captains of industry and citizens like myself, can be safe and secure.”

Annual Forum: America’s “Greatest Strength” – From the former U.S. military commander in the Middle East to the current Director of National Intelligence, from a leading commentator on American politics to an icon of American business, BENS members heard from the nation’s foremost political and security experts at BENS’ **18th Annual Washington Forum** on May 9. Reflecting the sense of both urgency and optimism struck by many speakers, homeland security expert Steve Flynn argued that an under-maintained infrastructure has left America an “increasingly brittle nation,” but that he remains optimistic because of “the greatest strength we have” – “the ingenuity and latent resiliency of the American people,” including BENS members, to protect the homeland.

BENS Works: Business Sense for National Security

Confronting “The Gravest Threat” – Call it another “win” in BENS’ longtime advocacy of the landmark security initiative that destroys and secures Soviet-era nuclear, chemical and biological weapons. Following an April letter in which BENS CEO Chuck Boyd and Founding Chairman Stanley Weiss urged the House Armed Services Committee to strengthen the Cooperative Threat Reduction (CTR) program, the committee approved new funds and eliminated bureaucratic restrictions in its 2008 defense authorization bill. Similarly, Boyd and Weiss in a **May letter** urged the Senate Armed Services Committee to likewise enhance the program and “and eliminate the gravest threat to our country.”

The State Dept. Wants You! – Want to give direct input to the federal government on critical issues like international energy, fiscal and trade policy, or counterterrorism? The State Department is looking for BENS members to participate in its inaugural Franklin Fellows Program, a year-long posting in Washington, DC or New York where mid-career professionals can bring fresh ideas and business best practices to the Department’s foreign affairs mission. For more information, see <http://www.careers.state.gov/FF> or contact William Pope, Senior Advisor for Fellows, directly at popewp@state.gov.

Business Force News

Category 5 Convocation – Bracing for the next Floyd, Gloria, or Isabel, the New Jersey Business Force wants business leaders to focus on the unique challenges a major hurricane strike would hold for the New Jersey/New York region. The June 20 Private Sector Hurricane Symposium will examine the impact businesses can expect once waves and water recede and will feature an interactive session with industry and infrastructure experts and the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management. RSVP by June 15 to Hank Straub at (609) 777-3999 or hstraub@bens.org for the event, which will be held at the Stevens Institute of Technology’s Babbio Center in Hoboken and co-sponsored by the Institute, the National Weather Service, and the Port Authority of New York & New Jersey.

Event Highlights and BENS Developments

Extreme Makeover: BENS 2.0 – If your website is your face to the world, BENS is getting a facelift as we unveil our brand new site June 5 at www.bens.org. With generous pro bono support from BENS member Lani Hay, President and CEO of Lanmark Technology, the new BENS website has been redesigned from the bottom up with new features and new content. Please visit as we cut the ribbon on this major new upgrade!

Yesterday’s Bureaucracies, Today’s Battles – America cannot win the 21st century using 20th-century institutions, Gen. Jim Jones, USMC (Ret.) told a May 15 Texas luncheon co-sponsored by BENS member Chuck Jarvie, prospect Bob Utley, and the Dallas Committee on Foreign Relations. Gen. Jones, former Commander of U.S. European Command and Commandant of the Marine Corps, warned that large 20th-century-style bureaucratic organizations are not nimble enough to respond to today’s unconventional threats and opportunities. The Defense and State Departments, intelligence agencies, and other national institutions, Gen. Jones said, need vital reforms to more flexibly respond to these changing challenges.

Upcoming Events

- **San Francisco** – “Public Health and Private Sectors Responding to Pandemic Influenza,” Jun. 19-21, Sheraton Gateway Hotel, Burlingame, CA. Sponsored by Berkeley School of Public Health. Contact Peter Ohtaki at (650) 591-7770 or pohtaki@bens.org.
- **New Jersey** – **Private Sector Hurricane Symposium**, Jun. 20, 9:30 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Stevens Institute of Technology, Hoboken, NJ. Contact Hank Straub at (609) 777-3999 or hstraub@bens.org by June 15.
- **Atlanta** – **Visit to Fort Benning**, Jul. 27. Contact Aimee Yrlas Simpson at (404) 220-1268 or ayrlassimpson@bens.org.
- **Atlanta** – **Lunch with Dr. Robert R. Friedman**, Director, Georgia International Law Enforcement Exchange, Aug. 14, Four Seasons Hotel. Contact Aimee Yrlas Simpson at (404) 220-1268 or ayrlassimpson@bens.org.