

MARCH 2007

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25 YEARS
SECURING AMERICA'S FUTURE

Business Executives For National Security

A Celebration 25 Years in the Making

25th Anniversary Gala to Mark BENS' Founding and Future

As in the business world, few organizations survive their make-or-break first years. Even fewer go on to thrive for a quarter century. But this May, Business Executives for National Security proudly celebrates 25 years of bringing the best of business to the world of national security.

Hundreds of BENS members and friends will gather at our annual black-tie Eisenhower Dinner in Washington, DC on May 9 to commemorate our first 25 years – toasting our greatest achievements and paying a very special tribute to our founder, Stanley A. Weiss, who steps down as Chairman of the Board of Directors the following day. We can't yet reveal all the surprise details of what's bound to be an unforgettable evening, but those interested in attending the Dinner and that day's 18th annual Washington Forum – both to be held at the Ronald Reagan Building – should contact Jennie Moonis at (202) 296-2125 or jmoonis@bens.org.

The following day, BENS formally welcomes our next Chairman, Joseph E. Robert, Jr., at the Board's Spring meeting. A highly respected entrepreneur and executive, Joe is founder, chairman, and CEO of J.E. Robert Companies, one of the world's largest private commercial real estate investment and asset management firms. A dedicated BENS member, he has made several trips to Iraq – where his son served in the Marines – and wrote about his travels in the *Washington Post*. "With Joe's selection and with our 25th anniversary year underway," said Stanley Weiss, "I'm more confident than ever – BENS' greatest days are yet to come." Read the announcement of Joe Robert's election as Chairman at <http://www.bens.org/New-Chair-letter.pdf>.

BENS Works: Business Sense for National Security

Writing Business Into the Plans – Fully integrating the private sector into government emergency response plans was a key recommendation of the recent BENS task force report, *Getting Down to Business*. Now, BENS is leading the way in putting that idea into action.

- At the state level, the National Emergency Management Association, representing state emergency managers, voted unanimously in early February for BENS to spearhead a new effort to integrate the private sector into the state-to-state mutual aid system known as the Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC). BENS members will play a key role in the project, expected to begin this month. At the same time, BENS' regions are assisting their home-state legislatures in strengthening Good Samaritan laws to protect companies and individual volunteers, further encouraging public-private cooperation in crisis preparation and response.
- At the federal level, the Department of Homeland Security and the Federal Emergency Management Agency invited BENS to help revise the national structure for disaster preparation and response, the National Incident Management System. BENS' recommendations, submitted in late February, would enshrine public-private collaboration in the system, especially business participation in state Emergency Operations Centers. In addition, BENS is in the early stages of another project to examine the process by which select federal regulations may temporarily be rolled back in times of crisis, enabling businesses to do more to help their communities.

Business Force News

Hooray for Hollywood – And the Oscar goes to...BENS' Los Angeles Business Response Network (BRN)! Since its formal "opening night" in November, the new Southern California effort has attracted pledges – worth hundreds of millions of dollars – of everything from vehicles and volunteers to medical supplies and communication equipment, from 28 members, including Macerich Company, Mattel, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Westfield, and Westwood One-MetroLink. Other civic-minded companies interested in joining this smash hit should contact Lauren Armistead at (213) 346-9428 or larmistead@hsac.bens.org.

Event Highlights and BENS Developments

It's Ready! – Crucial guidance for businesses on pandemic flu preparedness, continuity of operations planning, and emergency communications – these are just some of the updates to the newly-published second edition of *Getting Ready*, the corporate primer on preparedness and response planning produced by BENS' Atlanta members and government partners. This must-read booklet for all members can be downloaded at <http://www.bens.org/Getting-Ready.pdf>. To receive a hard copy, contact Aimee Yrlas Simpson at (404) 220-1268 or ayrlassimpson@bens.org.

Of Turf & Terrorism – "Bureaucratic turf battles," especially between the Treasury and State Departments, continue to hamper U.S. efforts to combat terrorist finances worldwide. That indictment was leveled by former Rep. Sue Kelly (R-NY), past chair of the House Financial Services Committee's Oversight and Investigations subcommittee, as she kicked-off a BENS-hosted discussion on "Counterterrorism and the 110th Congress" on January 31 in Washington, DC. Co-sponsored by the [Counterterrorism Blog](#), the morning-long event featured terrorism experts from both the private and public sector, including former FBI Financial Crimes Section Chief Dennis Lormel, who echoed BENS' long-time call for the financial community to build closer ties with government and address its institutional lack of counter-terrorist financing expertise.

Stewing Over Nukes – "Thin gruel," but also "a small but a very important step forward," were former Defense Secretary William Perry's twin assessments of the latest North Korean nuclear deal, offered at a timely BENS-Asia Society forum on the subject February 13 in San Francisco. Although Perry, who also served as a special envoy to North Korea, noted that this new agreement could potentially freeze Pyongyang's nuclear ambitions, he questioned whether full disarmament remained possible in 2007. Still, Perry and other speakers at the half-day forum saw U.S. willingness to engage North Korea, along with the unity of the East Asian powers since Pyongyang's October nuclear test, as encouraging first steps in a long, complicated, and precarious process.

Breakfast of Champions – Bringing home the debates roiling Washington, Kansas Sen. Pat Roberts made an impassioned pitch in support of the Iraq war to a packed Kansas City breakfast meeting with BENS on February 26. While noting both errors and successes to date, Roberts, the former top Republican on the Senate Intelligence Committee, devoted most of his time to future challenges. Withdrawing American troops without first assuring Iraqi stability could have drastic consequences, he argued, leading to a political vacuum that would be filled by open warfare between Sunnis and Shiites. Maintaining U.S. forces in Iraq, Roberts thinks, holds the best hope of minimizing future bloodshed and averting a broader war involving Iraq's neighbors.

Upcoming Events

- **San Francisco – Luncheon with Stephen Flynn**, homeland security expert and author of *The Edge of Disaster: Rebuilding a Resilient Nation*, Mar. 8, 12p.m., Kuleto's Trattoria, Burlingame, CA. Contact Peter Ohtaki at (650) 591-7770 or pohtaki@bens.org.
- **Atlanta – Luncheon with Norman Szydlowski**, President & CEO Colonial Pipeline Company, Apr. 13, 11:30a.m.-1:30p.m., Four Seasons Hotel. Contact Aimee Yrlas Simpson at (404) 220-1268 or ayrlassimpson@bens.org.
- **New York City – Rory Stewart**, former provincial governor in Iraq and author of *The Prince of the Marshes and Other Occupational Hazards of a Year in Iraq*, Apr. 24. Contact Steve Ewell at (202) 296-2125 or sewell@bens.org.
- **Atlanta – Visit to Robins Air Force Base**, Nov. 8. Contact Aimee Yrlas Simpson at (404) 220-1268 or ayrlassimpson@bens.org.