

MARCH 2008

UPDATE

Business Executives For National Security

Pentagon to BENS: Send Ideas ASAP

Deputy Defense Secretary Welcomes BENS Insights

It may not have the fanfare of a presidential endorsement, but in the defense world there are few more sought-after blessings than that of the deputy secretary of defense. And that's just what BENS received this month, when Deputy Secretary Gordon England praised our latest project to improve how the Pentagon spends defense dollars. Our ongoing evaluation – in partnership with the Defense Information Systems Agency – of the hidden costs of the cumbersome defense acquisition system “will be very informative, given the problems in this area,” England said in a February 13 letter to BENS President and CEO Chuck Boyd.

The project – led by BENS Vice President for Policy Paul Taibl – will recommend reforms to reduce the costs and delays created by a maze of acquisition laws and regulations affecting the Pentagon's purchase of information technology. Noting that the initiative “will highlight how the Department can acquire relevant cutting-edge information technology capabilities and services more effectively,” England urged BENS to brief senior Pentagon officials on its findings “as soon as possible” and “without waiting for completion of the final written report.”

As a nonpartisan, independent voice, BENS is uniquely positioned to critique federal acquisition laws as well as Congress, which creates them. So stay tuned in the coming months for the project's findings and recommendations, which may serve as the springboard for BENS to examine similar problems on a larger – even Pentagon-wide – scale.

BENS Works: Business Sense for National Security

On the Road, BENS-Style – It may not change your life, as Bob Dylan said of the famous Beat novel by Jack Kerouac, but if you live in the San Francisco area you won't want to miss out when BENS goes “On the Road” April 2-4. Vice Presidents for Policy Danielle Lindholm and Steven Naplan will brief members on some of our latest initiatives and new opportunities for member involvement. During two lunch sessions and several meetings, Danielle and Steven will also discuss cyber security and tracking threat financing, our ongoing engagements with the intelligence community and Special Operations and Strategic Commands, and potential BENS work on energy security. For more information or to attend a session, contact Kathy Denzer at (510) 238-0176 or kdenzer@bens.org.

Business Force News

Continuity Amid Calamity – Question: What do school closures have to do with business continuity? Answer: If it's during a pandemic flu outbreak, many of your employees – parents – will be home caring for their children. That was one of the lessons of a workshop on workforce strategies during public health emergencies organized by the BENS Georgia Business Force February 19 in Atlanta.

Featuring Gene Matthews of the North Carolina Institute of Public Health/UNC Chapel Hill – a nationally-recognized expert on how public health issues affect businesses – representatives from the public and private sector explored how to maintain operations during an outbreak. Business attendees – including Business Force members ChoicePoint, Cisco Systems, Coca-Cola, CSX Transportation, Deloitte and Touche, Southern Company/Georgia Power, and Wachovia Corp. – also stressed the need for clear government-business communication on what operations might need to be suspended during an outbreak, and why.

Event Highlights and BENS Developments

Defense Secretary Gates to Address BENS – We're pleased to announce that we have confirmed Secretary of Defense Robert Gates as the guest of honor for our May 15 Eisenhower Award Dinner in Washington, DC. A former director of the Central Intelligence Agency and president of Texas A&M University, Gates became the 22nd defense secretary in late 2006 and has been praised for his pragmatic management style and for strengthening relations between civilian and military leaders and between the executive and legislative branches. Prior to the 6:30 p.m. black-tie gala – to be held at Washington's JW Marriott Hotel – a full day of distinguished speakers will address BENS' 19th Annual Washington Forum on "The Nation's Security – 2009 and Beyond." Look for your formal invitation in early April, or contact Jennie Moonis for more details at (202) 296-2125 or jmoonis@bens.org.

"Resilient Nation" Needs "Culture of Preparedness" – Two very different speakers delivered the same message to recent BENS audiences in Atlanta: business and citizen preparedness is a vital – but often missing – element in securing the homeland. Citing the passengers of United Flight 93 – when citizens, not just government, responded to the terrorist attacks of September 11 – homeland security expert Dr. Steve Flynn told BENS members on January 17 that civic action is the linchpin of a "resilient nation" capable of responding to major disasters, whether natural or man-made. Similarly, Army Lt. Gen. Russel Honore – who led the military response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita – told BENS members on February 20 that the nation still has "a long way to go" to realize a true "culture of preparedness," one that must include readiness among the business community and American people.

Upcoming Events

- **Washington, DC – Lunch with Randall Larsen**, author of *Our Own Worst Enemy*, Mar. 6, 12 p.m., BENS HQ. Contact Steve Ewell at (202) 296-2125 or sewell@bens.org.
- **New York – Breakfast with Lt. Gen. William Caldwell**, Commanding General, Army Combined Arms Center and Ft. Leavenworth, Mar. 10, 8 a.m., Harvard Club. Contact Dan McSweeney at (202) 486-1522 or dmcsweeney@bens.org.
- **Atlanta – BENS/USO Volunteer Days** – Welcome Home the Troops at Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, Mar. 19, 7:30 a.m. Contact Allison Cheatham at (404) 220-1268 or acheatham@bens.org.
- **Dallas – Lunch with Al Sharif Bin Ali Bin al-Hussein**, member of the former Royal Family of Iraq, Mar. 20. Contact Matthew Elias at (214) 315-2576 or melias@bens.org.
- **San Francisco – Lunch discussion on "The Environment as a National Security Issue" with Dr. Richard Matthew**, Director, Center for Unconventional Security Affairs, UC Irvine, Mar. 26. Contact Kathy Denzer at (415) 690-6254 or kdenzer@bens.org.
- **Atlanta – Visit to U.S. Army Infantry Center and School, Ft. Benning**, Apr. 4. Contact Allison Cheatham at (404) 220-1268 or acheatham@bens.org.

- **Kansas City – National Security Awards Dinner**, Apr. 8, 6:30 p.m., Westin Crown Center. Contact William Lawson at (816) 842-1778 or wlawson@bens.org.
- **Washington, DC – Lauri Almann**, Permanent Undersecretary of Defence, Republic of Estonia, Apr. 24, 2 p.m., Washington Convention Center. Contact Steve Ewell at (202) 296-2125 or sewell@bens.org.
- **Washington, DC – BENS Eisenhower Award Dinner honoring Defense Secretary Robert Gates, and 19th Annual BENS Washington Forum**, May 15, JW Marriott Hotel. Contact Jennie Moonis at (202) 296-2125 or jmoonis@bens.org.
- **Atlanta – Lunch with Gen. Charles Campbell**, Commander, U.S. Army Forces Command, Jun. 4, 11:30 a.m.-1:30p.m. Contact Allison Cheatham at (404) 220-1268 or acheatham@bens.org.
- **Dallas – Lunch with former Rep. Charlie Wilson**, subject of the book and movie *Charlie Wilson's War*, Jun. 4. Contact Matthew Elias at (214) 315-2576 or melias@bens.org.