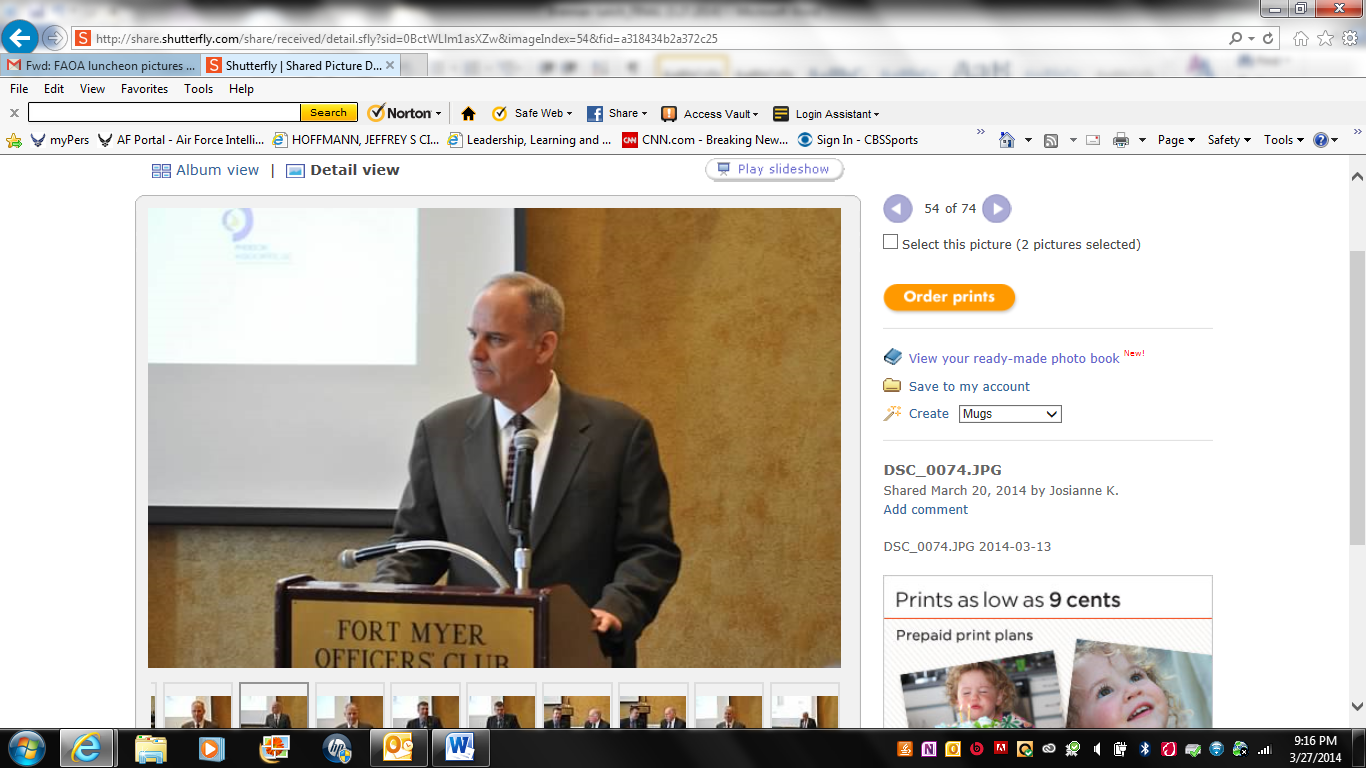
**FAO Association hosts CIA Director, John O. Brennan, at Distinguished Leader Luncheon**

Ms. Esther Kim, The Intelligence Community, LLC

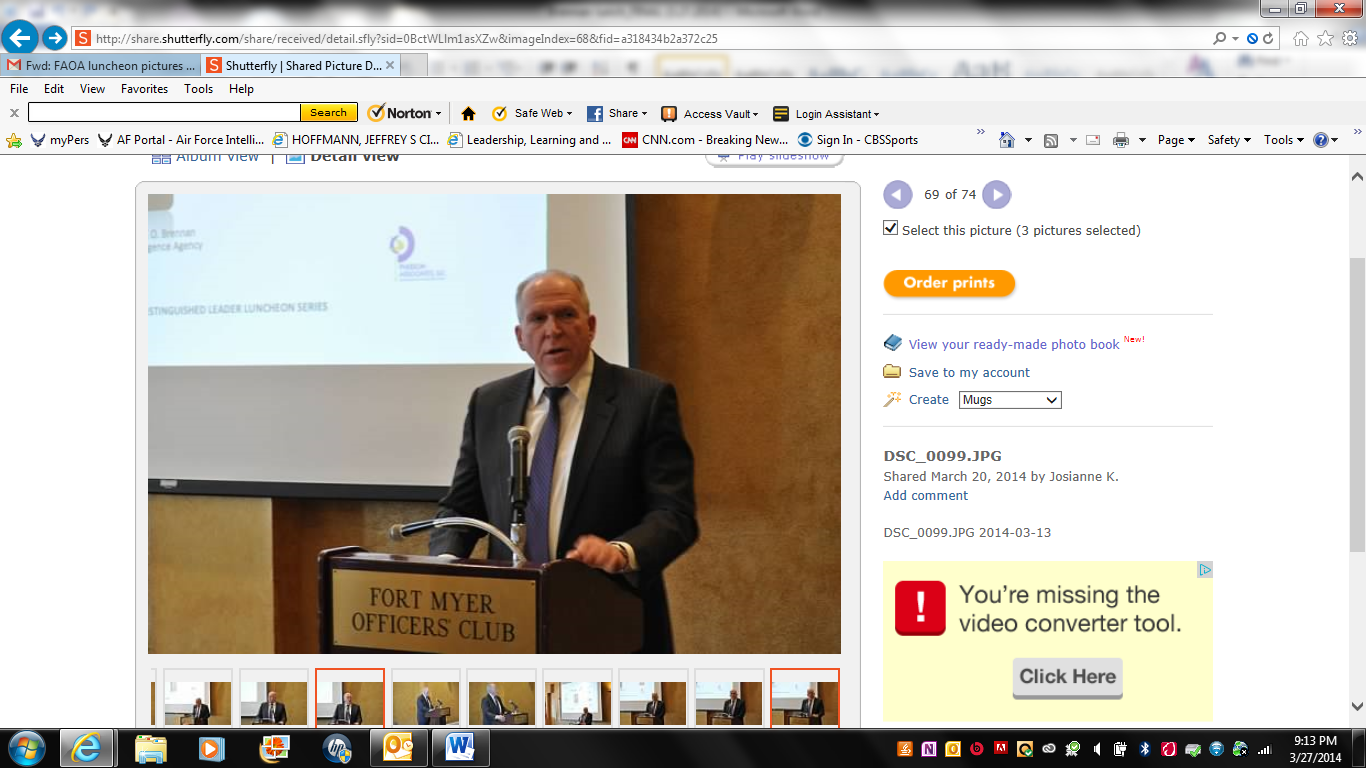
The Foreign Area Officer Association (FAOA) was privileged to host the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), John O. Brennan, at the Fort Myer Officer Club on March 13, 2014. Over 200 FAO members and supporters participated including active and retired military officers, government and private sector civilians, academia, and foreign partner defense attaché offices.



FAOA President, Kurt M. Marisa, USAF Colonel (Ret.) provided welcome remarks and then introduced the opening speaker, Mr. William “Bill” Clark, Chief of the Defense Attaché Service (DAS). Bill highlighted several important functions of the Defense Attachés (DATT), many of whom are FAOs, around the world including their diplomatic skills, ability to forge bilateral partner relationships to support security cooperation, and function as advisors to the embassy Country Teams led by the U.S. Ambassadors.

Bill was pleased to announce that in September, the DAS will place its 140th Defense Attaché Office (DAO) position in Afghanistan-- up from 100 DAOs in recent years. He also emphasized that the number of General Officer (GO) DATT positions has increased to 10, highlighting posts in Israel and India.

Bill concluded with a brief overview of the new Regional Intelligence Centers (RICs) standing up at the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA). He encouraged much more integration and investment in collector/analyst initiatives, which he stated leads to, “*teaming without seaming – that generates faster and better results.*”



http://cdn0.staticsfly.com/img_/search/transparent-v118399849400043.gifAs a transition to Director Brennan’s keynote presentation, FAOs were highlighted as national treasures and the DAS needs more of them.

Director Brennan began his remarks by mentioning the high regard and appreciation he has for Foreign Area Officers and military attachés as the key reason he insisted on supporting this event. He then referred to one of his CIA predecessors and former Secretary of Defense Bob Gates, who advocated for more fusion and integration at all levels between the CIA and DoD-- tactical to strategic. Collaboration, and sharing and leveraging of all resources, is a "force multiplier" that is especially needed in the face of more diverse and complex threats than ever before.   Brennan used the example of the Defense Clandestine Service (DCS) stating, *“contrary to what you see in the press reports, the DCS is complementary to our activities and needs at CIA.”*

Brennan said that those select and few DoD HUMINT assets continue to produce high level information and reporting critical to national security. He emphasized that this will be even more important in future years as budget constraints will require tough choices. Particularly since the U.S. faces such a diverse group of threats in a post-9/11 world, it is absolutely imperative that the Intelligence Community become even more efficient and reduce redundancies.

Some of these missions are not new, including Brennan’s belief the war on terrorism will not end after a drawdown in Afghanistan. He highlighted the importance of DoD contributions to this continued fight. In addition to counterterrorism, which was Director Brennan’s portfolio at the White House before he became CIA Director, he highlighted cyber and how the “digital domain” has become a new venue for criminal networks.

Brennan also discussed “hotspots” in the world including Syria, which he stated, “*has been unlike any other conflict in his career*,” highlighting the multiple dynamics ranging from high level state actor issues to WMD proliferation and terrorist network insurgencies leading to the most complex situation for decision making and action.

Director Brennan also highlighted the high value of the Defense Attaché Service to the intelligence and foreign policy communities, highlighting the complimentary and value of the DAS and the unique access and insights gained by these diplomats in uniform. He concluded his remarks by acknowledging all of the men and women serving at the CIA and he stated, “*leading CIA is the privilege of a lifetime*.” He also provided similar complimentary remarks about the FAO community, “*FAOs understand the richness of what’s going on in their regional areas and their insight and feedback is of high value to U.S. policymakers.*”

The event concluded with a brief Q&A session including a question related to climate change and past and current efforts underway that are addressing global warming as a national security interest area.

The FAOA would also like to thank the following companies and organizations for sponsoring this event: American Military University (AMU), Leidos, Bizzell Corporation, Pherson Associates, Metis Solutions, Culmen International, Peduzzi Associates, and The Intelligence Community LLC.

*Content for this article was approved by both CIA and DIA Public Affairs.*

