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IFE/INFO hosts Panel discussion: “Beyond Boston: The Future of Global Security and Intelligence”

Over Memorial Day weekend, over 3,000 runners in this year’s Boston Marathon who were unable to finish their race due to the bombings in April completed their journey in a one-mile run organized by the city. The event demonstrated, once again, American resilience in the aftermath of terrorism and provided a perfect prelude to IFE’s latest INFO Global Connections Series Roundtable. On May 28, IFE hosted His Excellency Sergey I. Kislyak, Russian Ambassador to the U.S.; General Michael Hayden, former director of the CIA and NSA; and Ambassador John Negroponte, former Director of National Intelligence, at the Federal City Council to discuss how the U.S. national security landscape has changed in the wake of the Boston Marathon bombings.

Coach Kemper opened the forum by recognizing the State Department’s Ben Beach, awarding him IFE’s Athletic Achievement medal. Beach is an extraordinary athlete who has run the Boston Marathon no less than 45 consecutive times; he was also one of 5,000 runners who was unable to complete the marathon in April because of the bombings that claimed three victims and injured over 200. Beach plans to run in his 47th Boston Marathon next year.

Kemper then moved on to IFE buzz, recognizing IFE Fellow Ali Wyne for his accomplishment as a first-time book co-author. In February, MIT Press published *Lee Kuan Yew: The Grandmaster’s Insights on China, the United States, and the World*, which Wyne co-authored with Graham Allison, the Director of the Belfer Center for Science and International Affairs at Harvard, and Robert Blackwill, the former U.S. Ambassador to India. The book has sold 25,000 copies and been recognized as one of the most authoritative reads on the Singaporean statesman.



The Honorable Mayor Anthony Williams opened the forum proper by reflecting on his experience as mayor of Washington, DC on 9/11. Mayor Williams distinguished between emotional leadership and organizational leadership in the wake of disaster. In the days immediately after 9/11, following emergency response procedures was straightforward enough. The mayor and his senior staff collaborated with the federal government and arranged for foreign dignitaries stranded in Washington to take shelter at an Emergency Command Center. But there was no playbook for helping people feel safe again. Even so, the mayor noted, “There are no excuses. Even if you are not good with people or a people person, there are times when you have to act out of character.”

General Hayden pointed out that the Boston Marathon bombings were “a tragedy, but not a catastrophe.” The incident was representative of the nature of post-9/11 terrorism insofar as casualties were limited and the operation itself was not particularly sophisticated. The security measures that were implemented after 9/11 have by and large been successful—disrupting major terrorist plots and eliminating much of Al Qaeda’s top leadership. But the very success of those measures, General Hayden noted, means that terrorist incidents are assuming a different form. Smaller operations are now the norm and may well become more frequent because they are easier to organize—a development that Ambassador Negroponte compared to cancer “metastasis”.

The panelists agreed that most Americans would not be willing to accept the trade-off between security and freedom that would be needed to completely eliminate the possibility of terrorism. General Hayden and Ambassador Negroponte pointed out that a bombing like the one that disrupted the Boston Marathon probably would not have occurred in New York because the city’s police department is much more aggressive. But it is unlikely that the country as a whole would be willing to accept the controversial measures New York has relied on.



Greater bilateral cooperation can help increase the effectiveness of security measures that are already in place. Ambassador Kislyak pointed to the need for greater intelligence-sharing and closer collaboration between his country and local U.S. law enforcement. Terrorism is a problem that both Russia and the U.S. face, though incidents in Russia are not frequently reported in the western press.

General Hayden emphasized the importance of fighting the long war against terrorism: “We won’t win the war at the near fight [attempting to stop terrorists and would-be terrorists whose views have already hardened].” The best path forward, he asserted, may not be even more draconian security measures, but simply a combination of American vigilance (“See something, say something”) and British hardiness (“Keep calm and carry on”). Ambassador Negroponte added, “Don’t let the turkeys get you down.”

Members of the diplomatic community were also present, including H.E. Jose Cuisia of the Embassy of the Philippines, IFE Diplomatic Steward H.E. Jan Matthysen of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Belgium, H.E. Elena Poptodorova of the Embassy of Bulgaria, H.E. Manuel Sager and Christine Sager of the Embassy of Switzerland, H.E. Wegger Chr. Strommen and Rev. Dr. Cecilie Strommen of the Embassy of Norway, and H.E. Kairat Umarov of the Embassy of Kazakhstan.

Other distinguished members of the audience included IFE Stewards Chris Caine, John P. Farmer, and Marci Robinson.

Forum attendees included distinguished members of the media and diplomatic community as well as long-time IFE supporters. Media representatives included CNN’s Jill Dougherty and Molly Jay, Al Jazeera’s Abderrahim Foukara, Associated Press’s Kimberly Dozier, CBS’s Henry Schuster, NPR’s Greg Myre, *The National Journal’s* Michael Hirsch, *The Wall Street Journal’s* Jerry Seib, *TIME Magazine’s* Jay Newton-Small, Reuters’ Lesley Wroughton, *The Hill’s* Jordy Yager, *The Washington Post’s* Juliet Eilperin, and *Washington Life’s* John Arundel.

Written by IFE Fellow Zaahira Wyne

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