



World Affairs Council of Orange County

# Orange County Globe

Summer 2017

*Orange County's Premier Forum on World Affairs since 1967*

## Chairman's Message 2017– Serge Tomassian

Dear Members & Friends of the World Affairs Council of Orange County:

It has been a great and exciting year for our Council. As Chairman this past year it has been a pleasure to serve and lead our Council. Along with our Director of Operations Madeena Rafiq and an engaged Executive Board, our Council has reestablished itself as the premier venue for world affairs both in Orange County and for the Southern California community. We have been able to establish key relationships with community organizations and leaders who also share our Council's mission and goals. We are financially strong with a growing and energized membership base. Our active and engaged Executive Board has provided key leadership and support for our Council.

My primary goal as Chairman has been to make our Council relevant to its members and our community by serving its mission of informing and engaging the community on the critical issues in world affairs. For the Executive Board I have endeavored to encourage team work, selfless leadership along with recognition and appreciation of our members and Council Supporters.

Our programs this year have been simply outstanding. Ambassadors Dennis Ross, Robert Ford, Christopher Hill addressed topical issues including US policy in the Middle East and Korea. Congressional leaders Ed Royce, Adam Schiff and US Senator Lindsay Graham gave us great insight on matters involving America's foreign policy, national intelligence and issues of domestic debate. Former Director of the CIA and NSA General Michael Hayden visited our Council and provided us with an in depth analysis on US policy for domestic intelligence. Prince Turki gave us an interesting Saudi view on the source of tensions and the competing interests in the Middle East. The News headlines of President Trump's election, the wars in Syria and Iraq, the crisis in Korea and Qatar, the EU, immigration, Russia, Iran, Reform within Islam, the new administration's foreign policy, US intelligence and international terrorism were some of the many topical issues addressed by our Council this year.

I will continue my work with the World Affairs Councils of America based in Washington DC, while serving on the National Board of Directors and my newly elected position as Corporate Secretary of the Executive Board. In that capacity on the national level I hope to continue to serve and assist our local Council. I'm optimistic and looking forward to another successful year with the new Board and Chairman Elect Jim Gray.

As a final thought, during my years with the Council going back to 1987, when I joined as a young attorney, I have made many warm friendships which I value. Sir Eldon was one of them, as well as a mentor. Our Council has always maintained the highest standards for collegiality and civility when discussing and debating critical yet controversial issues. While we may disagree on matters and sometimes passionately so, yet we remain as colleagues and friends at the end of the day. This civil dialogue must continue with the Council. We have a diverse membership, but like this great nation, we are inclusive and welcoming and for that we remain a strong and vibrant organization. We are Americans loyal and committed to our Country and entrusted with the mission in educating and engaging our community on world affairs. God Bless the USA and the values for which this great nation stands. I want to thank you for your support and engagement this past year.

My best regards, **Serge Tomassian, Chairman, WACOC**



Serge Tomassian with General Michael Hayden, Fmr. Director of CIA & NSA

## Congratulations to our 2017 Golden Orange Recipients!



**Ms. Nora Valenzuela -**  
**Membership Committee Co-Chair**



**Mr. Errol Mathieu -**  
**Treasurer**



## Member Highlight



Dr. Garo and Sylvie Tertzakian, have been long-standing WACOC members. Recently, Dr. Tertzakian was the recipient of two prestigious national awards. On May 13, 2017, he was awarded the prestigious **Ellis Island Medal of Honor** during an auspicious ceremony held on Ellis Island, New York. Three days later, on May 16, 2017, he was honored with the coveted **Presidential Citation of the American Urological Association** in Boston, during the annual congress of the association.



Both awards were granted in recognition of Dr. Tertzakian’s social, professional and humanitarian contributions both in Orange County and internationally. Since their arrival in Orange County in 1975, the Tertzakians have been active community members supporting and actively participating in worthy social, community and academic projects.

Since 1987, Dr. Tertzakian has traveled annually to his ancestral homeland of Armenia on humanitarian outreach visits to modernize the practice of Urology in the ex-Soviet republic. He has helped transform Armenian Urology into one of the most advanced and respected surgical specialties in the country by inculcating the tenets and high standards of American Urology in a new generation of Armenian urologists. In 2012, also in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the advancement of health care in Armenia, Dr. Tertzakian was awarded the “Mekhitar Heratsi” Presidential Medal of Honor from President Serge Sargsyan of the Republic of Armenia.

## Member Trip Highlight with Hal Smith Jr.



Mr. Hal Smith Jr. is a long standing member and trustee of WACOC. In May, Mr. Smith went to Northern Ireland with the Olive Tree Initiative, OTI, an organization started about ten years ago as a result of confrontations between pro-Palestine and pro- Israel students at UCI in Irvine. Dr. Daniel Wehrenfennig, one of the founders had done his doctoral research on comparing the “Troubles” in Northern Ireland with the Israel-Palestine problem.



The group flew into London and met with the Pears Foundation. Lord Alderdice, formerly head of the Alliance party and speaker of the Northern Ireland Assembly gave an excellent talk. He was very active in negotiating the peace accords with the IRA. He gave us a very good feel of the problems that led to the “troubles” and the difficulties in reaching a resolution. Then, they went by

train to University of Glasgow to visit our international chapter of OTI.

The group also had a panel with an ex-IRA gunman, an ex-Orange Order gunman, both had spent over a decade in prison before being released as part of the Peace Agreement. The third was a policeman whose job had been to lock them up. The panel gave some hope of reconciliation being possible. Afterwards, they spent time with educators learning about the difficulties of desegregating the school system and the next day, they visited Derry/Londonderry, the site of “Bloody Sunday.”

They visited Queens University Belfast and had dinner with the Irish Joint Secretary of the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference, Ruairi de Burca, at his residence. He is essentially similar to an Ambassador from Ireland to Belfast.

Lastly, they flew to Dublin and met with various members of the Irish government and had lunch with some of them at Leinster House/Dail (Parliament). Before flying back home, they visited Maynooth University and observed a workshop at the Edward M. Kennedy Institute for Conflict Intervention.

## Welcome New Council Members April—July ‘17

**Ruth Ann Moriarty—  
Ambassador’s Circle Member**

Greater Irvine Chamber of  
Commerce

Dianne Weston

Elizabeth Edwards

Phyllis Clark

Huda Aljord

Dr. Erkan Ereren

Avinder Chawla

Peggie Fariss

Yumiko Blaschko

Lorelei Tanji

Dr. Naved Moravej

Susan Shahidi

Gila Willner

Philip Hummel

Dr. Howard & Mrs. Barby Schwid

Huihua Zhu