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BlackNET: Rory O'Connor - The War Over Information Warfare

Written by [NavySEALs.com/BlackNET - MediaChannel.org](#)

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A bi-partisan effort to hide stunning intelligence failures spanning more than fifteen years and three presidential administrations may explain the puzzling refusal by current Department of Defense officials to allow testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee concerning the controversial Able Danger "information warfare" program. Able Danger analysts say they identified Mohammed Atta and other 9/11 hijackers a year before the worst terrorist attack ever on American soil.

DOD's repeated refusals to cooperate have stymied efforts by the Republican-dominated committee, led by Senator Arlen Specter, to get to the bottom of the affair, and infuriated other Republicans pushing the probe, such as Rep. Curt Weldon -- like Specter a Republican stalwart from Pennsylvania.


In a recent interview, Weldon bluntly denounced the DOD intransigence. "At a minimum, this is a case of gross incompetence," said the conservative Congressman. "At maximum, it's a cover up bigger than Watergate."

"And this doesn't concern some third-rate burglary," Weldon added. "It's about the biggest attack against this country in history, one that killed nearly three thousand people!"

Politicians, analysts, journalists and bloggers on both the left and the right are dumbfounded, and have been speculating for weeks as to why the current Bush Administration is taking such a hard line on the testimony Specter wants to hear before his committee.


"Why is the Pentagon taking this position? That's the \$64,000 question," says Weldon. "The explanation appears to be a case of ass-covering for bureaucrats within the DIA who will be embarrassed when the truth comes out."

Another explanation, however, may lie within the 9/11 Commission charged with investigating the attacks and the intelligence breakdown that led to them. Whistleblower Lt. Col. Anthony Shaffer and other Able Danger participants say they took their information to Commission staffers, but that the Commissioners themselves may never have been told about the program or its identification of Atta as a member of an Al Qaeda "Brooklyn cell." Commission head Thomas Kean -- another Republican -- subsequently termed the Able Danger program "historically insignificant."




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Lt. Col. Shaffer and others -- investigative reporter Peter Lance among them -- believe documents and testimony they provided to Commission staffers suggest that the origin of the 9/11 plot was earlier than the 1996 time line the Commission's final report fixed.

Lance, an award-winning former ABC News producer and correspondent, provided details in his best-selling books "1000 Years for Revenge" and "Cover Up: What the Government is Still Hiding about the War on Terror." The books, as well as documents archived on Lance's web site (peterlance.com), describe what he calls "the greatest intelligence failure since the Trojan Horse," and tell a story of how the FBI missed numerous opportunities to prevent the 9/11 attacks -- dating as far back as the administration of George Herbert Walker Bush, continuing through the Clinton years, and culminating with the current administration.

Lance's thesis, which is shared by others, is that the 9/11 plot was in motion at least as early as 1994, that it was directly connected to the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center, and that the intelligence fiascoes leading up to both attacks date back as early as 1989. (Details and supporting evidence are available on his website peterlance.com as well as on the Center for Cooperative Research.org site: http://www.cooperativeresearch.org/timeline.jsp?timeline=complete_911_timeline)

"The origin of the plot is the key to the 9/11 Commission investigation," says Lance. "I believe the Commission fix was in, however, and that a decision and a deal was made to limit the damage across three administrations to avoid blame and obscure accountability for massive intelligence failures. The plot was launched in 1996 -- but it certainly was in place by 1994, and may well have begun as early as 1989. The 9/11 Commission is looking more and more like the Warren Commission of our time—an official body that purposely limited the scope of its investigation, cherry-picked evidence, and allowed political considerations on the left and the right to influence its final conclusions."

Meanwhile, the ongoing information war between the White House and Congress over Able Danger continues unabated. Recent revelations in the New York Times

<http://select.nytimes.com/mem/tnt.html?emc=tnt&tntget=2005/10/01/politics/01able.html&tntemail0=y> over what National Security Adviser Stephen Hadley knew, and when he knew it, coupled with an Associated Press account of a Pentagon smear job against Lt. Col. Shaffer, have kept the spotlight on the mysterious affair. http://customwire.ap.org/dynamic/stories/S/SEPT_11_HIJACKERS?SITE=CASDT&SECTION=HOME

The 9/11 Commissioners and staff have consistently dismissed the Able Danger claims, as has the Bush Administration. But Rep. Weldon's account of a White House meeting with Hadley (then deputy to National Security Advisor Condi Rice) two weeks after the attacks -- when Weldon says he gave Hadley a chart that showed information collected by Able Danger about Al Qaeda before the attacks -- has now been confirmed by another House Republican, Dan Burton of Indiana.

Weldon believes both the Clinton and Bush administrations and the 9/11 Commission should have paid more attention to Able Danger, which identified Atta and other future hijackers as potential threats by the fall of 2000. But 9/11 Commissioners (such as former Senator Slade Gorton, who defended the commission's decision not to mention Able Danger in its report in a letter to Congress last week) have questioned Weldon's account. Until recently, Hadley said he did not remember seeing the chart described by Weldon. Now, faced with Burton's confirmation, Hadley recalls "receiving a briefing" and "being shown a chart."

Weldon, who says "Colleagues in both parties are cheering us on," is pleased at Hadley's suddenly improved memory, but still upset at DOD's attempts to muzzle Able Danger whistleblowers -- particularly the effort to smear Lt. Col. Shaffer.

Shaffer, one of five witnesses the Pentagon ordered not to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee Sept. 21, has essentially been gagged. His attorneys have been told he cannot speak to anyone about Able Danger until further notice -- not to inquiring journalists, and certainly not in public before Senator Specter's committee. And as detailed in the Associated Press article, his superiors at the Defense Intelligence Agency also revoked his security clearance on spurious grounds and tried to ruin his reputation, spending an estimated \$400,000 trying to prove that he improperly asked to be reimbursed for \$67.79 in telephone charges, falsely claimed \$341.80 in mileage and tolls, and so on.

"To blame patriotic, uniformed personnel who are trying to do their duty and honor and respect this country is outrageous!" Weldon said. "I am NOT going to have their careers ruined, their character attacked, and their lives turned upside down by intimidation and threats simply for trying to tell their story."

Will the explosive allegations lurking just below the Able Danger controversy ever be examined openly? Senator Specter is still hopeful that open hearings -- originally rescheduled for this week, then postponed indefinitely -- will take place soon. "We're still negotiating with DOD and are confident that we'll come to an agreement," says Blain Rethmeier, Sen. Specter's Committee spokesman. But DOD spokesman Bryan Whitman's last pronouncement on the subject indicated that the Pentagon was not budging from its censorship. And Lt. Col. Shaffer's attorneys say the Pentagon remains adamant that their client is not to speak to anyone until further notice.

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