

Cong. Curt Weldon on Lou Dobbs 11.9.05 re: Dietrich Snell

LOU DOBBS TONIGHT

Terror in Jordan; Republicans Lose Big In Off Year Elections

Aired November 9, 2005 - 18:00 ET

DOBBS: New charges tonight -- charges of a massive cover-up by members of our defense intelligence community. Congressman Curt Weldon today called for a criminal investigation into what he says is the most important story of our lifetime. Weldon says the Army's intelligence unit known as Able Danger, identified the ringleaders of the 9/11 attacks more than a year before September 11, but those warnings were ignored by the Pentagon.

Weldon says the Defense Intelligence Agency is now trying to smear the reputation of Able Danger member Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Shaffer, for speaking out about the scandal. In addition to identifying the ringleaders of the 9/11 attacks, Congressman Weldon says Able Danger warned Defense officials about terrorist activity in the Port of Aden in Yemen, two weeks before that bombing of the U.S. the bombs of the U.S.S. Cole in 2000.

He also blasted the 9/11 Commission, calling them a disappointment and a failure for not including that information about Able Danger in its final report. I talked with 9/11 Commission member and former Senator Slade Gorton three weeks ago. And I asked him why Able Danger was omitted from the commission's report.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

SLADE GORTON, FORMER 9/11 COMMISSIONER: Well, Able Danger worked out very interesting. It didn't identify Mohammed Atta a year beforehand. Unfortunately, no one identified Mohammed Atta beforehand. Able Danger was simply irrelevant to our report and still is.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

DOBBS: Congressman Weldon now joining me from Washington, in an exclusive interview. Congressman, it is good to see you. Simply irrelevant how Slade Gorton describes Able Danger. What's your reaction?

REP. CURT WELDON (R-PA), ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE: Unbelievable. Slade Gorton has never talked to any principle involved with Able Danger. And how he can go off and profess to know something about something that he's never talked to anyone about, is beyond me.

Slade Gorton is into what the 9/11 Commission is doing, Lou. It's called C-Y-A - cover their butts, pretend it didn't happen. How can you say something is historically insignificant that Louis Freeh just two weeks ago on national TV said Able Danger information was the kind of intelligence that could have prevented the hijackings? That's Louis Freeh saying that two weeks ago.

Able Danger was briefed to the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in January of 2001. How could you call that historically insignificant? Lou, this is a cover-up. It's not a third-rate political burglary. It's a cover-up of information on the largest attack in the history of the country.

DOBBS: Congressman, you are calling for a criminal investigation. Obviously, you're not going to receive a great deal of cooperation from the leadership, the Republican leadership in the House or the Senate. You're a Republican.

What kind of reaction are you getting as you go one on one with your fellow Congressman?

WELDON: Lou, the members of Congress want the facts to come out, both parties. I did a briefing this afternoon for members of Congress. We had dozens of their members and their staff show up. And just within two hours Lou, today, I got 100 signatures -- 100 signatures from Republicans and Democrats across the country. Liberals and conservatives to Secretary Rumsfeld demanding that we allow these Able Danger military officers to testify in an open hearing.

The American people need to know the facts. They need to know the truth. Three thousand people were killed, 17 sailors were killed in the U.S.S Cole. The 9/11 Commission did not do its job. It's time to get the facts out to the American people.

DOBBS: Let me quote Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Congressman. When asked about Able Danger, Donald Rumsfeld said -- quote -- "it's such an interesting story. Of course, it's something that occurred well before this administration came in. Back in the '90s, as I understand it, and it's an interesting story". What's your response?

WELDON: Well, Donald Rumsfeld would not have been given the detailed information about Able Danger because it ended at the end of 2000, before he came into office. However, Lou, we have to understand, there were people within the Pentagon who stayed in place from the 1999/2000 period into 2001. In fact, they're still there today. They have a vested interest in not having the story be told because some of them are going to be embarrassed because the American people will see we failed them in 1999 and 2000.

We failed them in 2001. We had information we should have acted upon. It was denied from being transferred to the FBI, and as Louis Freeh said just two weeks ago, could have allowed us to stop the hijackings from having ever occurred.

DOBBS: Louis Freeh, the former FBI director. At this point, Congressman, where does the investigation go from here? The people that are most critical to establishing what the unit, Able Danger knew, and was capable of disseminating relevant to 9/11, have been gagged by the Pentagon and cannot speak. What do you do now?

WELDON: Well, we have a DOD, inspector general investigation that actually commenced today. I met for an hour and a half with four of their top leaders. They were requested by three separate members of Congress, one senator and two House members. They have commenced an internal investigation of the Defense Intelligence Agency. In addition to that, I talked to the head of the General Accounting Office and I have asked him to look at a criminal investigation of what happened, and a deliberate attempt to cover-up information.

The person who debriefed Scott Philpott, Lou, was a guy named Dieter Snell. Dieter Snell worked for Jamie Gorelick. We have to know whether or not there was a deliberate attempt by Dieter Snell not to have the 9/11 Commission members know the full details of what Able Danger was doing. I can't answer that question. An investigation needs to take place.

DOBBS: And Scott Philpott, of course, one of those who has been gagged by the Pentagon in this case. Congressman Curt Weldon, we thank you very much.

WELDON: My pleasure, Lou.

DOBBS: When we continue here, we'll have the very latest for you on the terrorist attacks in Jordan. And then, why the results of Election Day 2005 have left President Bush and the Republican Party with a difficult challenge. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)