



LOU DOBBS TONIGHT

Security and Iraq's Historic Election; President Bush Delivers Fourth Speech on Strategy for Victory in Iraq; Patriot Act Battle Rages; A California Statute Offers In-State Tuition to Illegal Immigrants; Able Danger developments.

Aired December 14, 2005 - 18:00 ET

DOBBS: Just ahead, untangling the mystery of Able Danger. Emmy Award winning journalist Peter Lance joins me. We'll be discussing what the U.S. Government may have known before the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Stay with us.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

DOBBS: It appears now that the American public may soon be hearing explosive testimony about U.S. intelligence failures leading up to the 9/11 terrorist attacks. Congressman Curt Weldon announced on this broadcast Monday evening that the Pentagon is now set to approve open Able Danger hearings on Capitol Hill.

REP. CURT WELDON, (R) PENNSYLVANIA: This will be a full hearing, and finally the American people will get to hear what the 9/11 commission didn't pursue, and that is information about what happened before the attacks on September 11.

DOBBS: All this comes following an admission by former Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman General Hugh Shelton that he approved the Able Danger project four years before 9/11.

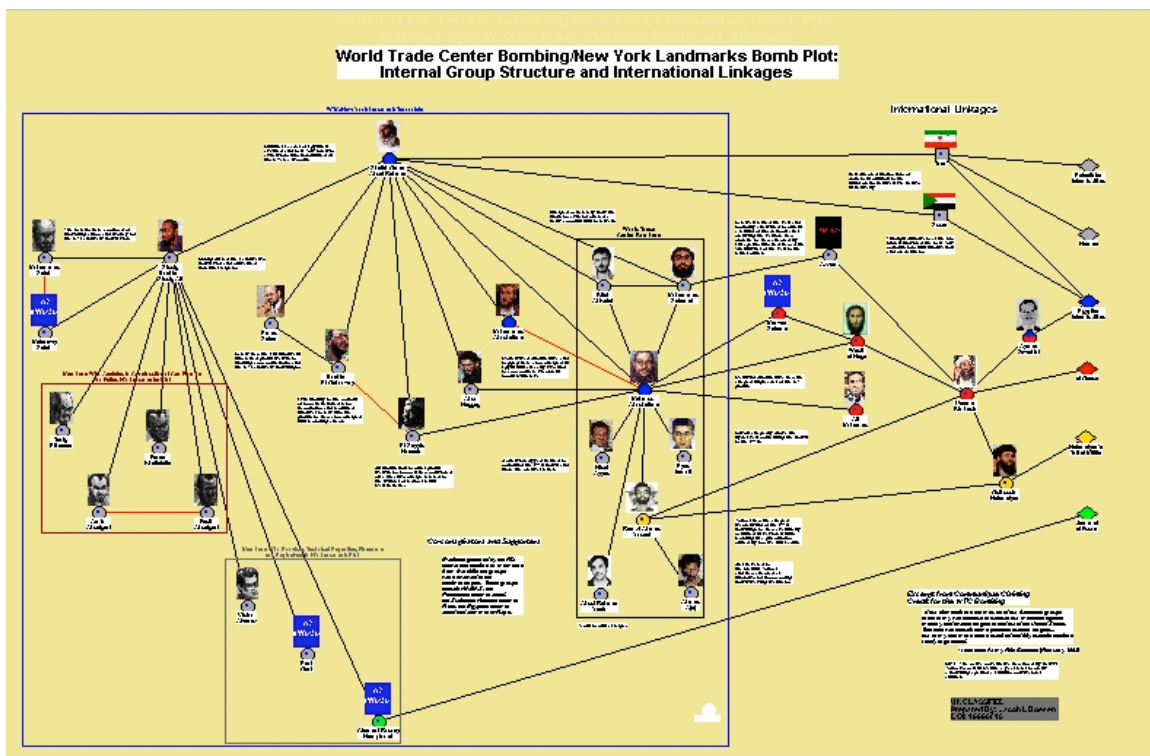
Joining me now, Emmy-award-winning investigative journalist Peter Lance, who is now writing a book on U.S. intelligence failures. Peter, first, good to have you here. What is the significance, in your judgment, of General Shelton's comments acknowledging the creation of Able Danger?

PETER LANCE, INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALIST: It's very significant, Lou. How many projects does the chairman of the Joint Chiefs get together on with the head of SOCOM, the Special Operations Command, and actually ask for an operation to be created. It's very significant.

And now we know that the Defense Intelligence Agency, as early as August of '99 -- several months before Able Danger was initiated -- had in their files intelligence linking blind Sheikh Rahman to other al Qaeda groups.

So, this is a year after the African embassy bombings, the original cell that did the World Trade Center bombing in New York, the DIA finds out that they're linked to other al Qaeda cells. No wonder the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the head of SOCOM wanted this.

DOBBS: Peter, we're looking at a chart on the air, if we could put that back. Give us the significance of this chart, because so much about charts and Able Danger has come up in the discussion, particularly with the former members of the 9/11 Commission and Able Danger.



LANCE: Lou, this chart was built by a gentleman named Jacob L. Boesen. He was a contract employee, working for the Defense Intelligence Analysis Center at Bolling Air Force Base. DIAC is the analytical heart of the DIA; they call it the Death Star. It's dated August 10th, 1999.

This is a year after the African embassy bombing, and the fact that the DIA had evidence linking Ramzi Yousef, the original World Trade Center bomber and the blind Sheikh directly to al Qaeda and bin Laden is hugely significant.

By the way, this runs counter to the conclusion of the 9/11 Commission -- people like Dietrich Snell -- and it's why I believe Snell and company decided to flush the Able Danger intelligence when they were briefed on it.

DOBBS: And you have -- in reviewing some of the documentation -- in particular an executive memorandum in 1982, signed by, obviously, President Reagan, that in your judgment, at least, and frankly in my reading of it, suggests that it is -- if you will, an opportunity for our intelligence agencies to share information, rather than destroy it.

EO 12333: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/information/eo12333.html>

LANCE: Exactly. That executive order, EO12333, was the order cited by (William) Dugan, Asst. Sec. of Defense as the reason for destroying the data at the hearings that Senator (Arlen) Specter (R-PA) ran in September.

Specter Hearing 9.21.05:

<http://cspan.org/Search/basic.asp?ResultStart=1&ResultCount=10&BasicQueryText=Able+Danger>

LANCE: And also it was the reason given that Lt. Col. Tony Shaffer was prevented three times from meeting with the FBI to talk about Able Danger. Now, Jeffrey Toobin may be the man that should come in on this, but as a graduate of Fordham Law School, I read that order as you do.

There are massive exceptions, under EO 12333 Lou. It prohibits the maintenance of information on "U.S. Persons" for civil liberties reasons, but there is an exception for terrorism, Lou, there is an exception if it's public open source material -- which most of the Able Danger material was. And it permits agencies like DIA to meet with the FBI to share the information.

DOBBS: Peter Lance, we thank you for being here and you and Jeffrey Toobin certainly have the background to make that analysis. Occasionally, I lose myself and think that I can simply take legal documents and assume they mean what they say. So I will defer to both and you Mr. Toobin. As always, Peter, good to have you here, look forward to talking to you soon, as we follow this unfolding controversy.

LANCE: Thanks, Lou.

DOBBS: Thanks.