



LOU DOBBS TONIGHT

Former 9/11 Commissioners Say U.S. Is Not Safe; Able Danger Scandal Developments; Accusations of Cronyism, Profiteering in Defense Industry.

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LOU DOBBS, CNN ANCHOR: Good evening, everybody.

Tonight, scathing criticism of this country's defenses against radical Islamist terrorists.

(commercial break)

(VIDEO CLIP) TOM KEAN, FMR. 9/11 COMMISSION CHAIRMAN:

We saw every file. The Pentagon denies it. They say they haven't gotten the information.

UNIDENTIFIED MALE: The White House?

KEAN: The White House denies it. Nobody brought the congressional -- investigating any information, nobody gave any information to the 9/11 Commission to back this up. If this is true in any way, it's a monstrous conspiracy, and I haven't seen any evidence to back it up.

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DOBBS: Meanwhile, it has been 17 days since Congressman Curt Weldon and more than half of the members of the U.S. House of Representatives sent their Able Danger letter to Defense Secretary Rumsfeld.

They're demanding the Pentagon give Able Danger officials permission to testify before Congress. The secretary of defense has not responded. Able Danger Army intelligence officials said they identified 9/11 mastermind Mohammed Atta and other 9/11 radical Islamist terrorists more than a year before 9/11, and they say the Pentagon prevented them from sharing the information with the FBI.

Joining me tonight to discuss the latest Able Danger developments is Peter Lance. He is the author of the book *Cover Up: What the Government is Hiding About the War on Terror*. He has also testified before the 9/11 Commission.

Good to have you here. You said the Able Danger controversy is the last best hope for an honest, open reinvestigation of September 11. Why?

PETER LANCE, AUTHOR, "COVER UP": It's like a six-foot pry bar, Lou. It's the first time people on the political right, like Ollie North, are agreeing that the 9/11 Commission was essentially -- a whitewash -- joined by the Jersey Girls, the widows who campaigned for John Kerry.

The truth is that there was a cover-up with the 9/11 Commission. They moved the origin of the 9/11 plot forward several years. Now, that's the most important question.

DOBBS: To 1996?

LANCE: 1996 from 1994. And what the Able Danger information does is corroborate that. In fact, according to Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Shaffer and Capt. Scott Phillpot, who ran the operation, there was a direct relationship between al Qaeda and the Brooklyn cell of Ramzi Yousef and Sheikh Omar Abdel Rahman.

In both of my books, I've proven, that the World Trade Center bombing conspiracy was directly funded by al Qaeda, and that Yousef himself was the architect of the second attack, the 9/11 plot, which was carried out by his uncle (KSM).

So, in pushing the plot forward two years, (9/11 Commission) investigators like Dietrich Snell, who himself should have been a witness before the commission, what they did was they distorted the truth behind when the plot started.

Therefore, if you don't know when it starts, you can't hold accountable the intelligence agencies for failing to stop it.

DOBBS: You can't hold them accountable, but you can't also hold what would be effectively the Bush administration, Bush One, the Clinton administration, and the current Bush presidency accountable either, can you?

LANCE: No, exactly. I had a source inside the commission. I met with him every single week, Lou, from -- from the fall of '03 into the spring of '04. He told me they were cherry-picking evidence on both sides of the aisle. They had agreed -- and these are Democrats and Republicans -- prior to going forward with the commission -- they agreed to limit the investigation to the last few years, from '96 forward.

Whereas I've shown in my two books that the FBI's New York office, the bin Laden office of origin, had the al Qaeda cell, that did the first bombing, on their radar as early as the summer of '89, when Bush 41 was in the White House.

They could have stopped Ramzi Yousef. I proved this in my book. In the fall of '92, going into early '93, just when Clinton was taking over, prior to the first bombing.

DOBBS: To narrow this just a bit here, Peter, the claim by Able Danger officials, Shaffer and Philpot, principally. That they had that information and were denied the opportunity to share that information with the FBI, the CIA, or other government agencies.

Narrowing it to that specific charge, much has been made of this broadcast at least, by other 9/11 Commission members that they never saw the chart, the so-called chart outlining this. They had no physical evidence. How do you respond to their remarks?

LANCE: The chart is a red herring, Lou. I presented evidence to Dietrich Snell when I testified in March 15th of '04 of a link chart. The link chart was made by the Defense Intelligence Analysis Center, showing a direct connection between al Qaeda and the New York cell of the blind sheikh.

Whether or not there was a later link chart that had Atta's picture is irrelevant. All of the evidence -- as Governor Kean said -- was not turned over. There were two briefcases. Tony Shaffer said, that's one-twentieth of the evidence that they had available. So how can the 9/11 Commission have made an effective evaluation on the scope of that limited evidence?

DOBBS: We talk about one-tenth, we should also put that in some context, because the Able Danger Pentagon intelligence unit had 2.4 terabytes, 2,400 gigabytes, of information stored that they destroyed. The amount of information that they had accumulated was extraordinary by any measure.

LANCE: Equal to one quarter of the books in the Library of Congress. And what's amazing is that this system could work today, Lou. It's a very inexpensive system that basically culls the Internet. And Congressman Weldon, who I really commend for pushing this, has proposed that for \$50 million they reinitiate this program at a critical time.

The FBI has not reformed. The 9/11 Commission clearly -- you know -- they're a little disingenuous today saying we're at great risk when they only told half of the story in their report.

DOBBS: Peter Lance, Congressman Weldon, who, with whom -- I agree with you absolutely, he is a man to be greatly credited for trying to get to the truth here. What do you think the odds are that the secretary of defense will respond to more than half of the members of the U.S. Congress demanding hearings on Able Danger?

LANCE: Well, it all comes down to what Monica Gabrielle said today about the 9/11 report; one of the widows. There has to be public outrage.

The people have to finally say, "we are at risk. They are going to hit us again, and there hasn't been sufficient reform."

The people who've got to get into the streets, they've got to contact Congress, in order to get this new investigation. But Able Danger is the last best hope of prying open that investigation.

DOBBS: Peter Lance, thanks for being here.

LANCE: Thank you.

DOBBS: Former 9/11 Commission member Slade Gorton will be joining me here in just a few minutes. We'll be talking about Able Danger, the charges and the commission's viewpoint.