

Press Conference of Rep Curt Weldon: 9/11 Commission and Operation “Able Danger”

9/11 Commission suppressed the evidence

By [Global Research](#)

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WELDON: Good afternoon.

I'm Curt Weldon, and I'm here to provide a response to the 9/11 Commission in their statements this week about Able Danger and the outrageous statement made by Slade Gorton that it just didn't exist.

And it is absolutely outrageous, especially from a commission that I supported, that spent \$15 million with 80 staffers to give the American people and the Congress a full and complete understanding of what happened prior to 9/11.

They have maintained there is no information about Able Danger or the data mining work. They couldn't find anything.

So I brought some charts for you. These are all original charts. None of these charts were made after 9/11. These charts were all made before 9/11.

Now, granted, they're not all about Able Danger. They're not all about Mohammed Atta, nor Al Qaida.

They're about drug trafficking. They're about terrorist cells. They're about crime in Russia. They're about crime in Serbia. They're about the World Trade Center bombing in '93.

So this information is a compilation of work being done by the Army's LIWA Center, as well as some of the work being done by Able Danger on Mohammed Atta and Al Qaida.

It's absolutely unbelievable to me that a commission would come out and say that this program just didn't exist.

The Pentagon has acknowledged now, publicly, that they have identified five defense employees who either vividly remember identifying Mohammed Atta prior to 9/11 or seeing his name linked with a Brooklyn cell prior to 9/11.

We have Scott Philpott (ph), a Navy commanding officer, who's commanded one of our naval warships, an Annapolis graduate, who has come out publicly and risked his entire career to say what he'll say next Wednesday under oath: that he specifically remembers identifying Mohammed Atta in January and February of 2000, specifically; that he would stake his career on it. And that he was the leader of Able Danger.

We have Lieutenant Colonel Tony Shaffer — who's outside in the hallway, who I couldn't bring into the House Gallery because of House rules, but who's available for you to talk to, outside — who will testify under oath on Wednesday before the Senate that as a DIA liaison to Special Forces Command for Able Danger, he attempted to present information to the FBI on three occasions in September of 2000 about the Brooklyn cell and Mohammed Atta.

WELDON: We've identified the woman at the FBI who set those three meetings up. She will testify under oath at the Senate hearing next Wednesday that she actually organized three meetings. She knew the topics of the meetings because there had been other discussions that occurred prior to the attempt to set up those three meetings.

And in each of the cases of those three meetings, they were abruptly canceled by Pentagon lawyers hours before those meetings were to take place.

I asked the Pentagon had they talked to that FBI person. They said, "No."

And, by the way, the Pentagon did not conduct an investigation. There were no subpoenas. There were no witnesses under oath. It was an inquiry. There's a big difference between an inquiry and an investigation, as my colleagues on the Armed Services Committee brought up when we had a briefing last week with six or seven members of the committee.

What will be the added dimension to the Senate investigation and hearing that will take place on Wednesday is not just the five people that the Pentagon has confirmed, identified and knew about Mohammed Atta prior to 9/11, but we'll bring out the person who actually did much of the data analysis. Actually, his name, I think, has already been brought out in the public. That's J.D. (ph).

But the person who's not been brought out in the public yet, this individual who will testify that he was actually the one who destroyed 2.5 terabytes of data about Able Danger that included the Brooklyn cell and Mohammed Atta.

Now, I'm not a computer expert. I don't know what 2.5 terabytes of data are. But, John, I read your story. You called the Library of Congress.

And the Library of Congress, if we can believe this great reporter down here who I trust fully, told him that it's basically one-fourth of all the printed material that the Library of Congress has in their collection. Now, that's a lot of material.

So what we will have is a person who will testify under oath, on the record, that in the summer of 2000, he was ordered — or he would lose his job and/or go to jail if he didn't comply — he was ordered to destroy 2.5 terabytes of data specific to Able Danger, the Brooklyn cell and Mohammed Atta.

He will name the person who ordered him to destroy that material. And, furthermore, he will note that a commanding general from SOCOM — Russ, what was his name?

STAFF: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: General Lambert was incensed when he found out that material that he was a customer for was destroyed without his approval.

So here we have a case where General Lambert at SOCOM was not told that an employee

had been ordered to destroy all the material that he was a customer for. And that material related to Able Danger, it related to Al Qaida and it related to Mohammed Atta.

In addition, I urge you to go back and review, on the Heritage Commission Web site, a speech that I gave on May 23rd of 2002. That speech, which is one hour and 20 minutes long with questions, is about stovepipes. In fact, you'll see a chart there that I referred that I can't find.

WELDON: That chart refers to Able Danger.

It refers to the data mining. I'm not definitely sure that specific chart referred to Able Danger. But you can see the chart.

But what is in that speech are the exact details I've been talking about for the last two months. What was also in that speech, which I had forgotten and which I'm now public acknowledging, is that there was a three-hour briefing provided to General Shelton in January of 2001.

And furthermore, what Tony Shaffer will tell you in the hallway outside is that he personally briefed General Shelton on Able Danger, and in a briefing in the first quarter of 2001, and he will name the people that were in the room. He was giving a briefing on another topic, remember the name of that?

STAFF: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: Door Hop Galley (ph) which is another classified program.

In the course of that briefing — and there was a Navy admiral in the room, Admiral Wilson, in charge of DIA, and Richard Schiefren (ph) was in the room. Richard Schiefren (ph) was an attorney at DOD.

In the course of that discussion, Richard Schiefren (ph) discussed Able Danger. I did not know that up until I watched the Heritage Foundation speech that I gave in 2002, where I document the meeting, in the briefing that was done for General Shelton. When I asked Tony Shaffer this morning about that, he said, "Yes, I briefed General Shelton. I was also involved in a Door Hop Galley (ph) brief, where Steve Cambone" — he was not in the position he's in today. He was a special adviser to Don Rumsfeld.

My concern is if there were 2.5 terabytes of data that were destroyed in the summer of 2000, there had to be material in 2001 if you briefed General Shelton. Where is that material? Where is that briefing?

In addition, there is a question about the possibility of additional data that was in Tony Shaffer's office that was removed, not all of which was turned over to the 9/11 Commission.

As most of you know by now, when Tony Shaffer returned in January of 2004, Tony Shaffer — or 2003, get my dates right, 2003 — 2004 — in January 2004 — right, because it was in October of 2003 when he first briefed the 9/11 Commission's staff over in Baghram.

In January of 2004 when he was twice rebuffed by the 9/11 Commission for a personal follow-up meeting, he was assigned back to Afghanistan to lead a special classified program.

When he returned in March, he was called in and verbally his security clearance was temporarily lifted. By lifting his security clearance, he could not go back into DIA quarters where all the materials he had about Able Danger were, in fact, stored. He could not get access to memos that, in fact, he will tell you discussed the briefings he provided both to the previous administration and this administration.

For the 9/11 Commission to say that this does not exist is just absolutely outrageous.

It is a total denial of the facts. It's a denial of information the Pentagon has affirmed. And to say that we just don't have data to back it up is not enough.

WELDON: They had 80 staffers and spent \$15 million and came up with nothing and didn't mention Able Danger once in their report, and I'm convinced never briefed the 9/11 commissioners.

In one month we provided all these charts, we reconstructed the original Mohammed Atta chart, which I've showed many times, with the linkages — from the original data, I might add, that people had available.

All of this will come out on Wednesday, but I could not sit by and have Slade Gorton make the statement he made. He has not interviewed personally any of the Able Danger staff. He talked about a disagreement between a Defense Department female employee and Tony Shaffer. I've talked to both of them and he's totally wrong. He didn't speak to either one of them.

Tim Roemer, a good friend of mine, came out and said, "Well, they couldn't have had a photograph of Mohammed Atta because he wasn't in the country before a certain date." That obviously came from staff of the commission.

Well, as we now know, the photograph did not come from an immigration picture or a driver's license. An individual who will testify on Wednesday will say they bought that photograph from a woman in California who was researching the activity at selected mosques. That's where the photograph came from.

It's very troubling to me that people are going out of their way not to want to know the details of what happened here, to distort and spin.

In the time that I have known about this, I have not tried to spin this any way. I have not made any comments as to the intent or the effort by any of the 9/11 commissioners. In fact, I have defended them. I don't think any of them were ever briefed.

I can tell you, to not have this covered by the 9/11 Commission, to not have it mentioned, for them to say, as they did initially, that it was historically insignificant — 2.5 terabytes of data about Mohammed Atta and Al Qaida, a three-hour briefing for the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff is historically insignificant? A briefing that included Richard Schiefren (ph), with Steve Cambone, in March of 2001, five months before 9/11, is historically insignificant? I don't think so.

And so the more information I get, the more questions arise. The American people deserve to have answers.

One of the pilots of one of the airplanes on 9/11, Michael Horrocks, was a neighbor of mine.

He went to the same university I went to. He was a dedicated Navy pilot. He was killed. He left behind a wife and two kids.

The chief of all rescue for New York City Fire Department, Ray Downey, was one of my best friends. Ray had taken me through the Trade Center in 1993 when I went up. Ray was the one who convinced me to introduce the language to create the Gilmore commission. The Gilmore commission made three reports before 9/11. Ray Downey was a member of that commission, chaired by former Governor Jim Gilmore.

WELDON: The 3,000 people and the families of those people and their friends and loved ones, the American people and the Congress, when we approved the 9/11 Commission, asked to know all the facts.

How could anyone not only ignore this particular situation before they made the report but then when the report comes out and they're embarrassed and changed their story three times in one week about this particular Defense program, then come out with a statement they made yesterday that it didn't exist?

There's something wrong here, something tragically wrong.

The American people, the families, the country and the Congress need to know the truth, the whole truth, the complete truth. And so far we haven't gotten it.

I wanted to bring Tony Shaffer in to talk to you about the briefing that he was involved with with General Shelton in January of '01 and the briefing — again, this second briefing, as Tony will tell you, was not specifically about Able Danger. It was about a program called Door Hop Galley (ph).

But during that briefing with Admiral Wilson and with Richard Schiefren (ph), the topic of Able Danger came up and Richard Schiefren (ph), who was the legal counsel at the Pentagon, knew about Able Danger.

Somebody's got to connect the dots and answer the questions. If the 9/11 Commission won't do it, then Congress has to do it.

I applaud Senator Specter and his staff for scheduling a hearing on Wednesday where all of these people can testify.

To say that nothing existed in spite of five people, the Pentagon acknowledged, knew about this information, in spite of what documentation we can provide as evidence of some of the work they were doing on a number of different programs — the commission's attitude has been, "We don't want to go there."

The same response — the acting staff director of the 9/11 Discourse Project told my chief of staff, when he made a call at my request, when I found out the details of Able Danger in May of this year.

And his response to Russ when he did not remember the first day when Russ called, the second day was, "Yes, you were briefed on Able Danger. Well, why wasn't it included in your report?" "We decided to not go down that route," whatever that means — "down that route."

I talked to two of the commissioners personally, Tim Roemer and John Lehman. Neither of them had been briefed on Able Danger. To my knowledge, no member of the 9/11 Commission was ever briefed on Able Danger.

The facts are the facts. And it really is very discouraging to me that the 9/11 Commission's response is to do what they allege this administration and others have done: not be candid and forthcoming.

Now, I tried to get to the 9/11 Commission. I contacted the commission through staff.

WELDON: I offered to go in and give them a briefing while they were doing their investigation. They could have seen the Heritage tape that's on the Heritage Commission's Web site of the speech I gave in May of 2002. It's a public document. If they would have talked to me, I would have given them that link. I would have given them every piece of information that I had to reconstruct what I've reconstructed.

Do we have the actual date when I presented this document? Was it April?

STAFF: I think it was April — one of the two hearings in the Hart Building.

WELDON: In the Hart Building, when the 9/11 Commission brought in George Tenet, and I was watching the hearings from my home, I couldn't believe the questioning. So I drafted this document and had my staff director hand deliver it to the 9/11 Commission. They never asked a question. This is the actual document.

The next week, they sent a staffer over to pick up some additional materials about the NOA (ph), about the concept, and about information I had briefed them on. They never followed up and invited me to come in and meet with them. So they can't say that I didn't try.

I had one phone conversation with Tom Kean, and it took me a long while to get him. That lasted about five minutes. He was in a big rush.

And I tried to explain to him in that five-minute time period all of the parameters of this information, so they could do what the Congress asked them to do. He assured me that 9/11 commission staff would follow up and they never did.

So we had Scott Philpott (ph) voluntarily go to the commission, Tony Shaffer voluntarily go to the commission. I went to the commission. And they choose to ignore the information. They choose to categorize it as historically insignificant, which the Pentagon will not do. They won't characterize it as that.

A three-hour briefing for General Hugh Shelton, a briefing on Door Hop Galley (ph) that included Richard Schiefren (ph) and Admiral Wilson and Steve Cambone, where Able Danger was discussed, and no one wants to get to the bottom of what really happened.

The 9/11 Commission has lost my confidence.

I voted for the commission. I supported the commission. I talked about the commission. I have given speeches around the country supporting the commission's recommendations.

WELDON: I was so frustrated when I could not get a face-to-face meeting with the

commission staff or commissioners, that the day that Lee Hamilton and Tom Kean briefed Congress, that was right before the 9/11 commission's report was to be released, in the Cannon Caucus Room they invited members over. I got there first. I was the first member to raise my hand to ask the first question.

And I stood up and I said to the two of them, "I support your work. I support your recommendations. Many of your recommendations are recommendations previously made by the Gilmore commission. But I am extremely upset that you would not meet with members of Congress who were involved with these issues."

Lee Hamilton's response to me, in front of my colleagues in Congress, was, "Well, Curt, we couldn't meet with everyone."

So I tried.

And so I felt, after seeing what I thought was a ridiculous press conference yesterday and knowing what's going to come up on Wednesday at the Senate hearing — unless somebody is gagged between now and Wednesday, because I have talked to all the witnesses — there are some serious questions that need to be answered.

Who — and why — ordered 2.5 terabytes of data referring to Able Danger, Al Qaida, and including Mohammed Atta, in the summer of 2000? And why did they not seek the approval of General Lambert before his data was destroyed, especially given the fact that Madeleine Albright, the secretary of state, had declared Al Qaida an international terrorist organization? How could you destroy that volume of material about one of the top terrorist cells in the world?

I don't buy the idea that there was information about American persons — or I guess, if you include Mohammed Atta in there, he would be considered an American person. I don't buy that as an excuse to justify destroying that kind of data.

Number two, who ordered — either within the Pentagon legal staff or higher up — the blockage of meetings on three separate occasions in September of 2000 where Able Danger material was going to be briefed to the FBI?

WELDON: And again, we have that person who set those meetings up who will testify on Wednesday. Who stopped those meetings and why did they stop them?

Number three, what was in the three-hour briefing that was prepared for General High Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, in January of '01, and where is that brief, since it would still have existed, even though the bulk of the data had been destroyed in the summer of '00?

What materials did Richard Schiefren (ph) discuss in a briefing that was held with Colonel Shaffer, Steve Cambone and Admiral Wilson in the Door Hop Galley (ph) briefing in the winter of '01? What was the Able Danger material discussed in that meeting?

And finally, and most importantly, why did the 9/11 Commission, charged with the responsibility by the Congress with my support, choose to totally ignore the work of Able Danger? And why did they not pursue the people that I've pursued over the last 35, 40 days that would have provided them the same information that I've provided?

We, today, do not have a clear picture of what happened before 9/11 because this vacuum exists. I'm offering no conspiracy theories. I'm not making any allegations.

As a member of Congress, as the vice chair of two security and intelligence committees — Armed Services and Homeland Security — all I want are answers for the American people.

I'll be happy to make the document available of the questions that I've presented to a 9/11 commissioner and carried by my chief of staff in one of their hearings in '04.

QUESTION: What do you think is the whole truth?

WELDON: I think the whole truth is, bureaucrats in Defense intelligence don't want this story to be told. I don't know why.

I don't believe it's a coincidence that Colonel Shaffer, a Bronze Star recipient, 23-year career decorated veteran, put in charge of assignments working with SOCOM in the jungles of Afghanistan undercover, doing work that allowed him to brief George Tenet and other senior leaders on a number of occasions — and you can talk to him outside — that the work that he was doing relative to Able Danger and Al Qaida, interacting with the Army's information dominance center at Fort Belvoir, was not significant.

I think here are those, perhaps, that are going to be embarrassed by this: embarrassed in the previous administration, and now it looks like embarrassed in this administration.

WELDON: And I can tell you I met with Steve Cambone right after the story broke in the New York Times. And, as you all know, I did a floor speech a month before that. So this wasn't something I did for the media.

The New York Times did not pick up on this story until a trade publication called Defense Security News published it. And then the New York Times picked it up. That was a month after I gave the floor speech in late June of this year.

When Steve Cambone came in to meet with me, he said, "Congressman, you know more about this program than I do."

I brought Tony Shaffer in to meet with Steve Cambone, with the understanding his career would not be ruined. In the 19 years I've been in this city, I have seen people's careers ruined. I saw it with Notra Trulock, I saw it with Jay Stewart (ph), I saw it with Dr. Gordon Ehlers, I saw it with Mike Maluf (ph), I saw it with Jack Daly (ph).

I've seen it time and again.

My concern was that these military people, who wanted to simply tell the truth, would not have their careers ruined.

Steve Cambone never mentioned to me that Able Danger was ever discussed in a meeting on Door Hop Galley (ph). Now, maybe he didn't remember that. That's understandable. And I'm not faulting him for that.

But in that meeting with Richard Schiefren (ph) and Admiral Wilson, as you can ask Tony Shaffer outside, Able Danger was discussed. It was not the purpose of the meeting, but it was discussed.

QUESTION: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: I think my own perception is the 9/11 Commission staff did not want this story to be pursued. As John Lehman and Tim Roemer told me, I don't think this was ever briefed to 9/11 commissioners.

I think, for some reason, there was a staff effort deliberately put forward not to allow this information to be brought forward.

Now, a couple of strange things have happened during this time period, and one thing I've never mentioned publicly.

The first week the story broke in the New York Times, I was in Pennsylvania that Friday doing district work and I got a call at my office. My chief of staff took the call, and it was from a person I'd never met in my entire life. I'd never mentioned her name. She was on vacation and asked my chief of staff for me to call her back.

Her name was Jamie Gorelick.

I said, "What does she want, Russ? I don't know the woman." I said, "I'm tied up. Would you please call her back and ask her what she wants?"

WELDON: Russ called her back on her cell phone. She was on vacation. And her response to my chief of staff was, "Please tell Congressman Weldon I've done nothing wrong."

Am I correct, Russ?

There are a lot of things here that leave a lot of unanswered questions.

I don't know why Al Feltzenberg (ph) got mad. I don't even know the guy. I don't know why Al Feltzenberg (ph) came out the first day the New York Times asked him and said they were never briefed. And the second day, he said they were briefed, but they never mentioned Mohammed Atta. On the third day, he said, "Well, we were briefed and they did mention Mohammed Atta, but only in passing and it was too late."

How many times can you change the story?

There's something deeper here that I don't understand, but that the American people need to have the answer to. And the only reason I'm doing this today is because the 9/11 Commission came out with their presentation yesterday that to me is just outrageous.

I listened to it. I read the transcript. And to read the statement of Slade Gorton, it just turned my stomach.

First of all, let me say this to you: I'll believe Commander Philpott (ph) 100 times before I'll believe politician Slade Gorton.

Scott Philpott (ph) jeopardized his entire naval career to state emphatically that he will swear on his career that they knew about not just Able Danger, but Mohammed Atta and ties to the Brooklyn cell in January and February of 2000. I believe Scott Philpott (ph).

And for them to say that this didn't exist, that this is not real — what was the exact comment he used? This never happened? I mean, how could you say this never happened

with everything I've given you, with all the people that have come out, with five people the Pentagon has confirmed, with the person at the FBI who set the meetings up, with the man who's going to testify next week on Wednesday that he destroyed the data and was ordered to destroy the data? How could you say this never happened?

How could you say there was never a three-hour briefing with General Shelton? How could you say that that briefing material never existed?

QUESTION: So who was it at the Pentagon that canceled those meetings with the FBI? Because you know Pat Downes (ph) and Tom Gandy (ph) gave a briefing a couple of weeks ago at the Pentagon and denied, absolutely, categorically, that there was ever any effort on the part of anyone at DOD to stop information being transferred.

WELDON: I wasn't there. And neither were the two men that you just referred to there. So we're all going on second- and third-hand information.

I can tell you that two of the people involved with this will testify under oath on Wednesday: Lieutenant Colonel Tony Shaffer, who's in the hallway and the FBI woman whose name has been out in the news, who set the meetings up. Neither of them are backing down on their statements.

So they can swear all they want; they can be as emphatic as they want. We have two people who will testify under oath that, number one, they set the meetings up; and, number two, that the purpose of those meetings was to transfer information that Able Danger had produced about Al Qaida and about the linkages of the Brooklyn cell and Mohammed Atta.

And let me also give you this point. They've constantly focused this on a chart. Well, we can't find the chart.

WELDON: This is not just about a chart. I've showed you 13 charts here. This is about 2.5 terabytes of information about Mohammed Atta and Al Qaida, the group that attacked us. It's not about one chart, the chart that I gave to Hadley, with Dan Burton present with me in the White House.

And for them to just try to brush this aside and hope it goes away — the same problem that you identified I was told by Fox News that the press guy over at the Pentagon actually went in the room and told Fox News and the New York Times, "When you going to let this story go?"

This is the largest disaster in the history of the country. I mean, it would be like saying we don't want to know the details of Pearl Harbor. Three thousand innocent people were killed; the Congress, Democrats and Republicans, want the answers; why are we not getting straight talk? Why is there a constant effort to spin?

Why would you say, as Larry Di Rita said from the Pentagon after referring to Tony Shaffer and Scott Philpott's (ph) recollections, "Well, you know, memories sometimes play games on people."

Well, how about now that they've acknowledged five people recalling seeing Mohammed Atta's photograph and the linkage to the Brooklyn cell?

And how about now the witness that's going to testify that all this data was deliberately

destroyed, in spite of the fact that the general was not aware his material was being destroyed?

There are just too many unanswered questions.

I wish I had a full staff to investigate all this. I don't. I hope the American media follows up on this material. I'm going to continue to use my influence to do that.

But there's something rotten here. And I'm not saying it's rotten in the conspiracy standpoint, I'm saying it's rotten from the standpoint that the American people are not getting answers.

QUESTION: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: I've been told that the woman at the FBI has e-mails that will verify the meetings.

I can tell you that Tony Shaffer will tell you his e-mails, all classified, on his system, were deleted. They were deleted during the time that he could not get access because they had temporarily lifted his security clearance.

WELDON: And that in itself is absolutely outrageous.

You've all seen the charges they've trumped up against him, which were that he transferred a cell phone that amounted to \$60 while he was working over in Afghanistan undercover to his personal phone, and that he had gotten reimbursed for mileage to a training course at Fort Dix that they said he wasn't entitled to even though it was a military training program which is \$109.

And for that, they temporarily lifted his security clearance, conveniently after he gets back and had told the 9/11 Commission staff all the documents were in his office at DIA headquarters, but he could not get back into DIA headquarters because they had temporarily lifted his clearance for these three stupid allegations. But all during this time the Army's paying him \$100,000 a year as a military officer — and, oh, by the way, during that time they promoted him to lieutenant colonel.

Does something sound fishy there? It sure does to me.

QUESTION: I believe you said you spoke with the FBI woman...

WELDON: I didn't.

QUESTION: Oh, you didn't?

WELDON: But I know people who have. And she's also come out publicly. But I'll tell you what she said. I didn't talk to her personally.

QUESTION: I'm wondering about the why of this. Does the FBI woman know and will she testify why the Pentagon canceled the...

WELDON: She doesn't know.

QUESTION: She doesn't know.

WELDON: No. All she knows is the meetings were set up, and that's what she'll testify to.

QUESTION: OK.

And how...

WELDON: Now, Tony Shaffer talked to her, and you can talk to him outside.

QUESTION: And the other "why" question is why were the 2.5 terabytes of data destroyed? And since we're going to hear from the DOD person who destroyed the data, are we going to hear on Wednesday why?

WELDON: I don't know that anyone knows that. What the Pentagon's saying is that they routinely destroy data. We're trying to get to the bottom of what that means.

What I don't understand, as the vice chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, is if you have 2.5 terabytes of data about Al Qaida; and Madeleine Albright, the secretary of state, has declared Al Qaida a national terrorist organization; and if that data — which is largely open-source data, so it's not classified — contains some information that may have involved U.S. persons, why wouldn't you want to retain the bulk of that data for your own use against Al Qaida in the future?

Now, Tony Shaffer will tell you that there were efforts to bring out the U.S. person information from that data but in the end that was dropped and the data was destroyed.

I don't know why it was destroyed. Pentagon is saying it was routine. To me, that doesn't make sense.

And if it's routine, the American people need to know that. If it's routine that the summer before 9/11 we routinely destroyed 2.5 terabytes of data about Al Qaida, then the American people, as a run-up to 9/11, need to know that that happened and they need to ask the question why did that happen.

For the 9/11 Commission to ignore that and say it wasn't historically significant is ridiculous.

Maybe it was justified but I would like to know that as the vice chairman of the committee.

QUESTION: It's also been reported that you gave an original chart, including the (inaudible). Is anybody asking the White House to look for this document?

WELDON: No, but I had a meeting — I briefed — you have asked him, right?

STAFF: Yes.

WELDON: I briefed Steve Hadley two weeks after 9/11, exactly, with Dan Burton and one of the analysts who did this work.

WELDON: And I took the chart down that was given to me. And the chart was a chart that was made before 9/11.

And in the speech that I did in 2002 on the Heritage Commission files, I said the same thing then that I've been saying recently. So the story hasn't changed.

QUESTION: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: I have and he's asked them. I think the Senate asked for it. I don't even know if they have it. I think the Senate — one of the Senate committees asked for it. I assume Specter's probably asked for it — Judiciary.

I don't know the status. When I met with Steve, he acknowledged me giving him a chart.

QUESTION: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: I don't know. Never met the woman. Never knew her, never mentioned her name. I've never said anything negative about her.

No other commissioner called me but she did.

It was the Friday after the New York Times ran a front-page story on Tuesday. They ran three straight stories, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday. The call came into my office on Friday. He took the call. I wasn't there. When he called back at my request, she said, "I just want to tell the congressman I did nothing wrong."

QUESTION: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: I don't want to do this. I'll let you guys do that.

QUESTION: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: I don't want to get involved with the commission directly per se after this (inaudible).

I would have hoped they would have done a thorough investigation. They didn't even call me in.

I sent a letter to the commission that week, three-page letter. You all got copies of it. I've never been given the courtesy of a response.

I have never said anything negative about any commissioner. I have said positive things about the commissioners I know: John Lehman, Bob Kerrey, Lee Hamilton, Tom Kean and Tim Roemer. I know them all personally. I have said positive things about the commissioners and about the commission.

I've never received a response. There were two questions in that letter I asked, never a response.

And for them to come out the way they did yesterday and make that statement — now I can tell you I'm already networking with members of the Congress about all this, and Senator Specter's doing his hearing.

WELDON: We had a briefing for members of the Armed Services Committee last week in a closed session. And we're going to continue to pursue it.

I don't know the answers. And again, I don't have an agenda. I mean, I don't know — but it's amazing that more facts continue to come out as they're saying there's nothing there. It didn't exist.

Well, those two things just don't jibe. And there I find out this morning that Tony Shaffer — and going back to my speech in '02, there was a three-hour briefing, and I remember this now, that was presented to General Shelton.

And then Tony Shaffer says, yes, he was involved in the briefing with General Shelton. And then, separately, as a part of this other briefing, Able Danger came up, Richard Schiefren (ph), and Admiral Wilson were involved. I was not aware of that.

Isn't this what the 9/11 Commission was supposed to do? Wasn't this what those 80 staff people were for?

I shouldn't be doing this.

And these are all questions the American people need to have answers to, because all this happened before 9/11.

QUESTION: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: Well, I know this, because I was very heavily involved with LIWA. What happened was, as the chairman of the R&D Subcommittee, back in the late '90s — and I was briefed on the information dominance centers of the services, the Army's being LIWA — I was very supportive, and I saw them doing amazing things.

And I had a discussion with John Hamre, deputy secretary of defense. I said, "John, you should go down and see what they're doing down there. It's amazing."

He went down, and John came back and we had a discussion. He said, "You're right, Congressman." He said, "This is amazing."

He tasked them to do a special briefing on Chinese proliferation. And I was aware of that. And I was aware that, when that briefing was done, there were some very sensitive human person issues that came up. Because the technology that China was acquiring, through researchers that were here in our country, in many cases were at Stanford University and other universities in America. And because of that, the two names surfaced that had been reported in the press.

QUESTION: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: Condoleezza Rice and Bill Perry.

And I'm not saying they did anything wrong — absolutely, unequivocally. They simply were associated with Stanford.

And Stanford was one of the most significant schools where Chinese post-doctoral students and researchers were focusing on very, very specific technology for our military that was being used in sensitive military programs.

There were other universities as well.

When that information reached Congress, it caused an uproar. And you can imagine the pressure the Army got, because the Army's not, in most people's minds, supposed to be doing that. This is a prototype capability.

At the time that was being done, there was an effort — and I understand the effort — to suppress that from coming out. And that was misread by some people as though there was an attempt to destroy data.

Sam Johnson, Congressman Johnson's son, Dr. Bob Johnson, was working for Raytheon down in Texas. And Special Forces Command was setting up a separate operation for data mining at Garland, Texas, separate from LIWA, partly because the Army was getting cold feet because of the pressure they were realizing.

WELDON: Dr. Bob Johnson told his father that the military was deliberately destroying data. Sam Johnson came to a number of members, including Dan Burton. And, as the chairman of the government oversight committee, Dan Burton subpoenaed documents and files.

That caused a major uproar back and forth. And so, that did contribute to the ending of the LIWA.

And my understanding is — correct me if I'm wrong — that Richard Schiefren (ph) was the individual who ordered the destruction — or the stoppage of the LIWA. Is that correct?

Richard Schiefren (ph), the same lawyer who was in the briefing with Steve Cambone in the winter of '01, was the lawyer who caused the data mining at LIWA to stop.

QUESTION: How prominent do you think the Chinese connection is, or was, in the process of ending the LIWA?

WELDON: I think it was significant. I think it was a major reason why it was ended. I don't think it had anything to do with Able Danger. I think it was that that came up with some sensitive names that should not have been brought out to the public and caused this big uproar back and forth.

And that's really, to my opinion, a non-issue. And people have tried to discredit the work that was being done because of that. And that should not be the case.

QUESTION: So, I guess what I'm asking here now is that, do you feel like it was the embarrassment that that could have created for certain individuals...

WELDON: For the Army?

QUESTION: Yes — that led to them just saying, "OK, we've got to throw this whole thing out, including Able Danger and everything"?

WELDON: No, I don't think that was the case. Because General Lambert wanted that Able Danger information. He was incensed when he found out that it had been destroyed.

And, let's face it, Madeleine Albright had by then declared Al Qaida an international terrorist organization.

I don't just think you throw out that kind of data if this is a major terrorism group that you've got focus on.

Now, maybe there's some American nationals in there you have to go through there and pull out; that's understandable. But the bulk of this information is open source.

I mean, let me compare this for you: In the campaign season that just ended last year, both political parties used something called smart voting.

What they did is they took massive data mining, looked at people's — what magazines they buy; they looked at what their habits are. And from that, they profiled people to most likely vote for Republican or Democrat candidates.

STAFF: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: I've got to go?

STAFF: (OFF-MIKE)

WELDON: So, it's not something that's not been done before.

Any other questions: Tony Shaffer's outside and he'll be glad to talk to you, and you can follow up with any questions you want with him.

Thank you.

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