

or it is all going to be debt, passed on to our children, because our friends on the other side of the aisle will not join us in these modest reforms.

In fact, they tell us every single day that somehow tax relief to the American people is part of the problem.

□ 1615

What they do not tell you is the massive tax increases that are going to be necessary just to pay for the government we have, not even the government that they are trying to add on top of the government programs that we already have.

Under their program, they will be bringing back the marriage penalty. They will be bringing back the death tax. The new child tax credit, say goodbye to it, accelerated depreciation and the list goes on and on.

Mr. Speaker, that is not a future that the American people want, and so we are going to debate this spending.

To me, Mr. Speaker, when we see that this spending is out of control, there was a time very recently until this last Congress when Medicare paid five times as much for a wheelchair as the Veterans Administration did, five times as much, because one would competitively bid and the other would not. Well, according to our friends on that side of the aisle, somehow we cut health care for the elderly when we began to pay market prices for wheelchairs. It is absurd, Mr. Speaker.

Now we are offering reforms saying that, you know what, if you are not a citizen of the United States of America and you signed a contract not to become a ward of the State, maybe you ought to wait 7 years instead of 5 before you qualify for food stamps so that maybe we can send that money to help relieve human suffering along the gulf coast. But somehow, again in this body, notwithstanding the fact that food stamps will grow next year over this year, it is somehow called some kind of massive cut.

It is just not true, Mr. Speaker. You are entitled to your own opinion, but you are not entitled to your own facts.

Mr. Speaker, what is important is that we do not let the Democrats put double taxes on our children. It is important we not allow them to increase taxes today, because the tax relief we have passed has been great for this economy. It is what is helping people. Right now, we have passed tax relief, and guess what, Mr. Speaker, we have more tax revenue.

Mr. Speaker, right now, on this chart you can see that after we passed tax relief for the American people, allowing small businesses and families to keep more of what they earn, in 2003 we have almost \$1.8 trillion in revenue, in 2004 almost \$1.9 trillion in revenue, and now in 2005, \$2.1 trillion in revenue. Tax relief has proven to be part of the deficit solution, not part of the deficit problem.

Mr. Speaker, that may be counterintuitive to some people, but

let me tell you just one story about one small business in my district back in Texas.

It is an outfit called Jacksonville Industries, employs 20 people, an aluminum and zinc die cast business. Before we passed our economic growth program that had tax relief, they were getting ready to have to lay off two of the individuals due to competitive pressures, but because of tax relief, Mr. Speaker, they were able to go out and invest in new machinery that made them more efficient. Instead of having to lay off two people, Mr. Speaker, they hired three new people.

That is five people that could have been on welfare, five people that could have been on food stamps. That is five people who could have been on unemployment, but instead, Mr. Speaker, it was five people who had good jobs with a future, who had their own housing program, their own nutritional program, their own education program called a job.

So, to listen to our friends on the other side of the aisle, they would say somehow that is a cut. It is not, Mr. Speaker. It is about freedom and opportunity, and that is what helps the poor.

STONEWALLING CONGRESS

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FORTENBERRY). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. WELDON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WELDON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, first of all, let me thank my friend and colleague for allowing me to take this 5-minute special order before his 1 hour. I will be brief, but I rise for an issue of severe concern to me, Mr. Speaker.

As someone who has spent 19 years working on defense and security issues in this Congress and currently serves as the vice chairman of the Armed Services and Homeland Security Committees, I have to report to my colleagues continuing efforts to try to find out what happened before 9/11 and, unfortunately, have to report that we are being stonewalled. In fact, Mr. Speaker, I cannot use any other term but the appearance of a cover-up.

Just a few moments ago, I questioned one of the cochairs of the 9/11 Commission, Lee Hamilton, why the Commission has not yet responded to a letter that I sent to them on August 10 of this year, which I will enter into the RECORD at this point.

AUGUST 10, 2005.

Hon. THOMAS H. KEAN, Chairman,
Hon. LEE H. HAMILTON, Vice Chairman,
9/11 Public Discourse Project, One DuPont Circle, NW., Washington, DC.

DEAR CHAIRMAN KEAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN HAMILTON: I am contacting you to discuss an important issue that concerns the terrible events of September 11, 2001, and our country's efforts to ensure that such a calamity is never again allowed to occur. Your bipartisan work on The National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States shed light on much that was unclear in the

minds of the American people regarding what happened that fateful day, however there appears to be more to the story than the public has been told. I bring this before you because of my respect for you both, and for the 9-11 Commission's service to America.

Almost seven years ago, the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 established the Advisory Panel to Assess Domestic Response Capabilities for Terrorism Involving Weapons of Mass Destruction, otherwise known as the Gilmore Commission. The Gilmore Commission reached many of the same conclusions as your panel, and in December of 2000 called for the creation of a "National Office for Combating Terrorism." I mention this because prior to 9/11, Congress was aware of many of the institutional obstacles to preventing a terrorist attack, and was actively attempting to address them. I know this because I authored the language establishing the Gilmore Commission.

In the 1990's, as chairman of the congressional subcommittee that oversaw research and development for the Department of Defense, I paid special attention to the activities of the Army's Land Information Warfare Activity (LIWA) at Ft. Belvoir. During that time, I led a bipartisan delegation of Members of Congress to Vienna, Austria to meet with members of the Russian parliament, or Duma. Before leaving, I received a brief from the CIA on a Serbian individual that would be attending the meeting. The CIA provided me with a single paragraph of information. On the other hand, representatives of LIWA gave me five pages of far more in-depth analysis. This was cause for concern, but my debriefing with the CIA and FBI following the trip was cause for outright alarm: neither had ever heard of LIWA or the data mining capability it possessed.

As a result of experiences such as these, I introduced language into three successive Defense Authorization bills calling for the creation of an intelligence fusion center which I called NOAH, or National Operations and Analysis Hub. The NOAH concept is certainly familiar now, and is one of several recommendations made by your commission that has a basis in earlier acts of Congress. Despite my repeated efforts to establish NOAH, the CIA insisted that it would not be practical. Fortunately, this bureaucratic intransigence was overcome when Congress and President Bush acted in 2003 to create the Terrorism Threat Integration Center (now the National Counterterrorism Center). Unfortunately, it took the deaths of 3,000 people to bring us to the point where we could make this happen. Now, I am confident that under the able leadership of John Negroponte, the days of toleration for intelligence agencies that refuse to share information with each other are behind us.

The 9-11 Commission produced a book-length account of its findings, that the American people might educate themselves on the challenges facing our national effort to resist and defeat terrorism. Though under different circumstances, I eventually decided to do the same. I recently published a book critical of our intelligence agencies because even after 9/11, they were not getting the message. After failing to win the bureaucratic battle inside the Beltway, I decided to take my case to the American people.

In recent years, a reliable source that I refer to as "Ali" began providing me with detailed inside information on Iran's role in supporting terror and undermining the United States' global effort to eradicate it. I have forwarded literally hundreds of pages of information from Ali to the CIA, FBI, and DIA, as well as the appropriate congressional oversight committees. The response from our intelligence agencies has been

underwhelming, to put it mildly. Worse, I have documented occasions where the CIA has outright lied to me. While the mid-level bureaucrats at Langley may not be interested in what I have to say, their new boss is. Porter Goss has all of the information I have gathered, and I know he is ready to do what it takes to challenge the circle-the-wagons culture of the CIA. And Pete Hoekstra, the chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, is energized as well. Director Goss and Chairman Hoekstra are both outstanding leaders that know each other well from their work together in the House of Representatives, and I will continue to strongly support their efforts at reform.

All of this background leads to the reason I am writing to you today. Yesterday the national news media began in-depth coverage of a story that is not new. In fact, I have been talking about it for some time. From 1998 to 2001, Army Intelligence and Special Operations Command spearheaded an effort called Able Danger that was intended to map out al Qaeda. According to individuals that were part of the project, Able Danger identified Mohammed Atta as a terrorist threat before 9/11. Team members believed that the Atta cell in Brooklyn should be subject to closer scrutiny, but somewhere along the food chain of Administration bureaucrats and lawyers, a decision was made in late 2000 against passing the information to the FBI. These details are understandably of great interest to the American people, thus the recent media frenzy. However I have spoken on this topic for some time, in the House Armed Services and Homeland Security Committees, on the floor of the House on June 27, 2005, and at various speaking engagements.

The impetus for this letter is my extreme disappointment in the recent, and false, claim of the 9-11 Commission staff that the Commission was never given access to any information on Able Danger. The 9-11 Commission staff received not one but two briefings on Able Danger from former team members, yet did not pursue the matter. Furthermore, commissioners never returned calls from a defense intelligence official that had made contact with them to discuss this issue as a follow on to a previous meeting.

In retrospect, it appears that my own suggestions to the Commission might have directed investigators in the direction of Able Danger, had they been heeded. I personally reached out to members of the Commission several times with information on the need for a national collaborative capability, of which Able Danger was a prototype. In the context of those discussions, I referenced LIWA and the work it had been doing prior to 9/11. My chief of staff physically handed a package containing this information to one of the commissioners at your Commission's appearance on April 13, 2004 in the Hart Senate Office Building. I have spoken with Governor Kean by phone on this subject, and my office delivered a package with this information to the 9-11 Commission staff via courier. When the Commission briefed Congress with their findings on July 22, 2004, I asked the very first question in exasperation: "Why didn't you let Members of Congress who were involved in these issues testify before, or meet with, the Commission?"

The 9-11 Commission took a very high-profile role in critiquing intelligence agencies that refused to listen to outside information. The commissioners very publicly expressed their disapproval of agencies and departments that would not entertain ideas that did not originate in-house. Therefore it is no small irony that the Commission would in the end prove to be guilty of the very same offense when information of potentially critical importance was brought to its attention. The Commission's refusal to investigate

Able Danger after being notified of its existence, and its recent efforts to feign ignorance of the project while blaming others for supposedly withholding information on it, brings shame on the commissioners, and is evocative of the worst tendencies in the federal government that the Commission worked to expose.

Questions remain to be answered. The first: What lawyers in the Department of Defense made the decision in late 2000 not to pass the information from Able Danger to the FBI? And second: Why did the 9-11 Commission staff not find it necessary to pass this information to the Commissioners, and why did the 9-11 Commission staff not request full documentation of Able Danger from the team member that volunteered the information?

Answering these questions is the work of the commissioners now, and fear of tarnishing the Commission's legacy cannot be allowed to override the truth. The American people are counting on you not to "go native" by succumbing to the very temptations your Commission was assembled to indict. In the meantime, I have shared all that I know on this topic with the congressional committee chairmen that have oversight over the Department of Defense, the CIA, the FBI, and the rest of our intelligence gathering and analyzing agencies. You can rest assured that Congress will share your interest in how it is that this critical information is only now seeing the light of day.

Sincerely,

CURT WELDON,
Member of Congress.

This letter asks significant questions about a Top Secret intelligence unit in the military that identified Mohammed Atta and three associates in a Brooklyn cell 1 year before 9/11.

Mr. Speaker, these individuals are still in the military, and they have offered to testify publicly, but this administration is gagging them. This administration is not allowing these military officers to speak, and in fact, the Defense Intelligence Agency is in the midst of destroying the career of a 23-year Bronze Star recipient, a lieutenant colonel in the Army, for doing one thing, for telling the truth.

Mr. Speaker, there are bureaucrats in this administration, in the previous administration who do not want the story of Able Danger to come forward. Even though this secret intelligence unit was ordered by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, carried out by Special Forces Command, and we now know had information 2 days before the attack on the *Cole* that could have prevented 17 sailors from losing their lives; and in January of 2000, identified Mohammed Atta and, in September of 2000, tried to transfer that information to the FBI on three occasions.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the 9/11 Commission did not mention Able Danger at all. When they were asked about it by the New York Times in August of this year, they said, Well, it was historically insignificant.

Mr. Speaker, Louis Freeh, the FBI Director during the time of 9/11, was interviewed on national news by Tim Russert on "Meet the Press" 2 weeks ago, and when he was asked about his role in the information on 9/11, he said, Well, you know, if we would have had

the information from the Able Danger team, and I quote, "that is the kind of tactical intelligence that would have made a difference in stopping the hijacking." Louis Freeh says it could have stopped the hijacking, and the 9/11 Commission now says it is historically insignificant.

Mr. Speaker, there is something wrong in the Beltway. Tomorrow, at 12:30 in the House gallery, I will unveil additional new information on Able Danger. I will unveil an enhanced set of investigations because, Mr. Speaker, in the end, the families of the 3,000 victims, the families of the 17 sailors, the people in this country deserve to know the truth.

What happened before 9/11? Why is information being held in secret? Why are military officers being gagged? Why can the truth not be told?

Mr. Speaker, we must in this body demand the truth publicly.

AMERICAN WORKERS PENSION SYSTEM

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, millions of Americans are worried sick about their retirement nest eggs, and they are demanding decisive action by Congress. In just the last 2 weeks, two national publications have featured cover stories on the peril America's workers and retirees are facing.

On October 31 of this year, the issue of Time magazine has a stinging anthology of missteps and foibles of the Congress in the regulation of private pension plans. The cover story that is pictured here on this cover of Time magazine, called, "The Great Retirement Rip-off—Millions of Americans who think they will retire with benefits are in for a nasty surprise—how corporations are picking people's pockets—with the help of Congress."

That is the status of the American workers' pension system today. It is a system that is in peril, and it continues to be in peril because of the lack of action by this Congress.

For 3 years, we have been warning the President and this Congress that we must take decisive action to strengthen unfunded pension plans. Back in July of 2002, I wrote Secretary O'Neill and Secretary Chao, urging them to take action after private pension underfunding quadrupled \$25 billion to \$111 billion.

I wrote to them that "The implications of such massive shortfall in pension funds are staggering, for pensioners, taxpayers and for private companies themselves. As part of your agency's statutory duties, as overseers of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, it is incumbent upon you," Mr. and Mrs. Secretary, "to ensure that private pension plans continue to