

Memorandum for the Record

Event: Interview—Commander Scott Phillpott
Location: Commission office – K Street
Date: July 13, 2004
Access Restrictions: None
Commission Participants: Dieter Snell, Bonnie Jenkins
MFR by: Dieter Snell

Commission staff interviewed Commander Phillpott at the Commission's K Street office. Also in attendance was Major Jeanne Meyer of the Chairman's Legal Office.

The interview was arranged at the request of Commander Phillpott, who wanted to provide the Commission with information concerning his involvement in a particular information operations segment of the Department of Defense's "Able Danger" program over an approximately 18-month span before 9/11.

According to Phillpott, documents he worked with in Able Danger—and that he sought to organize in a link analysis program—included material from Februar-April 2000 showing Mohamed Atta to be a member of an al Qaeda cell located in Brooklyn. Phillpott's information on this subject was limited to his recollection of Atta's name and photo being part of an analyst notebook chart assembled by Lt. General Matt Gale (now retired and a DOD contractor). Phillpott saw the Atta material only briefly, before 9/11, at a point before it was redacted so as not to run afoul of posse comitatus restrictions, which Phillpott maintains were incorrectly imposed by DOD.

Phillpott contested the redaction of Atta (and other Brooklyn cell members) up his chain of command, to General Lambert, to no avail. According to Phillpott, General Schoonmaker was concerned about adverse publicity in the aftermath of Waco.

Phillpott's original assignment within Able Danger, in 1999, was to target Bin Ladin. His work initially was coordinated by a small group working in Tampa. The group, however, lacked adequate information access (JAC terminals), so Phillpott had to search for assistance elsewhere. He saw this need as particularly acute because, in his view, the nodal analysis being conducted by DIA, NSA, NRO and CIA was dysfunctional, focusing excessively on minor issues and not exploiting available subject matter experts.

Following a briefing at the Land Information Warfare Facility in Fort Belvoir (Information Dominance Center) on a data harvesting program, Phillpott became

convinced that his program should use automated link analysis, which experts would then be able to work with. SOCOM, however, dismissed the link analysis as a "new toy", and Phillipott's pitch went nowhere. As a result, he had to create a link on his own terminal between Tampa and IDC, which ultimately enabled him to brief Generals Schoonmanker and Shelton between May and July 2000. Both were impressed.

In-fighting among DIA analysts, however, prevented the system from gaining a wider following. After IDC shut it down—due to "legal concerns" (EO12003)—Phillipott was permitted to continue development of the system using Raytheon, receiving \$750,000 in funding. The work continued in Garland, Texas, where the system was built almost from scratch. VIPs came down for tours.

To address concerns still being raised by Legal, Phillipott developed a spreadsheet to codify entries and trace searches, a control to make sure that searches were not conducted on U.S. nationals.

In c. October 2000, "circumscribed" briefings were planned for General Shinseki (sp?) and Admiral Jacoby (sp?).

Phillipott had a very good group of analysts, one of whom already was warning that Yemen represented a real danger point. The *Cole* bombing occurred two days later. After the bombing, Admiral Steffens (sp?) asked Phillipott to do forensic link analysis and generate a timeline hypothesis. Al Zandani was linked to the Muslim Brotherhood and al Qaeda, which Phillipott's database showed to be providing funds. In addition, the Aden Container Terminal—where the bombing took place—had a minority (49%) owner who was linked to UBL.

Phillipott sent his analysis to Centcom but nothing happened. He then clashed with his new boss, who was not cleared to see everything in Phillipott's program. The boss forced Phillipott to transfer back to Tampa, ending his involvement in the program, which Raytheon has continued to develop as "Genesis."

Phillipott thinks DIA is not exploiting all the data at its proposal, and especially is missing an opportunity to do language mapping. (Phillipott believes UBL has considerable influence over the French.)

Mitre Corp. (DOD contractor) now is in charge of the program, in which Phillipott no longer is involved.

Phillipott noted that the USG unwisely relied on the Political Security Agency in Yemen to provide reporting on political activity within Yemen. The PSA was prevented under Yemeni law from reporting on the activity of Yemeni national, so much information was missed.