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Curt Weldon: CIA, FBI 'Out of Control'

Kenneth R. Timmerman
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WASHINGTON -- Defeated Pennsylvania Republican Curt Weldon believes that the CIA and the FBI are "out of control," and that the next Congress must do better oversight to prevent them from continued interference in domestic U.S. politics.

The charge by the outgoing Republican congressman and deputy chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, one of the top targets of the Democratic National Committee in November's congressional election, was not idle speculation.

"Just yesterday, FBI Director Mueller took the unusual step of publicly acknowledging that the FBI had launched a criminal inquiry into the activities of two of its agents for misconduct in a federal investigation," Weldon said. "Even more unusual, Mueller said that the improper leaks involved Congressman Weldon."

Weldon spoke to NewsMax on Friday just outside the House chamber in the Capitol building on his last day as a United States congressman. He planned to stay for votes scheduled to continue until 11 p.m.

Six weeks before last November's election, Weldon continued to dominate his Democratic opponent in the polls. Then, out of nowhere, "anonymous law enforcement sources" leaked to the press that the FBI was conducting a federal probe into the Pennsylvania Republican for alleged influence peddling.

Weldon has been in Congress since 1986, and was re-elected in 2004 with 59 percent of the vote. After a televised FBI raid on his daughter's townhouse on Oct. 16, Weldon dropped like a rock in the polls.

"I was exceptionally disappointed, and that is being charitable in terms of my response," Mueller told the Senate Judiciary Committee on Thursday, referring to the leaks in the "Weldon matter."

"It is unfair in advance of an election; but, as importantly to us, it adversely affected the investigation," Mueller said.

Judiciary Committee Chairman Sen. Arlen Specter, R-Pa., blasted Mueller and said he found the FBI behavior to be "highly prejudicial."

Weldon's opponent, retired Rear Adm. Joseph A. Sestak, won top drawer support from the national Democratic Party, including an endorsement and campaign appearance by Bill Clinton on Oct. 5.

The list of his campaign contributors reads like a "Who's Who" of the Clinton administration. Contributors included former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, former National Security adviser Sandy Berger, former White House political director John Podesta, and a host of Clinton White House aides including national security experts Rand Beers and Bob Bell, and terrorism analyst Daniel Benjamin.

Also significant, Weldon believes, was a contribution from Mary McCarthy, a senior CIA official forced to resign just 10 days from retirement in April on allegations she had leaked highly-classified information to The Washington Post that helped expose the existence of CIA secret prisons for terrorists.

"The CIA is out of control," Weldon said. "They are not leaking for the good of the country, or out of national security concerns, but purely to satisfy a personal agenda."

Weldon believes he became a top target of the national Democratic Party because of his investigations into Clinton-era national security scandals, including the sell-off of military technology to communist China. He further cooled his relationship with the Democratic Party after asserting that before 9/11, the Able Danger intelligence program identified Mohamed Atta and other 9/11 hijackers as possible members in al-Qaida.

Weldon also charged the former CIA station chief in Paris, Bill Murray, of attempting to smear the incoming chairman of the House Permanent Select Intelligence Committee, Silvestre Reyes, by alleging that Reyes attended a meeting in Paris with Iran-contra figure, Manoucher Ghorbanifar.

Those allegations appeared in a left-wing Internet publication on Nov. 17 that was clearly aimed at thwarting Reyes's candidacy to take over the sensitive intelligence oversight position. "What does this say about Reyes' judgment, meeting with a guy like this?" left-wing journalist Laura Rozen wrote.

Impeached former federal judge Rep. Alcee Hastings, D-Fla., was in line to become chairman of the intelligence committee, but was facing stiff opposition from security-minded Democrats as well as Republicans, who argued he was unfit for the job. Reyes was seen as a compromise candidate for the job.

"Bill Murray's aim was to impugn the reputation of the incoming chairman of the House intelligence committee," Weldon said. "This is outrageous. And it is a blatant lie, because Reyes never met with Ghorbanifar in Paris."

Weldon also accused Murray of having leaked to the press the name of a confidential source in Paris who had provided Weldon with intelligence information on Iran.

"I questioned the CIA about this," Weldon told NewsMax. "They sent me a memo with the name of my source blacked out. I asked them why. They said, because it was classified. That didn't stop Murray from releasing his name."

"This is what the whole Valerie Plame case was about," he added. Murray was embarrassed because he had mishandled the informant, so was seeking to discredit him through the press, Weldon believed.

Despite protests to CIA and FBI over Murray's leaks, neither agency launched a criminal investigation. "Murray got away with it," Weldon said. "This demonstrates everything that is wrong with our intelligence community."

Weldon said he was not bitter about his defeat, but was encouraging Congress to do stricter oversight of an intelligence community he believed was "out of control."

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