

Petraeus: Resignation or Sacking?

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Region: [USA](#)

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Some observers call Washington a city of scandals. Lots of intrigue reflects daily life in the nation's capital. Elected and appointed officials come and go.

Most often it's uneventful. Other times once powerful figures fell from grace or scandals affecting them rose to the level of affixing a "gate" suffix on what happened.

Watergate, Whitewatergate, Iran/Contragate, Koreagate, Travelgate, and Troopergate among others come to mind.

Perhaps Petraeusgate will enter the lexicon of political scandals. You read it here first.

Forget resignation over extramarital sex nonsense unless state secrets were compromised. Lots of elected and appointed Washington officials had affairs. Many likely have current ones.

Resignations don't generally follow. Newt Gingrich survived sex and ethics scandals. He resigned as House Speaker after the Republicans fared poorly in 1998 off-year elections.

In 1999, extramarital sex defrocked Speaker-elect Bob Livingstone. He could have stayed, but opted to become a high-paid DC lobbyist.

Extramarital affairs didn't defrock past notable officials. They included Alexander Hamilton, Thomas Jefferson, James Buchanan, Grover Cleveland, Warren Harding, Franklin Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower (during WW II), Jack Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson, and Bill Clinton. Unconfirmed rumors also surfaced about GHW and GW Bush.

Jimmy Carter once admitted to having "lusted in his heart," but never let it go further than that.

As more information and rumors surface, expect lots more written about Petraeus. Another emperor has no clothes. Petraeus was more paper hero than real one.

The man behind the image was fake. He's a shadow of how he and spin doctors portrayed him publicly.

Competence didn't earn him four stars. Former peers accused him of brown-nosing his way to the top. It made him a brand as much as general. Talk about him being presidential material surfaced.

In 2007, Time magazine made him runner-up as Person of the Year. The designation is as meaningless and unworthy as Nobel Peace awards.

So is current and previous praise. John McCain once called him “one of (our) greatest generals.” His judgment leaves much to be desired.

He’s not the best and brightest on Capitol Hill. He once admitted to graduating near the bottom of his Naval Academy class.

White House and media spin praised Petraeus’ performance as Iraq commander and CENTCOM head. It was falsified hype. Performance contradicted facts. Iraq was more disaster than success. His Afghanistan surge failed. Syria on his CIA watch didn’t fare better.

Before he fell from grace, he was called aggressive in nature, an innovative thinker on counterinsurgency warfare, a talisman, a white knight, a do-or-die competitive legend, and a man able to turn defeat into victory.

In 2008, [James Petras](#) described him well in an article titled “General Petraeus: Zionism’s Military Poodle. From Surge to Purge to Dirge.”

He explained what spin doctors concealed. He quoted Petraeus’ former commander, Admiral William Fallon, calling him “a piece of brown-nosing chicken shit.” Petras added:

“In theory and strategy, in pursuit of defeating the Iraqi resistance, General Petraeus was a disastrous failure, an outcome predictable from the very nature of his appointment and his flawed wartime reputation.”

The generalissimo is more myth than man. He shamelessly supported Israel “in northern Iraq and the Bush ‘Know Nothings’ in charge of Iraq and Iran policy planning.”

Petraeus had few competitors to head CENTCOM. It was because other candidates wouldn’t stoop as low as he did. He shamelessly flacked for Israel and supported Bush administration belligerence.

Petras criticized his “slavish adherence to....confrontation with Iran. Blaming Iran for his failed military policies served a double purpose – it covered up his incompetence and it secured the support of” uberhawk Senator Joe Lieberman.

Doing so also served his unstated presidential ambitions. He climbed the ladder of success by being super-hawkish, brown-nosing the right superiors, lying to Congress, surviving the scorn of some peers, hiding his failures, hyping a fake Iranian threat, supporting Israel, unjustifiably claiming Iraq success, and boasting how he’d do it throughout the region.

In other words, he hoped to rise to the top by manufacturing successes and concealing failures. Manipulated media hype made a hero out of what Petras called “a disastrous failure” with a record to prove it.

Petraeus benefitted from supporting Bush imperial ambitions and Israel’s regional agenda. At one time, the Israeli Lobby loved him. Perhaps no longer after March 2010. In [testimony](#) before the Senate Armed Services Committee, he said:

“The enduring hostilities between Israel and some of its neighbors present distinct challenges to our ability to advance our interests in the AOR (Area of Operations).”

“Israeli-Palestinian tensions often flare into violence and large-scale armed confrontations. The conflict foments anti-American sentiment, due to a perception of US favoritism for Israel.”

“Arab anger over the Palestinian question limits the strength and depth of US partnerships with governments and peoples in the AOR and weakens the legitimacy of moderate regimes in the Arab world.”

“Meanwhile, al-Qaeda and other militant groups exploit that anger to mobilize support. The conflict also gives Iran influence in the Arab world through its clients, Lebanese Hizballah and Hamas.”

In other words, Petraeus echoed others saying Israeli interests often run counter to America’s. The so-called special relationship at times does more harm than good.

At the same time, Petraeus very much supports Washington’s imperial agenda. Apparently he believes achieving it depends on delinking from Israeli interests when they harm America’s.

Anti-Defamation League head [Abe Foxman](#) responded angrily, saying:

“Gen. Petraeus has simply erred in linking the challenges faced by the US and coalition forces in the region to a solution of the Israeli-Arab conflict, and blaming extremist activities on the absence of peace and the perceived US favoritism for Israel. This linkage is dangerous and counterproductive.”

This may have contributed to his leaving. Challenging Israeli Lobby power is high-risk. Perhaps it decided Petraeus had to go.

Whether so or not, he’s a four-star, now defrocked, failure. Another paper emperor has no clothes. He never did but now we know.

Other opinions surfaced on why he left. [WND breaking news](#) said:

“Forget what you’ve heard – could this be why Petraeus resigned?” Speculation “focus(ed) in large part on his role in an alleged cover-up of the attacks against the U.S. mission in Benghazi this past September.”

Overlooked are secret CIA Benghazi operations. Involved are heavy weapons sent to Syrian opposition fighters. Petraeus left days before his scheduled congressional testimony.

He’ll either come voluntarily or be subpoenaed. What he’ll be asked or say remains to be seen. If it’s too controversial, expect closed hearings.

The Benghazi operation is erroneously called a US consulate. It’s “a meeting place to coordinate aid for the rebel-led insurgencies in the Middle East.”

Tasks performed include “collaborating with Arab countries on the recruitment of fighters – including jihadists – to target Bashar al-Assad’s regime in Syria.”

Consulate designation provides cover. Obama and Clinton call the post a “US mission.” The State Department lists no consulate in Benghazi.

WND reported earlier that ambassador Stevens “played a central role in recruiting (anti-Assad) jihadists.” He coordinated with Saudi and Qatari efforts. Fighters go to Syria via Turkey.

Washington claims only non-lethal aid is provided. In fact, the CIA and perhaps Pentagon are actively involved in arming anti-Assad fighters.

Agency efforts to conceal its operations may have contributed to Stevens’ death. Perhaps Petraeus is blamed and was sacked. Letting him resign for any reason is how Washington usually orchestrates exits. Why he chose extramarital sex he’ll have to explain.

[Robert Parry](#) said Petraeus’ departure “removes the last high-ranking neoconservative holdover from George W. Bush’s administration and gives the reelected President Barack Obama more maneuvering room to negotiate a settlement over Iran’s nuclear program.”

Petraeus wasn’t an Obama favorite. He had suspect loyalties. An unnamed administration source said “some key figures close to the President wanted (him) out, and there was no sadness” to see him go.

The New York Times and Washington Post said FBI investigations began months ago into a “potential criminal matter.” It wasn’t focused on Petraeus.

Information surfaced about a potentially compromised computer he used. Security concerns were raised. FBI agents discussed this with him.

An unnamed congressional official briefed on the matter urged him to fall on his sword and leave. Whether he did or was pushed who knows.

Parry thinks Obama is “clearing the decks (to) move ahead more aggressively with his own foreign policy.” Defense Secretary Gates is gone. Now Petraeus, and word is Clinton and others want out or will be replaced.

Perhaps Obama “learned a key lesson of modern Washington: surrounding yourself with ideological and political rivals may sound good, but it is usually an invitation to have your policies sabotaged.”

A Final Comment

[Ray McGovern](#) is a retired CIA officer (1963 – 1990), turned activist and political critic. He’s also a valued Progressive Radio News Hour guest.

In April 2011, he wrote about “Petraeus at CIA – Can He Tell the Truth?” He said Obama picking him as CIA director “raise(d) troubling questions.”

“What if CIA analysts assess(ed)” his Iraq and Afghanistan performance as failure? Would he accept or punish “critical analysis?”

“The Petraeus appointment also suggests that the President places little value on getting the straight scoop on these key war-related issues.”

“If he did want the kind of intelligence analysis that, at times, could challenge the military, why is he giving the CIA job to a general with a huge incentive to gild the lily regarding the

'progress' made under his command?"

McGovern compared Petraeus to the "ghost of Westmoreland Past." His Southeast Asia record included "deliberate distortion and dishonesty." Intelligence analysts proved it.

Progress he touted was failure. Petraeus appears to be Westmoreland redux. Lots of evidence confirms it. Now he's gone. Expect lots more said about him. It remains to be seen how much dirty linen will be aired.

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