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CIA Chief Petraeus Resigns, Leaked Classified Info to Girlfriend

By Jason Ditz

November 9, 2012

In a bizarre turn of events, CIA Director David Petraeus has tendered his resignation today after the FBI discovered he was having an affair with his biographer, Paula Broadwell, who is under investigation for improperly accessing classified information.

In his resignation letter, Petraeus couched the decision as a function of his moral failing, saying “such behavior is unacceptable, both as a husband and as the leader of an organization such as ours.” Petraeus has been married for 37 years. Broadwell is also reportedly married with two children.

The real question, however, is not so much about the “extensive access” to his person that Broadwell was given while penning the biography All In, but rather access she may have been given to his personal email account, which was being monitored by the FBI as part of the investigation. So far no charges have been filed and the FBI insists that Petraeus himself wasn’t under investigation.

Still, that one of the nation’s top spymasters may have ended up leaking classified information to his girlfriend by way of his email account is a major embarrassment even without charges, and leaves Mike Morell as acting CIA director.

The sudden resignation of Petraeus means he will no longer be testifying to Congress in relation to the September Benghazi fiasco, and rather that Morell, as his (at least temporary) successor will be doing so. Military officials insist Petraeus' resignation has nothing to do with Benghazi.

The timing of the resignation is also telling, as indications are this FBI investigation has been ongoing for quite some time, but the resignation waited until immediately after the presidential election. President Obama has been a vocal supporter of Petraeus in numerous roles, and the revelation that he appointed a leader of the nation's most visible spy agency who couldn't even keep an affair under wraps would certainly have been politically damaging if it came out before the vote.

Obama went on to praise Petraeus after the resignation for his "intellectual rigor" and "patriotism," insisting he made the nation safer. Exactly how safe will likely only be apparent to people who have access to the classified data, like Broadwell.