

**THE BLOG**

# Hey Porter - Not Even “Citing Personal Reasons”?

By Marty Kaplan

05/05/2006 02:15 pm ET | Updated May 25, 2011

What’s stopping Porter Goss from claiming that he wants to spend more time with his family? Even if he and his deputy, Dusty Foggo, are about to be swept up by the widening hookergate investigation that TPMuckraker.com has been covering, the least the president can do is offer something better than this retroactive “time of transition” dodge. The Negroponte excuse doesn’t pass the smirk test, either; surely Goss doesn’t love power more than he hates terrorists. I wonder whether a Presidential Medal of Freedom could still be given to someone who’s been indicted.

UPDATE: Forty-five minutes after the Oval Office announcement, and moments after the Wall Street Journal’s John Harwood wonders on MSNBC whether Joe Lieberman might a candidate to replace Goss (Extra! Langley Gets Joementum!), Norah O’Donnell finally points out that the absence of any face-saving BushCo excuse for Goss’s Friday-afternoon bombshell smells awfully fishy. She has the temerity to put the words “Goss,” “Foggo,” “Cunningham,” “poker,” and “investigation” into the same sentence. “It just raises the question of whether there’s something else out there,” she says. Ya think?

UPPERUPDATE: The cable news guest bookers are hauling onto the air one CIA entry in their rolodexes after another. They’re sagely connecting the dots; Goss’s departure, they say, was a long time coming. I wonder why next to none of them is paying attention to the biggest dot of all. If the White House had expected this, they’d have had a strategy in place to announce it to the world — a better cover story, a successor-nominee in place, advance backgrounding to friendly media.

Oh, and what a relief: Joe Lieberman says that if asked, he will not serve.

RUSSERT WEIGHS IN: His CIA sources tell him that Goss-Negroponte conversations about Goss’s exit strategy have been going on for quite a while, and that on Monday, Bush will tell us that he’s known about this all along, and has been assembling a shortlist for Goss’s successor for weeks. What - we’re supposed to think that this cover story just slipped Bush’s mind when he dropped the stinkbomb?

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