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CIA boss resigns in White House shake-up

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Related: CIA boss Porter Goss resigns



The file photo taken on April 27, 2005 shows CIA Director Porter Goss attending a hearing on Capitol Hill in Washington. U.S. President George W. Bush announced Friday that CIA Director Porter Goss is resigning. (Xinhua Photo)

WASHINGTON, May 5 (Xinhua) -- Less than two years since he took over as director of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), Porter Goss abruptly resigned from the position on Friday, taking many people by surprise.

Announcing Goss's resignation at the White House, U.S. President George W. Bush said Goss offered his resignation Friday morning and he had accepted it.

Bush described Goss's tenure at the CIA as "one of transitions," during which he said Goss had led the agency "ably." Both Bush and Goss, however, offered no reason for the resignation.

Goss, 67, became CIA director in September 2004, two months after the Sept. 11 commission released its final report on the terrorist attacks, in which the commission criticized the U.S. intelligence community, including the CIA, for intelligence failures and missteps that had allowed the attacks to happen.

Terrorists hijacked four passenger planes on Sept. 11, 2001, and crashed them onto the World Trade Center in New York and the Pentagon in Washington, killing nearly 3,000 people.

"He knows the CIA inside and out. He's the right man to lead this important agency at this critical moment in our nation's history," Bush said in August 2004, when he nominated Goss, a former Republican Congressman from Florida who headed the House Intelligence Committee and was once a CIA officer.

He served as the CIA director at a time when the agency was under fire for both its intelligence failures on terrorism and on prewar intelligence on Iraq.

When Bush passed over Goss to nominate in early 2005 then U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John Negroponte as the first director of National Intelligence, a post the Sept. 11 commission recommended to create in its report to take control of the country's 15 spy agencies, however, things began to change.

Under the intelligence reform act approved by the Congress in December 2004, Negroponte would become the president's chief intelligence adviser, and the Office of the Director of National Intelligence would take over from the CIA to write the president's daily briefs, reducing the CIA's power and its chief's prestige.

In addition, Goss's time with the CIA was marked by a strained relationship with the agency's clandestine operation department, and the departure of many long-time agency officials, including CIA Deputy Director John McLaughlin. It was also no secret in Washington that Goss and Negroponte had engaged in turf battles.

A CNN report said Negroponte decided recently to transfer certain functions from the CIA to his office, but the decision was fiercely resisted by Goss. And after the White House sided with Negroponte and his deputy, Michael Hayden, it was a mutual decision that Goss would resign, the report quoted sources as saying.

In a statement, Goss said it was his desire "to lead the CIA, this is where I started my career, and where I always wanted to return." But some Democrats hailed his departure.

Democratic Senator John Rockefeller said in a statement that Goss's chief mission at the CIA was to reform its operations and to lead the agency with foresight and vision, "yet his tenure was marked by an exodus of talented and respected intelligence officers and a demoralized staff."

Representative David Obey termed Goss's management style as one that had been "wrecking the country's most important intelligence agency."

At a time when Bush's approval ratings plunged and the president was shaking up its team to reinvigorate his second term, it would only be a natural choice for Goss to resign, analysts said.

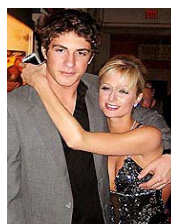
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Editor: Mo Hong'e

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