

CLASSIFICATION: UNCLASSIFIED

(b)(3)



UNCLASSIFIED

Subject:

Fwd: Devotion to Duty (GEN Petraeus) by Paul R. Pillar

To:

Petraeus David H.

From: Paula Broadwell

Date: 01/25/2012 07:10 AM

Hide Details

From: Paula Broadwell

To: Petraeus David H.

(b)(3)  
(b)(6)

(b)(3)

(b)(3)

(b)(6)

Please respond to Paula Broadwell

(b)(6)

FYI

Sent from my iPhone while on the run. Please excuse typos.

Begin forwarded message:

From:

Date: January 25, 2012 6:05:33 EST

To:

Subject: Devotion to Duty (GEN Petraeus) by Paul R. Pillar

(b)(6)

(b)(6)

## Devotion to Duty

January 23, 2012

Paul R. Pillar [2]



Successful implementation of public policy and—even more important—maintaining the principles of democratic government depend on the professionalism of public servants who have a clear sense of their proper role. This means the dutiful execution even of lawfully determined policies with which an official may not agree. It means staying in one's proper lane notwithstanding any urges to stray from it. If public servants did not do these things, the result would be chaos in public administration and a breakdown of democratic accountability.

None of this should be taken for granted. In the United States, the lines between the prerogative to make policy and the duty to execute it are not as clear and widely understood as in some of its sister democracies. This is largely because of an unusually large stratum of political appointees, who are not wholly part of either the policy-making or policy-executing portions of government. External pressures from those wanting policy executors to nudge the policy one way or another do not help. Nor do tendentious interpretations by outside commentators of the conduct of officials who are only trying to do their jobs. Staying in one's lane is sometimes difficult.

It is therefore reassuring to see conspicuous examples of senior officials doing just that despite pressures to do otherwise, especially when it involves someone of such fame and stature that many would *expect* him to do otherwise. The *Washington Post* has [an account](#) [3] of how David Petraeus, while still military commander in Afghanistan, responded to President Obama's decision to schedule a faster withdrawal of U.S. forces from Afghanistan than Petraeus favored. In a nutshell, Petraeus responded exactly as a dedicated professional should have responded. Before the decision, he gave his best military advice about what would be needed to accomplish his mission, and after the decision he focused on implementing it. In response to suggestions that he resign, he said, "the troops can't quit." Petraeus correctly believed that "military leaders should provide advice that is informed by important nonmilitary and military factors beyond their strict purview, but is driven by the situation on the ground and military considerations." He also understood that the political leadership making the decision must take broader considerations into account. His message to his staff hit exactly the right note: "All of us will support the decision and strive to execute it effectively. That is our responsibility as military leaders."

(b)(3)

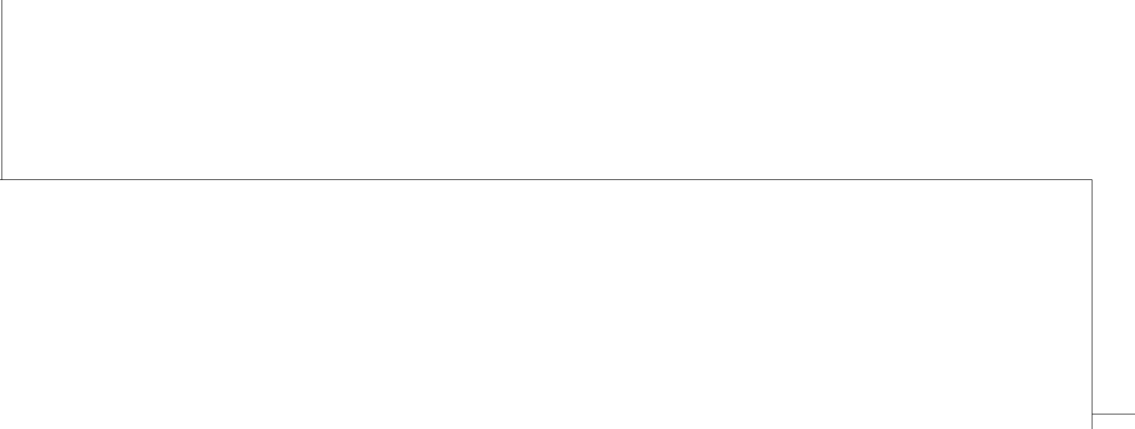
President Obama also had the right concept of lanes and responsibilities in systematically seeking input from all his military and civilian advisers before making the decision himself. The concept was clear as well in the president acknowledging that Petraeus should be honest in responding to Congressional questions about his own preference regarding the troop withdrawal from Afghanistan.

In taking off his uniform and becoming director of the CIA, Petraeus continued to evince a clear comprehension of the different roles and responsibilities that go with different jobs. He understands the distinction between intelligence and policy and the one between personal views and institutional positions.

David Petraeus deserves the nation's respect and gratitude for his skill and accomplishments, and for taking on some extremely difficult jobs. He also deserves it for setting such an outstanding example of what it means to dedicate oneself wholly to performing the precise duties of whatever job one occupies.

*Image: [isafmedia](#) (4)*

More by



(b)(6)

(b)(3)