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Report No. H08L106050007 March 19, 2008

Inspector General

United States Department of Defense

ALLEGED MISCONDUCT: VICE ADMIRAL JOHN. D. STUFFLEBEEM, U.S. NAVY DIRECTOR, NAVY STAFF

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INSPECTOR GENERAL
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
400 ARMY NAVY DRIVE
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22202-4704

MAR 19 2008

MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

SUBJECT: Investigation Concerning Vice Admiral John D. Stufflebeem, U.S. Navy, Director, Navy Staff

We recently completed an investigation to address an allegation that while serving in the rank of commander as the Naval Aide to President George H. W. Bush in 1991, Vice Admiral (VADM) John D. Stufflebeem, U.S. Navy, Director, Navy Staff, engaged in an affair with an employee of another Federal agency and was removed from his duties as a result. The matter was allegedly not documented in official records and, therefore, was not considered by promotion boards or the Senate Armed Services Committee as he progressed in rank from captain to vice admiral. Based on evidence gathered during the course of our investigation, we also considered whether VADM Stufflebeem provided false and misleading testimony to us with regard to the circumstances of his removal and matters related to his relationship with the woman.

We concluded that VADM Stufflebeem provided false and misleading testimony during our investigation. Such conduct could be characterized as violations of Article 107, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), "False official statements"; Article 134, UCMJ, "False swearing"; and provisions of DoD 5500.7-R, "Joint Ethics Regulation (JER)," on honesty.[1]

By letter dated February 15, 2008, we provided VADM Stufflebeem the opportunity to comment on the initial results of our investigation. In his February 22, 2008, response, VADM Stufflebeem "categorically den[ied]" that he made false statements with the intent to deceive, and found it "extremely regrettable" that we would question his integrity. After carefully considering VADM Stufflebeem's submission, interviewing the woman with whom he had the affair, and reevaluating the evidence in the case, we stand by our conclusions in the matter.

We recommend you consider appropriate corrective action with regard to VADM Stufflebeem.

A copy of our report is attached for your review. In addition, we are providing a second copy of our report, which has been redacted and includes citations showing the

[1] We did not evaluate whether the alleged affair could be characterized as a violation of standards in light of the passage of time and the lapse of applicable statutes of limitations under the UCMJ.

sources of the evidence that we considered in rendering our conclusions. That cited version of the report is found in the attached fact book, which contains copies of documents and testimony that are cited as evidence, as well as a copy of VADM Stufflebeem's response to our initial conclusions. To protect the woman's privacy, we referred to her in the report as "Jane Doe," and have redacted her name and Federal agency from copies of our initial conclusions letter and VADM Stufflebeem's response that are included in the fact book.

The redacted report and any of the documents and testimony in the fact book may be released to VADM Stufflebeem at your discretion. Should you wish to review additional documentation that was gathered during this investigation, please submit a written justification to this Office so that we may make appropriate arrangements.

By separate correspondence we provided the results of our investigation to VADM Stufflebeem. Please contact me or Mr. Donald M. Horstman, Assistant Inspector General for Administrative Investigations, at (703) 604-8316, should you have any questions.

Claude M. Kicklighter

Attachments:
As stated

ALLEGED MISCONDUCT: VICE ADMIRAL JOHN D. STUFFLEBEEM, U.S. NAVY DIRECTOR, NAVY STAFF

I. INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

We initiated the investigation in response to an allegation that while serving in the rank of commander as the Naval Aide to President George H. W. Bush in 1991, Vice Admiral (VADM) John D. Stufflebeem, U.S. Navy, Director, Navy Staff, engaged in an affair with an employee from another Federal agency and was removed from his duties as a result.[1] The matter was allegedly not documented in official records and, therefore, was not considered by promotion boards or the Senate Armed Services Committee as he progressed in rank from captain to vice admiral.

Based on evidence gathered during the course of our investigation, we also considered whether VADM Stufflebeem provided false and misleading testimony to us with regard to the circumstances of his removal and matters related to his relationship with the woman (specifically, the nature of their relationship, misrepresentation of his marital status to the woman, and his inability to recall her name and whether she accompanied him on a specific overseas trip). If substantiated, the conduct related to his testimony could be characterized as violations of Article 107, Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ), "False official statements"; Article 134, UCMJ, "False swearing"; and provisions of DoD 5500.7-R, "Joint Ethics Regulation (JER)," on honesty.[2]

We concluded that VADM Stufflebeem provided false and misleading testimony in this investigation. His testimony with regard to the circumstances of his removal as Naval Aide to the President, the nature of his relationship with Ms. Doe, and the misrepresentation of his marital status to her was inconsistent with the weight of the evidence, to include the testimony of Ms. Doe and other witnesses who presented a consistent account of the events. Similarly, we did not find credible his professed inability to recall both Ms. Doe's name and whether she accompanied him on the overseas trip during which testimony established they began their relationship. Under the circumstances, it did not appear VADM Stufflebeem's misstatements in these areas of testimony were inadvertent.

Our initial conclusions in this case were based on evidence gathered from VADM Stufflebeem's supervisors at the time and other witnesses. In deference to Ms. Doe's privacy, we did not request an interview with her in the initial stage of our investigation, but did so after receiving VADM Stufflebeem's response to our tentative conclusions letter. In that letter, dated February 15, 2008, we provided VADM Stufflebeem the opportunity to comment on the initial results of our inquiry. Based on the preponderance of the evidence at that point in the

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[1] The complaint to this Office included the first name of the woman involved and the Federal agency where she worked. We refer to her in this report as "Jane Doe."

[2] We did not evaluate whether the alleged affair could be characterized as a violation of standards in light of the passage of time and the lapse of applicable statutes of limitations under the UCMJ.

investigation, we concluded that he provided false and misleading testimony in three areas: the circumstances of his removal, the nature of his relationship with Ms. Doe, and his inability to recall her name.

In his February 22, 2008, written response, VADM Stufflebeem "categorically den[ied]" that he made false statements with the intent to deceive.[3] He wrote that doing so "would run counter to the primary ethical value and character by which I have lived throughout my career as a Naval Officer." VADM Stufflebeem asserted he was "honest and forthright in every possible way," and "cannot emphasize enough" that he had "spoken the truth as I remember"; "not manipulated the truth"; and "not withheld information." He further wrote:

> [I] find it extremely regrettable, in a case that has such far reaching implications for my career, that you have chosen to question my integrity . . .. The unfortunate truth in this case is that, as a result of lack of evidence to substantiate the allegation of a sexual relationship and in lieu of investigating the underlying allegations, you have chosen to accuse me of being untruthful as I defended myself against these allegations.

With regard to his removal, VADM Stufflebeem stated that he was never told he was "fired" and that he left the assignment thinking he was being reassigned by mutual agreement. He cited several "objective facts" to support his belief, to include a fitness report that complimented his service as military aide and a letter from President Bush. He also pointed out that while he was unable to recall the woman's name, he did not deny her existence or knowing her.

On the topic of the nature of his relationship with the woman, VADM Stufflebeem asserted he "hid nothing" in his two sworn interviews with us, and reiterated he had no sexual intimacy with the woman beyond one kiss. He wrote that our letter to him offered no "first hand, direct evidence of [his] having sexual intercourse with anyone," and challenged, "More importantly your letter contains one glaring omission: testimony from [Jane Doe], herself."

In light of VADM Stufflebeem's rebuttal to our tentative conclusions, we believed we were obligated to contact Ms. Doe to request an interview under oath. She readily agreed. We found Ms. Doe to be an extremely credible, candid, and articulate witness who willingly participated in our interview with the knowledge and support of her husband. Ms. Doe confirmed that she and VADM Stufflebeem had an extensive physical relationship which began on an overseas trip and lasted intermittently for approximately 8 months. The relationship included sexual intercourse on approximately one dozen occasions, to include intercourse during overseas travel, in the White House, and in her home. She also confirmed, among other details, that VADM Stufflebeem told her that he was a widower, that his wife died of breast cancer, and

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[3] While we have included what we believe is a reasonable synopsis of the response provided by VADM Stufflebeem, we recognize that any attempt to summarize risks oversimplification and omission. Accordingly, we incorporated comments by VADM Stufflebeem here and provided a copy of his response to the Secretary of the Navy together with this report.

that his two daughters' nanny was a woman named '[redacted]'[4] Moreover, she testified that VADM Stufflebeem certainly knew of and called her by her first and last names throughout their relationship.

After carefully considering VADM Stufflebeem's response, interviewing Ms. Doe, and reevaluating the evidence, we stand by our initial conclusions that he provided false and misleading testimony with regard to the circumstances of his removal, the nature of his relationship with Ms. Doe, and his inability to recall her name. Further, we have also concluded that VADM Stufflebeem provided false and misleading testimony in the additional areas of misrepresenting his marital status to Ms. Doe and his inability to recall whether she accompanied him on the overseas trip during which they initiated their relationship.

We recommend the Secretary of the Navy consider appropriate corrective action.

This report sets forth our findings and conclusions based on a preponderance of the evidence.

II. BACKGROUND

VADM Stufflebeem, while in the rank of commander, was assigned to the White House Military Office on April 17, 1989, and served as Naval Aide to President George H. W. Bush from June 1989 through August 8, 1990.

The alleged misconduct initially surfaced in 1999 but was not investigated by the Naval IG because the anonymous complaint lacked detail and because VADM Stufflebeem's superiors were apparently aware of the matter and took corrective action through his reassignment. Our Office concurred with Naval IG action at that time.

This investigation is the result of a recent complaint to this Office that provided significantly more detail than that in 1999. The recent complaint alleged that while serving as the Naval Aide to President George H. W. Bush in 1991, VADM Stufflebeem engaged in a "long term affair" with an employee of another Federal agency named "Jane," and he conducted the affair by misrepresenting himself to the woman as a widower when, in fact, he was married with two children. On discovery of the affair by his supervisors, VADM Stufflebeem was allegedly immediately removed from his duties and reassigned to the Pentagon. The complaint also identified by name Lieutenant General (LTG) Richard G. Trefry, U.S. Army (Retired), Military Assistant to the President; [redacted] U.S. Navy, [redacted] White House Military Office; Jane's supervisor; and Jane's Federal agency.

III. SCOPE

We interviewed VADM Stufflebeem twice under oath, the second time under rights advisement and with military defense counsel present. We also interviewed other witnesses with knowledge of the matters at issue, to include Jane Doe, and reviewed documentary evidence.

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[4] VADM Stufflebeem's wife -- who was then and is now alive -- is named [redacted]

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IV. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

A. Did VADM Stufflebeem provide false and misleading testimony during this investigation?

Standards

Article 107, UCMJ, "False official statements"

The elements of the offense of making a false official statement are that:

- the Service member signed a certain official document or made a certain official statement;
- the document or statement was false in certain particulars;
- the Service member knew it to be false at the time of signing it or making it; and
- the false document or statement was made with the intent to deceive.

Article 134, UCMJ, "False swearing"

The elements of the offense of false swearing are that:

- the Service member took an oath or equivalent;
- the oath or equivalent was administered to the Service member in a matter in which such oath or equivalent was required or authorized by law;
- the oath or equivalent was administered by a person having authority to do so;
- upon this oath or equivalent the Service member made or subscribed a certain statement;
- the statement was false;
- the Service member did not then believe the statement to be true; and
- under the circumstances, the conduct of the Service member was to the prejudice of good order and discipline in the armed forces or was of a nature to bring discredit upon the armed forces.

DoD 5500.7-R, "Joint Ethics Regulation (JER)," dated August 30, 1993

Chapter 12 of the JER, "Ethical Conduct," states that DoD employees should consider ethical values when making decisions as part of official duties. In that regard, the JER states that being truthful, straightforward, and candid are aspects of the primary ethical value of "honesty." It elaborates on those characteristics as follows:

- "Truthfulness is required. Deceptions are easily uncovered and usually are. . . . Untruths told for seemingly altruistic reasons (to prevent hurt feelings, to promote good will, etc.) are nonetheless resented by the recipients."

- "Straightforwardness . . . is usually necessary to promote public confidence. . . . Truths that are presented in such a way as to lead recipients to confusion, misinterpretation or inaccurate conclusions are not productive. Such indirect deceptions can promote ill-will and erode openness, especially when there is an expectation of frankness."

- "Candor is the forthright offering of unrequested information. It is necessary in accordance with the gravity of the situation and the nature of the relationships. Candor is required when a reasonable person would feel betrayed if the information were withheld."

Facts

Given the nature and age of the allegation, we gave VADM Stufflebeem the first opportunity to comment on the matter before proceeding with other investigative work. In our initial interview VADM Stufflebeem acknowledged that while serving as Naval Aide to the President, VADM Stufflebeem had what he characterized as an "inappropriate relationship" with an unmarried "colleague" from the named Federal agency from approximately February through May 1990.

VADM Stufflebeem explained that stress developed in his marriage because of his absences from home while serving at sea and as Naval Aide. As a result of marital stress, VADM Stufflebeem and his wife considered options, including dissolving their marriage. He further testified that during this time, he confided in the colleague about his marital problems and home life.

In response to our questions about the nature of his relationship with the colleague, VADM Stufflebeem said that he characterized the relationship as inappropriate because he took his marital problems to her. VADM Stufflebeem acknowledged that the relationship was romantic but not sexual. He told us that the physical extent of the relationship was limited to one kiss, and reiterated that he did not have a sexual relationship with the woman.

VADM Stufflebeem stated that the woman worked in an office supporting Presidential travel, that he had met her on a Presidential travel advance trip, and traveled overseas with her once or twice. VADM Stufflebeem also recalled at least two occasions that the colleague was at

the White House: once to witness the arrival of the Presidential helicopter on the South Lawn and another time when she asked to have lunch with him, which he said he declined.

VADM Stufflebeem also testified that he remembered sitting in her car outside the White House grounds discussing the relationship and her expectations that he would leave his wife to engage in a long term relationship with her. VADM Stufflebeem noted that problems began when the woman started to call his wife, and told us that he had not intended for the relationship to go as far as it had.

With regard to the circumstances of his departure, VADM Stufflebeem testified that after serving approximately 18 of the expected 24-month assignment, he initiated his reassignment from Naval Aide duties in the spring of 1990 during a meeting with his immediate supervisor, [redacted] VADM Stufflebeem told us that he asked to be reassigned so that he would not be traveling and could be with his wife to focus on saving his family and marriage. VADM Stufflebeem stated that [redacted] asked about his relationship with the female colleague, to which VADM Stufflebeem testified that he replied he had made a grave mistake by turning to someone about problems in his marriage. VADM Stufflebeem testified that he was not certain when [redacted] found out about the relationship, but assumed he learned of it during his discussion with VADM Stufflebeem. VADM Stufflebeem also noted that [redacted] was angry. When asked why, VADM Stufflebeem responded that [redacted] believed leaving the White House early would be devastating to VADM Stufflebeem's career.

Further, VADM Stufflebeem stated that he was not fired from the position, but had in fact written a letter requesting reassignment. He provided us a copy of the August 7, 1990, letter addressed to LTG Trefry, in which VADM Stufflebeem requested "immediate relief as Naval Aide" because of "close family personal problems."[5] VADM Stufflebeem also said that he did not recall discussing the matter with LTG Trefry, but remembered LTG Trefry returned the letter to him, directing VADM Stufflebeem to see his personnel office. Within days VADM Stufflebeem was reassigned to a Navy staff position in the Pentagon.

When asked about typical actions that accompany a change in assignment, VADM Stufflebeem said he did not receive an award, decoration, or farewell function on his departure from the White House. VADM Stufflebeem testified that he was "anxious to just run." He provided us a copy of a hand-written note from President Bush dated August 17, 1990, in which the President said he had been "partially briefed" on VADM Stufflebeem's departure and that VADM Stufflebeem was right to have family as a primary concern.

In discussing the identity of the woman, VADM Stufflebeem testified that he "spent a lot of time trying to forget who she was," and did not remember her name. When told that the complaint identified the woman as "Jane," VADM Stufflebeem responded that name did not jog his memory. Although VADM Stufflebeem could not recall the name of the woman with whom he had the relationship, VADM Stufflebeem identified for us the branch of service, rank, first and last name, and succession of the seven other individuals who were military aides to the President during his assignment as Naval Aide. VADM Stufflebeem even spelled the last names of two of the officers.

[5] VADM Stufflebeem testified in our second interview that he prepared the letter after meeting with [redacted]

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We also asked VADM Stufflebeem about the assertion in the complaint that he told the woman he was a widower whose wife died of breast cancer and was raising his two daughters as a single parent. VADM Stufflebeem testified that he did not tell the woman any of those things, and in discussing that comment later in the interview stated that he had not heard that claim before.

In addressing whether he had been held accountable for the relationship with the colleague, VADM Stufflebeem noted that not only did his wife hold him accountable, but that he held himself accountable, commenting, "[I]t took me a long time to come around to beg God for forgiveness for what had been going on in my life, and this just contributed to it." Moreover, in addressing the subject of rumors that followed his early removal from the White House, VADM Stufflebeem noted he was "racked with guilt," and "had a terrible time getting myself right with my family. In that guilt I was extremely conscious and worried about how my wife would perceive this, how she would react to it."

Finally, in concluding our initial interview, VADM Stufflebeem offered the following comment with regard to the allegation:

> [I]t brings back the memories, emotions and feelings of the rumors that I was living with as I came out in dealing with this. . . . I am over it now, but I had to live with shame for a long time. But mostly it was the shame about how I let my family down. And still to this day that is my priority. So I have had a great 18-year career since I left the White House. If this is the end of it, then I still leave a rewarded individual, thankful for the blessings that I have had.

After our initial interview with VADM Stufflebeem, we spoke with several witnesses knowledgeable of the matters at issue. A supervisor from the named Federal agency identified the woman with whom VADM Stufflebeem had the alleged affair as Ms. Jane Doe, one of her employees. The supervisor said that her office assisted with travel arrangements and paperwork for White House trips, and also traveled with White House staff in advance of the President to coordinate details associated with his overseas visits. The supervisor recalled the relationship began when VADM Stufflebeem and Ms. Doe were on an advance trip to an overseas location, which the supervisor named for us.

Ms. Doe worked in a cubicle located several feet from her supervisor, who testified she noticed that VADM Stufflebeem frequently called the office to speak with Ms. Doe. The supervisor noticed this shortly before VADM Stufflebeem went on an advance trip to South America. The supervisor, who was also scheduled to travel on that trip, thought his calls were unusual because they appeared personal in nature and she believed VADM Stufflebeem told her that he was married. She asked her deputy if Ms. Doe was seeing VADM Stufflebeem. When the deputy said yes, the supervisor questioned his marital status and the deputy told her VADM Stufflebeem was a widower. The supervisor recalled several points about the trip to South America:

- During a formal luncheon with host nation counterparts, VADM Stufflebeem left the table to take a telephone call. Upon his return, VADM Stufflebeem said something along the lines of, "I just talked to Jane; everything is fine in your office." The supervisor thought the fact VADM Stufflebeem contacted Jane and his comment on the status of her office was unusual.

- VADM Stufflebeem purchased a piece of jewelry made of lapis. The supervisor recalled that VADM Stufflebeem told her that he purchased it for Ms. Doe. The supervisor learned later from others on the trip that VADM Stufflebeem also showed them the item explaining that he purchased it for his wife.

- VADM Stufflebeem's July 17, 1990, Brazilian visa application listed his marital status as "single."

Ms. Doe's supervisor said that she contacted the Presidential Protection Office upon her return to Washington, D.C., to confirm VADM Stufflebeem's marital status. Office personnel told her VADM Stufflebeem was married. She testified that she then called Ms. Doe into her office to inform her of that fact. Ms. Doe's reaction, according to the supervisor, was one of complete surprise and shock. The supervisor also recalled that although VADM Stufflebeem attempted to speak with Ms. Doe to explain, she would not talk to him.

The supervisor testified that she telephoned [redacted] to inform him about the affair. She also said that one or two weeks later when she telephoned [redacted] to inquire about VADM Stufflebeem's status, [redacted] replied, "Everybody in town knew Boomer [VADM Stufflebeem's nickname] was F'ing some bimbo at the [Federal agency]."

According to Ms. Doe's supervisor, either Ms. Doe or her co-worker told her that VADM Stufflebeem misrepresented his marital status to Ms. Doe at the time of their relationship. In addition to the supervisor's comments associated with the trip to South America, she provided additional information regarding his misrepresentations. Specifically,

- VADM Stufflebeem told Ms. Doe his wife died of breast cancer.

- While spending the night with Ms. Doe, VADM Stufflebeem sat up in bed sweating and told Ms. Doe that he had had a bad dream about his wife's death.

- VADM Stufflebeem said he continued to wear his wedding ring because he couldn't bear to take it off.

- VADM Stufflebeem told Ms. Doe that the woman who answered the telephone when she called his residence was the nanny for his children when in fact the woman was his wife. Ms. Doe believed the woman's name was "[redacted]" short for "[redacted]"

[redacted] told us that he was VADM Stufflebeem's immediate supervisor at the time. [redacted] said he learned of the affair from either another military aide or someone from Jane Doe's agency. He stated that he called VADM Stufflebeem into his office and informed

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VADM Stufflebeem that he heard a rumor that VADM Stufflebeem was having an affair with a woman from the named Federal agency. He told us that he cautioned VADM Stufflebeem to be honest and asked if there was any truth to the rumor. According to [redacted], VADM Stufflebeem admitted the affair, and [redacted] stated that he was "99 percent certain" VADM Stufflebeem admitted having sexual intercourse on one or two occasions. [redacted] stressed, "Everyone was dead honest on this, including John Stufflebeem."

[redacted] said he believed he met with VADM Stufflebeem first, then informed LTG Trefry about the matter. [redacted] recalled that he and LTG Trefry spoke with the Chief of Naval Personnel and they agreed it was best to return VADM Stufflebeem to the Navy. [redacted] told us they transferred VADM Stufflebeem back to the Navy because the relationship included sexual intercourse; he noted had the relationship been limited to kissing, they would have likely counseled VADM Stufflebeem and let him remain at the White House. [redacted] stated that the whole matter -- from confronting VADM Stufflebeem to his return to the Navy -- occurred over a "couple of days." He noted the transfer occurred quickly in response to concerns of White House staff about any military misconduct that would appear to discredit President Bush.

With regard to the claim that VADM Stufflebeem engaged in deception by telling the woman that his wife died of breast cancer and he was raising his daughters as a single parent, [redacted] said he had no recollection of hearing anything like that. He further commented that that story did not sound like something VADM Stufflebeem would have done.

LTG Trefry testified that he was in Massachusetts when [redacted] telephoned to inform him about his affair. LTG Trefry said that on his return to Washington, D.C., he summoned VADM Stufflebeem to his office at approximately 6:00 a.m. on a Monday or Tuesday, and VADM Stufflebeem stood throughout the meeting. LTG Trefry stated that he cautioned VADM Stufflebeem to tell the truth, and told him that he had some very serious allegations about VADM Stufflebeem having an affair with a young woman from the named Federal agency. According to LTG Trefry, when he asked VADM Stufflebeem if the rumor was correct, VADM Stufflebeem responded, "Yes, sir."

In our original interview with LTG Trefry he recalled that VADM Stufflebeem admitted to LTG Trefry that VADM Stufflebeem had sexual intercourse with the woman. However, in a follow-up interview, LTG Trefry testified that he did not press VADM Stufflebeem for the details of the relationship because "it was obvious." LTG Trefry offered that he understood an "affair" to entail "having an illicit relationship, sexual relationship" and his recollection was that VADM Stufflebeem was admitting to a sexual relationship. He stated that VADM Stufflebeem did not contest the allegation that he was having an affair. LTG Trefry recalled lecturing VADM Stufflebeem on "leadership and decency," telling him, "[Y]ou've not only let me down but you've let the President down and you've let your wife and daughters down, and that's probably the worst of all right there." LTG Trefry told us he directed VADM Stufflebeem to immediately clean out his desk and leave the office. He recalled that VADM Stufflebeem departed before the other aides arrived that morning.

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LTG Trefry believed that VADM Stufflebeem carried out the affair with deception in that he portrayed himself as a widower to the woman involved. In our original interview, LTG Trefry stated that VADM Stufflebeem confirmed to him an anecdote about the woman calling his home and speaking to another woman there. When VADM Stufflebeem's female colleague questioned him about the identity of the woman who answered the telephone at his home, VADM Stufflebeem told the colleague that the other woman was "the nanny or nursemaid" for his children. In our follow-up interview, LTG Trefry testified that another member of the White House Military Office staff told him about that anecdote rather than VADM Stufflebeem. He clarified that in his meeting with VADM Stufflebeem, VADM Stufflebeem spoke only three times: once to answer, "Yes, sir," in response to whether the alleged affair was true, and twice to ask if he could leave.

LTG Trefry further testified that after his meeting with VADM Stufflebeem he discussed his reassignment with the Chief of Naval Personnel and the Chief of Naval Operations. When asked about the characterization that VADM Stufflebeem initiated his reassignment to spend more time with his family, LTG Trefry acknowledged that VADM Stufflebeem needed more family time, but that his removal was "sort of directed by me and the Chief of Naval Operations and the DCSPER of the Navy." He also recalled that the Navy transferred VADM Stufflebeem to the Pentagon and arranged for him and [redacted] to attend a church retreat in Pennsylvania.

Because of discrepancies between VADM Stufflebeem's testimony and that of other witnesses, we interviewed VADM Stufflebeem a second time under oath. He acknowledged our rights advisement under Article 31, UCMJ; consented to be interviewed; and had military counsel present.

We reviewed with him the circumstances of his removal: specifically, whether his supervisors fired him because of his relationship with the woman or VADM Stufflebeem initiated his reassignment. VADM Stufflebeem reiterated that he initiated his request for reassignment and submitted a letter request to LTG Trefry. To support his understanding that he was not fired, VADM Stufflebeem noted that he was never told he was fired, and referred to the fitness report he received upon his departure. VADM Stufflebeem described the report as good, pointing out that it recommended him for flag officer.[6] VADM Stufflebeem also said the current administration asked him to serve as the Military Assistant to the President, the position formerly held by LTG Trefry.

With regard to the nature of his physical relationship with the woman, VADM Stufflebeem vehemently denied having sexual relations with her and stated that he did not admit to either of his supervisors that he had. Asked to comment on why both of his supervisors would have the impression that he engaged in a sexual relationship with the woman, or would testify to us that he admitted to them that he was having sexual relations with her, VADM Stufflebeem replied that he had no idea, "I was there. It did not happen. I cannot explain why someone else would say that it did." When asked if they were mistaken in their recollection, VADM Stufflebeem said,

[6] The relevant passage reads, "Flag rank potential has been manifested in the performance of this officer."

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> It is impossible to have a recollection of something that didn't happen. . . . since I did not have sex with this woman, I don't understand how people could recollect that I did.

When asked if he recalled the name of the woman, VADM Stufflebeem replied, "No, I don't remember." On informing VADM Stufflebeem that a witness identified the woman as Jane Doe, he replied, "I don't know the name Jane Doe." Later in the interview VADM Stufflebeem stated, "I do not recognize that name. I can see the face of the person who I had known for that brief time, but I don't have that name."

On the topic of travel to the overseas location identified by Ms. Doe's supervisor, VADM Stufflebeem confirmed that he went on a Presidential advance trip there in 1989. He testified that he could not remember if his female colleague was on the trip, but did recall his dinner with the Ambassador who had just arrived, the names of three White House staff members on the trip, and other details of U.S. and foreign assets in the vicinity.

VADM Stufflebeem also confirmed his previous testimony that he did not tell the woman or her colleagues he was a widower whose wife died of breast cancer or was a single parent.

Regarding his Brazilian visa application, VADM Stufflebeem confirmed his signature was on the application. He testified that he could not explain why the application stated he was single, concluding it was a mistake by the White House Military Office administrative staff who prepared such forms. VADM Stufflebeem verified the remaining information on the application was correct, stated he had not told anyone who worked with passports and visas that he was single or widowed, and told us he had always worn his wedding ring. VADM Stufflebeem said he signed lots of documents for visas for the many places he went, and must have signed the Brazilian visa application without reading it.

We also asked VADM Stufflebeem about a telephone call placed during a luncheon and a piece of jewelry he purchased while in South America. VADM Stufflebeem said that he could not recall returning to the luncheon and announcing that he had just spoken with "Jane" back at her office. He confirmed that he purchased a piece of jewelry made of lapis stones for his wife, but could not remember if it was a bracelet or necklace. VADM Stufflebeem also did not recall telling one of his fellow travelers that he purchased the item for Jane and said the traveler would be incorrect if she said that was her recollection.

Discussion

We initially concluded that VADM Stufflebeem provided false and misleading testimony with regard to three areas: the circumstances of his removal as Naval Aide to the President, the nature of his relationship with the woman, and his inability to recall her name. His testimony with regard to the first two matters was inconsistent with the weight of the evidence, to include testimony provided by witnesses who presented a consistent account of the events. Similarly, his professed inability to recall the woman's name was not credible.

His characterization of his removal as the Naval Aide to the President is inconsistent with that of his supervisors. VADM Stufflebeem testified that he initiated the reassignment based on the need to get time off from travel to tend to his family; he was not fired. However, according to both LTG Trefry and [redacted], they initiated VADM Stufflebeem's removal based on his admission of the affair. LTG Trefry testified that he directed VADM Stufflebeem to report to his office to confront him about the affair and that VADM Stufflebeem spoke only three times during the meeting: once to confirm the alleged affair was true and twice to ask to leave. VADM Stufflebeem neither contested the allegation nor raised to LTG Trefry the issue of self-initiated reassignment for personal reasons. [redacted] also told us that he called VADM Stufflebeem to his office to discuss the rumored affair. Further, VADM Stufflebeem's departure was abnormally abrupt, accomplished without any prior notice to staff -- the characteristics of terminated employment rather than a voluntary exit. Both supervisors also stated that they discussed his removal and reassignment with the Chief of Naval Personnel.

According to VADM Stufflebeem's own testimony, [redacted] was "angry" during his meeting with VADM Stufflebeem. We find that such a reaction by his immediate supervisor to be more consistent with a situation in which VADM Stufflebeem was being removed for engaging in a sexual affair rather than a situation in which VADM Stufflebeem initiated early release to attend to urgent family needs. Likewise, VADM Stufflebeem's acknowledgement that he drafted the letter requesting reassignment after the fact of his meeting with [redacted] tends to support the notion that the letter was an afterthought intended to paper over VADM Stufflebeem's removal. Had VADM Stufflebeem initiated the request for reassignment, it would be reasonable to assume that he would have prepared and presented the letter to [redacted] at his initial meeting.

We also found VADM Stufflebeem's testimony regarding the nature of his relationship with Ms. Doe false and misleading. VADM Stufflebeem characterized the relationship as inappropriate because he discussed his marital problems with her and testified that his physical contact was limited to one kiss. However, both LTG Trefry and [redacted] testified that VADM Stufflebeem admitted to having an affair. [redacted] was "99 percent certain" VADM Stufflebeem admitted to engaging in sexual intercourse, and noted that they would not have reassigned VADM Stufflebeem based on a relationship limited to kissing. Further, the supervisor of Ms. Doe recalled [redacted] told her that everyone in town knew VADM Stufflebeem was engaged in a sexual relationship with an employee from the named Federal agency.

VADM Stufflebeem's testimony at the end of our first interview was telling with regard to the true nature of his physical relationship with Ms. Doe. He used phrases such as "beg[ging] God for forgiveness," being "racked with guilt," and "worried about how my wife would perceive this." VADM Stufflebeem used the word "shame" twice and described having to live with shame for a long time. He mentioned letting his family down. VADM Stufflebeem then offered that if this investigation was the end of his career, he would leave a rewarded individual thankful for his blessings. In our view, comments regarding guilt, shame, and the end of a distinguished naval career are incongruous with a physical relationship limited to one kiss.

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In both interviews, VADM Stufflebeem could not recall the name of the colleague with whom he had the affair. In the first interview the name "Jane" did not jog his memory. In the second interview when we identified her as "Jane Doe," VADM Stufflebeem responded that he did not know or recognize that name. Throughout our interviews VADM Stufflebeem has demonstrated an ability to recall details.

VADM Stufflebeem was able to immediately recall the names, ranks, and military services of seven fellow military aides to the President, volunteering the spelling of the last names of two of those officers. He recalled with little apparent effort his 1989 dinner with the Ambassador to the overseas location, the names of three White House staff members on the trip, and the details of U.S. and foreign assets in the vicinity. VADM Stufflebeem recalled the unnamed woman's two trips to the White House -- to witness the Presidential helicopter land on the South Lawn and to request a lunch with him -- and he recalled sitting in her car outside the White House grounds discussing her expectation that he would leave his wife for her. VADM Stufflebeem even testified that he could "see [her] face." However, VADM Stufflebeem could not recall her name.

In our experience, a naval officer and aviator of his rank, experience, and stature would certainly recall the name of the woman who contributed to his feelings of "guilt" and "shame," who called his wife in their home, who played a role in the possible ruin of his marriage, and who factored into his early departure as Naval Aide to the President of the United States. We did not find his inability to recall Jane Doe's name credible.

As noted in the introduction and summary to this report, we believed we were obligated to interview Ms. Doe in response to VADM Stufflebeem's vehement denial of our initial conclusions that he provided false and misleading testimony. We began our interview with Ms. Doe by recounting the allegation we received: that when assigned to the White House as Naval Aide to President Bush in 1990, then-Commander Stufflebeem pursued a relationship with a female employee of a named Federal agency, he was reassigned from his duties when the affair was discovered, and he deceived the woman by telling her he was a widower raising his daughters as a single parent. We informed Ms. Doe that her former supervisor identified Ms. Doe as the woman. In response to our request that she comment on the allegation, Ms. Doe stated, "[I]t's all true." The following summarizes details of the relationship provided by Ms. Doe in her sworn testimony.

- On the first night they met on overseas travel in late 1989, VADM Stufflebeem misrepresented his marital status to Ms. Doe, telling her that he was a widower.[7]

- That night, VADM Stufflebeem offered to give Ms. Doe "a back rub." The two went to her hotel room and engaged in sexual intercourse for the first time.

- Each night of the second week of the overseas trip, VADM Stufflebeem and Ms. Doe stayed together in one or the other's hotel room and engaged in sexual intercourse.

[7] At the time their relationship began Ms. Doe was [redacted] and VADM Stufflebeem was 37.

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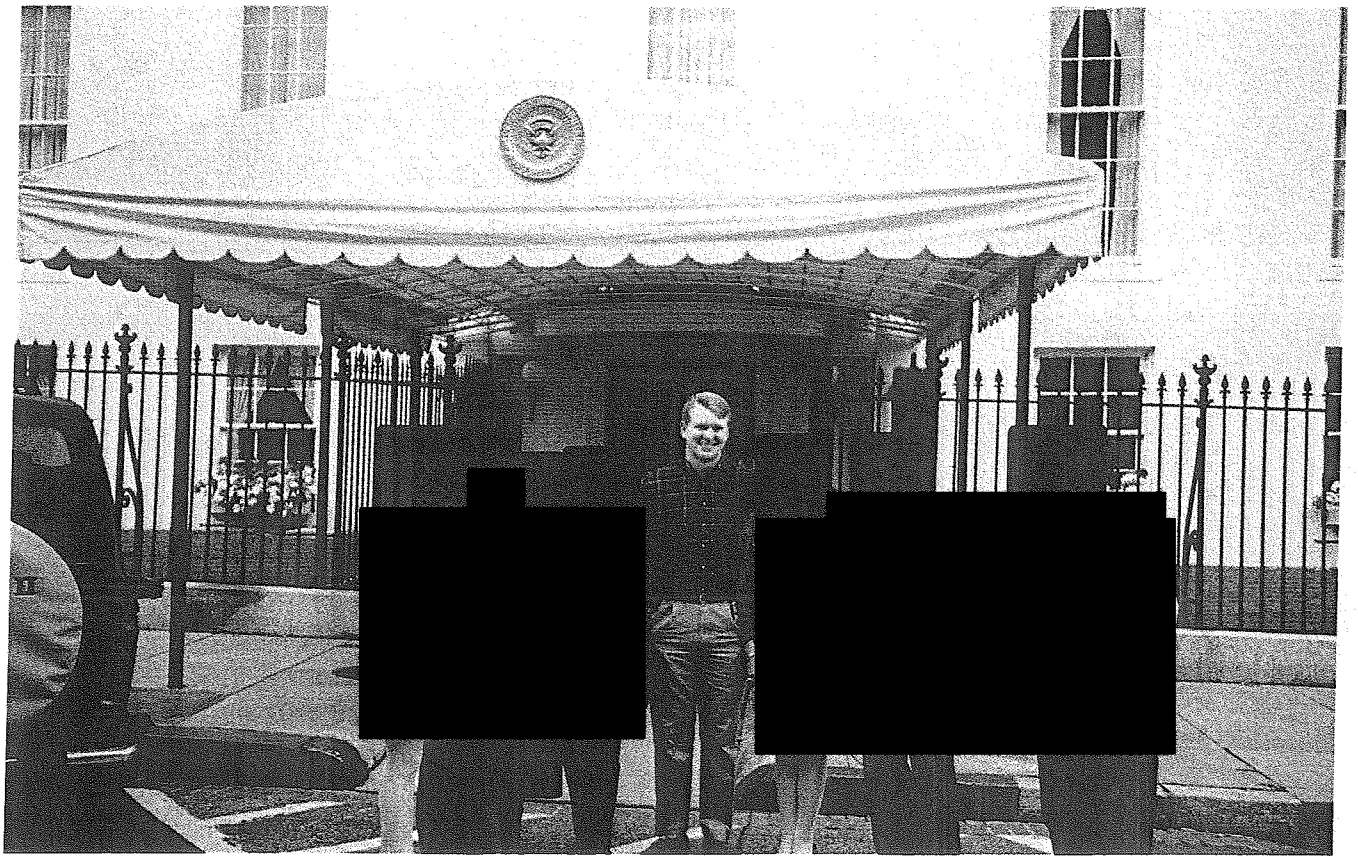
- In the summer of 1990, Ms. Doe went to the White House to witness the Presidential helicopter land on the South Lawn, after which VADM Stufflebeem led her to the White House basement room intended for military aides with overnight duties, where VADM Stufflebeem and she engaged in sexual intercourse and then showered.

- On multiple occasions in the spring and summer of 1990, VADM Stufflebeem and Ms. Doe engaged in sexual intercourse at the home she shared with two roommates.

- VADM Stufflebeem and Ms. Doe met in her car outside the White House grounds where they engaged in an intense session of kissing.

- In the spring of 1990, VADM Stufflebeem took Ms. Doe's parents, brothers, and sisters on a White House tour; posed for photographs with her and her family (to include that below); and ate dinner with them that evening.



Commander Stufflebeem, Jane Doe, and Doe Family Members
Outside the White House
Spring 1990

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- VADM Stufflebeem told Ms. Doe that his wife died of breast cancer.

- While driving to have dinner together one evening at Bullfeathers in Alexandria, Virginia, VADM Stufflebeem noticed Ms. Doe looking at his wedding ring. He explained that he continued to wear the ring for his daughters who missed their late mother.

- VADM Stufflebeem told Ms. Doe that he had a nanny by the name of [redacted] who looked after his daughters.

- Contrary to VADM Stufflebeem's testimony, Ms. Doe stated she never asked VADM Stufflebeem to leave his wife for her, because according to Ms. Doe, "I did not know his wife was alive."

- VADM Stufflebeem knew of and called Ms. Doe by her first and last names throughout their relationship.

- In August 1990 on the day Ms. Doe learned from her supervisor that VADM Stufflebeem was married, VADM Stufflebeem went to Ms. Doe's home where he apologized for "dishonoring her." He also admitted he was married and not a widower, and commented that he did not know how long he could have continued his charade. Ms. Doe testified that she called him "scum," closed the door on him, and has not spoken to him since.

After carefully considering VADM Stufflebeem's response to our initial conclusions, interviewing Ms. Doe, evaluating the relative credibility of the witnesses, and reexamining the evidence, we stand by our initial conclusions that he provided false and misleading testimony with regard to the circumstances of his removal, the nature of his relationship with Ms. Doe, and his inability to recall her name. Further, we have also concluded that VADM Stufflebeem provided false and misleading testimony in the additional areas of misrepresenting his marital status to Ms. Doe and his professed inability to recall whether she accompanied him on the overseas trip during which they initiated their relationship.

V. CONCLUSION

VADM Stufflebeem provided false and misleading testimony during an Inspector General investigation.

VI. RECOMMENDATION

We recommend that the Secretary of the Navy consider appropriate corrective action with respect to VADM Stufflebeem.

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Inspector General
Department of Defense

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