

Chastised head of San Diego FBI office announces retirement

by Kelly Thornton

SAN DIEGO - San Diego FBI chief Dan Dzwilewski, who was rebuked by superiors for publicly defending ousted U.S. Attorney Carol Lam, has announced his retirement.

Dzwilewski, who has been at the helm of the San Diego office since July 2003, sent an e-mail to his agents and staff Wednesday saying he planned to take a post as director of security at Sempra Energy. His last day at the bureau is to be April 30.

Some colleagues found the timing of the announcement curious. On Tuesday, FBI Director Robert Mueller acknowledged during testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee that one of his subordinates, John Pistole, told Dzwilewski that his statements on Lam were inappropriate and that he should keep quiet.

Dzwilewski had said Lam's firing was political and would adversely affect ongoing corruption cases.

However, some people familiar with Dzwilewski's plans said he was ready for a change after 27 years with the bureau and had been job hunting for months. Dzwilewski, who had held numerous assignments in Los Angeles, Washington, D.C., San Diego and Honolulu, had made it clear he planned to get off the FBI career ladder and retire in San Diego, they said.

Officials declined to say whether Dzwilewski's retirement was forced as a result of his comments on Lam.

"We have no comment and we refer you back to San Diego," said Richard Kolko, a spokesman for the FBI headquarters in Washington, D.C. Dzwilewski is 53, married, with no children. As a young single man he did stints as an agent in the Los Angeles bureau, where he rode a motorcycle, dressed well and because of his perpetual tan was nicknamed "Get-a-tan-Dan."

He became an assistant special agent in charge in San Diego in the late 1990s, then was promoted to head the Honolulu FBI. He returned to San Diego as special agent in charge in 2003.

During Dzwilewski's tenure, local FBI agents investigated the Randy "Duke" Cunningham bribery scandal and its spinoff cases as well as the corruption investigation involving San Diego city councilmen.

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