



Protesters Hound David Petraeus Before Lecture At CUNY

by Eyder Peralta September 11, 2013 6:09 PM

Ret. Gen. David Petraeus, who served as director of the CIA and commanded the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, was hounded and taunted as he walked through the streets of New York City on Monday.

The video showing the confrontation is just now gaining traction online. It shows Petraeus headed to his new job as a visiting professor at The City University of New York (CUNY), while young people described in the video as "CUNY students" hurl insults his way.

They say he's a "war criminal" and a "scumbag." Petraeus maintains his composure and remains silent the whole time.

We warn you, the video contains a couple of expletives and the aggressiveness means it can be tough to watch: <http://youtu.be/DIbl28O99Lg>

As we've reported, Petraeus' tenure with CUNY has been mired in controversy. The college was roundly criticized for offering Petraeus \$200,000 to deliver two public lectures and a seminar titled "Are We on the Threshold of the North American Decade."

The reaction on Twitter has tended to side with Petraeus, . Tommy Vietor, former National Security Council spokesman for President Obama, tweeted:

"No excuse for treating anyone like this RT ': disgrace.... RT : Unreal '"

that ironically, it is Petraeus who "comes across better than anyone else in the video."

The liberal site Firedoglake , who is part of a group organizing the protests against Petraeus.

He said they protest because they believe Petraeus is a war criminal.

"Most of our students at CUNY are from the working class and from oppressed communities, specifically from families whose roots are in countries where the effects of U.S. imperialism and militarism have been experienced in the most unspeakable and horrific ways," John told the site.

(Updated 11:10 p.m. ET)

In a statement emailed to NPR Wednesday night, Ann Kirschner, dean of the Macaulay Honors College at CUNY, said:

"Our university is a place where complex issues and points of view across the political and cultural spectrum are considered and debated in the hopes that we might offer solutions to the problems in our world. In order to advance reasoned debate on such issues, it is important that multiple points of view be heard."

"Great universities strive to connect their students with remarkable leaders and thinkers so students can examine a variety of ideas, debate them, and form their own opinions. Those perspectives find expression through discussion in and out of the classroom."

"We may disagree, but we must always do so in a spirit of mutual respect and understanding. While the college supports the articulation of all points of view on critical issues, it is essential that dialogue within the academic setting always be conducted civilly."