EXHIBIT 137
Top Homeland Security official, who clashed with White House over immigration policy, to step down

By Nick Miroff

Nick Miroff
Reporter covering immigration enforcement, drug trafficking and the Department of Homeland Security

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Elaine Duke, the second-highest-ranking official at the Department of Homeland Security, announced Friday that she will step down after serving less than a year. A longtime Homeland Security official who ran the agency as acting secretary for more than four months last year, Duke, now deputy secretary, is a well-regarded sidelined after Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen took over in December and given a portfolio described as “embarrassingly light,” according to people familiar with the situation.

In a brief statement, Nielsen said Duke would “retire from government service in April,” having “selflessly served the federal government for three decades.”

Duke worked as a top-ranking DHS official under President George W. Bush, and was recruited back to the agency by then-Secretary John F. Kelly. Duke was put in the position of chief of staff in December by Kelly after Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico. Duke was heavily criticized for saying the government’s response should be viewed as “a good news story.”

When Kelly moved to the White House to be chief of staff a few months later, Duke became acting DHS secretary. She filled the top role for more than four months.

“She ended up taking over for Kelly during a tumultuous time at DHS — with three hurricanes, and having to navigate complicated waters on immigration,” said Norton called her departure “a real loss for our country.”

After Hurricane Maria devastated Puerto Rico, Duke was heavily criticized for saying the government’s response should be viewed as “a good news story.” When Kelly moved to the White House to be chief of staff a few months later, Duke became acting DHS secretary. She filled the top role for more than four months.

“The White House wanted Duke to cancel the Hondurans’ TPS permits, and Kelly called Duke to pressure her, officials said at the time. The episode upset Duke, who denied it.

“Upon confirmation of Kirstjen Nielsen as the next Secretary of Homeland Security, I look forward to continuing our important work as the Deputy Secretary contrary are untrue.”

Duke is the second high-ranking DHS official to step down in recent weeks. James D. Nealon left his job as assistant secretary for international engagement in Honduras, had reportedly also clashed with the White House over immigration policy.

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Nick Miroff covers immigration enforcement, drug trafficking and the Department of Homeland Security on The Washington Post’s National Security desk. He was a fellow at the New America Foundation before joining The Post. His investigation into the U.S. immigration detention system was a finalist for a 2018 Pulitzer Prize.

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