

# Trump says Mattis to leave by end of year, announces new acting secretary of defense

By [Eli Watkins](#), [Barbara Starr](#) and [Ryan Browne](#), CNN

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**Washington (CNN)** — President Donald Trump announced on Sunday he would replace Defense Secretary James Mattis at the start of the new year, two months earlier than Mattis' planned departure.

"I am pleased to announce that our very talented Deputy Secretary of Defense, Patrick Shanahan, will assume the title of Acting Secretary of Defense starting January 1, 2019. Patrick has a long list of accomplishments while serving as Deputy, & previously Boeing. He will be great!" Trump tweeted.



**Donald J. Trump**

@realDonaldTrump

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Mattis [announced his resignation](#) on Thursday with a letter saying his views were not aligned with Trump, who said Mattis would retire at the end of February.



Mattis' last day is expected to be Jan. 1, according to a source familiar with the matter. He is not expected to have a big, public farewell ceremony to try to prevent further exacerbating tensions between himself and Trump, the source said.

## Trump mad at coverage of Mattis resignation

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A source familiar with the matter said Trump was mad at the extensive coverage given to Mattis' resignation and therefore was forcing him to leave earlier than he originally planned.

Pentagon spokesman Col. Rob Manning said in a statement that "the secretary of defense serves at the pleasure of the

President. The department remains focused on national security."

Mattis' retirement announcement on Thursday led much of Washington, including key Republicans, to [express alarm](#) about the change in leadership at the Pentagon. The announcement itself followed Trump's decision to call for a full withdrawal of troops from Syria and [consideration of a drawdown in Afghanistan](#).

## Mattis' No. 2 to lead Pentagon

Shanahan, Trump's choice to replace Mattis on an interim basis, was [confirmed](#) as Mattis' No. 2 in the Pentagon last year by an overwhelming margin that came after a [confirmation process](#) that included a clash with the late Arizona GOP Sen. John McCain.

Shanahan's portfolio at the Department of Defense has been narrow; he has almost exclusively handled budget issues, internal reform and the Space Force.

His [official biography](#) from the Defense Department notes Shanahan joined Boeing in 1986 and stayed with the major defense contractor for more than three decades. He received an undergraduate degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Washington and two higher degrees from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, according to his biography.

*This story is breaking and will be updated.*