By John A. Tirpak, **Editorial Director**

More ground troops on the way?; No effects-based operations;
Fun to kill some people; Nuke adjustments ....

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CHAOS THEORY

If President-elect Donald J. Trump's pick for Secretary of Defense—retired Marine Corps Gen. James N. Mattis—is confirmed by the Senate, he will likely advocate a very different approach to the conduct of the war on ISIS: one that is more intense, less air-centric, and more likely to involve a larger contingent of US ground troops.

Trump's choice, taken in the context of initially picking "surface warfare" service veterans for nearly all key national security posts, raises concerns that he may not receive balanced advice regarding the use of airpower in the anti-ISIS fight or other potential conflicts.

Mattis is also on record as suggesting that the composition of the nuclear arsenal be reviewed, saying that eliminating the ICBM element of the nuclear triad would reduce costs and the risk of accidental war. Though the first steps have been taken in the last year to modernize all three legs of the triad, all three programs are in their infancy and could be stopped or redirected early in the new administration.

While Trump and Mattis share a common view of many world challenges, they disagree on others. Trump has suggested a more conciliatory approach to Russia and has called NATO "obsolete," but Mattis would likely challenge those attitudes, having consistently painted Russia as a serious threat and voicing strong support for the Alliance. Mattis apparently agrees with Trump's concerns about Iran, having called that country the "single greatest" threat to stability in the Middle East.

Trump's choice, formally announced Dec. 6, was extraordinary in a number of ways. If confirmed by the Senate, Mattis, who used to go by the call sign Chaos (said to be an acronym from his O-6 days for Colonel Has An Outstanding Solution) would become the only recently retired general to hold the SecDef post since George C. Marshall during the Truman administration. Congress would have to pass special legislation waiving the 1947 federal law that demands that a general be retired at least seven years (originally 10 years, but amended in 2008) before taking a top defense post.

After Marshall's tenure ended, special legislation contained language that it is "the sense of the Congress that … no additional appointments of military men to that office shall be approved."

Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), who won reelection in November and thus retains his status as chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, praised the choice on Dec. 1, saying Mattis is "one of the finest military officers of his generation and an extraordinary leader who inspires a rare and special admiration of his troops." McCain said he hoped to move "forward with the confirmation process as soon as possible in the new Congress."

Nevertheless, Senate Republicans, who only have 54 seats, would need to round up six more votes to pass the waiver to allow Mattis to take the job. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand (D-N.Y.) said that while she holds Mattis in high regard, she's concerned about civilian control of the military and wouldn't support a waiver.
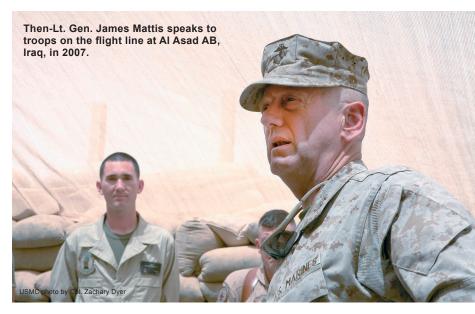
Trump said, "A lot of people are going to be very angry" if the waiver isn't granted.

Known by other nicknames, such as "Mad Dog"—the one Trump never fails to use—and "Warrior Monk" (a reference to Mattis' never-married status), Mattis retired in 2013 after a 41-year uniformed career. He led the 1st Marine Division in the 2003 Iraq War and presided over the protracted and casualty-heavy battle for Fallujah.

In his last post, he was head of US Central Command (CENTCOM), which has purview over most of the Middle East. Reportedly, there was friction between Mattis and the Obama White House over the handling of the war in Afghanistan, where Mattis wanted a more aggressive ground campaign.

EBO-NIX

In a previous assignment, Mattis was head of Joint Forces Command (JFCOM, abolished in 2011), and there voiced his disdain for effects-based operations (EBO),

Then-Lt. Gen. James Mattis speaks to troops on the flight line at Al Asad AB, Iraq, in 2007.

USMC photo by Col. Zachary Dyer

calling the concept, which had paved the way to victory in Desert Storm and subsequent wars in the Balkans, Afghanistan, and Iraq, "fundamentally flawed." Mattis, outlawing use of the term and concept in a 2008 directive, said he objected to the ideas of effects-based operations because they had "not delivered on their advertised benefits." Airpower advocates, however, saw Mattis' move as simply countering what he perceived as a threat to the primacy and funding of ground forces.

The EBO concept holds that it's more important to concentrate on desired outcomes—such as silencing a command and control network, cutting off power in the enemy capital, or blinding enemy leadership—rather than the specific tools used to achieve those ends or traditional, set-piece battles focusing on troops at the forward line of battle.

Despite Mattis' objections, EBO has become accepted doctrine by all the services, though under different names. The Air Force resurrected the term just a couple of years after Mattis left the JFCOM post.

As CENTCOM chief, Mattis pushed for an ever greater number of ground troops in Afghanistan and Iraq to carry out the counterinsurgency war.

While CENTCOM commander, Mattis pushed to keep more carrier battle groups on station near Iran to deter that country. He has been an opponent of the deal struck with Iran over its development of nuclear weapons, saying the agreement will only slow Iran's march to become a nuclear power. Speaking at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in April 2016, Mattis said the next President will "inherit a mess" because of the Iran deal. He also said US influence has been waning in the Middle East for decades, and he has complained about the Obama administration not taking a tougher stance against Chinese island-building in the Pacific and Russian aggression in Eastern Europe.

However, in remarks at the CSIS event, Mattis said there's "no going back" on the nuclear deal with Iran "absent a real violation" of Iran's obligations under that agreement. European allies, he said, wouldn't go along with new sanctions, and US sanctions alone would lack the necessary force to bring Iran to heel. Under the agreement, the US and other countries lifted a decades-long freeze on Iranian assets in exchange for Iran promising to limit certain kinds of nuclear research and uranium enrichment for a number of years. Critics—including Mattis—said the deal merely ensured that Iran would eventually—legally—obtain nuclear weapons, but on a longer timetable, funded with the windfall of its unfrozen assets.

Mattis is fond of nonpolitically correct comments, having famously said it's "fun to shoot some people" and "be polite, be professional, but have a plan to kill everybody you meet." There are Web pages devoted to Mattis quotes. In announcing his choice for the SecDef job, Trump compared Mattis to World War II Gen. George S. Patton, famous both for salty, intemperate language and a hard-charging attitude reveling in battle.

Mattis is known to have a military library of thousands of volumes and is considered by the Marine Corps and some others as a military visionary. He has written one book about the military, *Warriors and Citizens: American Views on Our Military,* published in 2016. In it he decried the growing gap between the citizenry of the US and its military, noting that fewer and fewer Americans have any firsthand knowledge of the military and warning that this disconnect may create problems.

DYAD IN THE WOOL

In 2015, Mattis testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee about the potential future of the nation's nuclear arsenal, saying "fundamental questions must be asked and answered" about how many nuclear weapons to maintain and their alert status. He suggested that if nuclear weapons are only for deterrence, "we should say so, and the resulting clarity will help to determine the number we need." Reducing the triad of ICBMs, bombers, and nuclear-armed submarines to a dyad of bombers and subs only "would reduce the false-alarm danger," Mattis said at the hearing.

GROUND-BASED PERSPECTIVE

Trump's early national security lineup features almost entirely retired generals and veterans from the Army and Marine Corps. For national security advisor, he tapped retired Army Lt. Gen. Michael T. Flynn; for CIA, Rep. Michael R. Pompeo (R-Calif.), a West Point graduate; for Homeland Security chief, retired Marine Corps Gen. John F. Kelly. Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Gen. Joseph F. Dunford Jr. is also a marine.

One retired Air Force general, who spoke about the Mattis nomination on background, said he was worried that with all the surface-service leadership on the Trump team, "you have no diversity of thought." He observed that most of those being tapped "are the people who created that counterinsurgency doctrine. So where's the innovation in thought? Where are the different options going to come from?"

The "fear is," the general said, Mattis "only sees airpower and the Air Force as aerial artillery to be used in support of ground forces."

The episode regarding Mattis and EBO was troubling, he continued, because "as head of Joint Forces Command, you shouldn't be closing your mind to any ideas. You should be opening your arms to the widest spectrum of ideas."

When all the people in the room fall back on their experience, and there is no champion of airpower, the default may well follow the thinking that led to "these long, drawn-out, indecisive outcomes in Iraq and Afghanistan."

The retired general acknowledged, though, that he believes Mattis will be able to manage the Pentagon bureaucracy, having experienced it himself, "operationally." His concern is only "aren't we a little lopsided here, with regard to perspective?"

Aerospace Industries Association President David F. Melcher, when asked if he's concerned about the ground-service-heavy makeup of the Trump national security team, said, "I'm really not." He explained, "Every one of those guys, like General Mattis, was responsible for the whole combined-arms team." Their experience in that respect means "they understand what everybody brings to the fight. And they're going to advocate for what's needed most, both short term—[the] combatant commander view—and longer term, department-wide. So I'm not concerned about that."

Melcher, himself, is a retired Army three-star general. ✪