



Written by [Luis Miguel](#) on December 11, 2020

Pentagon to Cut Most Support to CIA Counterterrorism, Suggesting Battle With Agency

The Pentagon surprisingly announced to the Central Intelligence Agency that it intends to [end the majority of the military support](#) it gives to the agency's counterterrorism efforts by January 5.

According to a former senior administration intelligence official, Acting Defense Secretary Christopher Miller sent a letter to CIA Director Gina Haspel outlining the decision. The official called the move unprecedented.

While the CIA's Special Activities Center has its own paramilitary force that carries out covert and counterterrorism operations independently of the Defense Department, it often relies on the military for transportation and logistical support. Thus, military personnel often end up being detailed to support the CIA's counterterrorism work.

Defense One was the [first to report](#) that the Pentagon was reviewing its support of the CIA.

The outlet reported:

The idea is to determine whether Defense Department personnel "detailed" to the spy agency should instead be used for missions related to competition with Russia and China, rather than counterterrorism, according to multiple former and current administration and military officials....

A Defense Department spokesman indicated that the shift away from supporting the CIA's counterterrorism missions was in line with the National Defense Strategy that pushes the military's focus away from the regional wars in the Middle East towards near-peer competitors like Russia and China.

"As a responsible actor, the department has taken a look to better align its allocation of resources with the 2018 National Defense Strategy's shift to great power competition," said Lt. Col. Uriah Orland, a Defense Department spokesperson.

Fixtures of the intelligence establishment expressed concern with the change.

"If these stories are true, they mark a serious setback to a very strong and effective relationship between the CIA and the Defense Department," Mick Mulroy, a former deputy assistant secretary of defense and retired CIA paramilitary officer, told ABC News. "A relationship that has resulted in



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countless successes in the last 20 years, especially in the area of counterterrorism such as the bin Laden and al-Baghdadi operations, but also in many that will remain unknown.”

“This could increase the risk to CIA officers until it can be readdressed by the incoming administration,” he added. “If it is not reversed, the CIA needs to be increased in personnel and funding to make up for the difference to continue their critical missions.”

“Pulling DOD detailees from the CIA can only be motivated for political reasons,” said Eric Oehlerich, a former Navy SEAL and ABC News contributor. He added, “Pulling this support is akin to cutting off your nose to spite your face.”

Why is the Pentagon withdrawing its support from the CIA? The answer may be that there is a [battle taking place](#) between the Pentagon and the agency.

Lieutenant General Thomas McInerney, a friend of former National Security Advisor Michael Flynn, has [said](#) that the Trump administration recovered servers from the Dominion Voting machines (which were widely used during the 2020 election in various states and which members of the Trump team claim were used to manipulate votes in Joe Biden’s favor) through a Special Forces raid on a CIA installation in Frankfurt, Germany.

McInerney said U.S. soldiers were killed in the operation.

Last month, President Trump [fired](#) Defense Secretary Mark Esper, which triggered several high-level departures at the Pentagon, resulting in their replacement by Trump loyalists.

Among the post-Esper resignations was James Anderson, the acting policy chief at the Pentagon who had frequently clashed with the administration over the appointment of Trump allies to his department. Anderson has been replaced by Brigadier General Anthony Tata on a temporary basis.

Tata was a regular contributor to Fox News before joining the administration this year and had been nominated by President Trump for the top policy job. However, his nomination fell through over the summer after CNN publicized tweets in which he called Barack Obama a “terrorist leader” and referred to Islam as “most oppressive violent religion I know of.”

Jen Stewart, chief of staff to the Secretary of Defense, resigned and was replaced with Kash Patel, a protege of House Intelligence Committee Ranking Member Devin Nunes (R-Calif.) who, as a Hill staffer, played a major role in fighting the Russia probe and has held several roles in the Trump White House.

And, of course, Joseph Kernan, undersecretary of defense for intelligence, was replaced by Ezra Cohen-Watnick, a close ally of Michael Flynn.

The CIA has long been one of the Deep State’s chief assets, an autonomous shadow government unaccountable to the people or the people’s representatives. It’s about time it got defanged.



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