



# Defense Secretary Mattis resigns, citing differences over the role of alliances

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A day after President Trump announced a surprise decision to withdraw U.S. troops from Syria, Secretary of Defense James Mattis submitted his resignation, which will take effect in February. The Wall Street Journal's Michael Gordon joins Judy Woodruff to discuss why the policy differences between the president and Mattis were "too profound" to allow a sustainable working relationship.

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### Judy Woodruff:

We begin with word that Defense Secretary James Mattis is stepping down from his post at the end of February.

President Trump tweeted the news this evening, a day after he went against Mattis' advice, in announcing a U.S. withdrawal from Syria.

In his resignation letter, Mattis he is leaving because -- quote -- "You have the right to have a secretary of defense whose views are better aligned with yours."

Longtime Pentagon reporter Michael Gordon of The Wall Street Journal joins me now.

Michael Gordon, what happened?

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### Michael Gordon:

Well, I think the differences between Secretary Mattis and President Trump are just too profound really to be bridged.

I think Mattis was a good Marine for a while and played along and certainly in public defended the administration's position. But I think Syria really was the last straw, because the way in which President Trump ordered out the 2,000-odd American troops in Syria is not the way the U.S. military would do it. And from the military's perspective, it puts all of their hard-earned gains in jeopardy.

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### Judy Woodruff:

But it wasn't, as you're suggesting, just over the decision on Syria, which came as a surprise, was it? It was over other things as well.