

Senate confirms Esper as new Secretary of Defense in 90-8 vote

The Senate confirmed former Army Lt. Col. Mark Esper as Secretary of Defense Tuesday, making him the first permanent Pentagon boss since James Mattis resigned last December.

Esper, who served 10 years on active duty and 11 years in the National Guard and Army Reserve, was Acting Secretary before his nomination, and Patrick Shanahan had been Acting Secretary prior to that.

ESPER GRILLED OVER CONTRACTOR TIES IN HEATED CONFIRMATION HEARING

The vote was not close, with the Senate confirming Esper by a vote of 90-8. The no votes included 2020 Democratic presidential candidates Cory Booker, Kirsten Gillibrand, Kamala Harris, Amy Klobuchar, and Elizabeth Warren.

Warren and Esper had a tense exchange during a confirmation hearing before the Senate Armed Services Committee when she challenged his refusal to completely recuse himself from any and all matters related to Raytheon, the defense contractor for which he served as a lobbyist before joining the government. Esper said that ethics personnel told him not to fully recuse himself.

TRUMP DIRECTS DEFENSE DEPARTMENT TO DEVELOP POLICY ALLOWING MILITARY ACADEMY ATHLETES TO TURN PRO UPON GRADUATION

Earlier in the hearing, he said he was “fully committed to living up to my ethics commitments” and would employ a “robust screening process” and “remain in constant contact with our ethics personnel.”

On the day of that hearing, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., lauded Esper, calling him “a man of honor and integrity, dedicated to our nation and committed to the men and women who serve in uniform.”

Source:

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