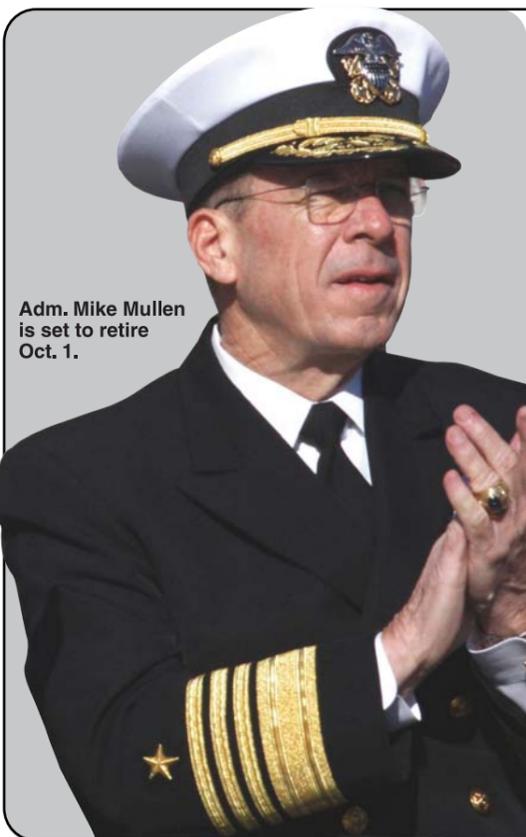


Musical chairs

BY KEVIN BARON
Stars and Stripes



Adm. Mike Mullen is set to retire Oct. 1.

Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

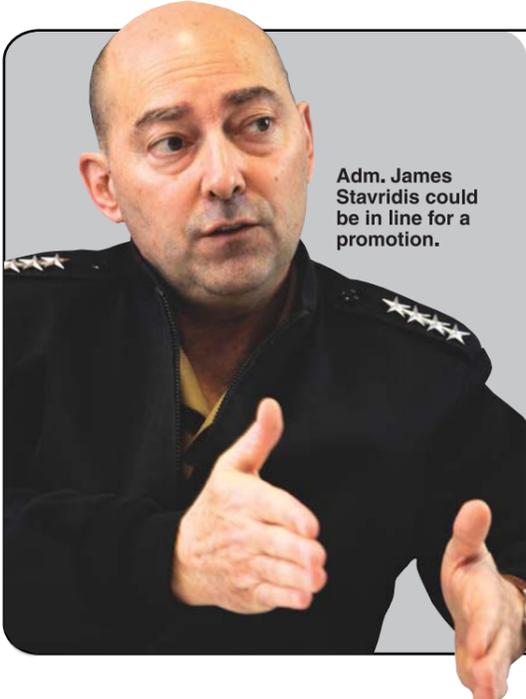
- Vice Chairman and Marine **Gen. James Cartwright**, aka "Obama's favorite general," is everyone's top pick, despite never serving in Iraq or Afghanistan. But sources say he has challenges to overcome. He was investigated – and later cleared – after allegations arose of misconduct involving a drunken subordinate. One military official suggested that the inquiry was made public by those wishing to tarnish his candidacy.
- **Adm. James Stavridis**, NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe, is the next candidate in line. This Twitter-happy diplomat-general, however, is sometimes called the Navy's version of Gen. David Petraeus – too media-happy for some tastes. Most think he's a lock for Chief of Naval Operations at least.
- **Gen. David Petraeus**, ISAF commander, the military's most popular officer, is in some ways considered a political liability for the White House and may not want to step out of the chain of command. This founding father of big counterinsurgency operations, who came up during the Bush administration, may represent the past more than the future.
- **Gen. Ray Odierno** is a long shot, less than a year after getting his first combatant command. The longtime Iraq War commander would have to leapfrog others into the top officer chair, but many think he's heading to Washington one way or another.
- **Gen. Martin Dempsey** became the Army chief only recently, but one senior official has said don't be surprised to see his name floated higher given his extensive command experience at Central Command, in Iraq and in Saudi Arabia.



Gen. James Cartwright's term ends in August.

Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

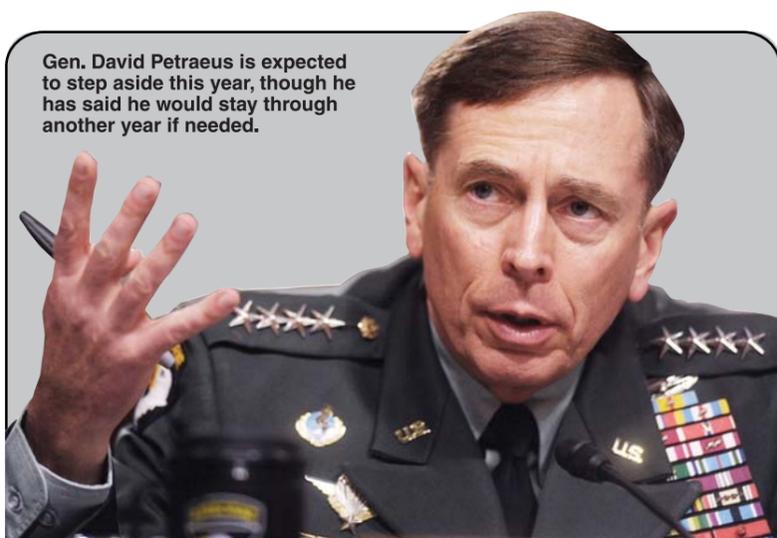
- **Gen. Ray Odierno** is the lead candidate, several sources say. After a brief respite from his long Iraq War service to lead Joint Forces Command in Norfolk, Va., many senior officials want him in Washington, where he has excelled in congressional hearings and as a former aide to Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.
- **Adm. James Stavridis**, if not tapped to be chief naval officer or Joint Chiefs chair, is a fit for this post, too. He's long been well known in Washington and is the Navy's most-groomed officer to move up after serving two combatant command posts, at Southern Command and NATO.
- Air Force Chief of Staff **Gen. Norton Schwartz** is a respected planner and Washington veteran, and could easily pick up where Cartwright left off on strategic missile defense and nuclear issues.
- Pacific Command's **Adm. Robert Willard** was an early name in the mix, but with just two years as a combatant commander, others are line ahead of him.



Adm. James Stavridis could be in line for a promotion.

NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe

- **Gen. David Petraeus** reportedly hoped for the coveted NATO post in Europe after he left Iraq. Instead, he was asked to take over Central Command, overseeing both wars. Along with the chairman's position, this may be the next best operational command posting with enough clout for Petraeus, should he want to stay in uniform.
- **Gen. Ray Odierno** has the diplomatic and operational command skills for the post, though more senior officers would like to call Europe home. He also needs a job – JFCOM is slated to close this summer – but is considered a more likely candidate for the vice chairman's role.
- **Gen. Lloyd Austin** may be out of a job on Jan. 1 if the U.S. cannot persuade Iraq to let troops stay longer.
- **Gen. Carter Ham** just took command of AFRICOM but is a Pentagon favorite, and one source said his name has already surfaced as a latecomer.



Gen. David Petraeus is expected to step aside this year, though he has said he would stay through another year if needed.

International Security Assistance Force commander

- Marine **Lt. Gen. John Allen**, CENTCOM deputy commander, is the favorite to take over the Afghanistan War this year. The Iraq War veteran has been a longtime deputy to Petraeus and Gen. James Mattis.
- **Lt. Gen. Bill Caldwell**, ISAF training commander, is unlikely to succeed Petraeus, sources say, but after several years in theater is due for a new assignment. There has been little chatter about who would replace him as training commander.
- **Gen. Ray Odierno** is the next most experienced war commander after Petraeus, but most feel it is unlikely he would be sent right back out to Afghanistan after his long Baghdad tour.
- **Lt. Gen. David Rodriguez**, the operational Afghanistan War commander and former Defense Secretary Robert Gates aide known affectionately as "General Rod," has been tapped to receive his fourth star and take command of U.S. Army Forces Command. Few people know Afghanistan so well, and he's reportedly disappointed at being left out of the fight.
- **Lt. Gen. Curtis M. Scaparrotti**, commander of Joint Base Lewis-McChord and former commander of Afghanistan's eastern regional operations, has been tapped to replace Rodriguez.



Joint Chiefs of Staff

Chief of Naval Operations

- NATO's **Adm. James Stavridis** is the top choice for the Navy's seat on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, to replace retiring Adm. Gary Roughead, having commanded the Navy-intense southern watch out of Miami and international forces out of Brussels. That is, unless Gen. James Cartwright is passed over for chairman.
- Vice CNO **Adm. Jonathan Greenert** could step into Roughead's shoes, should Stavridis get a call to chair the Joint Chiefs.

Army Chief of Staff

- Two weeks ago, **Gen. Martin Dempsey** took over from Gen. George Casey. Dempsey spent nearly three years leading the U.S. Army Training and Doctrine Command.

Air Force Chief of Staff

- Air Force Chief of Staff **Gen. Norton Schwartz's** third year as chief ends in August and he is frequently talked about for another post in Washington, but there has been less discussion in senior circles about his replacement until higher positions are settled.