

افغانستان آزاد – آزاد افغانستان

AA-AA

چو کشور نياشد تن من مباد بدین بوم ویر زنده یک تن مباد
همه سر به سر تن به کشتن دهیم از آن به که کشور به دشمن دهیم

www.afgazad.com

afgazad@gmail.com

European Languages

زبان های اروپایی

<http://www.vox.com/2014/11/24/7275177/chuck-hagel-resigns-defense>

Why Obama is firing Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel

Max Fisher

11/24/2014



1. Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel is resigning, President Obama will announce on Monday.
2. Obama appointed Hagel, a former Republican senator, as Defense Secretary in early 2013. He was expected to serve all four years of Obama's second term, so this is an early retirement.

3. Hagel has had a rough two years at the Pentagon, but this is also, to some degree, about the Obama administration trying to fix its increasingly broken foreign policy.

Why Hagel is leaving his job

Hagel had two kinds of failures as Secretary of Defense.

The first kind are policy failures, and they're not insignificant. In Afghanistan, Hagel failed to gain enough ground against the Taliban to force them to accept some kind of peace deal; instead, the Taliban sees itself as winning outright and is largely ignoring American negotiators. In Egypt, Hagel took the lead in trying to convince defense minister Abdel Fatah el-Sisi *not* to depose Egypt's first-ever democratically elected president in a coup; Hagel failed and the coup went ahead. In Iraq and Syria, Hagel failed to devise a strategy that would prevent the rise of ISIS or that would roll it back. In Ukraine, Hagel has not contributed to the effort to roll back or deter Russia's still-ongoing invasion. In Hagel's defense, he is not the lead on Russia and the Afghanistan policy was failing before he took office, but ISIS and Egypt are definitely under his purview.

The second set of failures, though, are bureaucratic, and that's more important than you might think. In some ways, Hagel's biggest job is to be the Pentagon's representative to the White House and to Congress, as well as to bring White House-set policy to the Pentagon. Hagel didn't really succeed at either. He was viewed skeptically in the Pentagon as an ineffective representative and manager who failed to advocate on behalf of the vast institution that is the US military. Within the White House discussions that set American foreign policy, he was lax and ineffective, known as not good at steering debate or contributing. The New York Times **writes**, damningly, "Hagel has often had problems articulating his thoughts — or administration policy — in an effective manner."

There's a much deeper issue: Obama's team is adrift on foreign policy

To some extent, though, you can't totally blame Hagel: Obama has insisted on setting foreign policy within the White House, which means excluding agencies like the Pentagon and the State Department. That policy has largely failed (look at the struggling efforts with ISIS and Russia's Ukraine invasion), and now Obama appears to be pinning the failure on Hagel — which is not going to fix the problem, given that Obama had already neutered Hagel's ability to set and shape foreign policy.

What's telling about all of this is that there's been speculation for a couple of months that, after the midterm elections, the Obama administration would fire some lead foreign policy people to try to fix the problems. But everyone thought he would fire someone who works in the White House, such as National Security Advisor Susan Rice, because Obama has forced all foreign policy-making to happen within the White House. Instead he's fired someone *outside* of the White House, which suggests that Obama is going to keep the White House foreign policy team that is actually leading things, and that is more culpable for the failures.