

JEDI: Emails Show Additional Connections Between DOD Officials and Amazon in Early 2017

Former Secretary of Defense James Mattis expressed interest in meeting with Amazon (AMZN) CEO Jeff Bezos at a dinner with his senior adviser Sally Donnelly and Amazon Web Services (AWS) VP of Worldwide Public Sector Teresa Carlson in early 2017, according to [emails](#) *The Capitol Forum* received as part of a FOIA request.

According to an email from DOD staffer William Bushman sent on April 18, 2017, an Amazon employee reached out to schedule a meeting between Mattis and Bezos for April 27, 2017. The purpose of the meeting “would be for Bezos to impart his thoughts/observations on DoD’s relationship with the tech sector.”

This meeting was discussed, and appears to have been approved, by DOD officials including Donnelly, according to the emails.

On March 15, 2017, Mattis’ Deputy Chief of Staff Tony DeMartino emailed Carlson to set up a meeting with Kevin Sweeney, Mattis’ Chief of Staff. Carlson responded the next day suggesting they meet on April 10, 2017. The emails also include an accepted calendar invite entitled “Meeting: Teresa Carlson” for 1:00 PM on that date.

The redacted emails do not contain definitive confirmation that the meetings occurred as planned. DOD was unable to provide comment by the time of this article’s publication; Mattis, Donnelly, DeMartino, and AWS could not be reached for comment by time of publication.

On August 10, 2017, Mattis visited Amazon’s headquarters in Seattle and met with Bezos. After the trip, Mattis ordered DOD to begin the process of modernizing the military’s digital infrastructure, according to [Geekwire](#).

AWS is favored to win the DOD’s lucrative, embattled JEDI contract, although JEDI is currently the subject of a court challenge regarding potential conflicts of interest involving DOD officials including DeMartino. *The Capitol Forum* [has previously written about the issues surrounding the contract](#).

Donnelly and DeMartino left positions at SBD Advisors (now ITC Global Advisors), a strategic advisory firm founded and helmed by Donnelly, for their jobs at DOD. AWS was a client of SBD Advisors until March 2018.

Additionally, Donnelly and other SBD Advisors staff have a history of involvement with projects and people connected to AWS. SBD Advisors often served as a revolving door for personnel to move into and out of senior positions in the U.S. defense community.

DOD spokesperson Heather Babb previously told *The Capitol Forum* that “neither Ms. Donnelly nor Mr. DeMartino were involved in the JEDI Cloud procurement.”