



Gen David Petraeus, the US head of international forces in Afghanistan, will be nominated as CIA director when its chief moves to head the Pentagon, unnamed US officials have said.

CIA director Leon Panetta will be nominated to take over as US defence secretary when Robert Gates retires in 2011, the sources said. The changes will be officially announced on Thursday.

Mr Gates was first appointed as defence secretary by George W Bush in 2006. The shuffling of the top national security jobs has been the subject of weeks of speculation. Gen Petraeus' office in Kabul told the BBC it had "no comment at this time" on the reports out of the US.

In a BBC interview earlier this month, the general said he had "committed to staying here through the fighting season", which ends in late November.

"At this point in life you serve at the pleasure of the elected leaders above you and when they decide what the future holds obviously I'll salute smartly and execute their decisions," Gen Petraeus said.

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