

## Leon Panetta to replace Robert Gates as defense secretary



Included in the flurry of news stories from the White House today was the announcement by President Obama that CIA director Leon Panetta would replace the current Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates.

The choice of Panetta, who at age 72 will become the oldest person to ever head the Pentagon, brings a budget expert in to combat the ever-expanding defense budget. According to the [Washington Post](#), Panetta's experience includes being chairman of the House Budget Committee and director of the Office of Management and Budget during President Clinton's first term.

[Politico](#) notes that Panetta's appointment is a sign that Obama hopes to shrink the defense budget more so than Gates would do. "Considerable cuts, beyond even the \$400 billion-over-12-year target that President Obama announced earlier this month, will require a fundamental rethinking of the military's role, something that Gates was unwilling to do," Christopher Preble, director of foreign policy studies for the libertarian Cato Institute, told Politico.

Still, there remains a question on whether or not Panetta's intelligence and budget credentials will translate to handling the military as well as Gates during his tenure.