

Fallon resigns as Central Command chief

by UPI

WASHINGTON - U.S. Navy Adm. William Fallon resigned as the U.S. Central Command commander, citing the perception that he disagreed with the Bush administration over Iran. Recent published reports indicated "a disconnect between my views and the president's policy objective have become a distraction at a critical time," Fallon, the top Pentagon commander in the Middle East, said Tuesday in a statement. "Although I don't believe there have ever been any differences about the objectives of our policy in the Central Command area of responsibility, the simple perception that there is makes it difficult for me to effectively serve America's interests there." U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates, announcing Fallon's intentions to resign his post and retire from the military, said he approved Fallon's request "with reluctance and regret." "I think it's the right decision," Gates said. "The notion that this decision portends anything (changing) the policy toward Iran is ridiculous." U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Martin Dempsey was named as acting commander. An article in Esquire magazine noted differences between Fallon and U.S. President George Bush about policy on Iran, criticizing those who publicly urged war. Bush praised Fallon "has served this country with honor, determination, and commitment" during his 40-plus years in the military.

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