

Gates says he's quiet on Iraq for a reason

by UPI

WASHINGTON -- U.S. Defense Secretary Robert Gates says little publicly about the war in Iraq in part to minimize political jockeying, the New York Times reported Tuesday. In an interview with the newspaper, Gates acknowledged he says little in discussions with his aides and the military, preferring to listen instead. Next month, Gen. David Petraeus, the senior U.S. commander in Iraq, and Adm. William Fallon, the U.S. commander in the Middle East, are scheduled to report to Congress on the Iraq situation. "I haven't really shared my views because I want to get their advice unvarnished, and I don't want General Petraeus or the chiefs or Admiral Fallon looking over their shoulders," Gates said. He said he hoped "we are on a path by late fall or early winter that reduces the political temperature sufficiently" so Iraq is no longer "a white-hot subject" in the presidential campaigns already in high gear for 2008. The Times said since Gates became secretary of defense last December, he has gained admirers in both parties and "may be the one person with the clout to persuade either President Bush or the Democratic-led Congress to compromise."

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