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RECORD ID: 0005898
RECEIVED: 18 SEP 00 18

TO: BERGER

FROM: PRESIDENT

DOC DATE: 18 SEP 00
SOURCE REF:

KEYWORDS: KOSOVO
MEDIA

POTUS QUESTIONS

PERSONS:

SUBJECT: POTUS QUESTION RE NY TIMES 15 SEP EDITORIAL / BUSH ON SPOT AS GOP
PUSHES TO PULL OUT GIS FM KOSOVO

ACTION: NO FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED

DUE DATE: 20 SEP 00 STATUS: C

STAFF OFFICER: LACKEY

LOGREF:

FILES: PA

NSCP:

CODES:

D O C U M E N T D I S T R I B U T I O N

FOR ACTION

FOR CONCURRENCE

FOR INFO

COMMENTS: POTUS WROTE, "SANDY- WHERE ARE WE ON THIS? BC

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ACTION DATA SUMMARY REPORT

RECORD ID: 0005898

DOC ACTION OFFICER

CAO ASSIGNED ACTION REQUIRED

001 PITTMAN	Z	00091818	PREPARE MEMO FOR BERGER
001	Z	00091910	ACTION TRANSFERRED
001 GREENWOOD	Z	00091910	PREPARE MEMO FOR BERGER
001	Z	00092118	ACTION TRANSFERRED
001 LACKEY	Z	00092118	PREPARE MEMO FOR BERGER
001	X	00101215	NO FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED

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DUE DATE: 20 SEP 00 STATUS: S

STAFF OFFICER: GREENWOOD

LOGREF:

FILES: PA

NSCP:

CODES:

D O C U M E N T D I S T R I B U T I O N

FOR ACTION
GREENWOOD

FOR CONCURRENCE
PITTMAN

FOR INFO
ANDERSON
BRADTKE
CROWLEY
SCHULTE
YEE

*Please close out. Original copy whereabouts unknown.
Per Tavlantides. Lackey provided oral update to Berger.*

COMMENTS: POTUS WROTE, "SANDY- WHERE ARE WE ON THIS? BC

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9-18-00

Bush on Spot as G.O.P. Pushes to Pull Out G.I.'s From Kosovo

By ERIC SCHMITT

WASHINGTON, Sept. 14 — House and Senate negotiators are fighting over a deadline for withdrawing American troops from Kosovo, renewing a clash with President Clinton and putting Gov. George W. Bush on the spot again, since he lobbied Senate Republicans to drop a similar provision earlier this year.

At issue is a proposal to cut off money for nearly 6,000 United States ground forces in Kosovo by April 1, forcing their withdrawal unless Congress authorizes an extension.

In May, the Senate rejected a similar measure, 53 to 47, with at least two or three Republicans saying they were swayed by Governor Bush, who called it a "legislative overreach" that would tie his hands if he became president. But House Republicans quietly attached a comparable provision to the Pentagon's \$310 billion budget bill for fiscal year 2001.

House and Senate leaders are now meeting in a conference committee to reconcile the two versions of the military budget bills — one with the provision, the other without. The contentious language was one of the last sticking points negotiators faced in finishing the bill before Congress adjourns for the year.

By tonight, there were signs that Congressional Republicans were relenting. "I think we'll work something out," said Senator John W. Warner, a Virginia Republican who heads the Armed Services Committee and who sponsored the original Senate measure. The House version was sponsored by Representative John R. Kasich, Republican of Ohio.

The dispute comes at an awkward time for Mr. Bush, the Republican presidential nominee, who has accused the Clinton administration of allowing the military's combat readiness to erode, in part by dispatching American forces on far-flung peacekeeping missions to places like Kosovo.

A spokesman for Mr. Bush, Ray Sullivan, said today that the governor objected to the Republican-written language for the same reasons that he balked at the Senate provision in May. "He views it as a legislative overreach on the powers of the president," said Mr. Sullivan, who added that Congressional Republicans were aware of Mr. Bush's views.

Critics say the provision would undermine the unity and morale of NATO's peacekeeping operation, which involves forces from Britain, France, Germany, Italy and other nations in and out of Europe.

In a letter sent late today to Senator Warner, Mr. Clinton warned that imposing an arbitrary deadline for withdrawal would also send a dangerous signal of uncertain American resolve to President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia before that country's elections scheduled for Sept. 24.

Under the provision, Mr. Clinton's successor would be required to certify to Congress that Washington's European allies were meeting their commitments in Kosovo for reconstruction aid, police officers, food and medicines. Without that certification, the measure required that money be spent in Kosovo only for a withdrawal of American troops.

The measure would require the allies to be responsible for at least 50 percent of reconstruction aid, 85 percent of humanitarian assistance and 90 percent of police officers in Kosovo. The allies are now providing 87 percent of the reconstruction aid, 73 percent of the humanitarian assistance and 87 percent of the police, the White House said. Some of the contributions are from non-European countries.

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In a letter last month to Mr. Warner, Defense Secretary William S. Cohen criticized the provision, saying it was "unacceptable because it is counterproductive to peace in Kosovo and could seriously jeopardize relations between the United States and its NATO allies."

"If enacted this provision would take decision-making on the deployment of U.S. forces out of the hands of Congress and the president and put it into the hands of European governments — a dangerous precedent," said Mr. Cohen, who is the only Republican in the cabinet.

"This provision would create uncertainty about U.S. intentions and resoluteness, and could encourage an extremist element to take actions that could put American forces at increased risk, in the hope of triggering their withdrawal," he concluded.

But many Congressional Republicans say the provision is essential to relieve the burden on American ground troops in Kosovo and pressure European countries to pay a larger share of the reconstruction and policing costs for Kosovo.

"We feel pretty strongly about it," said Representative Dick Army of Texas, the House majority leader. "The question is, how long will we have people over there, and when will we have a clear definition of what they're doing?"

Representative Floyd D. Spence of South Carolina, chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, agreed: "We're tied down too much in different places right now. People are scattered all over the world, our readiness is down and our equipment is wearing out. We have to have our allies do more."

But Democrats echoed Mr. Cohen's dire warnings. "These arbitrary limits are not going to be helpful," said Senator Jack Reed, a Rhode Island Democrat on the Armed Services Committee.

Senator Carl Levin of Michigan, the panel's senior Democrat and a top negotiator in the conference committee, said: "It undermines the coalition and creates terrible morale for our troops to let them know they're coming out."

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Sullivan
Warner
on this
PT

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