

Budget negotiations get under way

Replay of shutdown looms next month

By The Associated Press
WASHINGTON — Capping a yearlong feud, the Clinton administration and Republican lawmakers began budget talks Tuesday, expressing hope that a deal could be struck, but warning of tough bargaining ahead.

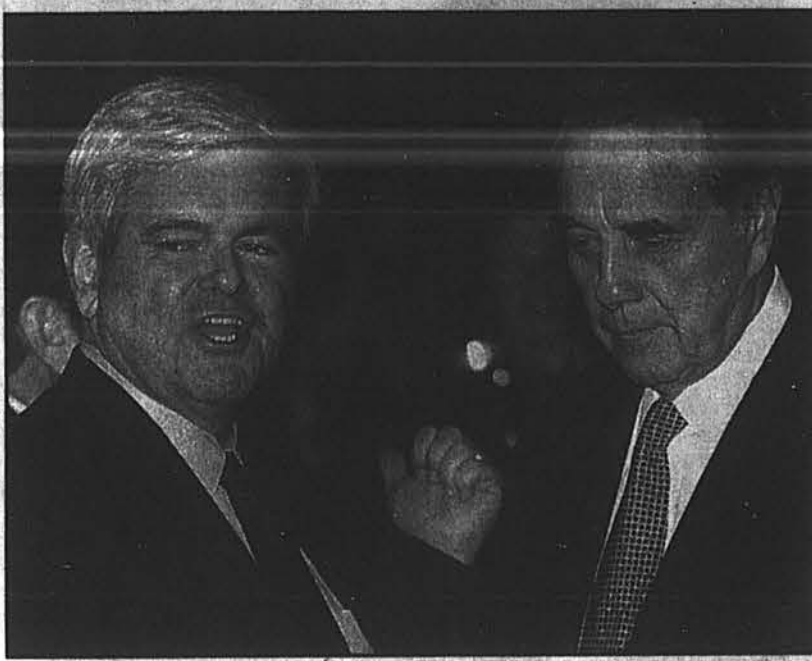
Facing a possible Dec. 16 replay of this month's six-day partial federal government shutdown, negotiators met for more than an hour in a wood-paneled Capitol room to begin seeking a pact for balancing the budget by 2002.

President Clinton's goal was to temper GOP plans to extract savings from Medicare, Medicaid, welfare, education and environmental programs, and to shrink the Republican \$245 billion seven-year tax cut for many families and businesses.

"The mood is somber because of the big job we know we have to do," Senate Budget Committee Chairman Pete Domenici, R-N.M., told reporters allowed into the room moments before the closed-door talks began.

"Good start," said White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta when the meeting was over.

Five congressional Republicans sat at a rectangular table, facing seven administration officials and



The Associated Press
House Speaker Newt Gingrich (left) and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole will play key roles in hammering out a budget compromise.

congressional Democrats. Each side had more than a dozen aides in the room, across a corridor from the Senate chamber.

In that corridor, staring resolutely at the meeting room is a marble bust of former President Bush. In 1990, Bush participated in marathon budget talks that produced bipartisan tax increases that contributed to his 1992 re-election defeat by Clinton.

Hours before Tuesday's talks began, Clinton lunched with Democratic senators in the Capitol and told them he wants to strike a deal, participants said.

"He said he owes the American people his best efforts to do everything he can to bridge the gaps," said Sen. Harry Reid, D-Nev. But Clinton also promised to fend off proposed savings from Medicare and other social programs, say-

ing, "People will fall through the safety net in droves" under Republican plans, according to Reid. Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole, R-Kan., called the chances of reaching an agreement by Dec. 15 "at least 50-50. I'm hopeful."

Tuesday's opening session focused mostly on the structure and timetable for the talks. The two sides agreed to meet each day this week including Saturday, and to have seven bargainers apiece.

As a prelude, Clinton invited leaders of both parties to the White House to discuss the budget and Bosnia before he flew to Europe. Prior to that, White House aides sounded notes of caution over the budget bargaining.

"It's not going to be easy. There are large differences here," acknowledged Panetta.

And on Fox television's "Morning News," White House spokesman Mike McCurry cited philosophical differences over the government's role in American life and its price tag and said, "I suspect that those kinds of issues will have to be settled in November of 1996," when presidential and congressional elections will be held.

That prompted Domenici to say that in that event, "It's the White House that's destroying the opportunity to get a balanced budget."

"The price of not getting a deal is higher than the price of getting a deal," said House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga.

The Russell Daily News, Thursday, November 30, 1995

Bob Dole Riveted on Securing Nomination

By THOMAS OLIPHANT
The Boston Globe
WASHINGTON — For those willing to acknowledge the primacy of timing in politics, consider the following:

On the evening of Nov. 17, Senate majority leader Bob Dole led his Republican leadership colleagues in spurning President Clinton's first search for a compromise to reopen the government for a few weeks.

The following afternoon, Dole jetted in and out of Florida to strike a combative pose before the GOP activists and big shots assembled in Orlando to cast the last straw poll of the pre-presidential campaign, vowing that this will not be an autumn of compromise.

Whereupon, once safely back here with another ho-hum victory under his belt, he proceeded to arrange a compromise.

Connecting these latest Dole dots is easy on the surface, but beware: The only certainty in the Dole world is more dots.

According to senior advisers, their guy has come through spring training with his road to the nomination still smooth and lacking an

obvious obstacle.

His opposition, they add, remains balkanized and lacking a clear cause. He has, they sum up, come through the fits and starts of the precampaign with gobs of money, governor-based operations in nearly all the early-voting states and not a single crushing embarrassment after more than six months of activity.

Just as important, the precampaign had ended with no opposition from a Republican figure of potentially equal institutional stature: Not Colin Powell from the middle; not Jack Kemp from the futurist, New Ideas world; not Dan Quayle from the social issues world of right-wing Christians; and probably not Newt Gingrich from the congressional revolutionaries (though Dole himself will believe it when he hears it definitively from Gingrich himself).

On the surface, this might appear to be the moment when a front-runner begins to shift his attention from the ideology-driven activists of the precampaign to the broader, less right-wing universe of Republicans and conservatives who will actually vote next year, not to mention the much broader universe of voters who will decide the general election itself.

More specifically, the temptation was to seize on the budget compromise that would temporarily reopen the government and posit the return of Dealmaker Dole — the bridging figure from a partisan base who helps make big things happen around here.

It's possible, but don't count on it. More than all his pals and advisers, Dole remains riveted on a strategy of concentrating on securing the Republican nomination above all else; his memories of his 1988 collapse almost on the brink of victory over George Bush are consuming.

All this year — whether he was

crudely insulting gay people, junking long-held civil rights convictions or carrying Gingrich's water — Dole has given his opposition not a millimeter of substantive running room to his right.

The budget maneuvers didn't substantially change things. It is easy for Dole to give an opponent like Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas an opening to oppose the compromise that reopened the government; that clear prospect caused not a second's hesitation upon Dole's return Nov. 18.

For one thing, Dole's right flank is covered for the moment by the more-than-ample flanks of Gingrich. For another, the Dole view of the world strongly prefers that Gramm be the senator's principal rival and foil in the primaries.

Nonetheless, the Dole view is also grounded in the cautionary conviction that eventually a front-runner has to face at least one near-death experience and that he will be no exception.

It was simple to arrange a short-term compromise, but the negotiations with President Clinton on balancing the budget for real will be both arduous and dangerous.

To understate the point, the idea that Dole would do anything that risks Gingrich's opposition, much less his candidacy, is far-fetched; so far he's even happy to let Gingrich upstage him in front of TV cameras.

The irony is that once again the tactics that help get Dole the nomination make his ultimate task of beating Clinton more difficult. And the worse Dole looks in the polls, the more Republicans wonder if they're being led off a cliff.

Dole's Merle Haggard response — it's not love, but it's not bad — is at least accurate. But it understates the instability of the Republican world and ignores the extent to which his pandering has harmed him among moderate and independent voters.

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Talking With Kansans Senator Bob Dole



Dole Puts Principle Ahead of Politics

For many, the nightmare scenario for the 1996 presidential election features a debate between Bill Clinton and Bob Dole.

There wouldn't be enough syrup in the world to cover that many waffles.

But today, at least on one key issue, neither of the apparent presidential finalists is waffling. And both are standing on the same side of the issue. For that, Dole deserves much credit.

Even if Dole were not trying to take Clinton's job away from him, his role as the leader of the Republicans in the Senate might be reason enough for him to pick apart the president's Bosnia policy, just as he has picked apart his budget, welfare, defense and arts policies.

There's only one problem. Clinton is right, and Dole knows it.

In fact, Dole can claim that he was right before Clinton was. Dole is no Johnny-come-lately to this issue. Even when the White House was in Republican hands, Dole was the clearest voice for western action to stop the slaughter of innocents in Sarajevo and elsewhere in Bosnia.

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that at this point we shouldn't be so partisan."

Dole added that he was holding meetings with leading experts on Bosnia to persuade recalcitrant senators to support him, and that he was discussing a joint strategy with the House speaker, Newt Gingrich, as well.

The administration is likely to run into much more trouble in the House, whose members are younger and less swayed by the administration's argument that failure to take part in the mission would destroy NATO.

Among the congressional skeptics is Rep. Sam Brownback, R-Topeka, who will join about 15 other House members on a four-day trip beginning today to Germany and Sarajevo, capital of Bosnia.

"To date, I still don't see that U.S. vital interests are at stake," said Brownback, a member of the House International Relations Committee. "I keep coming out of these things thinking we're getting just a sell job and no facts. It's like getting a pig in a poke."

Another Kansas Republican in the House, Rep. Todd Tiahrt of Goddard, said he opposes the mission but would vote for a resolution expressing support for the troops.

"I think the policy is absolutely wrong," Tiahrt said. "They have not made the case for ground troops over there. We can lead in many ways without ground troops."

Several hours after Dole's announcement, White House officials traveling with Clinton in Belfast said the president had decided to allow a military spending bill that he needs to help pay for the Bosnian mission to become law without his signature. Although he had initially said he would veto

the \$243 billion bill because it contained more money than he had requested, it would also provide the \$2 billion needed to pay for the Bosnia operation.

In discussing the Bosnia operation, the administration previously talked in terms of \$1.2 billion as the cost for the troop deployment.

Before the House International Relations Committee, however, Perry said that in addition there would be \$500 million for support operations and \$300 million for continuing air operations such as enforcing the "no-fly zone." The \$300 million is not a new cost.

Perry also said that in addition to the 20,000 troops in Bosnia there would be 5,000 in support units in Croatia and 7,000 in nearby countries, primarily Italy and Hungary.

Thursday's announcement by the two key Republicans does not signify a ringing endorsement of Clinton, whose Bosnia policy has continued to come under attack from Republicans and Democrats in Congress, and which — as both lawmakers pointedly observed Thursday — is opposed by the vast majority of their constituents.

Rather, their decision stems more from resignation that Clinton is going to send troops to help enforce a peace agreement no matter what and that it would be unseemly not to line up behind the commander-in-chief.

Dole said in the Senate: "The bottom line is that the president intends to send these troops to Bosnia one way or another. And so, it seems to me that we in the Congress have a responsibility to try to insure — to our best ability — that as this deployment goes forward, that we create the conditions to end it quickly and successfully so that U.S. forces can return to their families."

Dole has long held that a president should be supported once he

decides something as important as committing U.S. troops abroad. He argued passionately against the use of U.S. troops against President Saddam Hussein of Iraq over Kuwait, but once President George Bush decided to do so, he worked hard to win support for him.

As the United States and its NATO allies considered commitment of new ground troops to Bosnia, the Security Council moved Thursday to extract the United Nations from the Balkans by limiting the presence of its peacekeeping force in Bosnia to two more months and in Croatia to just 45 more days.

Only in Macedonia, another former republic of Yugoslavia, did the council extend its peacekeeping mandate for a full six months, the duration previously applied. A U.N. contingent of 1,105 soldiers, nearly 500 of them American, is stationed in Macedonia to prevent the kind of ethnic warfare that erupted in Bosnia and Croatia.

The three peacekeeping mandates were to expire Thursday. The council unanimously extended them in anticipation of the arrival in Bosnia of a new NATO force to help carry out the peace agreement on Bosnia reached in Dayton, Ohio, on Nov. 21.

Meeting in Brussels on Thursday, NATO ambassadors ended a day-long session without deciding to launch the first 2,600 of the 60,000 troops slated for peace enforcement in Bosnia. No official explanation was given for the failure to reach agreement.

The North Atlantic Council, NATO's top policy-making body, was to meet again today to resume discussions on the authorization document and on the overall military operations plan.

Contributing: Associated Press

THE WICHITA EAGLE Friday, December 1, 1995



Associated Press
A Swedish U.N. soldier stands guard as Col. John Brown, chief of staff of the U.S. Army's 1st Armored Division, conducts a reconnaissance patrol Thursday in Bosnia on a road from Tuzla to Zenica.

Dole backs U.S. mission in Balkans

By Elaine Sciolino
New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — In a major boost to President Clinton's decision to send U.S. troops to Bosnia, Senate Republican leader Bob Dole threw his support on Thursday behind the mission.

Testifying before a congressional committee, Defense Secretary William Perry raised the price tag for the Bosnia deployment to \$2 billion and said the mission will require 32,000 U.S. troops in and around the former Yugoslavia.

Dole made his announcement from the Senate floor in tandem with Sen. John McCain, the Arizona Republican and former Vietnam prisoner of war who has been one of his party's most bitter critics of any military intervention in Bosnia.

Dole said that he was drafting a resolution supporting the president's decision — with conditions intended to bring the troops home quickly —

and hoped it would pass late next week or early the following week. That would give Clinton much-needed bipartisan political backing before the scheduled signing of the Bosnian peace agreement in Paris on Dec. 14, which would be immediately followed by the deployment of the bulk of U.S. and other troops.

After announcing his support, Dole acknowledged in a telephone interview that U.S. troops would be in Bosnia by the time the Senate voted. But he said that opposing the president after he had made his decision would undermine the soldiers' morale.

"It wasn't easy," he said of his decision. "I knew the easy way out was to go out and trash everything."

He added, in an allusion to his presidential rivals who have opposed the Bosnia mission: "I know I'll get a few whacks out there, but I've been around here long enough to know

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