

Watch out for Bush speeches, warns aide

WASHINGTON: A US senator whose interests include UFOs has disciplined an aide who used paranormal experiments as a reason for warning the Pentagon that President Bush and other top leaders may be disclosing a secret code word in their speeches.

Aide Scott Jones — who investigates telekinesis, extrasensory perception and other paranormal phenomena as part of his \$US50,000 (\$A65,360) a year job as a special assistant to Democrat Senator Claiborne Pell — warned the Defence Secretary, Richard Cheney, that the word “Simone” can be heard when recorded speeches by Bush, Cheney and Secretary of State James Baker are played backwards.

“I mention this situation in case it is a code word that would not be in the na-

tional interest to be known during the Persian Gulf crisis, Jones wrote in a letter on Senate stationery.

Mr Jones, 62, a retired navy intelligence officer, told Mr Cheney, a personal friend, that the word had been discovered through reverse-speech therapy, in which subconscious thoughts are held to be revealed through the analysis of speech played backwards.

“If the word means nothing special to you, this is a non-event, just another mystery in a new technology we are developing,” Mr Jones wrote.

Senator Pell, 72, said in a statement that “We are convinced that as a retired naval intelligence officer and friend of Secretary Cheney” Mr Jones “was motivated by patriotic concern about national security, but he exercised poor

at security, but he exercised poor

judgment in communicating with the secretary's office as he did".

In addition to serving as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Senator Pell is on the advisory board of the International Association for Near-death Studies and attended a symposium in 1987 on people who say they have been abducted by extraterrestrials from unidentified flying objects.

The *Providence Journal*, which broke the "Simone" story after being sent a copy of Mr Jones' letter anonymously, said Senator Pell had "readily discussed" the work he and Mr Jones have done on such issues as ESP, the power of memory and telekinesis — the moving of objects through psychic forces.

— KRD

US dodges Govt shut-down

WASHINGTON: The United States has averted another government shut-down by hours as the President, George Bush, agreed to provide it with operating cash for five more days while lawmakers try to work out a compromise plan to cut the Budget deficit.

Mr Bush signed into law a temporary funding measure for the Government early in the evening, just before he left for a weekend at his Camp David, Maryland, retreat. The measure provides funding to midnight on Wednesday.

Earlier in the week, Mr Bush had threatened to veto any such temporary funding measure.

The White House statement said Mr Bush had received a progress report on the delicate deficit-cutting negotiations

... had received a progress report on the delicate deficit-cutting negotiations during an afternoon visit by lawmakers and was now convinced that the Congress was working hard to produce an

acceptable Budget that would cut the deficit.

Lawmakers are struggling to work out a Budget accord to cut \$US40 billion (\$A52.29 billion) from the deficit in the first year of a five-year plan intended to slash the deficit by \$US500 billion (\$A653.60 billion).

The Government ran out of operating money on October 1 when its annual funding expired without a new Budget. The Government has run on stopgap measures since then, including one approved two weeks ago that was to expire at midnight on Friday.

The House of Representatives and Senate passed the new five-day extension earlier on Friday to give themselves time to stitch together a plan that would reconcile their two very different deficit-cutting packages.

In signing the extension, Mr Bush took

the edge of suspense off the proceedings and left Congress to press on with the grinding work of compromise without the worry of a government shut-down.

Nearly a dozen joint committees from the House and Senate planned to meet through the weekend to somehow blend the House and Senate packages.

The House plan features an income-tax increase for the wealthiest Americans, raising the top bracket from 28 to 33 per cent, something Mr Bush has said he will not accept. The Senate package, which adds no new income taxes, hits the middle class hard, raising petrol tax from

...which goes to help income taxes, hits the middle class hard, raising petrol tax from nine to 18.5c and cutting health-care benefits for the elderly.

Mr Bush has said he will sign the Senate Bill but veto the House measure.

— Reuter