

Report: Give states control of forces

by UPI

WASHINGTON - Congress is considering whether to give governors authority over all U.S. military forces in their states during terrorist attacks and domestic disasters. The discussion comes on the heels of a report by the Commission on the National Guard and Reserves, which suggested that the nation's governors be given authority over active duty troops in their states during catastrophes, Stateline.org reported Thursday. The proposal is opposed by the Pentagon, which says giving governors authority beyond their state's National Guard troops is unconstitutional and "invites confusion" over military command during emergencies. But having the governors oversee their National Guardsmen and the president commanding active duty troops "places the nation at risk of a disjointed federal and state military response to a catastrophe," the report concluded, according to Stateline.org. "We have great confidence in our governors," said Arnold L. Punaro, a retired Marine major general and chairman of the commission. Paul McHale, assistant secretary of defense for homeland defense and Americas' security, said if enacted the plan would run roughshod over the federal system of government. "It is at odds with Article II of the Constitution," he said. "There can be only one commander in chief, and that is the president of the United States. To decentralize that command and control to 50 separate state governors invites confusion."

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