

Florida legislature plans to thwart Gore's move

S Rajagopalan
Washington, November 30

FLORIDA'S REPUBLICAN-DOMINATED Legislature appears to be getting set to thwart Democrat Al Gore's legal challenge by nominating 25 electors to ensure George W. Bush's victory in the Electoral College voting on December 18. A special session to pursue the controversial move is being actively considered.

The Democrats have served notice that any such intervention is certain to become the subject of yet another legal challenge. Appointing electors without waiting for a judicial disposal of cases pending in the Florida courts could also trigger a Judiciary-Legislature face-off.

Moves on a special session gathered momentum on a day when the protracted presidential drama took a new turn with a circuit court ordering the transportation of more than a million ballots from the Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties to Tallahassee, the State capital.

The court's ruling on an omnibus movement of ballots represented a twin setback for Gore. His attorneys, wanting a quick judicial recount, had confined their request to 14,000 disputed ballots. But the Bush camp successfully threw a spanner in the works by getting the judge to agree to the movement of all the 1.16 million ballots.

The motorcade carrying the ballots would now arrive in Tallahassee only on Friday night, thus putting paid to the Gore camp's plans for

an immediate recount. The court is still to decide whether to undertake a recount. This matter has been posted for hearing on Saturday.

The Bush camp's success with its delaying tactics has all but unnerved the Gore attorneys. The latter have been wanting to establish that Mr Gore secured more votes than Mr Bush -- and they wanted this ahead of the US Supreme Court's crucial hearing on Friday on a Bush plea to overturn manual recounts.

The Gore lawyers have now turned to the Florida Supreme Court for an expeditious judicial recount. Even if the court agrees on such a selective recount, the exercise can't commence before Saturday since the ballots will now be brought to Tallahassee only by Friday night.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

1 DEC 2000

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FROM K.P. NAYAR 9-9

Washington, Dec. 1: For the first time in America's history, the Supreme Court intervened in a presidential election, but as the highest court's nine justices retired to debate their verdict after a 90-minute hearing, the choice of the 43rd President of the US was still nowhere near a final decision.

Intense questioning by the judges of all sides involved in the dispute pointed to a delay in deciding the election that may now extend upto the eleventh hour of the Clinton presidency which terminates on January 20.

Lawyers for George W. Bush, the Republican candidate who has appealed to the Supreme Court, were grilled by judges to explain why the highest court of the land should be involved in settling the election at this stage.

Their questioning appeared to indicate thinking on the bench that the election dispute in Florida is a matter for the state Supreme Court to settle. More significantly, the judges wondered if the Supreme Court should come into the picture only after the Congress has picked a President and vice-president as one of the final constitutional processes in a dis-

puted election.

If the Supreme Court decides that this should, indeed, be the case, then the dispute could drag on in the court even after January 5 when the Congress will have a say on the unresolved choice for the White House.

So far, it was expected that if the indecision over the 43rd President continued up to January, the two Houses of Congress would decide the electoral outcome by making their choice for the nation's two top jobs as mandated by the US Constitution.

On the other hand, if the Supreme Court rules that the ongoing dispute is a matter for Florida courts to settle under the state's Constitution, the problem will still be nowhere near resolution.

At the last count, there were 44 different cases being heard in courts across Florida, some filed by Bush, others by his Democratic rival Al Gore and still more by independent voters and non-governmental organisations.

As leaders of the two political parties, their supporters and weary lawyers approached another weekend of indecision, the whole election process was descending into a farce. Yesterday, nearly half a million ballots from Palm Beach County, where both

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sides are challenging the tally, were brought to Florida's capital of Tallahassee on the orders of a state court.

Today, another 654,000 ballots were similarly being transported to Tallahassee from Miami-Dade county under police escort. Somewhat reflecting the current state of the US political process was a screaming sign on the rental van used for transporting the ballots. The bright yellow sign read: "Rent me". The judge will decide on Sunday whether these ballots should be counted all over again manually.

The sight of ballots in a rented van being escorted by the police with blaring sirens reminded many Americans of O J Simpson, the former football star who was arrested on charges of murdering his ex-wife and her friend after a chase on a Los Angeles highway six years ago.

Meanwhile, Florida's legislature has decided to hold a special session to consider nominating members of the state electoral college if election disputes are not settled by December 12, the deadline for choosing electors.

Since the legislature is controlled by Republicans, the controversial move will certainly favour Bush.

THE TELEGRAPH

- 2 DEC 2000

Why should we intervene?: court

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, DEC. 1. Nine judges of the United States Supreme Court today intensely and aggressively questioned both lawyers for the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, in a historic case on the November 7 Presidential contest.

A rare audio tape released by the court (no television cameras were allowed) at the end of the 90-minute hearing shows many judges asking whether they should intervene at all. "Why should the Federal Judiciary be interfering in what seems to be a very carefully thought-out scheme," Mr. Justice David Souter asked the Texas Governor's chief lawyer, Mr. Theodore Olson. Other conservative judges including the Chief Justice, Mr. William Rehnquist, also questioned why the Supreme Court should get involved. "This is a federal court," remarked Mr. Justice Antonin Scalia. Mr. Justice Stephen Bryer wondered whether its intervention would lead to 'any outcome'. One of the arguments by the Gore lawyers is that the case should not even be entertained by the U.S. Supreme Court.

On the other hand, conservatives on the Bench questioned the Florida Supreme Court ruling. Mr. Justice Scalia, at one point, said it might have violated



The Gore campaign attorney, Mr. Dexter Douglass, hides his face as another petition to intervene on behalf of voters was brought for hearing on Thursday in a circuit court in Florida. — AP

a constitutional provision which directs the States to appoint electors "in such a manner as the legislature thereof may direct".

The Florida Supreme Court appeared to rely on the State Constitution, and not on the code crafted by the legislature. "That is a real problem under Article 2" of the U.S. Constitution, Mr. Justice Scalia told Mr. Gore's chief lawyer, Mr. Laurence Tribe of the Harvard University. Ms. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor asked Mr. Tribe whether the Florida Supreme Court changed the rules after the elections were over. "Who would have thought that the Legislature was leaving open the date for change by the court.

Earlier, lawyers for the Texas Governor and the Vice-President asked the court to give finality to the election process, now in its fourth week. The highest court of the land considered such critical issues as States' rights and separation of powers. More than the legal ramifications of its ruling, there is the political component. A legal 'victory' for Mr. Bush would mean that his margin would be the previous 930 votes, instead of the present 537. Politically, it would increase the pressure on the Vice-President to call it quits. But if the court rejects Mr. Bush's arguments, the ruling will give an added impetus to Mr. Gore to pursue his fight in Florida courts.

THE HINDU

. 2 DEC 2000

US Supreme Court ends hearing

SF-9
7/12
PTI, AP & AFP

WASHINGTON, Dec. 1. — The US Supreme Court today concluded a historic sitting that could settle once and for all whether Mr Al Gore or Mr George W Bush will be the next President.

The court heard for nearly 90 minutes lawyers of Mr Gore and Mr Bush on a petition by the Republicans, challenging the Florida Supreme Court ruling allowing hand recounts of votes beyond a deadline fixed by state law.

The US apex court told lawyers for the two presidential candidates that it would decide whether the Florida Supreme Court had acted correctly.

The issue is whether the Florida Supreme Court acted within or outside its authority when it allowed ballots to be handcounted after 14 November to be added to the vote total.

Mr Bush's lawyers and the Florida legislature itself, which too submitted a brief, hold that

the Florida Supreme Court usurped the authority of the legislature.

The US Supreme Court indicated it would also weigh what the consequences would be if it decided that the state Supreme Court, which overturned the ruling by a lower court, was wrong.

The nine Justices peppered both sides with questions on why it should take up the case.

Normally, the US Supreme Court takes four days at least to give a ruling.

Therefore, a ruling is generally expected on Monday or Tuesday.

New Mexico: The New Mexico canvassing board has extended its deadline to certify its official tally in the presidential election, which gives Mr Gore a small lead over Mr Bush in the state, an official said today, a report from Santa Fe says.

Lt Governor Walter Bradley has called a board meeting on Tuesday to amend the official election tally, said Ms Diane Kinderwater, spokeswoman for Governor Gary Johnson.

THE STATESMAN

- 2 DEC 2 2000

U.S. will shift focus to future poll process

By Jal Taraporevala

MUMBAI: After Republican and Democratic Party tempers cool over the conduct of the electoral process in Florida in the U.S. presidential elections, some of the attention will be focused on ways of preventing similar situations occurring in the future. A number of counties across the nation which currently use the somewhat outdated punch-card method of casting ballots could well choose to switch over to sophisticated electronic machines in an attempt to avoid future arguments over hanging chads and dimpled ballots.

But it will be much harder to effect substantive changes in the law governing elections. This is because the control and administration of elections in the U.S. are essentially handled on a statewide basis and not at a centralised level. As a result, there is an absence of uniformity in the various sets of regulations and procedures between the 50 states.

NEWS ANALYSIS

These differences are scarcely likely to be standardised in view of the federal character of the constitution and the strong tradition of state governments which have been in favour of asserting their autonomy. Besides, given the fact that the majority of members of the different local canvassing boards will continue to be either Republicans or Democrats and not independent means that whenever there is a close electoral contest, there are bound to be allegations of arbitrariness and partisanship.

A few state governments might face some pressure to narrow the wide differences between countries on the rules governing the conduct, administration and control of elections. These issues include the design of ballots, the principles governing the counting of manual votes by the local canvassing boards and the time-table and rules relating to the official certification of the election by the state canvassing commissions.

However, a few states could, in course of time, consider an alternative to the winner takes all principle of selecting electors to the college. Among the proposals mentioned are selecting electors in a state in proportion to the popular votes received by the various candidates and the congressional districtwise allocation of electoral votes, as is the practice in Maine and Nebraska. Such changes would not be very difficult to implement since they would merely require alterations in state law and not an amendment to the constitution.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

3 DEC 2000

US Supreme Court presents a divided picture

Gore suffers further setback in Florida as apex court rejects plea for immediate recount

S. Rajagopalan

Washington, December 2

GIVING THE impression of being as divided as the polity, the US Supreme Court on Friday grilled lawyers of George W. Bush and Al Gore in an intense 90-minute encounter that left a whole nation wondering about the outcome in the long-drawn Presidential saga.

While the nine-member apex court's pronouncement is expected early next week, the tone and tenor of the judges' questioning set off a guessing game: Will they uphold or overturn the Florida Supreme Court's order that threw a lifeline for Gore? Or will they opt not to get involved in a State matter?

The questions that the different judges fired at the two sides have given rise to speculations of a split verdict, even though pundits concede the point that questioning is more a tool than an index of the pronouncement.

If the apex court overturns the Florida Court's order, Gore's problems will multiply and a question mark will come to hang on his ongoing legal challenges. However, if it upholds the order or leaves the issue on jurisdictional considerations, the Gore campaign can draw some sustenance for the battle ahead.

The US Supreme Court's deliberations came on a day when Gore suffered two more setbacks in Florida. The State's apex court, in back to back rulings, rejected his plea for immediate judicial recount of 14,000-odd disputed ballots and also rejected a citizens' petition (supported by the Gore camp) for repoll in the Palm Beach county.

The upshot of the rejection is that Gore's attorneys are back to the Leon circuit court, whose judge N. Sanders Sauls has scheduled an extended hearing today to decide whether or not to hold a recount. More than a million ballots cast in the Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties have arrived in Tallahassee amid great fanfare.

In the apex court here, the spotlight was as much on the jurisdiction issue as on the Florida Supreme Court's extension of deadline for certifying the results. The Bush camp had castigated the extension as being tantamount to rewriting election law and usurping executive powers.

"I do not know of any case where we have impugned a state supreme court the way you are doing in this case," Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg told Bush's lawyer Theodore B Olson. "In case after case, we have said we owe the highest respect to what the state Supreme Court says, as the state's law."

In a similar vein, Justice David H. Souter posed, "Why should the federal judiciary be interfering in what seems to

be a very carefully thought-out scheme for determining what happens if you are right?"

If these queries were music to Gore's camp, the Bush camp was to be delighted later by pointed questions put by two other judges to Gore attorney Lawrence Tribe. The judges questioned Gore's lawyers over the 12-day deadline extension that the Florida Supreme Court had granted for certifying the results after hearing Gore's appeal.

"What we are talking about is having laws of sufficient specificity and stability that people can rely on them in advance and not have them changed after the fact," Justice Anthony M. Kennedy said. Justice Sandra Day O'Connor spoke in a similar vein and questioned the "very dramatic change" of the date that the Florida court effected.

Some of the questions by Chief Justice William H Rehnquist and Justice Antonin Scalia also made the Gore aides distinctly uncomfortable, prompting a rethink of their earlier position that the case was all but wrapped up in their favour. If there was much action in the grand courtroom, the scene outside was no different. Braving the cold, several thousand supporters of the two presidential hopefuls took position with placards, some of them provocative.

The day, however, was incident-free as the police kept the slogan-chanting crowds apart.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 3 DEC 2000

Florida SC rejects Gore's recount plea

REUTERS

TALLAHASSEE, Dec. 2. — The Florida Supreme Court yesterday dismissed an appeal from Mr Al Gore's lawyers for an immediate recount of more than 12,000 disputed ballots that Mr Gore believes could give him the numbers to change the result of the presidential election in the state.

Mr Gore's prayer for a revote in Palm Beach was also thrown out.

Court spokesman Mr Craig Waters said the court had "dismissed the petition without prejudice".

Mr Gore has challenged in a Florida state court the certified result from Florida that gave Mr George W Bush victory by 537 votes.

With federal election deadlines looming in mid-December and concerned they may run out of time, Mr Gore's attorneys had wanted the Leon county circuit judge Mr N Sanders Sauls to get a recount of the disputed ballots from Palm Beach and Miami-Dade

CLINTON SAYS GORE WON FLORIDA VOTE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2. — The White House declined comment yesterday on reports that President Bill Clinton had stepped off the fence and declared his Vice-President Mr Al Gore the winner of the presidential vote in Florida.

"If the votes were counted, Al Gore would carry the state," Mr Clinton was quoted as saying by the *Ottawa Citizen*, expanding further on prior comments on the presidential election debacle in Florida. The Canadian newspaper said Mr Clinton made the comments to a small gathering of people at a book launch here on Wednesday. — AFP

counties underway immediately.

Mr Sauls did not grant this and the Gore camp went to the Supreme Court on Thursday seeking an emergency order. Mr Sauls was set to hold a hearing today that may decide whether or not a recount of votes will go ahead.

Mr Sauls, who ordered more than 1.1 million ballots from Palm Beach and Miami-Dade delivered to his court here, will hear lawyers from both camps will argue whether the ballots should be counted.

The Supreme Court decision has left the possibility for a new appeal to be filed.

In the case of a revote, all seven judges agreed that the so-called butterfly ballots used in Palm Beach were not defective or confusing enough to annul the original vote and call for new polls.

Some Palm Beach voters had complained that because of the layout of the ballots they had mistakenly either double-punched the form or cast votes for ultra-conservative candidate Pat Buchanan.

The ballot ironically had been devised by a supervisor who is a Democrat. It was reproduced in the newspapers and hailed by both Democrats and Republicans.

Both Mr Gore and Mr Bush now await the US Supreme Court's verdict on whether the Florida Supreme Court exceeded its authority in granting Mr Gore five more days for a hand recount.

'Flaws': People in the USA and other countries view the legal wrangling over the US election as showing "serious flaws" in the US presidential election process, according to a poll released yesterday.

The Ipsos-Reid poll showed that in the USA, 59 per cent believe the Florida recount and court disputes indicates a "major issue that shows serious flaws." But 75 per cent of those polled in France, 68 per cent in Britain and 63 per cent in Canada agree with the assessment that the electoral system is flawed.

"These overseas results show that even in countries that have historically had close ties with the USA, many people are having serious doubts about the US presidential electoral system," says Ipsos-Reid vice president Mr Edward Morawski.

THE STATESMAN

3 DEC 2000

HD-1 3/12

Gore suffers further setback

W. 1

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, DEC. 2. The U.S. presidential election, which has been dragging on for over three weeks, witnessed another turn on Friday when the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, suffered a setback in three Florida courts.

The State Supreme Court refused to agree to an expedited ballot count sought by Mr. Gore's lawyers and unanimously refused to order a re-election in Palm

Beach county. Separately, a Circuit Court judge refused to order a manual recount of disputed ballots unless evidence is taken first.

"On the one hand we are disappointed that the Supreme Court (Florida) didn't take this up immediately. On the other hand we understand it would have been a very unusual step," said Mr. Gore's chief attorney, Mr. David Boies. The Florida Supreme Court which was asked to intervene dismissed the petition

without prejudice", meaning the petition could be filed again.

The Palm Beach county "butterfly ballot" case, which did not involve Mr. Gore formally, was being watched with active interest by all. The State Supreme Court rejected the petition from some voters who argued, among other things, that a confusing design of the ballot made them inadvertently vote for the Reform Party candidate, Mr. Patrick Buchanan.

Summarising the decision of the State Supreme Court, a spokesman said the courts had generally declined to void an election unless defects in the ballots "clearly operate to prevent a free, fair and open choice."

It may be recalled that it was the so-called butterfly ballot in the Palm Beach county which started the whole election controversy in the State.

Complex legal scene: Page 11

THE HINDU

- 3 DEC 2000

U.S. supreme court verdict will be crucial for Bush and Gore

By Ramesh Chandran

The Times of India News Service

WASHINGTON: Finally the nine judges of the U.S. supreme court stepped into the fray of the contentious American presidential elections and subjected lawyers representing Governor George W. Bush of Texas and Vice-President Al Gore to intense and persistent scrutiny. Although the country heard audio transcripts of their sharp oral examination of the two celebrated lawyers when they presented their arguments in what was one of the most important cases in the court's 211-year history. The justices offered few clues as to how or when they would rule on a case that might well decide this country's 43rd president.

The supreme court justices—described by some constitutional experts and legal luminaries as one of the “brainiest” ever to sit on the bench—waded into the arguments offered by Theodore B. Olson representing Mr Bush and Lawrence H. Tribe for Mr Gore, repeatedly interrupting them with probing questions. As with every other minute detail concerning this bizarre electoral standoff, the judges questions were later also analysed by legal experts with some concluding it might end up as a “close verdict”—that is a 5-4 decision either way.

Of the supreme court judges, Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Anonin Scalia are known for

their conservatism. Stephen G. Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg are both Clinton appointees. Justice Ginsburg, for instance, at one point said that the seven justices of Florida's supreme court “may have been wrong; we might have interpreted it differently, but we are not the arbiters—they are”.



Bush



Gore

While the conservative justices peppered Gore's attorney with questions clearly implying the Florida court may have exceeded its authority under the U.S. constitution. And, legal analysts here pointed out, as is so often the case of this supreme court, at least two of the justices seemed neutral — Sandra Day O'Connor and Anthony Kennedy.

As television stations provided the audio transcripts later with sketches of the justices, outside the Court, in the piercing cold, the atmosphere of a carnival had grown substantially bigger. While several hundred demonstrators were kept at bay by vigilant police officers, there were individuals who dressed

themselves as everything from the infamous dimpled chad to a ballot box with the legend: “Get The Al Out”.

This particular gentleman was telling onlookers that he was puzzled why West Palm voters were so confused by the ballot box, adding: “You don't have to be Hercules or Einstein to punch that vote out.”

Elsewhere, it was not an encouraging day for Mr Gore who suffered a double-burled legal defeat at the Florida supreme court: Democratic demands for a re-vote in Pal Beach county was rejected while in another ruling the court refused to order an immediate recount of a million ballots at the heart of Mr Gore's lawsuit contesting the victory of Mr Bush. However, these setbacks are temporary for the Vice-President as he has numerous other legal options available to overturn the Florida's secretary of state Katherine Harris' certification of Mr Bush, ceding him the 25 electoral votes. However, even as the state court began new hearings on the disputed ballots on Saturday morning, the danger confronting Mr Gore is the ticking clock—he must have legal resolution before the Republican state legislature begins to choose the electors.

For both candidates the verdict of the highest court in the land — presumably expected early next week — will consequently be a crucial one.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

- 4 JAN 2000

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Star-tangled Banner

It's almost four weeks since Americans went to the polls to elect a new president, but no clear outcome is yet in sight as legal wrangling continues unabated over the 25 electoral votes of the state of Florida that are crucial to deciding the winner. Vice-president Al Gore, the Democratic candidate, is contesting the official "certification" declaring Republican George W Bush the winner on the ground that it is based on an incomplete count of votes. Mr Gore's plea for a manual recount of votes in the heavily Democratic Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties (where thousands of valid ballots may have been rejected by the automated counting machines) had been allowed by the Florida supreme court, but the recount could not be completed by the deadline for certification. Mr Bush's appeal to the US supreme court to disallow manual recounts on the ground that it would be "rewriting the law" was heard last Friday, and it is to be seen whether the apex court upholds Mr Gore's opposing argument that "every vote must count". Meanwhile, over a million of the disputed ballots have been moved to the state capital of Tallahassee where a judge will decide whether to order a complete recount. While Mr Gore is hoping that a recount (if it is allowed and completed before the looming deadline of December 12) will give him the necessary votes to overturn the certified result, Mr Bush's strategy seems to be to "run out the clock". The Republican-dominated Florida state legislature is also preparing to call a special session in which it might choose to bypass the courts altogether and exercise its "prerogative" to nominate the state's electors — something the Democrats say will be highly questionable.

This is a situation in which no jurist or political pundit would go out on a limb and predict how the legal wranglings and political bickerings will play out and who the next president will be. Essentially, the problem is that the election has turned out to be a statistical tie, in which Mr Bush's purported lead of 537 votes is less than one-tenth of one per cent of the six million votes that were cast in Florida. It would be in the fitness of things if a full and fair recount is gone through, just so that there is no lingering question of legitimacy about the result. What is clear however is that American democracy is at work here. The country's legal and political institutions are working through the problem; and, for all the gripping drama, the situation is not in any sense a crisis. The country's governance is not affected, as the economy, as always, is in the autonomous hands of the Federal Reserve chairman, 'Great Helmsman' Alan Greenspan; and the strongly bipartisan foreign policy is firmly on course. There are deep divisions in the polity to be sure (on the abortion question, gun control, tax cuts, social security), and the next president, whoever it is, will have to work with a divided Congress at forging bipartisan solutions to move forward on these fronts. But, whatever the outcome, this year's US election and its aftermath will turn out to be a great lesson in democracy for Americans as well as others. As President Clinton has remarked, "No American will ever be able to seriously say again, 'My vote doesn't count'".

THE TIMES OF INDIA

44 DEC 2000

8 DEC 2000

After 26 hours of hearing, all eyes now on Florida judge

S. Rajagopalan

Washington, December 4

IT'S CRUNCH time for the lawyers of Al Gore and George W. Bush as a Florida county judge is set to make pronouncement after a marathon hearing that went on till about midnight on Sunday.

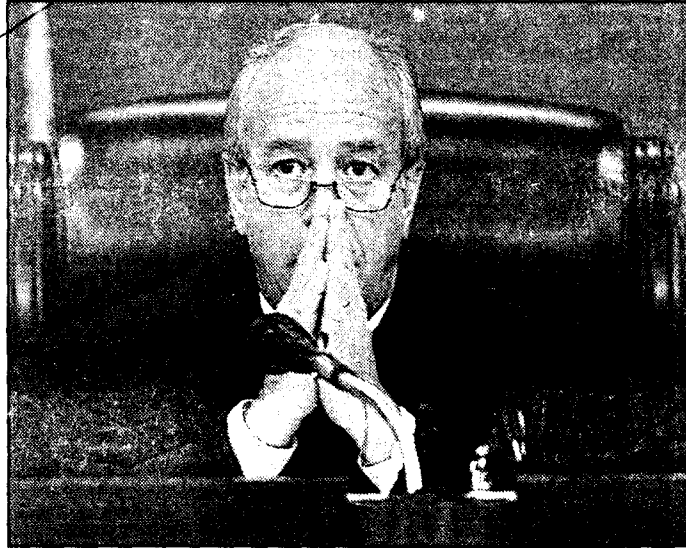
Judge N. Sanders Sauls has to decide whether or not to allow a manual recount of some 14,000 disputed ballots which, the Democrats believe will tilt the presidential race in Gore's favour.

Ahead of the ruling, the only thing clear was that it would not end the protracted legal battle. For the loser, be it Bush or Gore, is certain to move Florida Supreme Court.

Gore himself made that quite plain when he appeared on CBS's 60 minutes show. He had said if the ruling would be unsatisfactory, he would go in for appeal.

"If at the end of the day, when all these processes have taken place, if George W. Bush is sworn in as President, he'll be my president; he'll be America's president," a conciliatory Gore had remarked on a day when the Republicans stepped up pressure on him to give up the fight. "I do think that it's time for him to concede," Bush's running mate Dick Cheney said.

Both the camps are decidedly more apprehensive vis-a-vis the U.S. Supreme Court's judgment



Leon County Circuit Court Judge N Sanders Sauls listens to proceedings on Sunday, during the Gore vs Harris trial in Tallahassee, Florida. Photo: AFP

that is expected anytime now. It can have a critical bearing on the whole controversy over stretching the manual recounts beyond the seven-day limit stipulated by the Florida law.

If the Supreme Court strikes down the Florida court order extending the deadline for recounts, it will perhaps end Gore's legal challenge, built as it is on manual recounts. On the contrary, if it upholds the order or opts for the neutral course, a stronger Gore case will then come on the fight.

At Judge Sauls' court, which concluded 26 hours of hearing on Sunday night, Gore's lead lawyer David Boies summed up his arguments by saying that the very existence of 14,000 disputed ballots was a sufficient ground to hold a recount. The inclusion of these ballots can make a difference as Bush is leading by a slender margin of 537 votes.

Boies referred to 10,750 ballots which had failed to register a vote in the counting machines, pressing his case for manual recount.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

5 DEC 2000

'Florida Supreme Court will have the last word'

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, DEC. 5. Despite the setback caused by the Leon county circuit court in Florida rejecting the Democrats' request to handcount some 14,000 ballots in two Democratic counties, the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore's campaign is again moving the Florida Supreme Court with the lead lawyer, Mr. David Boies, saying, "They won, we lost, we are appealing." He added that the resolution by the State Supreme Court will be the end of the matter.

On Monday evening, the Leon county judge, Mr. Sanders Sauls, was quite blunt, perhaps even "dismissive" of the Gore campaign's contentions. "The court finds that the plaintiffs have failed to carry the requisite burden of proof and judgment shall be and hereby is entered that plaintiffs shall take nothing by this action and the defendants may go hence without delay."

But the consensus has been that unlike the U.S. Supreme Court decision on Monday, the ruling of the Leon judge was definitive and precise. The impression is that the Florida Supreme Court is going to find it very hard to overturn the findings of the circuit court which had conducted an elaborate trial. Normally, an appeals court does not easily overturn trial court proceedings.

Quite independent of what is taking place in Tallahassee, the 11th circuit court of appeals in Atlanta will be hearing from the Bush campaign lawyers today on why handcounting must be deemed unconstitutional. The contention has been that a handcount amounts to stuffing the ballot box and hence the Court has an obligation to stop it.

The U.S. Supreme Court on Monday sent the issue of U.S. presidency back to the Florida Supreme Court for further clarification.

The attention — legal and political — was on Washington D.C. and Tallahassee. The significance of the Supreme Court ruling was in the unanimity. Even if the decision has been considered a "draw", legal analysts were quick to say that the Gore campaign was losing further time, something it could not afford.

The real attention was on Leon county where the ruling came shortly after 4:30 p.m., and the "shock" for the Democrats was for all to see. The appeal from either of the campaigns to Mr. Sauls' ruling to the State Supreme Court was definite, but the process again is disadvantageous to the Vice-President as he faces a December 12 deadline for the finalisation of electors to the Electoral College.

The State Court must, in the first place, spend time reading briefs from the two sides,

perhaps entertain oral arguments and issue a ruling.

If the Florida Supreme Court decided that handcounting must proceed, the Bush campaign will definitely come back and ask for standards. This is, again, time-consuming. In the midst of all this if the federal appeals court in Atlanta issues a ruling against the handcount, it would be a totally different ball game.

While the Gore campaign was busy on Monday rallying the troops on Capitol Hill — especially after the Leon court verdict — the Bush campaign went about things in a quiet fashion. The Texas Governor's communications director, Ms. Karen Hughes, argued that the Leon county judge was "thoughtful and comprehensive" in coming to the conclusion that further handcounts were not necessary. But clearly the day began and belonged to Mr. George Bush.

Media reports have it that Democrats are becoming more apprehensive of what is in store, privately taking the position that the Florida Supreme Court is not about to overturn the circuit court ruling. Quite apart from what the legal team may be advising the Vice-President, many of Mr. Gore's advisers are nervously looking at the fallout on the public relations front.

THE HINDU

6 DEC 2000

Republican Florida to appoint 25 loyalists to dilute Gore

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, December 7

IN A clear bid to neutralise Al Gore's renewed challenge, Florida's Republican-controlled Legislature has convened a special session tomorrow to appoint 25 loyalists as the State's electors to ensure George W. Bush's victory in the electoral college vote on December 18.

The controversial decision is aimed at pre-empting a possible overturning of the election by Gore, who is still thought to have a 50:50 chance in the race.

It could well be advantage-Gore if the Florida Supreme Court accepts his plea for recount of 14,000 disputed ballots after hearing the arguments this afternoon. That apart, Gore has something to look forward to in another raging court battle for throwing out 15,000 "irregular" ballots in the Seminole county.

When the going was smooth for Bush till a couple of days ago, the Republican legislators of Florida opted to keep their moves on special session in abeyance. However, the courtroom twists of the last 24 hours have prompted them not to leave anything to chance.

The new imponderables for Bush

AF13 made the sceptical John McKay, president of the State Senate, fall in line. Till two days ago, McKay resisted the moves of Speaker Tom Feeney to convene the special session, which was originally slated for December 4.

On Wednesday, McKay justified the reversal of his earlier thinking by saying that he wanted to ensure that Florida's 6 million voters had their say in the presidential election. Since the legal battle may remain unfinished by the December 12 deadline for choosing electors, the Legislature had to intervene, said the Republicans.

The Democrats condemned the "questionable" intervention, describing it as a crude partisan move to ensure Bush's victory because a recount of the 14,000-odd ballots could well swing things in favour of Gore.

However, in a bid to ward off the Democrats' criticism, McKay said the State Senate would be free to approve electors for Gore if at all he won the Florida race by the December 12 deadline. "We're going to do our constitutional responsibility. I don't care if it's Gore or Nader or Bush," he remarked.

The Republicans maintained that the Bush camp had nothing to do

with the Legislature's decision on the special session. But the Democrats pooh-poohed it, saying the only thing missing on the proclamation was the postmark from Austin, Texas (Bush's headquarters).

In Florida's House of Representatives, the Republicans have an overwhelming 77-43 majority. In the Senate, too, they are comfortably placed (25-15).

In case Gore wins the election through a recount of the disputed ballots, the court could issue a parallel set of 25 electors in his favour. Some experts contend that in such an event, the set of electors chosen by the Legislature and certified by Governor Jeb Bush will prevail.

Whether things will go that far depends greatly on the Florida SC's decision after it hears arguments this afternoon on Gore's appeal against the lower court's order, throwing out his petition for the recount of 14,000 ballots.

If the State's apex court, too, rejects Gore's plea, it would more or less signify the end of his legal challenge. The only chance left for him in such an event would be a possible invalidation of the "irregular" ballots of the Seminole county, a verdict which may come about by this evening or tomorrow.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

8 DEC 2000

Anxious wait for Gore, Bush

AD-1 By Sridhar Krishnaswami 9/12

WASHINGTON, DEC. 8. The Bush and Gore campaigns, on Friday morning, were anxiously awaiting the decisions of the courts in Florida which would hopefully help determine the next President of the United States. Much of the attention was on the Florida Supreme Court, whose verdict was to have come on Thursday itself. The seven justices went into a conference after the hearing and the standard refrain was that a ruling was expected "anytime".

The focus was also on two circuit courts in the State where lawyers representing the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, and independent Democratic voters presented arguments on the fate of some 25,000 absentee ballots in the Seminole and Martin counties. If there was a consensus, it was that time was ticking away, a fact take note of by the judges of the State Supreme Court while hearing arguments from both sides. "We are now here on December 7 with December 12 fast approaching. How can we resolve an issue like that at this late date?" wondered a judge, Mr. Harry Lee Anstead.

On the question of jurisdiction, Mr. Bush's lawyer, Mr. Barry Richard, admitted that the State Supreme Court had the right to review the ruling of a trial court, but said there was very little merit in the case brought by the Gore campaign. "There is nothing

more than a garden variety appeal from a final judgment by a lower court that conducted an entire, full evidentiary hearing. We had an absolute failure on the part of the plaintiffs here."

Lawyers for the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, pointed out that they had a purpose in seeking a recount of the votes rejected by the machine and which not been counted previously. "There are two issues here. One is whether or not you demonstrated you were entitled to a recount of those 9,000 votes. And the other is whether or not you would actually win the

**Florida Legislature session convened;
Uncertainty may persist: Page 14**

contest," said another judge, Ms. Peggy Quince.

The court was also reminded of the fine line between interpreting existing law and writing a new law. "There is just so much baggage the word interpretation can carry on its back before it becomes more of a change than it is an interpretation," said Mr. Joseph Klock, representing Florida's Secretary of State. "Going from seven days to 19 days — that's a lot of baggage for the word to carry," he said referring to the court's earlier ruling changing the deadline of certification of the November 7 election from November 14 to November 26.

THE HINDU

9 DEC 2000

USA: Clinton backs order

(Continued from page 1)

any manual recounts from being included in certified vote tabulations. Mr James A Baker, Mr Bush's representative in Tallahassee, called the opinion flawed and disappointing, and said it might disenfranchise the state's voters.

Republican leaders in the State Legislature have begun efforts to convene a special session to appoint presidential electors pledged to Mr Bush, no matter what the outcome of the recount is. If Mr Gore wins the recount, the Congress, narrowly divided between the two parties, could be forced to choose between them.

The possibility was envisioned by Chief Justice Charles T Wells of the Florida Supreme Court, who dissented. "I have a deep concern that the prolonging of judicial process in this counting contest propels this country and this state into an unprecedented and unnecessary constitutional crisis," he wrote.

The justices in the majority concluded that Leon County Circuit Court Judge N Sanders

rejected Mr Gore's bid to reverse the certification of Mr Bush as the Florida winner.

Among the errors, the justices said, was his reading of the law on whether Mr Gore had to show that he had a reasonable probability of winning through additional manual recounts.

The justices also said Mr Sauls had presented Mr Gore "with the ultimate Catch-22" in trying to prove that argument by allowing 9,000 "undercount" ballots — which registered no presidential vote during machine counting — to be submitted as evidence but then refusing to examine them. Yesterday, Mr Sauls announced that he had recused himself from the case.

In Washington, Mr Gore's supporters celebrated the Supreme Court decision outside his residence.

"This decision vindicates Mr Gore," said Nancy Chevalier, a Washington resident.

(Mr Bill Clinton too backed the court order, saying it would help legitimise the eventual winner, whether it's Mr Bush or Mr Gore, reports Reuters)

Bush lead slashed to 154

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9. — The suspense over the US presidential election took another unexpected twist yesterday when the Florida Supreme Court ruled in favour of a manual recount of 45,000 votes in the state, slashing Mr George W Bush's lead over Mr Al Gore from 537 votes to 154.

The bitterly divided court, which voted 4-3 in favour of the recount, also ruled that 383 votes from Miami-Dade and Palm Beach counties, tabulated during an earlier recount but refused by Florida Secretary of State Katharine Harris, be considered.

The court reversed a lower court's decision on Monday that had rejected the Gore order, UNI adds. In Miami-

campaign's request for a manual recount of disputed ballots. The Supreme Court said the recount had to go beyond the two counties whose ballots Mr Gore had contested

Dade, a panel of eight judges are expected to complete the exercise by tomorrow afternoon.) The ruling came just as the drama over the election appeared to be drawing to a close. The hand count has to begin at once to meet the US Supreme Court's deadline of 12 December for naming Florida's 25 electors. A judge ordered that all recounts conclude by 2 p.m. on Sunday.

The Bush campaign has appealed to the US Supreme Court and to the 11th US Circuit Court of Appeals, seeking an injunction to halt the recounts. Mr Bush's lawyers said he would "suffer irreparable injury as a result of the unconstitutional recounts," and requested the court to prevent

RECOUNT HALTED

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9. — Recounts have stopped in Florida, after the US Supreme Court issued a stay, ruling in favour of a request from Mr George W Bush. Hearing was set for Monday morning. — AP

and include all the so-called undervotes — estimated to be more than 45,000.

(Manual recounts got under way in various Florida counties following the Supreme Court's order, UNI adds. In Miami-

■ See USA: page 12

Ruling reveals divided judiciary in USA

DESIKAN THIRUNARAYANAPURAM
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 10. — Mr Al Gore's hopes of winning the presidency have received a blow that could be fatal with the US Supreme Court issuing a stay on a manual recount, ordered on Friday by the Florida Supreme Court.

The US Supreme Court judges ruled 5-4 to halt the counting that began just hours earlier in Florida, and set Monday morning for arguments on Mr George W Bush's appeal of the Florida Supreme Court ruling on the manual recount of 45,000 ballots.

The ruling revealed a conservative-liberal division in

the nation's highest court with Republican-appointed conservatives, in the majority, favouring Mr Bush and the liberals Mr Gore.

Mr Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for liberal minority justices, argued that Mr Bush faced no irreparable harm from the ongoing counting in Florida, as his lawyers had claimed in their appeal. "Counting every legally cast vote cannot constitute an irreparable harm," he wrote. "The majority has acted unwisely."

Conservative Justice Antonin Scalia, in a statement explaining why the majority halted the recount, wrote: "One of the principal issues in the appeal we have accepted is precisely

whether the votes that have been ordered to be counted are, under a reasonable interpretation of Florida law, legally cast votes... Count first and rule upon legality afterward is not a recipe for producing election results that have the public acceptance democratic stability requires."

Mr Justice Scalia also clearly indicated that Mr Bush has a good chance of winning his appeal.

He wrote: "It suffices to say that the issuance of the stay suggests that a majority of the court, while not deciding the issues presented, believe that the petitioner has a substantial probability of success."

THE STATESMAN

11 DEC 2000

DAMAGED AND DEVALUED

The Presidency is now in danger of both

FOR over a month now the judiciary, in the United States, has grappled with various challenges to the distinctly suspicious manner in which some of the votes have been cast in the presidential elections and more particularly, the manner in which they are being counted, at least in Florida. Misleading ballot papers, imperfect punching, discarded ballots and much else besides is in question. So far it raises no cavil. What causes concern now is that the judiciary from the Florida courts to the court of appeal and right up to the United States Supreme Court, have had a go and the prospect is not edifying. The latest twist to the tale has the Florida supreme court allowing a recount and the Federal Supreme Court issuing a stay against it. This can happen anywhere but it is now beginning to look as though, American judges are increasingly casting their eyes backwards to check who appointed them, Democrats or Republicans and this is unfortunate. As much is apparent in the reasons given. In issuing a stay of recounting by the narrowest of margins — 5 to 4 — until the matter can be disposed of, the minority holds that Bush can suffer no inconvenience if every legally cast vote is properly counted. In brushing aside the distinctly disturbing objections to the ballots counted and the manner of the counting, the majority say that to uphold the recount amounts to counting first and ruling upon the legality of it afterwards. It is also held not to be a recipe for producing election results. The minority even accuse the majority of having acted unwisely. The whole question has been hopelessly politicised and this is unfortunate. When the stakes are as high as they are in this instance, principles fly out of the window.

A couple of central factors are being overlooked. Al Gore has won a majority of the national vote and this is not in contention. It is the anachronism of the indirect system of electing electors and letting them decide the final outcome that has been exploited here. On the other hand, electing electors is part of the system and cannot be discarded simply because it is inconvenient. What is being suggested is that in a functioning democracy the vox populi ought not to be cast aside so easily but treated with more respect than has been on display. The system of checks and balances in the United States which has served the country so well for two hundred years is now on trial and it is too early to say whether the country and its politicians will acquit themselves in a manner that will not do permanent damage to American democracy. It was assumed, all too readily by hindsight, that a solution would be found well before now, but hopes have been belied.

Too much has happened for either side to give in gracefully now. There are even suggestions that Governor Bush, a brother of candidate Bush has not been inactive in the matter of the suspect ballots and how they would be counted. For all the skills that President Clinton has displayed during his term of office, he has been damaged by two main factors, his anxiety to win a Nobel Peace prize by intense activity in the Middle East between Israel and the Palestinians to the extent that Israel, a staunch ally, publicly says America can do no more, and the other his dalliance with Monica Lewinsky and his threatened removal from office on impeachment. Despite all the hyper activity of Clinton to make people forget the past, the presidency has been damaged. If this current dispute over balloting and counting is not resolved and seen to be resolved by an open and non-partisan mechanism, it will also be devalued.

THE STATESMAN

12 DEC 2000

Clinton begins last overseas tour

FROM BRIAN WILLIAMS

Dublin, Dec. 12 (Reuters): President Bill Clinton arrived in Dublin today and was immediately hailed as a "one-off" statesman more than welcome to stay involved in Northern Ireland peace talks when his presidency ends.

The fulsome praise came from Britain's Northern Ireland minister Peter Mandelson as Clinton began a three-day visit to Dublin, Belfast and London that he hopes will exorcise some lingering demons of the past from the troubled British province.

Making possibly his last official foreign visit at a time when he still does not know who will succeed him as President, Clinton said he planned one last peace shot on Northern Ireland.

Clinton was a prime mover behind the scenes in helping to carve out the landmark 1998 Good Friday accord which sought to end 30 years of sectarian strife between the province's Protestant majority and Catholic minority.

But Northern Ireland's home rule government has become bogged down in rows over how to reform the predominantly Protestant police force and get the guerrillas to disarm.

"Both issues... reflect the lin-



A local resident toasts a pint of Guinness beer to US President Bill Clinton in a bar in Dundalk, Ireland, on Monday. (Reuters)

gering demons of the past and we just have to get over and try to purge a few more," Clinton said before leaving Washington.

Mandelson played down expectations of a major breakthrough but left no doubt that if anyone could do the impossible it was Clinton.

"I think he is a one-off. He is a cross between a thoroughly charming and charismatic human being and a political com-

puter," Mandelson said. "He reaches out to people. He has brilliant communications skills."

"Bill Clinton is, I can assure you, more sausage than sizzle," he said in a radio interview.

In their today's editions British and Irish newspapers were also full of praise for how Clinton has helped the peace efforts.

"Bill Clinton arrives in Ireland today to have one last go at boost-

ing peace in the north while he is still President," the Irish Sun said in an editorial.

A White House adviser had said yesterday the President would consider taking on a further role in the peace process after his term ends on January 20. Mandelson said Clinton was welcome to play a continuing role as a peace broker once he steps down. "I don't know of any proposal, formal or informal, for him to play a continuing role but if he wishes to do so I think he will receive a very warm welcome here from all the parties," he told BBC Radio.

It is the third time Clinton has visited during his eight-year-long presidency. After his visit to Dublin, Clinton goes to the border town of Dundalk before spending tonight in the Northern Ireland capital Belfast.

When he visits London, Clinton will meet Queen Elizabeth at Buckingham Palace. He returns to Washington on Thursday. He leaves for London tomorrow.

Apart from meetings with British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Irish Prime Minister Bertie Ahern and the leaders of Northern Ireland's parties, Clinton's trip is laced with the type of town hall meetings and street walkabouts for which he is famed.

THE TELEGRAPH

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 14, 2000

HD-12
14/19

A DIMINISHED DEMOCRACY

AMERICA'S LEGENDARILY ROBUST democracy is undeniably weakened for the enormously contentious manner in which the U.S. Presidential election has been finally determined for all practical purposes. The Republican Party candidate, Mr. George W. Bush, is the nominal winner at the end of a complex judicial process dominated if not also defined by deep political passions. Inevitably, Mr. Al Gore, the U.S. Vice-President as also the Democratic nominee, must be preparing to acknowledge the fact of Mr. Bush's having emerged the winner. This will not of course be easy for a man who sees himself as the victim of an imprecise evaluation of the election in which he has demonstrably won the national tally of popular votes but not the mandatory majority in the Electoral College. Inexorable however is the political message inherent in the statutory time constraint. The Electoral College is scheduled to vote on December 18 under a unique and antiquated poll process that was designed to uphold the U.S.' founding principle of federalism. But the paucity of time is only one of the issues which have, on the whole, triggered serious doubts about the credibility of established institutions including the judiciary. The apex federal court has indicated that its centrality in the vortex of this political maelstrom is not of its own choosing. However, a tenacious recourse to the legal process by and on behalf of Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore has produced a sad spin-off. This simply is the political variant of the cyber-age phenomenon of 'virtual reality' as distinct from the absolute certainty about the actual winner.

Handing down two separate but inter-related split verdicts, the U.S. Supreme Court has reversed the most recent majority ruling by Florida's highest judicial authority. The five-week-long saga of this poll dispute began in the political domain soon after the election on November 7 itself and wove a labyrinth of court cases. The Florida Supreme Court had, only a few days ago, favoured a manual counting of

thousands of Presidential poll ballots which were earlier invalidated in the 'objective' machine-reading of the voters' preferences. The burden of the U.S. Supreme Court's judgment is that any such hand-counting of 'disputed ballots' can be ordered only within the constitutional purview of "equal protection" for all voters and a "due process" besides a uniformity of counting standards for Florida in its entirety. This leaves the highest adjudicating authority in that State with no adequate time to reconsider the case that has now been referred back to it. With Florida having quickly emerged as the decisive state for both Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore in the stakes for a majority in the Electoral College, the U.S. Presidency may have in the end been decided by political and legal filibustering.

The immediate imperative is not so much a re-invention of the presidential poll process as a damage-control exercise designed to ease the impact of the present crisis of ensuring Presidential legitimacy on the U.S. institutions and on its authority abroad. The latest turn of events may save the U.S. from a constitutional crisis *per se*. Behind the intricate goings-on, though, is the nagging feeling that the judges in Florida and at the federal apogee have not been able to rise above their own political-ideological moorings to address the simple but profound issue of a full and fair vote count. The public discourse in the U.S. is laced with notions that Florida's "Democratic-leaning" apex court favoured Mr. Gore while the U.S. Supreme Court, consisting of a majority of Republican-nominated judges, was kind to Mr. Bush. Similar perceptions about the vote-counting officials, too, have taken hold. In a surcharged political ambience, Florida's Republican-dominated House has also passed a resolution assigning its own slate of Electors to favour Mr. Bush. Will the Electoral College now become a battle ground for a 'conscience vote'?

THE HINDU

14 DEC 2000

Gore to pull out of White House race

DESIKAN THIRUNARAYANAPURAM
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13. — A US Supreme Court verdict has forced Mr Al Gore to end his presidential run against Mr George W Bush.

The Vice-President is writing his speech and will announce his decision to the nation around 9 p.m. (7.30 a.m. IST on Thursday), Democratic Party officials said. Mr Gore may call on Mr Bush before his address to the nation. He had earlier said he would like to meet the Texas Governor in a show of unity once the winner was determined.

His campaign chairman, Mr William Daley, said Mr Gore had directed his recount committee to "suspend activities".

Last night, a sharply-divided US Supreme Court overturned by a 5-4 vote the Florida Supreme Court's ruling for a manual recount, just two hours before a deadline to appoint Florida's 25 electors.

The presidential contest after being bitterly contested in courtrooms across the country was decided by a single vote yesterday, a vote that appeared to be politically motivated.

The same five judges — appointed by Republicans, who voted in favour of a stay on the recount on Friday — said that after about two days of deliberations there was no time remaining for a manual recount.

Altogether, seven judges agreed that there were constitutional problems with the Florida call for a recount, but only five agreed that those problems couldn't be remedied in the time remaining.

The four judges who didn't join them were Democrat-appointed.

It's obvious that the recount

can't be conducted in compliance with the requirements of equal protection and due process without substantial additional work for which there isn't enough time, the majority opinion said.

Two judges (of the minority) agreed with the majority that the varying standards in different Florida counties for counting the punch card ballots presented problems of both due process and equal protection. But unlike the majority, they said the answer was not to stop the recount, but to extend it till 18 December for the meeting of the electoral college.

Such a recount would be a tall order but there is no justification for denying the state the opportunity to try to count all disputed ballots now, a "minority" judge said.

The dissenters said almost all objections raised by Mr Bush were insubstantial and that the court shouldn't have reviewed either this case or the one it decided last week, they said.

Justice John Paul Stevens (of the minority) said the court's action could only lend credence to the most cynical appraisal of the work of judges throughout the land. His dissenting opinion, signed by Justices Stephen Breyer and Ruth Bader Ginsburg, said: "It is confidence in the men and women who administer the judicial system that is the true backbone of the rule of law. Time will one day heal the wound to the confidence that will be inflicted by today's decision. One thing, however, is certain. Although we may never know with complete certainty the identity of the winner of this year's presidential election, the identity of the loser is perfectly clear.

GORE:

(Continued from page 1)

It is the nation's confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law." The fourth dissenting judge was Mr David H Souter.

The five members of the majority were Chief Justice William H Rehnquist and Justices Sandra Day O'Connor, Antonin Scalia, Anthony M Kennedy and Clarence Thomas. The four justices who did not join them are Democrat-appointed.

An hour after the Supreme Court ruling, Mr Bush's campaign observer and former secretary of state, Mr James Baker, said both Mr Bush and his running mate Mr Dick Cheney were pleased and gratified by the Supreme Court ruling. Interestingly, he didn't claim victory for the Bush camp.

This has been a long and arduous process for everyone involved on both sides, Mr Baker said in conclusion to his very brief statement.

■ See GORE: page 9

THE STATESMAN

14 DEC 2001

GORE'S HOPES DASHED, BUSH CAMP UPBEAT

MSD 101 14 12

Court rejects vote recount

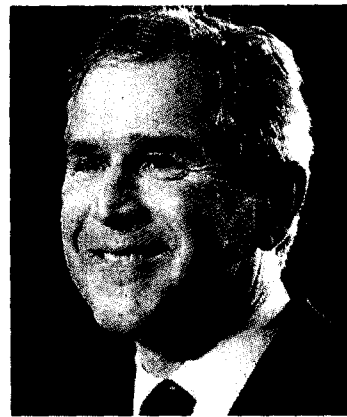
WASHINGTON, DEC. 13. A divided U.S. Supreme Court today appeared to hand the presidency to the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, in a bitterly disputed ruling that drove a legal stake through the heart of the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore's hopes of moving into the White House.

In a judgment that seemed to bring a messy, divisive and confusing election to a messy, divisive and confusing end, the nation's highest court voted 7-2 to disallow a Florida Supreme Court ruling that had allowed recounts of disputed votes in the State.

But the margin's shrunk to a bare 5-4 in deciding that there was no time for further recounts to be conducted in Florida to remedy the problem before the electoral college meets next Monday to pick the next President.

With the court divided between moderates and conservatives, the four dissenters said the majority had no right to prevent votes being counted.

The Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, who earlier was unwilling to concede defeat later appeared to be considering to admit defeat. He asked officials running the effort to recount votes in Florida to



Mr. George Bush

suspend their activities and was preparing to address the nation on television.

In Austin, Texas, reporters asked a smiling Mr. Bush if the nation would hear from him. He said "I hope so. We'll see." Aides said he would not speak until Mr. Gore had done so.

Meanwhile, Florida's Republican-controlled House of Representatives approved a plan to deliver the State's 25 electoral college votes to Mr. Bush.

Yesterday resolution naming a slate of Bush delegates to the electoral college passed 79-41 with two north Florida Democrats joining the Republicans' 77-member majority.

The proposal now goes to the Florida Senate, which was expected to approve it. — Reuters

More reports on Pages 13, 16

THE HINDU

1 4 DEC 2001

U.S. APPOINTMENTS / WOMAN NAMED AGRICULTURE SECRETARY

Bush warns of slow growth

AUSTIN (TEXAS), DEC. 21. Warning of a possible economic downturn, the U.S. President-elect, Mr. George Bush, named a businessman, Mr. Paul O'Neill, as his Treasury Secretary, saying his corporate experience and steady hand will guide the country if times turn rough.

In a second installment of Cabinet nominations later in Wednesday, Mr. Bush named Ms. Ann Veneman to be the first female Secretary of Agriculture; Mr. Mel Martinez, a Cuban refugee and county government leader in Florida, as Secretary of Housing and Urban Development; and his 'lifelong friend' and his campaign chairman, Mr. Don Evans, Secretary of Commerce.

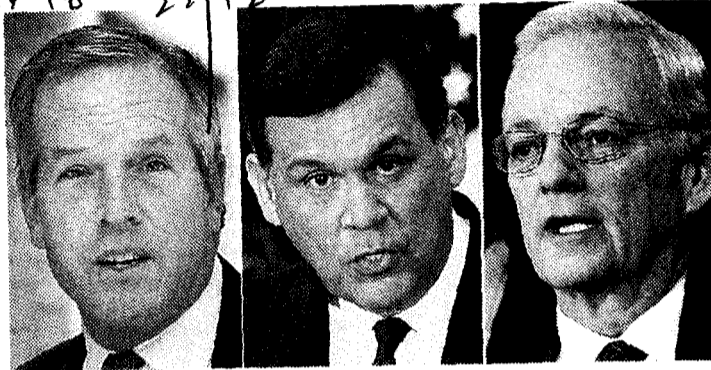
Mr. Bush delivered a message on the importance of the treasury appointment.

"Our economy is showing warning signs of a possible slowdown," said Mr. Bush. "So it is incredibly important for me to find someone who had vast experience, who is a steady hand, who when he speaks, speaks with authority and conviction and knowledge. I found such a man in Paul O'Neill."

In between filling his Cabinet, Mr. Bush was closing a chapter of his life. The two-term Texas Governor cleared his things out of his official office in Austin, including his collection of autographed baseballs, one day before he turns in his resignation. "I'm going to miss this place."

Mr. Bush also met some 30 leaders of religious and charitable organisations at a church in Austin to talk about his initiative to make it easier for faith-based groups to get government contracts to provide social services for the needy.

Many of those Mr. Bush met were black leaders — a significant fact given the fact that he fared



Don Evans
Commerce Secretary

Mel Martinez
Housing Secretary

Paul O'Neill
Treasury Secretary



Gen. Colin Powell
State Secretary

Condoleezza Rice
Security Adviser

Ann Veneman
Agriculture Secretary

poorly at the polls among blacks, losing their votes 9-to-1 to his opponent, Mr. Al Gore. After the meeting, which was closed to press, Mr. Bush said, "Not everybody here voted for me ... I'm hoping to find one or two." He said he wanted to "rally the people of good faith and good heart" to put "their faith and their love and their compassion into action."

Mr. Bush has been sounding warnings about a weakening economy and talking up his proposal to cut tax rates across the board to put more money in peo-

ple's wallets. Lawmakers of both political stripes have expressed reservations about whether his proposed \$1.3 trillions, 10-year tax cut, rather than incremental reductions, is the right approach, but Mr. Bush reiterated on Wednesday that he wants a broad tax cut. "I believe strongly that tax relief is part of the prescription for any economic ill that our nation may have."

Mr. Bush also talked tough about oil producing nations, saying they should "treat their friend, the United States, and our market with ease. — AP

TIME FOR ME TO GO, SAYS GORE

Bush reaches out to Democrats

WASHINGTON, DEC. 14. The U.S. Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, conceded defeat in the U.S. presidential election to the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, in a generous and patriotic speech, saying, "may God bless his stewardship of this country."

On the 36th day since the election that was virtually tied, Mr. Gore finally yielded and called on all Americans to unite behind "president-elect Bush" who will be sworn in as President on January 20, 2001.

The only shred of bitterness in Mr. Gore's speech came when he said he strongly disagreed with Tuesday's Supreme Court decision stopping further vote recounts in Florida, which killed his last hope of capturing the White House. But he said he honoured and respected the court's 5-4 decision.

"Just moments ago I talked to Mr. George W. Bush and congratulated him on becoming the 43rd President of the United States, and promised that I would not call him back this time," the Vice-President said, referring to his aborted concession on election night, on November 8, which he rescinded an hour later.

"I offered to meet him as soon as possible so that we can start to heal the divisions of the campaign and the contest through which we just passed," Mr. Gore said. Mr. Gore was only the fourth presidential candidate to win the popular vote and lose the election and the first since 1888. He closed his remarks, saying, "and now my friends, in a phrase I once addressed to others, it is time for me to go."

Bush praises Gore

An hour later, Mr. Bush in his victory address from Austin, Texas, paid tributes to Mr. Gore and said they agreed to meet early next week in Washington. "I am not elected to serve one party, but to serve one nation," he said.

Mr. Bush, who becomes the second person to follow a father's footsteps into the White House, said: "I hope the long wait of the last five weeks will heighten a desire to move beyond the bitterness and partisan-



The U.S. President-elect, Mr. George Bush, addressing the nation at the Texas House of Representatives on Wednesday. — AP

ship of the recent past." Stating that America wanted reconciliation and unity, he said: "Together guided by a spirit of common sense, common courtesy and common goals, we can unite and inspire the American citizens. Together we will have a bipartisan foreign policy true to our values and true to our friends. And we will have a military equal to every challenge, and superior to every adversary."

Support Bush: Clinton

In London, the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, urged Americans to put the "rancour" of the election wrangle behind them and support Mr. Bush. — Reuters, PTI, AFP

More reports on Page 16

THE HINDU

12 12 01

H.F. 10 Bushed America 15/12

AFTER THE results were kicked from polling booth to press conference, from counting room to courtroom, the United States presidential football game ended in the political equivalent of a penalty shootout. George W. Bush claimed the Oval Office thanks to 537 votes and the decision of one US Supreme Court judge. The Democratic candidate, Al Gore, left the field with the popular vote and the emotional sympathy of his party. The Republican leader made no claim to having a mandate. As President-elect he invoked "the spirit of cooperation", stressing the common ground between Right and Left in US politics. Mr Bush is only the fourth President in US history to have won despite losing the popular vote. His party holds both Houses of the US Congress, but by the slenderest of majorities.

Whoever won the presidency would have had to rule by carving out a centrist coalition, wooing both moderate Republican legislators and conservative Democrats. That is why it is probably for the better that Mr Bush came out ahead. The amiable Texas Governor is generally considered to have better coalition-building skills than the technocratic Mr Gore. His 'compassionate conservative' tag made him more acceptable to the minorities and working class Americans. Mr Bush did better than Mr Gore in taming the extremist wings of his own party. Then there is the political record of the Bush family. Mr Bush successfully governed Texas with a Democrat-controlled legislature. Both his father and brother were noted for their preference for the middle path. Mr Bush's obvious political weakness may help him fend off the far Right's demands over such touchy areas as abortion and gun control.

There will be no honeymoon period for Mr Bush after he is sworn in as President next month. However, his administration will be buffered by a lack of serious foreign policy concerns, a still vigorous US economy and a budget surplus running into hundreds of millions of dollars a year. There is a broad consensus that the US educational system, as well as its social security and medical welfare programmes, desperately need to be reformed. All Mr Bush needs to do is forge an agreement on how to carry out such reforms. Other than the continuing alienation of black Americans, US society is at least outwardly calm: crime rates are at record lows and Mr Bush proved a hit with Hispanic-Americans. Mr Bush can take heart from history. In 1860, a Republican candidate equipped with little more than a folksy disposition was elected with less than 40 per cent of the vote at a time of unprecedented national disunity. Abraham Lincoln is today seen by Americans as their greatest leader.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 DEC 2000

dated for January 20.

Photos: AFP

Seven key players in Bush team

● DICK CHENEY

THE VICE-PRESIDENT effect was the first President Bush's Defence Secretary. He is another Texan oilman who sees the world through an oilman's eyes, with an inherent tendency to equate US interests with those of American big business. He was put on the ticket to compensate Bush Jr's inexperience in foreign affairs.

This is, after all, a president-elect who has been overseas fewer than half a dozen times in his life. It is reasonable to assume Mr Cheney will be taking the lead White House role in foreign policy-making in at least the first months of the new administration.

● COLIN POWELL

Another face from the old Bush court who as national security adviser helped run the Gulf war cam-

aign alongside Mr Cheney. He is almost certain to become the new secretary of state, replacing Madeleine Albright's enthusiasm for humanitarian intervention with the caution and pragmatism of a soldier who rose to the top by taking few risks and making few mistakes.

● CONDOLEEZZA RICE

Ms Rice, who is expected to become President-elect Bush's national security adviser, is cut from similar cloth. The Stanford academic is a generation younger than her two colleagues but she shares their mindset. As the Russian affairs adviser in the first Bush White House, she is a child of the cold war, with a much more hawkish view on Russia and China - as rivals rather than partners.

● PAUL WOLFOWITZ

Mr Wolfowitz is likely to become

the fourth corner of the new foreign policy. Mr Cheney's undersecretary in the old Bush regime is another cold war veteran who has been biding his time since as dean of the Johns Hopkins University's school of advanced international studies in Washington. A cold war hawk, he has been highly critical of the outgoing administration's handling of ties with Russia and China.

● LARRY LINDSEY

One of the godfathers of supply-side economics, under which economic growth is fostered by tax cuts for the rich. Mr Lindsey is a former Governor of the Federal Reserve and served the president elect's father as a White House economic policy guru. He is tipped to replace Larry Summers at the treasury, although it is possible that job will be given to a financier

to build a bridge to Wall Street.

● ANDREW CARD

Andy Card was deputy chief of staff under the governor's father, and has already been selected as a White House chief of staff. As a former lobbyist for General Motors, he is likely to be a friendly gatekeeper, opening the gates on Pennsylvania Avenue wide for big business, which donated a record amount to the Bush campaign and will be looking for a return on its investment.

● KATHERINE HARRIS

The Florida secy of state's future will be closely watched, since she played such a significant role in the events of the past month. She is a citrus heiress, who before becoming forever associated with dimpled ballots and hanging chads was Florida's cultural tsar. (GNS)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 DEC 2000

Domestic scene stable, but Bush to alter foreign outlook

REUTERS
BRUSSELS, DEC 14

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15/12

THE foreign policy brief on the website of United States President-elect George W. Bush names several countries of special interest to him. But none is in the Balkans, and that outlook worries some NATO allies.

Bush cites Russia and China as concerns, along with Taiwan, Korea, India, Pakistan, the Pacific, the Gulf, and Chechnya.

He doesn't even mention Bosnia, where the NATO took the first offensive military action of its existence in 1995, or Kosovo, where it went to its first war in 1999.

NATO now leads a force of 65,000 peacekeepers in the Balkans and will probably need to carry on there for some years to come. This is NATO's biggest, most ambitious operation, bar none. NATO's two-page internal "Latest News" sheet, which gives the 19 permanent delegations a daily taste of the latest reports on key matters of interest, regularly carries a heavy crop of items on the Yugoslav crisis zone.

The Taiwan Strait, by contrast, is off NATO's sheet and way off its beat, politically as well as geographically. But as America debates whether to maintain a costly ability to fight simultaneous wars in two major theatres, its new leader may see merit in a new division of labour leaving European crises to European management.

If America believes it must adapt its defences and alliances to a globalised threat, what does this

mean for the future of NATO, an essentially regional pact no longer facing the great Soviet menace that justified its first 40 years?

Provided he is not weakened by the bitter election struggle, or cut to pieces in mid-term elections, Bush will take the helm of Western security, like every US President since 1945. He has indicated that nuclear missile cuts with Russia

and a US national missile defence will be priorities. Both issues strongly interest the NATO allies, but they are essentially bilateral matters that do not require alliance consensus.

✦ Bush's 4-year term, however, will coincide with EU's new Rapid Reaction Force that some see as an independent military arm without US involvement.

INDIAN EXPRESS

15 DEC 2000

Bush aims to reform American stem

Martin Kettle and
Duncan Campbell
Washington/Austin, December 15

REPUBLICAN POLITICAL leaders attempted yesterday to head off widespread dismay over America's election arrangements, less than 24 hours after the flawed voting process had finally handed the US Presidency to Texas Governor George W Bush.

Mr Bush's brother Jeb, the Governor of Florida, announced a wide-ranging inquiry into the State's voting and counting methods, while the Secretary of State, Katherine Harris, unveiled plans for a wholesale upgrade of Florida's controversial voting machines.

In Washington, Republican Senate leader Trent Lott said election law reform could be at the top of the Bush administration's legislative priorities as it seeks to consolidate its legitimacy after the bitterest Presidential contest in living memory.

Republican leaders realise they could face a massive voter backlash in 2002 and 2004 if they are not seen to take prompt action to guarantee future fairness in a system that so manifestly failed to do so in this year's contest.

On his first full day as America's official leader-in-waiting,



President-elect George W. Bush (C) and wife Laura pose with Pastor Kirby John (left) at a prayer service at the Tarrytown United Methodist Church on Thursday. Photo: AFP

President-elect Bush attended a prayer meeting in Austin, Texas, while aides announced that he will travel to Washington next week to meet President Clinton and his Democratic rival Al Gore, who

finally conceded defeat on Wednesday after 36 days of protests over the voting in Florida. Mr Bush spent the day taking telephone calls of congratulation from world leaders. The first call

ing declared President-
a Downing Street
an said.
ing President Bill Clinton
his successor against lead-
US into the kind of isola-
hinted at throughout the
tial campaign. Mr Clinton
ed him to maintain the
ple of the US in intervening
de in the interests of secu-
to contribute heavily in
the developing world. Mr
campaign team created
ension in the Balkans dur-
election by saying he would
troops out.
Clinton threw down a gaunt-
ne former Texas Governor
a speech at Warwick
ity at the end of his three-
t to Ireland and Britain. In
big foreign policy speech,
d there was a wonderful
unity for peace and prosper-
is century. "For eight years,
done what I could to lead
ntry down that path. I think
rest of our lives we had bet-

on it."
ington and Austin were full
s of the Presidential transi-
came from moving into top gear after
elect Bush's concession by Mr
of the speech who received many plaudits
our two cell sides for the manner and
pleased if his withdrawal speech.
phone call (Guardian News Service)

Colin Powell
U.S. Secretary
of State

CRAWFORD (Texas), Dec. 16. The U.S. President-elect, Mr. George W. Bush, nominated retired Gen. Colin Powell, one of the most respected men in America, as his Secretary of State today.

"Today it is my privilege to ask (Gen. Powell) to become the 65th Secretary of State of the United States of America," Mr. Bush said announcing the first appointment of his Cabinet at a school in Crawford, Texas.

Gen. Powell, known internationally after overseeing the U.S. military during the Gulf War and serving as National Security Adviser to the former U.S. President, Mr. Ronald Reagan, will be the first black to run the State Department, the most senior Cabinet position and the nation's top diplomatic post.

Mr. Bush, whose victory over the Democrat, Mr. Al Gore, in the November 7 election was only finalised on Tuesday after protracted legal disputes, will be inaugurated on January 20. He pledged to work for reconciliation after his win in the disputed vote in Florida. — Reuters

THE HINDU

17 DEC 2000

Some lessons in Presidency

Fred I Greenstein analyses the leadership styles from Roosevelt to Clinton

The executive branch of our government is like a chameleon. To a startling degree it reflects the character and personality of the President.

Clark M Clifford, 1972

THE HIGHLY personalised nature of the modern American presidency makes the strengths and weaknesses of the White House incumbent of the utmost importance. It places a premium on the ability of chief executives to get the most out of their strong points and compensate for their limitations. It also places a great value on the ability of Americans to select presidents with attributes that serve well in the Oval Office. Two premises underlie this review of two thirds of a century of modern presidential experience: presidents who steep themselves in the record of their predecessors will be better equipped for their responsibilities for having done so. Members of the public are likely to make wiser electoral choices if they are able to place presidential contenders in a historical context.

In seeking to provide such a context, I avoided two common approaches to assessing American presidents. I have abstained from judging the ends that presidents pursue so as better to focus on their means. I have avoided ranking presidents, because there is at least as much to be learned from their failures and limitations as from their successes and strengths. Each of the preceding chapters consists of two narratives: an account of its subject's background, leadership style, and White House actions, followed by a commentary on the implications of his leadership qualities for the conduct of the presidency. I conclude with summary observations about each subject and general remarks on the qualities that shape presidential performance.

Summing up the Presidents

Of all the modern chief executives, Franklin Roosevelt lends himself least well to a balance sheet of positive and negative qualities. FDR had towering strengths in the realms of rhetoric, superb political skills, and an unequalled capacity to radiate optimism and confidence. He provides endless positive lessons, but even he is a source of warnings. In the organisational sphere his chaotic organisation arrangements made the influence of his subordinates as much a function of their bureaucratic wiles as the merits of their recommendations. His weakness as a conceptualiser contributed to the incoherence of his administration's effort to combat the Depression. Even his astonishing self assurance had a negative side, sometimes leading him to act on untested intuitions.

Whatever his limitations, it would be difficult to overstate the historical importance of Franklin Roosevelt. Consider a possibility that nearly become a reality. Just two weeks before Roosevelt was to take office, a gunman sprayed his car with bullets, narrowly missing him. If Roosevelt's would be assassin had



found his mark, the next president would have been Vice President elect John Nance Garner. Few public figures were less well equipped for restoring public confidence than the crusty Garner, who is best known for equating the vice presidency to a pitcher of warm spit. There is no sure way of knowing what would have transpired if the United States had been deprived of the political genius of FDR. It is far from impossible that it would have succumbed to authoritarian rule, or even dissolved as a political entity as the Soviet Union did in 1991.

Harry Truman had an exemplary capacity to energise and rally his subordinates in an administration that had to contend with a highly unfavourable political environment. He also deserves attention for his ability to remain on an even keel, despite his often turbulent emotions. Truman provides an example of the broker politician at his best in his actions relating to the enactment of the Marshall plan. When it comes to rhetoric and vision, however, Truman is a negative role model. He illustrates the costs of a defective communication style and a situation determined approach to presidential leadership.

Dwight Eisenhower is the Clark Kent of the American presidency. He was once assumed to have been a well intentioned political innocent, but he emerges from the historical record as a self consciously oblique political sophisticate with a highly distinctive leadership style. Eisenhower had a firm sense of self worth that was not bound up in his presidency — he had made his historical mark by V E Day. He has the most to offer future presidents in the domains of policy vision and organisation of the presidency. His greatest deficiency was in public communication. Eisenhower's failure to persuade the public and the political community that the United States should not enter into a missile race with the Soviet Union underscores the short comings of a political style that places little weight on the teaching and preaching of the

presidency.

John Kennedy's forte was public communication. A less publicly persuasive chief executive would have been unable to maintain public support in the face of such set backs as the debacle at the Bay of Pigs and the erection of the Berlin Wall. Kennedy's personal qualities also set a high standard. His keen intelligence and sense of historical perspective made for thoughtful, well informed policy choices. He also was striking for the emotional detachment he brought to his public actions. Despite his private excesses, Kennedy was measured and clear headed in his official capacity.

Kennedy also is a source of negative lessons. He squandered Eisenhower's organisational legacy, discarding an advisory mechanism that could have been of inestimable value for later presidencies. Kennedy's lack of an overarching policy vision led him to muddle through in the vital relationship with the Soviet Union. By posing an unintended threat to the men in the Kremlin, he contributed to a spiral of misunderstanding that culminated in the near nuclear disaster of the Cuban missile crisis.

Following Kennedy there were the emotionally impaired Lyndon Johnson and Richard Nixon, under whom the nation experienced Vietnam and Watergate. In the absence of that succession of traumas, the tenor of American politics in the final quarter of the twentieth century would have been far more conducive to effective governance. Lyndon Johnson's most positive lessons bear on political skill. Presidents who study Johnson's often pyrotechnic political manoeuvres will be the recipient of a grad-

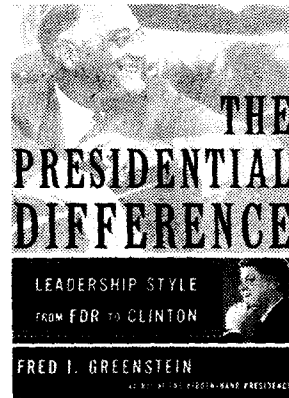
uate education in political operations. Future presidents also would be advised to take LBJ as a source of warnings. Especially instructive are the qualities that led Johnson to commit over a half million American troops to the jungles of Vietnam between 1965 and 1968. Because he was deficient in organisational capacity, he presided over an advisory process that failed to provide him with a rigorous assessment of the pros and cons of alternative courses of action. Because he was tone deaf when it came to policy content, his political skill enhanced his ability to pursue a bankrupt course of action.

The presidential leadership of Richard Nixon provides an illustration of the superficiality of efforts to rank chief executives. In a 1996 survey of Presidential greatness conducted by Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., a panel of authorities placed Nixon in the lowest of six performance categories. That assessment might lead later presidents to conclude that they had nothing to learn from Nixon. Yet it would be difficult to imagine a more positively, as well as negatively, instructive chief executive. Nixon's stunning international achievements illustrate the value of strategic vision in presidential leadership. His self destructive qualities demonstrate the capacity of a dysfunctional psyche to sabotage even the most proficient political leader.

Enter the underappreciated Gerald Ford. Presidents and presidential advisers who dismiss the Ford experience will miss out on a rich set of precedents about how to manage the presidency. More fundamentally, they will fail to take account of the personal strengths of a chief executive who had an impressive capacity to withstand the pressures of office. Future presidents cannot simply will emotional balance on themselves, but they are likely to approach their job with greater ease if they attend to the presidents who were not intimidated by their office.

The presidency of Jimmy Carter is informative as a limiting case. No president has been as reluctant as Carter to engage in the normal process of political give and take. No presidency provides a fuller catalogue of avoidable shortfalls than his. The exception is Camp David. By negotiating a peace agreement between Israel and Egypt, Carter provides a reminder that presidents need not simply respond to circumstances. They can make opportunity their servant, engaging in acts of political creativity.

Reagan was a Jimmy Carter in reverse. He was a fluent public communicator with an ingratiating behind the scenes manner.



The Presidential Difference
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Has US democracy been harmed by the disputed presidential mandate?

Yes, at least in the short run. It will take a lot of hard work to put the sheen back



Karan Singh

HAVING been a long-term observer of US Presidential elections — I was in New York during the Truman-Dewey election in 1948 and attended Truman's Inaugural Parade in Washington in February 1949 — I followed the latest one with tremendous interest. It has been an astounding and unprecedented political-legal saga. The upshot of which is that though Al Gore won a clear majority of the popular vote, and apparently a majority in Florida, he has been deprived of the Presidency because of an extraordinary chain of events, legal lacunae and constitutional conundrums.

It is obvious that the present electoral law in the United States urgently needs to be updated and standardised. The electoral college system was devised over a century ago, following the civil war, so as to give special protection to the smaller states. Since then the situation has undergone a sea change, and we now have the bizarre spectacle of the 50 states having separate and often differing electoral laws. This hardly brings credit to the world's most powerful democracy. After this traumatic experience the Congress and the State Legislatures will surely take urgent steps to amend their electoral laws.

Another thing that stands out is the surprisingly sharp cleavage within American society. The United States has been a predominant global power for half a century. The weaknesses and schisms within the country itself were often hidden from the rest of the world and perhaps from the Americans themselves. This election has brought out the sharp dichotomy and deep divisions between the coastal and the inland states, between the more and the less affluent sections of society, between the predominantly white and the predominantly coloured population, even between male and female voters. Clearly, despite its immense wealth and unprecedented power, the United States still has a great deal of homework to do to complete its unfinished social and economic revolution. Its social security system is far behind many of the much smaller Scandinavian countries. There is widespread poverty in certain sections. Educationally and socially, the Black community lags far behind the rest and as Jesse Jackson has said, the stage is set for a new chapter in the civil rights movement.

The Gore campaign made a serious miscalculation by not involving President Clinton in the electoral process. He remains, by far, the most intelligent and charismatic political leader in the US, despite

the difficult and embarrassing personal situations he encountered during his eight years in office. Hillary's election to the Senate by an impressive majority shows clearly that the Clinton factor would have been a positive input for the Gore campaign. Al Gore would have won comfortably had he involved President Clinton actively in his campaign. Having worked for eight years as his under-study, it was surprising that he should have been advised to keep the President Clinton at arms length instead of cashing in on the unprecedented economic growth and prosperity during his presi-

No, such political divisions reflect the vibrancy of US democracy and contribute to debates



Ramesh Chandran

MANY misty-eyed Democrats who watched their man Al Gore deliver that elegantly crafted eight-minute concession speech were struck by one thought-provoking sentence. The Vice-president, who had just emerged from a 36-day bare-knuckled legal skirmishing with his opponent George W. Bush, pointed out that although he might disagree with the US Supreme Court verdict, he accept-

that such divisions reflect the vibrancy of its democracy and contribute to a splendid national debate.

In effect, this most closely contested presidential election in over a century evoked a nationwide "civics lesson". Kids in schools were pondering over election laws to the undisputed might of its Supreme Court. Occasionally, there were the loony oddballs like a Jesse Jackson threatening a "civil rights explosion". But, despite the bristling partisan rhetoric, there was no bloodshed, no election-related violence, no tanks on the streets.

For a non-partisan observer of the election which began with the primaries to the two political conventions and culminated in the acrimonious court verdict, each side seemed blinded by the "righteousness" of its cause. Understandable perhaps, given the extreme narrowness of the winning margin. But allegations of the majority five justices of the Supreme Court being swayed by their ideological zeal seemed one-sided. The liberal-minded law professors who made the accusation did not consider that the four dissenting liberal justices might equally be motivated by partisanship.

Viewing the 7-2 ruling when seven justices condemned the disturbing, standardless hand recounts in Florida, Prof. Samuel Issacharoff of Columbia Law School argued that this was "a surprising expansion" of voting rights, rather than contraction. The seven Justices have broadened the constitutional protections for the right to vote. One happy outcome of this ordeal may be greater standardisation among the various States, and better machines.

The divisions that America now faces are stark. The smouldering resentment of minorities, especially those African-Americans who feel they were disenfranchised, are real. And much will depend on how George W. Bush negotiates this minefield of Conservative agenda within his own party and reconcile them with building a centrist path by reaching out to Democrats in a divided Congress. But these are political challenges. They do not diminish the country's democratic edifices. If the recounting process had been prolonged, there may have been other constitutional challenges including two sets of electors at the electoral college. So the onus is squarely on Bush to prove that he was not elected to serve one party but to serve one nation. Two centuries ago, this country's greatest chief justice John Marshall had declared that "America was a government of laws, not men". By adhering to the Supreme Court fiat, Al Gore proved he elevated principles above politics.

(The writer is Washington correspondent of 'The Times of India')

IN BLACK AND WHITE



TOI Illustration: Neelabh

dentship.

Political forecasting is a tricky proposition, but I could perhaps venture a prediction that in 2004 an Al Gore-Hillary Clinton ticket may well sweep the polls. Until then, we can only hope that George W. Bush, to whose father I presented my credentials, will be able to heal the sharp divisions within American society which have been exacerbated by a split mandate and mutually contradictory judicial activism. This election has to some extent eroded the image of American democracy, at least in the short run. The country has tremendous resilience, and if necessary corrective measures are taken the situation could stabilise again. But it will take a lot of hard work to put the sheen back on the world's most powerful democracy.

(Dr Karan Singh is a former Ambassador to the United States)

ed the "finality of the outcome" and "tonight, for the sake of our unity as a people and the strength of our democracy, I offer my concession". Echoing Gore, the President-elect, too, argued for submerging partisan rancour, encouraging "reconciliation" and viewed the month-long legal and political battles as a luminous testament to the vigour and tensile strength of American democracy.

So, have the country's vertical political divisions undermined its democratic institutions? Not by a long stretch. No one disputes that it is absurd that a technological superpower like the United States, which thrives on automated banking to online shopping, cannot produce halfway decent voting machines. Or that ideological fissures afflict its legislatures, judiciary and even media. But constitutional scholars here have argued

Bush set to name Powell as his Secretary of State

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, December 16

IT HAS been known for months; later today, it will be official. Gen. Colin Powell of 1991 Gulf War fame will be President-elect George W. Bush's pick for the key Cabinet slot of Secretary of State.

The retired four-star general, who was initially goaded by many Republicans to run for President, will be the first African-American to rise to such heights in the US State apparatus.

"I think America will be pleased," Mr Bush said about his impending first Cabinet announcement. The 63-year-old Powell was chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in the administration of George Bush Sr. during the war against Saddam Hussein's Iraq.

Given his popularity (he is regarded as the most popular general since Eisenhower), the Democrats are expected to swiftly endorse his appointment when it comes up before the Senate for confirmation.

For the Republicans, traditionally viewed with suspicion by African-Americans, the Powell appointment will perhaps help

earn a degree of acceptance from a community that has otherwise cast its lot with the Democrats.

Gen. Powell has been a critic of committing US forces in trouble spots for extended periods, such as the intervention in the Balkans.

Lodhi to Bush

PAKISTAN'S AMBASSADOR to US Maleeha Lodhi has urged President-elect George W Bush to pay more attention to Pakistan and avoid a piecemeal and sporadic approach to global crises. In a message to the new US President, Maleeha hoped that the new US administration would play an active role in promoting peace and stability in the world's major crisis areas, including the Middle East and South Asia.

HTC, Islamabad

This is in line with a view articulated by Mr Bush during his campaign. Mr Bush, according to his aides, expects to finalise most of the Cabinet appointments over the next couple of weeks. However, this optimism would appear to be a trifle misplaced, given the pulls and pressures among the "more

conservative" and "less conservative" segments of his party.

That apart, his efforts to rope in a Democrat of his liking has fallen flat with Senator John Breaux politely declining his offer of a Cabinet slot on Friday. Mr Breaux, while welcoming Mr Bush's bid to put up a diverse Cabinet, made it clear that he did not wish to weaken the Democrats' hold in the tied Senate.

He is believed to have suggested the name of party colleague Bennett Johnston for the Energy portfolio that was on offer. Mr Johnston is a former Senator from Mr Breaux's home state of Louisiana. Mr Bush has gone on record saying that he will try out his Texas experiment of bipartisan cooperation as part of his reconciliation efforts after an extraordinarily divisive election.

While finalisation of the Cabinet could take some time, Mr Bush is said to be more or less ready with his list of names for White House posts. Tomorrow, he is expected to formally announce the induction of Ms Condoleezza Rice as his national security adviser and some other key aides. He has already named Mr Andrew Card as his Chief of Staff.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

17 DEC 2000

BUSH AT LAST

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But divisive legacy remains W.C.

SO, it's over, with Gore having conceded defeat and pulled out of the race. Bush and Gore's differing campaigning strategies had earned them the sobriquets of "Gush" and "Bore", but ironically it was the Bush camp which succeeded in boring a whole nation with legal tactics of delaying recounts, till pressure mounted on Gore to concede defeat. Although opinion polls show that a majority consider it more important to "remove all possible doubt" than to "resolve the matter as quickly as possible", a majority also now thinks that it is time for Gore to concede. In this sense the Supreme Court's 5-4 vote against the Florida Supreme Court's ruling for a manual recount proved decisive. Technically Gore could have gone on by asking for 14,000 disputed ballots in Palm Beach and Miami-Dade to be counted. But apart from popular opinion turning against him, dissension was breaking out in the Democratic ranks as well.

For a long time, though, election 2000 will carry the taint of having been decided by the one extra vote cast by a Supreme Court judge even though Gore got 350,000 more of the popular vote, particularly since the judges' vote was along partisan lines, with Republican appointed judges plumping for the arguments of the Bush side, and vice versa. To make things murkier, family members of two Supreme Court judges, Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, are involved with the Bush campaign. One of Scalia's sons is a partner of the attorney who argued in the Supreme Court in favour of Bush, while another son works for the law firm which represented Bush in Florida. Clarence Thomas' wife works for the conservative Heritage Foundation, which collects applications from those hoping for positions in a Bush administration. Taken together, Bush may find it hard to dispel the impression of a power elite rigging the rules.

Bush cannot afford to adopt a divisive agenda as president, which means stressing the "compassionate" part of the "compassionate conservative" agenda on which he ran. Bush owes his success to replicating Bill Clinton's New Democrat agenda from the other end of the political spectrum, putting together a multicultural coalition including blacks, Hispanics and gays, and promising not to cut welfare benefits. Under Clinton the US economy boomed, and unemployment, poverty and crime cut, significant achievements which it would be wise to hold on to. Hard-core conservatives are hoping that Bush's centrist postures were an eyewash and he will start moving on agendas such as restricting women's right to abortion, or blowing up social security, or allowing businesses to make extra profit by fouling America's water and air. Bush doesn't have the mandate for any of this, and can implement them only at his own and the Republicans' peril.

THE STATESMAN

17 DEC 2000

Bush, Powell proclaim 'uniquely' American internationalism

By C. Raja Mohan

NEW DELHI, DEC. 17. As India gets ready to engage the new Republican administration and begins to assess the direction of American foreign policy in the next four years, it received the first signals from the President-elect, Mr. George W. Bush, yesterday, to chew on.

There was no surprise in Mr. Bush's nomination of General Colin L. Powell as the top gun of the U.S. diplomacy. The new Senate is expected to quickly confirm the all-American hero as the Secretary of State when it meets early next month. Even less surprising were the remarks at the nomination ceremony by Gen. Powell, who stayed with the broad themes that were articulated by the Bush campaign during the election.

In proclaiming the pursuit of a "uniquely American internationalism" by the new administration, Gen. Powell was dispelling any misperceptions abroad that the U.S. was going to withdraw into a shell under the Republican leadership.

Throughout the campaign, the Democrats had accused the Republicans of a planned retreat from internationalism to isolationism. Mr. Powell was assuring both domestic and foreign audiences that the U.S. would remain engaged — purposefully — with the world.

While emphasising the internationalist orientation of the new administration, Mr. Powell did not step back from any of the positions that had in the first place led to the accusations of isolationism. Foremost among them was the argument of the Republican platform that the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, had got the U.S. mired in a host of needless military interventions around the world.

Gen. Powell reaffirmed the Republican assessment that the U.S. armed forces are "stretched too thin" around the world, and its current missions, including those in the Balkans, will be reviewed. The review, however, will be conducted in consultation with the allies in Europe and East Asia.

Gen. Powell was indeed the original archi-



The U.S. President-elect, Mr. George W. Bush, introducing Gen. Colin Powell (left), as his nominee to be the Secretary of State, during a ceremony in Crawford, Texas on Saturday. — AP

tect, when he served in the Reagan administration in the mid 1980s — of the idea that the U.S. must be extremely cautious about military interventions. He had insisted that the U.S. must only intervene to pursue clearly-defined political objectives. When it does intervene, Mr. Powell has asserted, it must do so with "overwhelming force."

This "Powell doctrine" has since become the guiding principle for many of the leading lights of the Republican foreign policy establishment. The nomination of Gen. Powell and his reiteration of the opposition to expansive interventions suggest that the internationalism of Mr. Bush will be very different from that of Mr. Clinton.

The transition will, in essence, be from "liberal internationalism" of the last eight years to a more "conservative internationalism" under the Republicans. New Delhi should find itself more comfortable with a less-interventionist administration in Washington.

Gen. Powell also reaffirmed the Republican

commitment, expressed during the campaign, in favour of the controversial programme to build defences against missiles. The American effort to build theatre and strategic missile defences has already raised tensions, with China and Russia strongly opposed to the move. It has also drawn flak from the U.S. allies in Europe. An acceleration of the programme under Mr. Bush will sharpen these contradictions.

Calling the plans for a "defensive shield" against missiles an "essential part" of the Republican security strategy, Gen. Powell said the objective was to "start diminishing the value of offensive (nuclear) weapons."

As a new nuclear weapon power, India will keenly follow the prospects for a radical change in the presumed relationship between offence and defence in the U.S. nuclear strategy. While emphasising the increased importance of defence-related technologies, Mr. Bush has also called for radical, and even unilateral, cuts in the American arsenal.

India will have to carefully assess the potential for tectonic shifts in the U.S. nuclear doctrine and adapt its own nuclear security and arms control positions. Would nuclear defences be necessarily bad, as India has argued until now? Or, would India, as a small nuclear weapon power, prefer an offence-dominated environment? Could India support radical reductions in global nuclear arsenals, coupled with a new emphasis on missile defences?

New Delhi will also take note of Gen. Powell's remarks moving Washington away from the conception that the U.S. and China are "strategic partners." He said the Bush administration would work with Russia and China "not as potential enemies or adversaries, but not yet as strategic partners."

This open-ended formulation is likely to add new uncertainties to the great power relations in the coming months. Indian diplomacy will have to be nimble-footed if it hopes to minimise some of the negative consequences and take advantage of the positive trends.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 DEC 2000

A President who won't meddle

Bush does not appear to be a man of bombast and show. He has (as yet) shown no sign of yearning the glamour and adulation of the foreign stage like Clinton, writes SIMON JENKINS

PRAISE be, the age of cynical Western interventionism may be past. Thursday saw the final election (or selection) of a new US President, George W Bush. The event could mean little or it could mean much. That is always the case when an empire changes hands. Millions may plod the same weary furrow, or they may suddenly die. Let us be optimistic.

On Thursday, the old era displayed itself in symbolic finery. Bill Clinton visited Shakespeare's county of Warwickshire on his final lap of honour. His latest interventions have been predictable failures, but that does not matter. These are the fanfares of a demiparadise. "Let's purge this cholera without letting blood," cries Mr Clinton to the cameras. In Belfast he tells the IRA to lay down its arms, the British to "demilitarise" and the Unionists to be patient. It is that easy. Everyone hugged and wept and was photographed. Times were so out of joint that Hillary actually kissed Martin McGuinness. All was for show.

Mr Clinton told Ulster to "opt for peace", as last month he had said the same to the Arabs and Israelis, and previously to the Kosovans, the Vietnamese and the Colombians. The Pope and the Dalai Lama together would not generate so much platitude. To Mr Clinton, foreign policy is a series of rhetorical trophies, chosen at random from the crisis boutique to adorn the White House wall. Travelling American statesmen no longer shoot bears, just bear-hugs.

Since the end of the Cold War, the Western alliance, and America in particular, has failed to find a rationale, even a language, for intervening in the affairs of foreign states, whether by diplomacy, economic sanctions or cruise missiles. Mr Clinton on Thursday recalled that America had never enjoyed so few internal crises and so little external threat. Yet he and his predecessors have sent the West lurching into one fidgety adventure after another, with



little thought of exit, let alone of long-term consequence. The one success of the past decade, the Gulf War, honoured a quite different principle of intervention, that of the United Nations restoring the territorial integrity of states. It was limited and it worked.

The involvement of the White House and the trumpeting of a "peace process" is supposed to alter the balance of a civil war. The evidence suggests that it more often destabilises and prolongs conflict and corrupts any final solution. It is simply wrong to claim that Mr Clinton has brought "peace" any nearer in Ulster, the Gulf or West Asia.

The Arab-Israeli peace process has brought both sides close to open war. The similar process in Northern Ireland teeters on the brink of failure and has London this Christmas on terrorist red alert. American and British planes will spend another new year bombing Iraq, entrenching its dictator in power. The attempt to uphold "multi-ethnicity" in former Yugoslavia has been an abject failure. Neither massacre nor mass eviction was averted. Nato returned to the continent of Europe the obscenity of civilian bombing and military colonisation. No, Milosevic was not bombed from office, he was voted out.

Intervention over the course of the 1990s in Africa has been confined to minimising televised atrocity. Soldiers were sent to Somalia, Rwanda and Sierra Leone, not to the continuing (but untelevised) wars in Angola, Sudan and Congo. Mr Clinton's intervention in Colombia is destabilising its government. Cuba remains isolated and

impoverished. No audit of the past decade could declare the world a safer place because of these interventions. The adventurism of the greatest world democracy has, in the outturn, wrecked and impoverished some of the poorest states in the world. When America mistakenly bombed Khartoum in 1998, it merely shrugged and walked away. Faced with such examples, the burden of proof must be on the policy, not on its critics.

As Michael Ignatieff has argued in his book, *Virtual War*, the advent of smart weapons and "clean wars" has not lessened the inclination of the West to intervene. It has rather increased it. A President can order a bomber from Wisconsin to kill and flatten a target with impunity, in time for the evening news. Diplomacy, power projection and media manipulation — all swirl in the same opportunistic stew, without theme or legality. It is war as spectator sport, the politics of the Colosseum. Where next will a President wish to "walk tall"? Modern America can do what it likes, when it likes, where it likes, "born not to sue but to command".

Any policeman needs a mission. He needs the consent of the policed under a recognised law. He must show consistency, for without consistency there is no deterrence. There has been neither consistency nor deterrence in the interventions of the past decade. Hence the survival of Saddam Hussein, Gaddafi, Castro, the Iranian ayatollahs and the Colombian drug barons. Hence the chaos of the Caucasus and the horrors of Rwanda/Burundi.

Those who criticise such cynical interventionism are dismissed as isolationists and appeasers. They would have been "soft on Hitler and soft on Communism". Such is the dumbness of modern foreign affairs. Yet I could agree with the Falklands and Gulf wars, interventions under the terms of the UN Charter against territorial aggression. The objection is to a quite different principle, adumbrated by Mr Clinton (with Tony Blair in tow), that of "justified humanitarian aggression". The objection is to the concept of a global policeman with a random licence to kill.

George W Bush has indicated, albeit in vague terms, an opposite tendency. He wants to see American troops return from Kosovo and Bosnia. He is sceptical of the buckets of aid tipped by the West into corrupt former Communist regimes. He wants a European defence system firmly coupled to Nato. He wants American defence geared to America's interests, not to some "feel-good" humanitarianism.

The woman tipped as his national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice, and the probable new secretary of state, Colin Powell, offer a distinct foreign policy from Mr Clinton's. According to a recent article by Miss Rice in the *Stanford Journal of International Relations*, the new Administration's priorities are military stability, world free trade and the spread of democratic values, in that order. The Clinton/Blair humanitarian aggression is not on that list.

This suggests a vast improvement. It explains why in future American troops should not find themselves briefly

"policing" the Balkans or Africa. It suggests that sanctions might be lifted from Iraq. Distant civil wars might be left to resolve themselves unaided, as did Lebanon's after the West withdrew in the 1980s. Human tragedies might again be for charities to combat. Humanitarianism might be privatised. At its most liberal, the policy might even leave South America free to grow products in such demand in America, without being devastated by the US Drug Enforcement Administration.

Some of this may be wishful thinking. Every President must head a coalition, Mr Bush more than most. The global intervention lobby will still be strong, a bizarre alliance of United Nations, aid agencies, arms manufacturers, soldiers and media propagandists. Against such imperialism, the voice of realpolitik and pragmatism will be small. The cry will always be "something must be done". Modern America is eerily akin to late Victorian Britain, with Church and State in a frantic race to rule the world. That is what happens when specious ideologies gain a hold on vain men.

Yet every ideology has its antithesis. Mr Bush does not appear to be a man of bombast and show. He has (as yet) shown no sign of yearning the glamour and adulation of the foreign stage. Warwickshire is unlikely to be his first destination. His aides have shown themselves cautious men and women, capable of understanding the limits of "appropriate" intervention, of humility in the exercise of power. We can only hope. — *The Times, London*

I HAVE been spending the past three days in Miami, the home of the dimpled chad. I was pleased to hear from a local antiquary about the vote in Palm Beach the last time Florida was involved in a presidential election that was too close to call. There were then fewer than 50 voters in the whole of Dade County. In Palm Beach, there were only two registered voters, but three people were sent to count their votes. That would presumably have been in 1888.

This time, Dade County and Palm Beach have been at the centre of the storm. The Americans have an admirable ability to focus on what is going to happen next, not on what has happened in the past. Within a few hours of Al Gore's concession speech, which was generally well received, the attention of the United States, including that of Florida, had shifted from the heated dispute about the recounts to the prospects for the new presidency.

Democratic activists are sore about the outcome, but ordinary voters have accepted it, whether they are Republicans, Independents or Democrats in party affiliation. The US Supreme Court has achieved its objective, which was to reach finality. The majority decision was characteristic of Chief Justice Rehnquist's court, which is the moderate one.

It rested on the principle of equality, which has historically been a strongly held liberal principle. No American now questions the Supreme Court's 1954 judgment in *Brown vs the Board of Education*, which abolished segregation in schools.

Chief Justice Warren summed up the doctrine: "In the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place because separate educational facilities are inherently unequal." That was the reason the Rehnquist court rejected different systems of recounting in different Florida counties.

The US Supreme Court is also opposed to judges making laws, rather than interpreting them. This was also originally a liberal position, strongly championed by Justice Hugo Black, Franklin Roosevelt's first appointment to the Supreme Court.

Black was critical of those judges who struck down the early New Deal legislation on free-trade principles.

Recession may put Bush in Hoover groove

More recently, liberals have come around to supporting what is called "substantive due process", to defend the judicial activism of the 1973 abortion decision, *Roe vs Wade*. No right to abortion is to be found in the US Constitution; the 1973 court extrapolated it.

Distinguished columnist of *The New York Times* Anthony Lewis quotes a despairing law professor as asking: "How can I convince my students now that the integrity of legal reasoning matters?"

That may be the view of some liberal professors, but I do not think that it is a view which has taken hold in America or is even much discussed. Law professors who do not agree with the judgment should recognise that the majority decision in the US Supreme Court that the Florida Supreme Court was trying to make new law on a basis of inequality was consistent with its normal construction of the Constitution.

No one can tell how strong a President George W Bush will prove to be. The evidence from Texas is that he believes in delegation, that he is not interested in ideology, and that he likes to work towards consensus.

My own temperamental preference is for a more radical approach to political problems; I admired the radicalism of Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan more than the conciliatory strategy of John Major and George Bush Sr. Nevertheless, there are immediate advantages in George W Bush's approach.

The American people were evenly split; they did not vote for a sharp change of direction, either in a conservative or a liberal direction.

Mr Bush wouldn't have a national mandate for a shift of policy away from centrism. His only appointments are all of moderates like himself. Dick Cheney, Vice-President-elect, is an experienced and capable administrator. Like

The world is not going to get an American foreign policy which believes that the United States can solve every problem or right every wrong, writes WILLIAM REES-MOGG



President-elect George W Bush with Colin Powell, his nominee to be secretary of state. General Powell's cautious approach to intervention is shared by Condoleezza Rice (left) who will be national security adviser in the new administration. — AP/PTI.

problem or right every wrong. Both in foreign and domestic policy there will be more bipartisanship; this will strengthen the position of Congress and give more say to the Democrats, who are quite likely to win a majority in both Houses in the mid-term elections in two years' time.

Whether or not one is drawn to this style of presidency, it fits the present mood of the USA. It probably fits the mood better than the liberal campaign of Vice-President Al Gore.

So far as the political balance is concerned, Mr Bush's administration is likely to be a popular one, though the electorate may get bored with his apparent lack of dynamic purpose, as they did with his father. He may not prove an exciting President, but he may well be a cosy one.

The problem is the economy. As

Dick Cheney has said, there are signs that the USA may be moving towards a recession, and it could be a difficult recession to deal with. This is certainly the mood of the stock market.

Last Friday, reacting to the election result, almost all the indices were down, on the day, on the week, on the month, on the year. Investors in technology and Internet stocks have lost huge amounts, 40, 50, sometimes up to 90 per cent of earlier values. Microsoft has issued a profit warning.

The Clinton-Greenspan boom seems to be over. This in itself would not be too worrying. Booms do not go on for ever. A mild recession, a lower stock market, could be corrected by a cut in interest rates and taxes, both of which now seem likely. It is the current account deficit which will

make it much more difficult to deal with the recession, if one develops.

A single-column graph in Friday's *Wall Street Journal* tells the story. In the early 1990s, the US current account varied from a small positive balance to a deficit of \$25 billion a quarter. Things were not quite so good in the first Clinton term, edging up to a deficit of about \$30 billion.

In the second Clinton term, the deficit soared to \$113 billion in the third quarter of the current year. In the past three years, it has come close to doubling every 18 months.

The Wall Street Journal's heading is "Trade Gap will pose Challenge to Bush Team". That is like saying "Iceberg will pose Challenge to Captain of Titanic". Neither the present deficit nor the rate of deterioration can possibly be sustained.

This huge and accelerating inflow of foreign money financed the last three years of the Wall Street boom. Now that the boom is coming to an end, this flow of funds is likely to decline. Already there is a growing shortage of liquidity, particularly in new technology companies.

The measures which would normally be used to counteract the recession, which involve reflation of domestic demand, would make the current account deficit worse. Viewed as a technical economic problem, this is the most difficult predicament for the USA since the inflation of the early 1980s.

Politically, there is the question of responsibility. Like Nigel Lawson in the late 1980s, but on a far greater scale, Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the Federal Reserve, is likely to be accused of allowing the boom to get out of control, with painful consequences.

Will Bill Clinton share this blame? Will he be regarded as the man who primed the bomb? Or will the blame fall on Mr Bush, as the President in whose term the bomb went off?

The Republicans have been through this before. In 1928, Herbert Hoover became President, the third Republican in a row. In 1929, the stock market crashed. In 1930, the slump began. The Republicans did not get back into the White House until 1962. Very few people are now expecting a slump, but many are expecting a recession. Who gets the blame could well decide the fate of the George W Bush presidency.

— *The Times, London.*

Powell backs missile defence system

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IAN BRODIE
THE TIMES, LONDON

WASHINGTON, Dec. 18. — General Colin Powell has announced that the Bush administration will move ahead with a controversial national missile defence after discussing it with allies and other nations.

After his nomination as the secretary of state, Gen Powell told reporters that the defence was necessary to thwart the 'blackmail' inherent in Third World regimes, possessing long-range nuclear missiles with which they think they can hold USA hostage.

"I think a national missile defence is an essential part of our overall strategic force system. So we are going to go forward," he said. His comments were made ahead of yesterday's appointment of Ms Condoleezza Rice as the national security adviser.

During the election campaign, Mr Bush had called for deploying a more expansive missile system than the limited

'Son of Star Wars' pursued under President Mr Clinton, who eventually put off making a final decision.

But Mr Bush did say that ballistic missile defences should also protect America's allies. The Republican platform promised that a Bush administration would spend billions of dollars to research and deploy a robust missile defence system, including sea-based missiles, that would extend a shield around Europe, Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

Gen Powell did not offer any further details of just what the administration has in mind, but it is certain to alarm Britain and other Nato allies, along with Russia and China.

The concern in capitals other than Washington is that the proposal would breach the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and set off a new arms race. Under this cornerstone of arms control deals, both America and the Soviet Union agreed in 1972 not to build national defences against incoming

missiles as an insurance against either side being the first to go on the nuclear attack.

But Americans of all political shades say the rise since the Cold War of Iraq, Iran and North Korea as potential missile-building states has changed the strategic balance.

British officials are worried about the destabilising effects of the US solution and its potentially fatal impact on the ABM treaty as well as other arms control agreements.

Gen Powell acknowledged that convincing allies and other countries of the need for a missile defence would be a challenge. He said: "These will be tough negotiations. I don't expect them to be easy. But they will have to come to the understanding that we feel this is in the best interest of American people and not only American people, the people of the world." He described Russia and China as countries the USA would attempt to work with "not as potential enemies or adversaries, but not yet as partners".

THE STATESMAN

19 DEC 2000

Bush plugs into Washington power

FROM PATRICIA WILSON

Washington, Dec. 18 (Reuters): President-elect George W. Bush reached out today to the capital's powerful elite on his first post-election foray into Washington, holding talks with Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan before heading to Capitol Hill.

Over breakfast, Bush got a status report on the US economy from Greenspan, the financial wizard who receives a great deal of credit for monetary policies that enabled the US economy to achieve its longest peacetime expansion.

The two men would seem to differ on what to do with billions of dollars of federal budget surpluses projected to flow into the Treasury over the next decade. Bush favours an across-the-board tax cut of \$1.3 trillion while Greenspan favours using the surplus to pay down the national debt.

After the meeting, Bush headed to Capitol Hill for talks with Republican and Democratic leaders of Congress.

Speaker Dennis Hastert, an Illinois Republican, Senate Republican Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi and House Democratic Leader Dick Gephardt of Missouri were to have individual sessions with Bush.

After completing his Capitol Hill visit, Bush planned to interview prospective Cabinet officers at the Madison Hotel, where he is staying during the three-day visit.

At the White House, the Texas governor's wife, Laura, planned to pay a visit to First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton for tea and talks about the Bushes' transition into the mansion.

Bush's trip is in part designed to mend fences after his narrow victory over Vice-President Al Gore and the bitter post-election battle over the state of Florida. He is to meet Gore and President Bill



Justice Alberto R. Gonzales (left), White House counsel, and Condoleezza Rice, national security adviser. (AFP)

elect, Bush said he was looking forward to what surely would be "a series of unique moments."

"It will be special. ... It's going to be, I'm confident, a memorable trip," he said before departing Austin, the Texas capital. "I look forward to making my case, and visiting as many members of both parties as I can," Bush said. "It's the beginning of a dialogue that is crucial in order to get some positive things done. ... I'm very optimistic."

A new CBS poll said more Americans are satisfied with the outcome of the election than dissatisfied, although narrowly.

The poll found just 50 per cent of those interviewed were satisfied with the election outcome, while 45 per cent were not. A majority agreed the victor would never be known with complete certainty.

Before departing Texas, Bush was quick to name the top of his foreign policy team lineup, adding

Condoleezza Rice as his White House national security adviser, the first woman to hold the post.

Rice, 46, joined former chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, retired Gen. Colin Powell, who Bush has nominated for secretary of state. Powell and Rice will be the first Blacks to serve in their respective posts.

Bush also chose a Hispanic, Texas Supreme Court Justice Al Gonzales, as White House communications director Karen Hughes, as counsellor to the President.

While his message was one of outreach, his emissaries insisted Bush had no intention of abandoning the conservative policy agenda outlined on the campaign trail, including, first and foremost, the hotly debated \$1.3 trillion, 10-year tax cut. Democrats say the proposal favours the wealthy and some Republicans say it piecemeal tax cuts may be better.

more noteworthy following Bush's razor-thin victory by just one more than the 270 Electoral College votes he needed to clinch the presidency.

The Bush camp was confident the states would be pledged as promised. Asked yesterday how he felt returning to Washington for the first time as President-

Clinton tomorrow before returning home to Austin, Texas.

While Bush was meeting, electors across the United States today were to carry out the traditional formality of meeting and officially casting ballots in the Electoral College. These are usually pro forma sessions in state capitals, but this year the gatherings were

THE TELEGRAPH

19 DEC 2000

The Florida fiasco only confirmed a long-standing alienation of US voters from their polity

Barren politics, pregnant chads

BY PRAMIT PAL CHAUDHURI

IF THIS year's United States presidential election had been a movie, critics would have derided it as a plot too far. In the end, it came down to a fistful of votes and one judge. And if it was beyond Hollywood, it is safe to say it was not the stuff of wholesome, home-baked democracy.

Whatever George W. Bush's eventual record, the real legacy of the millennium's last election will be to pour acid on an already corroded public faith in US politics. An American political scientist, Theodore Lowi, wrote gloomily of US democracy: "Presidents need a party and have none. Voters need choices and continuity and rarely have either. Congress needs cohesion and has little." Or to quote a bumper sticker to be found on American highways: "If god had wanted us to vote, he would have given us candidates."

Black Americans are the angriest. Their candidate won the popular vote. The bulk of the disputed ballots were cast by blacks. In their vocabulary "disenfranchisement" has come to mean a general political marginalisation. But their complaints are just an extreme form of what American voters, of all hues and classes, feel about the political process.

Voter turnout this year was two percentage points more than 1996's 49 per cent. But the long-term electoral trend is to still stay at home. Some argue the jump in turnout is because of record levels of immigration to the US. Newly minted citizens are enthusiastic voters. A better yardstick is a Pew Research Centre voter poll. This showed the numbers of voters expressing interest in election 2000 dropping to 38 per cent. In 1992, the figure was 55 per cent.

What ails the Land of the Free? Too many Americans believe their political system denies them choice. The candidate roster bursts with mediocrity. So no one votes. This perception is not unjustified.

First, there is the incredible skill with which interest groups are able to mould and shape US domestic political agenda. Particularly distressing for the average American is the way such interests play

politics outside the democratic process.

Well-known pundits like Kevin Phillips argue that three groups set Washington's political agenda: lawyers, journalists and politicians. Between 1950 and 1994, membership at the US capital's bar rose from 1,000 to 61,000. Journalists have shot up from 1,500 to 12,000. Lobbyists have gone from near zero to 91,000. Only politicians' numbers remain static. And these constitutionally elected representatives of the people are the weakest players in the whole game.

Interest groups have made a science of opinion manipulation. In the 1996 elections, a third of all political ad spend, about \$ 150 million, was done by 30 interest groups. To non-Americans, the results can be surreal. The world's sole superpower seems perpetually obsessed with issues like licensing Magnums or letting schoolchildren say the Lord's Prayer. All this reflects the power of lobby groups who can throw organisation, money and a few committed people behind a single issue — no matter how trivial.

The lawyers enter the fray because another way to set Washington's political agenda is the courts. This is the forte of liberal Democrats. Activists made welfare payments an entitlement in the Sixties by using the judiciary to sidestep public opinion. When the civil rights movement shifted from fighting discrimination to reserving jobs for minorities it lost public support. So it used the courts instead. The Democrats earned a mass base through the welfare state's expansion, a base that crumbled only when the Republicans discovered the populist tax cut.

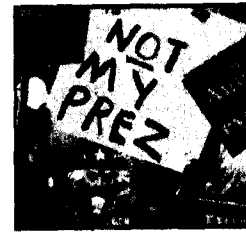
It will surprise many to know that the single largest financial contributor to the Democrats are law firms. Ally McBeal's cohorts donated \$ 11.7

million to Al Gore during the 1999-2000 election cycle. Silicon Valley gave only \$ 5 million.

Which brings us to candidate selection. US presidential candidates are chosen through a drawn-out process of state primary elections. Hence the brouhaha about Iowa and New Hampshire voters every four years. Since primaries are normally meant only for registered party voters, interest groups work hard to get their own on the ballot and in the booth. Barely a fifth of US voters participate in primaries. Almost by definition those who participate are ideologues. Yet they choose the candidates. As Bruce Adams, head of a group of Washington lobbies, said during election 2000, "More and more, politics is about... taking extreme positions that will get those folks out on the fringes activated enough to come out."

A further constraint on choice is that fighting 50 primaries also means money, lots of it. By one estimate, an Oval Office aspirant has to raise about \$ 50,000 a day for an entire year just to be a contender in the primary race. This means cozying up even closer to interest groups. Analysts say just 100,000 signatures adorn the cheques that provide nearly all the campaign funds for each election. Each step of the US presidential electoral process condenses, filters and concentrates democratic choice by a remarkable degree.

What gets left out is the broad political centre. Discount the half of the electorate who don't vote at all. About 40 per cent of all US voters refuse a party label and register as independents. But they cannot vote in primaries so have no say in choosing candidates. Yet no presidential wannabe can win without wooing the centre vote. This is why all US candidates begin their campaigns as Leftwing or Rightwing extremists — Bush went to a fundamentalist Christian college, Gore raved against the rich



— and end by preaching the Middle Path.

Nine years ago, the Kettering Foundation did a comprehensive analysis of US attitudes towards politics. Their conclusion: "Many Americans do not believe they are living in a democracy... They point their fingers at politicians, at power lobbyists and... at people in the media. They see these three groups as a political class, the rulers of an oligarchy that has replaced democracy."

The US nation may believe it's been robbed, but it's not about to take to the barricades. The country's sheer prosperity, the severe limits of the Oval Office's authority in economic and social fields, the charisma of the likes of a Bill Clinton or a Ronald Reagan, has led Americans to resign from politics rather than become radicalised.

Reformers are hard at work. Bush's Republican rival, John McCain, is demanding that the President do something about campaign finance reform. US voters are also turning to direct popular referendums, bypassing institutional politics altogether. Then there is the demand for term limits, an undemocratic act but one which forces the polity to change faces. Phillips has proposed that the US capital be rotated among different cities. But as a Pew Centre poll analyst argued, "There is a great deal of contentment with the times. And there's not a great appetite for change."

Bush's aides have so far talked only of reforming the election administration — uniform ballots and voting machines and the like. Turning an electoral system upside-down is not easy, especially when political power is so evenly divided between parties. Public cries to do something, anything, about the system have increased. Unfortunately, a disproportionate number come from the Reverend Jesse Jackson. Some analysts have given up.

Two-party democracy is an obsolete leftover of the industrial revolution, they argue. In a curious way, the Florida cliff-hanger has brought home to many Americans that their individual votes do count in the end — but only if they make sure the chads fall off the ballot.

Team Bush-II

The nominations of General Colin Powell as the US secretary of state and Professor Condeleezza Rice as the national security adviser were long anticipated. By nominating two blacks as the secretary of state and national security adviser, the latter the first woman to hold that post, president-elect George Bush is sending out a powerful message to the American public and the world. Mr Powell and Ms Rice had a major role in formulating the Republican party platform on US national security and foreign policy, and they, along with the yet to be nominated defence secretary and vice-president-elect Dick Cheney — who was US defence secretary during the Gulf war — are expected to form a cohesive team which would direct the US foreign and security policies. That all of them worked as colleagues in the administration of President Bush Sr appears to have influenced their current appointments, especially given that the president-elect has far less knowledge and interest in foreign policy and international security than his father. Bush Sr was in turn ambassador to the UN, director of CIA, ambassador to China and a vice-president actively involved in foreign and security policies. Now that we have some idea of the new team, it is imperative that we make a preliminary assessment of Washington's likely policies. The pronouncements of leading actors about to enter office and the Republican party platform suggest that the Bush administration would not be as much a prisoner of arms control theologians as its predecessor was, though some recent pronouncements of Ms Rice give cause for reservations as to how far the new administration will actually move away from the dogmas on non-proliferation.

The Republican party's passionate advocacy of the national missile defence, which implies that the US does not have great faith in the efficacy of the NPT and the CTBT to stop further proliferation, is well known. While the Republicans are more worried about Islamic terrorism they are also perceived to be in favour of better military-military relationship in respect of Pakistan. Again, while politically they have a more strident stand vis-a-vis China and view it as a strategic competitor rather than as a partner, the wider nexus between big business and the Republican party would generate its own pressures on the US's China policy. They are also viewed as favouring oil interests and higher oil prices and the Gulf war was about oil. However, a word of caution is in order. The evolution of the policies of the new Bush administration will have to be watched for some time before concluding that they would be on the lines already articulated by the nominated team members. One has to only compare the policies and perceptions of the earlier Clinton administration with the outgoing one to understand that US policies undergo radical transformation on the basis of freshly evolved assessments. President Clinton charged his predecessor with being soft on China but became the architect of permanent normal trade relations with that country. Assessing the new US policies is the most important task for our strategic establishment and one hopes unlike on earlier occasions, adequate effort will be devoted to the task and to establish a wide range of interactive linkages with its principal formulators.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

20 DEC 2000

Bush meets Clinton, Gore to put the past behind UN places fresh curbs on Taliban

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, December 20

HOW BAD can I be? I've been Governor of Texas. My daddy was President. I own a baseball team..." That was Bill Clinton's derisive description of George W. Bush's credentials for Presidency at the height of an acrimonious campaign. And Bush had retorted with a vow to restore "honour and dignity" to a tainted White House.

All that harsh rhetoric was forgotten on Tuesday as the President and the President-elect opted to be sweet and honey to each other as they sat together for a two-hour session to discuss affairs of state ahead of the transition.

Bush, at his deferential best, announced that he was there "humbled and honoured" to meet Clinton and benefit from his counsel. And Clinton, who had collected the baton from Bush's father eight years ago, was ready to hand it to the son. His only advice was: "Get a good team and do what you think is right."

The photo-op of the day, however, was to be provided by another meeting a little later in the day. That was when Al Gore came out of his Vice-Presidential mansion and received Bush with a gentle handshake and a warm pat on the back. There was no trace (or, so it seemed) of the slanging match that the nation had been treated to until a few days ago.

The Bush-Gore meeting may have lasted barely 20 minutes, but it was cordial enough, as spokesmen of both sides put it. "This is a



Vice-President Al Gore (R) shakes hands with President-elect George W. Bush at Gore's house as the snow begins to fall in Washington on Tuesday. Photo: AFP

country where we put aside our differences after a long and difficult campaign and join together in support of the person who will be

the next President," an aide quoted the Vice-President as saying.

But outside, braving the season's first

to indict Clinton in connection with the Monica Lewinsky scandal would be taken after he demitted office.

snowfall, a defiant Gore sympathiser carried a sign: 'Hail to the thief'. The reference was to Bush's "stealing" of the election with the "help" of the conservative-dominated US Supreme Court after a protracted legal battle.

At the White House, the Bush-Clinton interaction was mostly on foreign policy matters. Clinton dwelt on his initiatives in the Middle East and North Korea, which he might visit before laying down office. That, however, would be subject to Pyongyang agreeing to a missile control plan.

The outgoing President disagreed with the Bush camp's talk of the US economy heading into recession. "Well, a recession is two quarters in a row of negative growth. I don't think we're going to have that," he said. Briefing newsmen later, White House spokesman Jake Siewert said the meeting was "very much focused on policy and not on the past". The comment was in reply to queries if either side broached the issue of White House scandals.

The queries came in the context of reports that Clinton would not seek a pardon from the new President. Independent Counsel Robert Ray, it may be recalled, had some time ago stated that the issue whether or not

United Nations, December 20

THE SECURITY Council voted Tuesday to impose broad sanctions on Afghanistan's Taliban rulers unless they close "terrorist" training camps and surrender US embassy bombing suspect Osama bin Laden.

The resolution, sponsored by the US and Russia in a rare show of cooperation, won approval despite opposition from UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan and aid groups. China and Malaysia abstained, expressing concern that the new measures would only further harm the Afghan people, already suffering from a 20-year war, poverty and drought.

The former rivals over Afghanistan lobbied the 13 other Security Council members hard to adopt the resolution, arguing that the country was a "haven of lawlessness" whose hard-line Islamic rulers protect terrorists at home

and support terrorism abroad.

"The Taliban leadership harbours the world's most wanted terrorist: Osama bin Laden," said deputy US ambassador Nancy Soderberg, stressing that the Saudi exile is but one of many terrorists in the country. "Let no one misunderstand: They remain a continuing threat to us all."

The curbs call for an arms embargo on the Taliban, including military assistance given by Pakistan. The sanctions limit travel by the militia's senior leaders and impose a broader flight ban than the one imposed last year to force bin Laden's surrender.

The measures require all Taliban offices overseas to be closed and, in a bid to deprive the Taliban of revenue from illicit opium production, call for a ban on exports to Taliban areas of acetic anhydride, used to manufacture heroin.

The sanctions will go into effect in 30 days if Taliban authorities fail

to close Afghan "terrorist" camps and deliver bin Laden to the US or another country for trial in the 1998 bombing of the US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania.

On Wednesday the Taliban's Information Minister Qadratullah Jamal said the new sanctions won't result in the extradition of bin Laden. "Our position on Osama is unchanged. There is no evidence against Osama," he said. "The US and Russia are using the excuse of Osama and terrorism but really is the Islamic system of the Taliban they want to destroy."

Taliban leaders also have said the camps are used to train Chechen rebels, who are fighting for freedom from Russia. Earlier said they would ban new UN-mediated peace talks if new curbs are imposed. "For years, Afghanistan has been burning in the fires of war," Taliban deputy commerce minister Fai said Tuesday in Kabul. (D)

BLACK VOTERS DON'T FEEL COUNTED

By WILLIAM FRANKEL in WASHINGTON

IN their speeches which ended the acrimonious presidential election, both President-elect George W Bush and his unsuccessful opponent Vice-President Al Gore outbid each other in conciliatory tone. "I know America wants reconciliation and unity...we must seize this moment and deliver" said Mr Bush and continued, "Together, guided by a spirit of common sense, common courtesy and common goals, we can inspire and unite the American citizens."

Mr Bush's speech had been preceded by a televised address by Mr Gore conceding victory to his rival, praising him and pledging his co-operation. "This is America", he proclaimed, "Just as we fight hard when the stakes are high, we close ranks and come together when the contest is done." That may be the view of most of the population, but there is one group of Americans which is not yet ready to give up its fight against discrimination though the presidential contest has ended.

Black voters, 90 per cent of whom had voted for Mr Gore, are convinced that thousands of their votes were, in a variety of ways, not counted. This is all the more galling to them because their leading organisation, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), had made extra strenuous efforts to bring out the black voters. It had been strikingly successful in the state of Florida (whose vote became crucial) where the black turnout at the polls rose from 10 per cent of the total in 1996 to 15 per cent this year.

According to the exit polls, African Americans in Florida voted overwhelmingly for Gore, 93 per cent of them. They were therefore all the more outraged to be, as they saw it, cheated out of their hard won franchise and convinced that, on a fair count, their votes would have taken their candidate to the White House. One of the most common complaints was that their completed ballots were invalidated because of the malfunctioning of outdated voting machines. These machines had been upgraded in some polling station which, however, tended to be in the more affluent districts leaving the poor black areas with the antiquated and faulty gadgets.

DISCRIMINATION

Voting generally in the United States is not all that simple. Ballot papers differ in format from county to county and they all contain numerous names up for election both for federal and state elective offices. The names do not invariably and clearly line up with the spot that has to be punctured by the machine, nor do all machines always make a clean hole. Many poorly educated black voters were be-mused both by the process and the machines and were not helped by polling station staff.

In some places, police check points near polling stations in black areas discouraged voters from proceeding further and

even some who overcame this inhibition found that their names had been wrongly omitted from the list of eligible voters. It was a painful reminder of the situation before the Voting Rights Act 1965, a part of the momentous civil rights legislation of that year, which outlawed literacy tests and other devices intended to prevent blacks from voting.

Some of these allegations will, in time, be investigated. So far only one such investigation has taken place. A study by two academics at the University of Miami, the result of which has just been published, showed that black voters in Florida were fifteen times more likely to have their votes discarded than whites.

CONCILIATION

The black political leadership has made it clear that, despite President-elect Bush's promises, this is one issue which will not be dropped in the interests of conciliation. Last week, the Rev. Jesse Jackson, probably the most influential of black leaders, led a demonstration in Tallahassee, Florida's capital, protesting the Supreme Court decision which decided the election in favour of Governor Bush without permitting a recount of the votes. Mr Jackson is still unwilling to accept that Mr Bush is the legitimate President, he will only go so far as to regard him as the "legal" holder of that office.

For his part, Mr Bush has declared his intention to reach out to the black community and early this week appointed two African Americans to major posts in his administration. Miss Condoleezza Rice, a former Provost of Stanford University and a Soviet expert was named by the President-elect as his National Security Adviser. Probably the most popular black American who could himself have been a presidential candidate, General Colin Powell, was named Secretary of State. It was significant that, of the first five senior appointments announced by Mr Bush, two are women, two black and one hispanic.

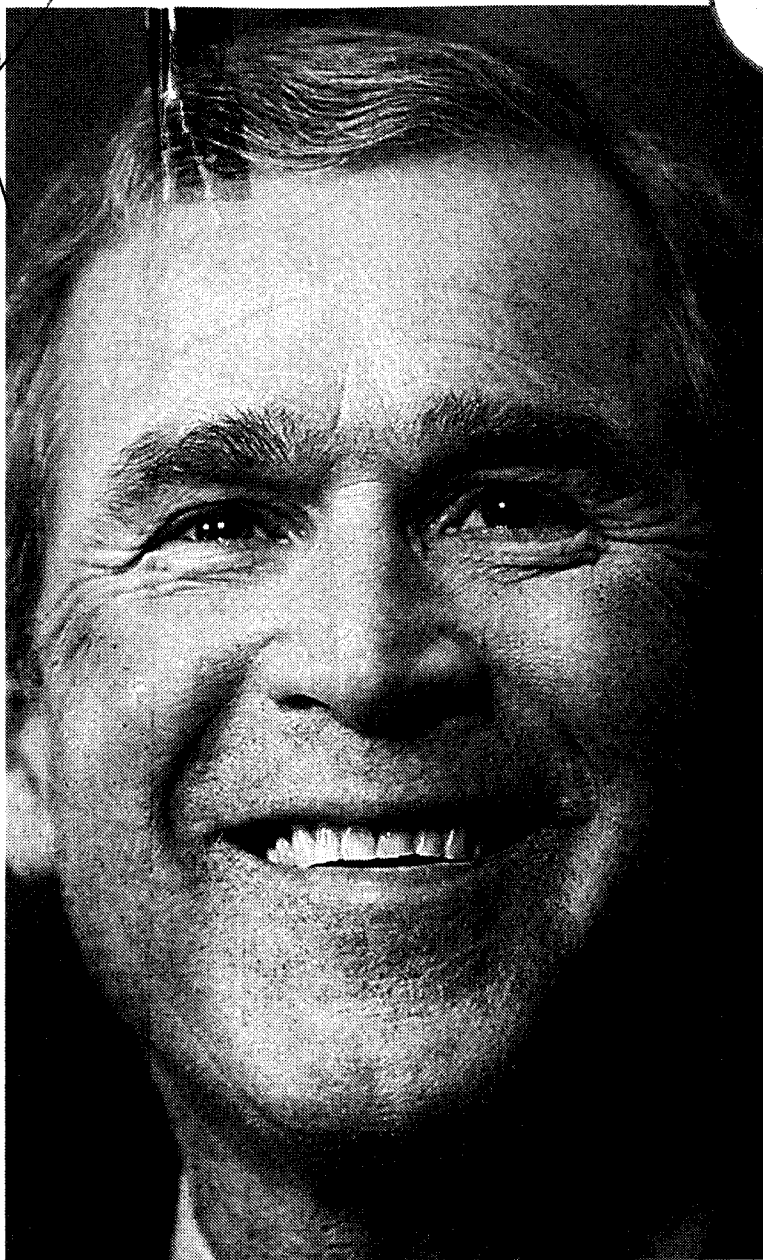
But these appointments alone are unlikely to placate the black community or diminish their allegiance to the Democratic Party; one of their spokesman dismissed the nominations simply as 'window dressing'. And they are further alarmed by the record of Vice-President-elect Richard Cheney, a hard line conservative who is not regarded by them as a friend and is likely to exercise the strongest influence over the new president.

Last week, in a further move to allay black concerns, Governor Jeb Bush of Florida announced the formation of a bipartisan task force to investigate the operation of the electoral system in his state. Since the complaints are nationwide, the black community is also looking to the Governor's brother, the occupant-to-be of the White House, to take similar federal action. That could well be President George W Bush's first stop on the road to conciliation.

Europe warily awaits a Bush Presidency

FID-20
29/12

What they said to Bush



We look forward to working with you to develop further the Euro-Atlantic relationship and the promotion of our common interests across the globe. The relationship between the U.S. and Europe has never been more important.

— Romano Prodi
President of the European Commission

Today, as in the aftermath of World War II, the world needs an America that exercises the global responsibilities incumbent upon it. It needs an America that is not tempted to turn its back upon the world or be seduced by unilateralism and that plays its full role in the main international organisations, from the United Nations to the WTO.

— Jacques Chirac
French President

I know that together we will strengthen still further the special relationship between Britain and the U.S. I very much look forward to working with you as partners for securing prosperity and freedom throughout the world.

— Tony Blair
British Prime Minister

Graphics by Varghese Kallada

through. Similar fears have been expressed in Britain and the Foreign Office Minister, Mr. Peter Hain, ruffled quite a few feathers in Whitehall when he sent a note to the Foreign Secretary, Mr. Robin Cook, warning against British support to the project.

For Britain, the change of guard in Washington marks the end of a special relationship which saw Mr. Bill Clinton and Mr. Tony Blair promote a new brand of politics — the Third Way as they called it — and which pitched Britain right in the heart of the American perspective on Europe. For all the derisory comment that Britain attracted in the process — and it is not amusing to be constantly called an American “satellite” — there is no denying the visibility that it acquired during the Clinton regime and it came to be looked upon by

A Republican White House is seen essentially as bad news... But there may not be drastic changes in U.S. foreign policy as Mr. George Bush lacks “moral legitimacy”.

A view from Europe on the change of guard in Washington by HASAN SUROOR and VAIJU NARAVANE.

France and Germany as a “bridge” to Washington. The importance of being Mr. Clinton’s friend was not lost on anyone.

In a sense, a Republican White House is a “double whammy” for Britain, as Americans would call it. For Downing Street has not only lost a powerful political ally it is not left even with the second best option — at least a Democratic regime which would have represented some sort of a continuity with the Clinton days.

Still, in certain circles both in Europe and Britain the installation of a Republican President, especially one weakened by a razor-thin majority and undermined by the lybranthine legal process that preceded, is not perceived as an unmitigated disaster. The French writer and commentator, Mr. Eric Dupin, says that the situation is not altogether negative. “We all know that the White House is not the sole

ruling body in the U.S. On the issues of utmost importance to Europe, such as trade disputes and defence, the U.S. Congress plays a dominant role. On the question of the Strategic Defence Initiative too, Bush has very little room to manoeuvre, since he will not be able to undo everything that has already been done.” “That said”, continues Mr. Dupin, “the new Republican administration can make things disagreeable for the Europeans especially if it insists on retaining political leadership even over operations in which they do not wish to participate.” He is obviously referring to the U.S. opposition to the European rapid reaction force.

In Britain too there is a view — and not necessarily restricted to pro-Republican circles — that there has been a hint of Bush-phobia in the Labour Party and liberal circles which may turn out to be unwarranted. Of course, it is going to be nothing like the good old days no matter how pleasantly different Mr. Bush turns out to be from the way he is perceived now.

But then commentators wonder if it can be said with certainty that it would have been business as usual with Mr. Al Gore considering that he took such pains to distance himself from Mr. Clinton that he ended up harming his own prospects. Yes, a Democratic White House would have been a lot easier to get along with simply because it was familiar territory but how far Mr. Gore would have gone down the same road as his predecessor remains a matter of speculation.

For instance, it is highly unlikely that Mr. Gore would have demonstrated the same enthusiasm for Northern Ireland as Mr. Clinton did. Similarly, on the Third Way politics, Mr. Gore’s views are not fully known and given his dislike for being seen as a Clinton clone he may well have chosen another “way”.

Analysts argue that fears of a radical change in American policies are exaggerated not because Mr. Bush and his advisers would not like to change things around but because they lack the moral mandate to do it in view of the circumstances of Mr. Bush’s election. He knows that the vast majority of Americans did not vote for him and for his agenda. As Mr. William Rees-Mogg pointed out in *The Times*: “The American people... did not vote for a sharp change of direction, either in a conservative or a liberal direction. George W. Bush

would not have a national mandate for a shift of policy away from centrism.” Mr. Rees-Mogg is not a flag-waving liberal — if anything he is closer to the right rather than the left of the centre — and for someone like him to question Mr. Bush’s legitimacy as a policy-maker underlines the constraints that the new President is likely to face.

The argument that Mr. Bush lacks the “moral legitimacy” to turn the White House upside down cuts across the British intellectual spectrum, if the opinions reflected in the newspapers are any indication. *The Guardian* and *The Independent* on the one side, and *The Times* on the other share the view that reports of the imminent death of Mr. Clinton’s legacy are exaggerated. The difference of

course is that having said this the liberals still project Mr. Bush as bad news. Broadly the fear is that American foreign policy would become isolationist under Mr. Bush, and not be compatible with Mr. Blair’s — and indeed Europe’s — more internationalist approach to world affairs. An insular America, putting its own national interest above everything else is at odds with Britain’s perception of what a progressive and humane foreign policy should be. Mr. Blair would miss the international peacekeeping missions which he and Mr. Clinton conducted around the world.

At the same time, it seems that an America “in retreat” would not countenance any challenge to its own interests and the first reaction to the European rapid reaction force

has confirmed Whitehall’s fears about the shape of things to come. Last week, a top aide of Mr. Bush pointedly asked Britain to clarify whether it was with France which favours a European force quite independent of the NATO or with the U.S. which sees the project as an attempt to undermine the alliance. “We should have to force the stark question: are you with us or with them?”, is how Mr. John Bolton, who is tipped to become the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, put it, according to *The Sunday Times*.

A few more such statements and the Blair Government should have reason to start worrying. Even those who favour a more pragmatic view of the Bush administration acknowledge that the President-elect

would need to restrain his advisers from sounding too gung-ho in order to address London’s apprehensions. The fact though remains that Bush administration would be more tough in its dealings and there would none of the previous regime’s comforting approach which had a lot to do with the personal rapport between Mr. Clinton and Mr. Blair.

In a sense, as *The Guardian* columnist, Mr. Roy Hattersley, points out, the Labour leadership would need to take a “more grown up view of America and its politics” and put behind the “years of girlish infatuation” with Washington.

The question of Mr. Bush’s moral mandate has been raised in media across Europe and opinion polls in France, Italy and Spain suggest that there are deep-seated reservations about the way he won the election; and that colours perceptions of the man himself.

The Danish paper *Politiken* said: “We only know that the voters lost this election. At no point was their will taken seriously enough to play a decisive role in the supreme court’s decision. In his determination to stop any recount, Bush showed that he does not possess the greatness of character needed to wait for the judgement of the people.”

Germany’s powerful *Suddeutsche Zeitung* commented acridly that Mr. Bush became President “thanks to the mercy of a deeply divided supreme court”. “Bush will need a long time to become the President of all Americans. Right now he is the President of lawyers and judges.”

The Italian U.S. specialist, Mr. Stephano Cingolani, said: “We may never know the identity of the real winner of this election. But the identity of the loser is perfectly clear. It is the nation’s confidence in the judge as an impartial guardian of the rule of law...”

The political commentator, Mr. Lucas Delattre, said there were three lessons to be learnt from the U.S. elections. “Lesson one: strong economic performance does not guarantee an electoral victory. Secondly, the Left-Right divide is no longer sharp and an attempt to capture the centre inevitably results in ideological confusion. Thirdly electors want less of the state...”

In Britain, *The Guardian* led an editorial with the heading “In, but illegitimate” and held that the “court is in contempt of the electorate”, while its analyst, Mr. Mark Lawson, commented on the partisan role of Mr. Bush’s brother in “Dubiya’s” victory and said that at “the court of George II” blood seemed to be more important than anything else.

Even as the jury is still out on Mr. Bush’s performance, few have any great expectations from what is already being referred to as the “Cowyboy White House”.

Clinton-Bush row over economy

IAN BRODIE
THE TIMES, LONDON

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23. — The aura of civility between Mr George W Bush and President Clinton was too good to last. By yesterday the departing occupant of the White House and the next tenant were seriously at odds over Mr Bush's talk of a slowdown in the US economy.

A top economic adviser to Mr Clinton accused the President-elect of claiming the economy was weaker than it is simply to bolster his case for a massive tax cut of \$1,300 billion.

Mr Gene Sperling, Mr Clinton's chief economic adviser, gave a warning that "talking down" the economy could create a self-fulfilling prophecy. The next President should not potentially be hurting economic confidence just to gain short-term political positioning, Mr Sperling said. The criticism brought a pained response yesterday from Mr Bush, who said it was foolish to say that

ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION AGENCY CHIEF

AUSTIN, Dec. 23. — Mr George W Bush today named New Jersey Governor, Ms Christine Todd Whitman, head of the Environmental Protection Agency, the most important federal environmental position.

The US President-elect said Ms Whitman will hold Cabinet-level rank in the new administration. "I know Governor Whitman well. She is a strong person...capable of taking on this difficult, but important, assignment...has had a really good record as Governor of that state," Mr Bush said. — AFP

he was trying to talk down the economy. He wanted it to be strong, but there were "clear warning signs" that would require Congressional action, including tax relief.

Aides to Mr Bush insisted that he was not saying anything more than was already on the minds of the private sector, where there have been job layoffs, and of millions of Americans who have seen shares fall in recent weeks.

Friction first surfaced during the somewhat strained courtesies between Mr Bush and Mr Clinton at their Oval Office meeting on Tuesday.

When a reporter asked Mr Bush if he would inherit a recession, he refused to comment. Mr Clinton, eager to protect his legacy, jumped in to say that a recession was unlikely. "A recession is two quarters of negative growth and I don't think we're going to have that," he said.

New figures show that the economy is growing at 2.2 per cent, its slowest pace for four years and well below the 5.6 per cent earlier this year. Mr Larry Summers, treasury secretary, insisted that it was healthy and poised for

moderate growth of about 3 per cent over the next year.

In an emotional ceremony in Austin, Mr Bush resigned as Governor of Texas, his only previous elective office. He said Texas would always be his home. Announcing his latest Cabinet appointment, he said Mr John Ashcroft, who lost his Senate seat in the election, would be his "no-nonsense" attorney-general. But the President-elect was struggling to find a secretary of defence.

Mr Clinton created what may be a minor irritant for Mr Bush by ordering new District of Columbia licence plates for the presidential limousine. They bear the slogan "Taxation without Representation" supporting a campaign for Washington to be upgraded to a state with delegates in Congress who can vote.

Like most Republicans, Mr Bush opposes the idea. He will probably risk upsetting his new neighbours by having the plates removed.

THE STATESMAN

24 DEC 2000

Fresh evidence of voting irregularities found in Florida

WASHINGTON: Continuing news media examination of the presidential election in Florida has turned up new evidence of irregularities in the state which president-elect George W. Bush carried by a final certified margin of 537 votes over vice-president Al Gore.

The *Miami Herald* reported on Sunday that its review of the voting in 138 of Miami-Dade county's 617 precincts had led to the discovery of votes cast by 144 people who were not registered to vote or otherwise ineligible. In one case, a vote was cast in the name of a Haitian-American who has been dead since 1997.



George W. Bush

If such illegal voting took place at the same rate across the entire county as it did in the precincts examined by the newspaper, it would mean that Mr Bush's victory was certified on the basis of a count that included approximately 625 illegal votes.

However, the paper reported no evidence of an organised effort at fraud. It was also not clear if the allegedly illegal voting in Miami-Dade would have altered the outcome in the state. The *Miami Herald* did not say how many of the alleged illegal votes went to Mr Bush and how many to his Democratic opponent.

However, the report succeeded

in showing that the debate over what happened in Florida was unlikely to end soon — and that, with news organisations rummaging through hundreds of thousands of ballots across the state, the questions could continue long after Mr Bush takes the oath of office on January 20.

A leading Democrat on Sunday reacted by musing aloud about what he implied were widespread doubts concerning the legitimacy of Mr Bush's election. "It doesn't mean much in terms of who will be the president," senator Paul Wellstone said on CNN's *Late Edition*. "But it does mean a lot in other ways. I think about what could happen if upon further investigation we find that there really were voting-rights violations that the election could have turned out differently. I don't know for sure. But I think that'll be a real challenge for George W. Bush. I think there will be continuing indignation."



Al Gore

Republican senator Chuck Hagel agreed that Mr Bush could face such "issues", but he quickly added, "I don't think we can unwind all of this and go back and try to replay it all. We've got to move forward. We've got a country to govern and a world to lead." (LA TIMES-WASHINGTON POST)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

26 DEC 2000

No pact with India, Russia against Taliban'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SR-12
29/12
WASHINGTON, Dec. 23. —
The US undersecretary of
state for political affairs, Mr
Thomas Pickering, has said
that Washington does not
have any alliance with New
Delhi and Moscow against the
Taliban.

"Our discussions with India,
as with other governments
have not been about overthrow-
ing the Taliban", Mr Pickering
wrote in the *Washington Post*.

"Rather, they have focused
on those Taliban policies that
threaten our interests and
theirs and the need to find a
peaceful political settlement in
Afghanistan by establishing a
broad-based government".

"We have consistently star-
ted and strongly believe there
can be no military solution in
Afghanistan," he added.

Mr Pickering refuted allega-
tions that USA had discussed
"overthrowing" the Taliban
with the Indian government
and that it had even given the
Russians special equipment to
be used against the Chechens.

"The US has taken the lead
in calling attention to Taliban
support for terrorist organi-
sations... Not because Russ-
ians have told us to do so,"

THE STATESMAN

24 DEC 2000

Clinton meets W Asia leaders

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23.—
The US President, Mr Bill Clinton, met Israeli and Palestinian negotiators here today in a last-ditch bid to forge West Asia peace deal before his term ends next month.

Israeli foreign minister Mr Shlomo Ben Ami and chief Palestinian negotiator Mr Saeb Erakat arrived at the White House shortly before 11 a.m. (16.00 GMT) to update the President on the latest round of talks that began Tuesday at Washington's Bolling Air Force base.

US secretary of state Ms Madeleine Albright and national security advisor Mr Sandy Berger were also to attend the meeting, which was expected to run about one hour.

The Washington Post reported today that Mr Ben Ami had told US Jewish leaders yesterday that Israel was prepared to surrender its sovereignty over the Temple Mount as part of a peace deal with the Palestinians.

The fate of Temple Mount, sacred to both the Jews and the Muslims, has been one of the key sticking points, and disagreement over the issue contributed significantly to the

collapse of a peace summit at Camp David, in the USA in July.

Meanwhile, Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank were burying two more of their dead following a "day of rage" in which four died, bringing the death toll since the latest cycle of violence erupted in September to 355.

In Gaza city The Palestinian leadership has called on the Israeli government to end "aggression" and engage in serious negotiations.

A statement issued after the

Palestinian Cabinet meeting yesterday said: "The Israeli government prides itself on wanting to seek peace through negotiations, but at the same time it pursues its policy of aggression, of closing borders and of collective punishment of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip".
Palestinian talks continue, Palestinian leader Mr Yasser Arafat arrived in Jordan to brief King Abdullah II on the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations underway in Washington and to seek his support.

THE STATESMAN

20 DEC 1995

US Supreme Court moved against ban on Tamil Tigers

P K Balachandran
Colombo, December 25

THE NEW York based non-profit organisation, Centre for Constitutional Rights (CCR), has moved to the US Supreme Court seeking a review of the ban on foreign "terrorist" organisations, including the LTTE, in the United States. The LTTE is banned in the US, Sri Lanka and India.

Among the plaintiffs with the CCR, are five US based Sri Lankan Tamil organisations and one Dr. Jeyalingam, a Jaffna-born Tamil surgeon who is a naturalised US citizen. One of the attorneys appearing for the CCR is Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran, a prominent pro-LTTE activist in the US.

The CCR's appeal is against a decision of the North Circuit Court of Appeal which said that the Anti Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (AEPDA), under which some foreign "terrorist" organisations were banned, did not violate the First and the Fifth Amendments of the US Constitution.

More specifically, the plaintiffs objected to two things: One, dubbing the fund collection for lawful humanitarian activities of the concerned organisations as "criminal", and two, giving the Secretary of State unfettered powers to designate foreign organisations as terrorist organisations.

Judges Kozinsky, D.W.Nelson and Trott of the Court of Appeal had said in their ruling of March 3,

2000 that the Act did not "unconstitutionally" give the Secretary of State unfettered discretion to limit the plaintiffs' right to associate with certain foreign organisations. Judge Kozinsky said that under the First Amendment, "expressive conduct" received significantly less protection than "pure speech".

Tamil attorney Visuvanathan Rudrakumaran said that although the Supreme Court took up only 20% of the cases filed, this particular case had a good chance because it involved an interpretation of the First Amendment. A victory in this case is important for the LTTE because it is in danger of being banned in the UK as well, under a new law in February next year.

Christmas ceasefire: To the great relief of the people of the Tamil North and East, the guns of the Sri Lankan security forces and the LTTE were silent today following the Sri Lankan government's announcement that it was suspending military operations to enable people to celebrate Christmas. The LTTE had already declared a ceasefire on December 21.

It had said that in order to create a conducive atmosphere for peace talks and to enable people to celebrate Christmas, New Year and Pongal, it would suspend all its military operations for a month from December 24.

The Sri Lankan military spokesman, Brig. Sanath Karunaratne, confirmed that the ceasefire was on but made it clear that the security forces would begin operations after Christmas.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

20 DEC 2000

Clinton's West Asia peace plans hit snag

REUTERS
JERUSALEM, DEC 27

82-9

THE future of Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking hung in the balance on Wednesday after the Palestinian leadership expressed strong reservations about proposals raised by US President Bill Clinton.

But efforts were under way to bring Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat together for a summit in Egypt as early as Thursday, officials from both sides said, adding that the two spoke by telephone on Tuesday.

While Clinton's last-ditch initiative to cap his presidency with a showcase peace deal hit a snag, gunshots echoed overnight in the West Bank where Israeli soldiers and Palestinians exchanged fire near the city of Ramallah.

However, no deaths have been reported over the last three days—a rarity in a three-month-old Palestinian uprising in which at least 343 people, mainly Palestinians have been killed. The death toll includes

52 Israelis, 13 of whom were Arabs.

A senior Palestinian official, apparently shrugging off a Wednesday deadline Clinton set for both parties to say yes or no to his compromise ideas, said the Palestinians would send him a non-committal letter instead.

"The Palestinian letter will not include a response in the positive or negative. It includes several reservations about the American ideas," the official, who asked not be identified, told Reuters after Arafat met advisers.

"The Palestinian leadership found after studying these ideas that they were not very different from those presented at Camp David," the official said, referring to a failed US-hosted summit with Israel last July.

Barak called a security cabinet meeting for Wednesday morning to formulate an answer to Clinton's proposals on issues at the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict such as the future of Jerusalem and Jewish settlements.

As the prospect of further

diplomatic deadlock loomed, moves were already under way to seek a solution.

A Palestinian official said Barak telephoned Arafat late on Tuesday and told him he would delay his response to the Clinton blueprint.

"There are efforts to convene a summit in Sharm el-Sheikh in the coming few days between Arafat, Barak and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak," the Palestinian official said, referring to Egypt's Red Sea resort.

An Israeli official confirmed the call and said Barak and Arafat agreed to meet on Thursday at Sharm el-Sheikh, scene of an emergency Middle East summit in October. No official announcement of a summit has been made.

At the summit, Arafat and Barak "would most probably simultaneously announce their response to the American ideas", the Palestinian official said. Barak was due to travel to Sharm el-Sheikh in any case on Thursday to meet Mubarak, Israeli government officials said earlier on Tuesday.

INDIAN EXPRESS

28 DEC 2000

Missile Defence Team

With President-elect George W Bush announcing Donald Rumsfeld as his nominee for the post of defence secretary, the national security team of the new Republican administration has taken formidable shape: Rumsfeld, who was defence secretary 25 years ago in the Ford administration; vice-president Dick Cheney, himself another former defence secretary; secretary of state General Colin Powell, who was formerly chairman, joint chiefs of staff and national security adviser; and national security adviser Condoleezza Rice, who has served as senior staff member of the National Security Council. Each has an outstanding record, but three of them, Mr Cheney, General Powell and Ms Rice, had worked together as a team in the Bush administration in 1988-1992. So how will these heavyweights work together? Unlike in India, where members of such a high-voltage group will inevitably clash, there are no such fears in the US. That apart, what stands out in this exercise is the focus Ms Bush has imparted to national security matters. Indeed, the Bush security team is due to consider a proposal to bring strategic economic planning under the overall purview of the National Security Council. Of course, all these moves are replete with signals. Two years ago, Rumsfeld headed a high-powered committee which concluded that missile and nuclear proliferation is inevitable, possibly leading to countries like North Korea, Iran, Iraq and Libya eventually acquiring nuclear warheads and long-range missiles capable of reaching the United States. The committee, therefore, recommended that the US should develop missile interception capability. This, indeed, is the origin of the now-famous national missile defence programme. The significance of the original author of that recommendation becoming the US defence secretary cannot be overstated.

The Rumsfeld committee implicitly admitted the Chinese proliferation of missile and nuclear technologies to Pakistan when it asserted that 'states of concern' — formerly called 'rogue states' — could develop nuclear weapons and missiles faster than was generally assumed because of help from others. More recently, the Clinton administration actually conceded its seven-year fudge when it admitted the Chinese M-11 transfers to Pakistan. It imposed sanctions on Pakistan and Iran for being recipients of missile technology, but waived them for China, the proliferator. As for the three potential proliferators — North Korea, Iran and Libya — the US concern about them shows that Washington does not expect the Non-proliferation Treaty — of which all three are members — to act as an effective barrier against nuclear acquisition. The sum total of all this is that the CTBT is dead. The GOP's electoral platform has already called it an "anachronistic outcome of an obsolete strategic thinking". It should be recalled that the US consistently opposed a comprehensive test ban till the end of the term of George Bush Sr. The CTBT was a Clinton administration's hobby horse. Now that the Republicans have called a spade a spade, we must take their words seriously instead of dismissing them as rhetoric. New Delhi should have an in-depth assessment of likely US international security policies under the Republican administration so as to develop a flexible Indian response to it.

Defence Decibels

Battles between the air-borne and chair-borne groups in any defence organisation may seem old hat. But in Britain, it has a new lease with the reported eagerness of the ministry of defence (MoD) to introduce new regulations to reduce noise in the workplace. The MoD's annual report suggests that the military should wake up to the danger of "industrial deafness" and enforce new rules to reduce its toll. The British defence minister, John Spellar, conceded in a BBC interview that experts were examining the issue, and added that "industrial deafness is no laughing matter". Reformers often complain that the British army resists attempts to modernise its practices and traditions. One magazine quoted poet W S Gilbert's hilarious doggerel: "I'm very good at integral and differential calculus/ I know scientific names of beings animalculus/ In short, in matters vegetable, animal and mineral/ I'm the very model of a modern Major-General". Noise pollution is an umbrella term and reports suggest that military bands might have to muffle their beat; rifle-ranges reduce their reports and bang-bangs; and, horror of horrors, even the ubiquitous sergeants-major and other non-commissioned army officials tone down and moderate their bawling out commands and lacing them with extravagant obscenities. It was Shakespeare's Othello who declared, "Farewell the neighing steed, and shrill trumpet/ The spirit-spurring drum and ear-piercing Fife/ The royal banner and all the quality/ Pride pomp and circumstance of glorious war!" Nostalgia, as they say, may no longer be what it used to be but the British press, senior army brass and politicians have not taken kindly to the latest bid to quieten army manoeuvres and use a 'silencer' for the entire armed forces. Two respected generals, Gen Charles Guthrie and Major-Gen Julian Thompson, have spoken indignantly about professional "do-gooders" imposing highly damaging (politically correct) agenda of human and civil rights on Britain's under-funded and over-stretched army. The pincer tactic has the defence minister defending the scheme. He said, "Only common-sense suggestions will be acted upon. Impractical ones will not be accepted". Gen Guthrie cautioned against the "undermining of military capability" by imposing well-meaning employment guidelines which might work in civilian life but not in the military. One wonders whether such proposals too will find their way to India alongwith our defence imports.

U.S. issues warning to Pakistan over Red Fort raid

Musharraf govt. told to honour extension of ceasefire

WASHINGTON: The U.S. has taken up with Pakistan the reported threat by the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) against Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and strongly condemned it as well as the terrorist group's attack at the Red Fort in New Delhi.

The White House objected to the fact that the Lashkar had phoned in these threats to the Pakistani media. U.S. officials privately said they had raised their concern about these announcements with Pakistan and had warned Islamabad that it would be held responsible if they were carried out. "We have raised our concerns about this threat with the Pakistani authorities because these threats were made to news organisations in Pakistan," the officials acknowledged.

"We strongly condemn these threats and actions, like the attack at the Red Fort. We think these are completely inconsistent with efforts to find a resolution of the Kashmir dispute and condemn them in the strongest possible terms. In particular, we think that the threat made against Prime Minister Vajpayee is reprehensible," Bruce Riedel, senior director for Near East and South Asia in the National Security Council, told journalists.

Mr Riedel said the U.S. was actively considering designating the Lashkar a foreign terrorist organisation. "Such consideration is under way and the review has not yet been completed," he said.

Naresh Chandra, India's envoy to the U.S., also said that he had drawn the attention of the White House to these threats. He said that he had taken up the issue with the National Security Council because it "needed to be discussed". He noted that the U.S. had "done its bit by strongly condemning the threats".

Explaining the rationale behind bringing up these new developments with the U.S., Mr Chandra said that it "was pursuant to our discussions which have

been going on about international terrorism and cross-border terrorism and it is in that spirit that the matter was taken up for explaining the actions and steps to counter extreme threats of this kind".

He said the fact that the U.S. State Department was actively considering a move to declare the Lashkar-e-Toiba a foreign terrorist organisation was "a separate issue, but of course it keeps coming up that they are an eminently suitable candidate for being listed under U.S. law. But that is a call for the U.S. administration to make".

Mr Chandra said that recent threats "bring out that there is strong justification for taking some expeditious action of that case". (IANS)

Agencies add: The U.S. has urged both India and Pakistan to show military restraint and honour the extension of the PM's ceasefire in Kashmir.

White House press secretary Jake Siewert said President Bill Clinton was not in touch personally with either country, "but we have urged both sides to show restraint in that area, and we have praised the government of India for its move on the ceasefire".

Mr Siewert said, "The U.S. has urged both sides to honour the ceasefire and we think that should be a constructive way of moving forward and renewing dialogue in that region about how to lessen tensions."

Another Pakistan-based militant group on Saturday threatened to carry out suicide attacks in India, following a bomb blast that wrecked its office in this port city. "Indian RAW (Indian intelligence's Research and Analysis Wing), was behind the blast at our office here. We will now target Indian cities," a central leader of the Jash-e-Mohammad group, Mufti Jamil, said.

Jash-e-mohammad was founded by Pakistani Islamic cleric Masood Azhar after his release by India to end the Kandahar hijacking episode last year.

VOICE OF AMERICA

- U.S. officials express concern over Lashkar-e-Toiba's threat to harm Vajpayee
- White House says it will hold Pakistan responsible for any further attacks
- U.S. actively considers putting Lashkar on international terrorist list, say top officials

THE TIMES OF INDIA

31 DEC 2000

Supreme Court agrees to hear Bush plea

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, November 25

REPUBLICAN GEORGE W. Bush has scored a tactical advantage over Democrat Al Gore in the protracted presidential battle with the US Supreme Court agreeing to hear his appeal against the Florida Supreme Court's go-ahead for manual recount of votes in three counties till Sunday evening.

The apex court's intervention, signifying yet another reverse for Gore, threatens to delay resolution of the tangle by at least one more week. For the court has scheduled a hearing only on December 1 even though the Florida authorities will be certifying the post-recount results by tomorrow evening.

It is another matter that a finality was not expected in Florida for some more days as both sides contemplated a challenge in case of a defeat. The Gore camp had planned to use the scrapping of recount in Miami-Dade as the main ground, while the Bush camp intended to base it on the invalidation of several hundred military votes from abroad.

The decision of the US Supreme Court to consider the Bush appeal came as a big surprise to Gore's formidable legal team. His attorneys had contended that elections being a State subject should be settled by State law and courts. The Bush camp had turned it into a larger issue, accusing the Florida Supreme Court of rewriting election laws and usurping executive authority.

The only consolation for the Gore camp was that the apex court refused to consider the related Bush contention that the Florida recounts lacked in standards, thereby violat-

ing the constitutional provision of equal protection to all voters. Conceding this premise could have meant an abrupt end to the recounts, ahead of the Sunday evening deadline.

Despite his slow progress, Gore's hopes rest squarely on the recounts in Broward and Palm Beach counties. As of Friday night, he had brought down Bush's lead from 930 votes to 699. At that point, about 6,000 "dimpled ballots" in Palm Beach and 1,000 in Broward remained to be disposed of in the disputed category.

With time ticking away, it was unclear if the Palm Beach election officials would be able to complete the recount of 300,000 votes and the 6,000 "dimpled ballots" by tomorrow evening.

Florida's Republican Secretary of State Katherine Harris has announced that she would scrupulously adhere to the 5 pm deadline and certify the results soon thereafter.

As of this morning, the Republicans were confident that from now on, it's advantage Bush. The Democrats, however, did not lose their heart.

Gore's lead lawyer, David Boies, was of the firm belief that the US Supreme Court, despite the decision to consider the Bush petition, would not reverse the Florida Supreme Court's order on the recounts.

To ensure that Gore does not benefit from last minute gains in Palm Beach and Broward counties, the Bush camp has filed a petition for reconsideration of the 500-odd invalidated overseas ballots, mainly from US military personnel.

A judge of Leon county is to give his ruling on this matter later today.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

25 NOV 2000

Facing up to the past

OLD ANIMOSITIES may have been eroded, but they continue to linger. Twenty-five years after the war in Vietnam ended, the American President, Mr. Bill Clinton, paid a four-day visit to Washington's Waterloo last week. He found a businesslike Government in Hanoi; eager to get on with the bilateral relationship but firm in its beliefs and convictions that the Vietnamese path was the correct one.

Lectures on human rights and plurality were not well-received. If Mr. Clinton spoke of the need for more freedom at the Vietnamese National University in Hanoi, he got his answer from the powerful general secretary of the Vietnam Communist Party (VCP), Mr. Le Kha Phieu. Just as Mr. Clinton was keen on not angering Americans back home, the leadership in Hanoi was conscious of the fact that the "American war" (as they call it) still continued to enrage many Vietnamese. At a time when 800,000 tonnes of unexploded ordnance and 3.5 million landmines continue to claim between three and five victims every day, the war is far from a memory for the Vietnamese people.

"As I see it, the Clinton visit has ended the cold war between the Americans and the Vietnamese. The relationship now has to grow. We have to await what kind of Government takes power in the United States," a Vietnamese staffer of a foreign-funded NGO told this correspondent. He was convinced that there were many (especially among the older generation) who did not appreciate the Clinton visit. According to him, the only way in which these people could be appeased was through massive monetary help being advanced.

Though Vietnam and the U.S. restored diplomatic relations in July 1995 and a bilateral trade agreement (BTA) was signed earlier this year, the Vietnamese people want more. They do not want an apology; but they think the Americans have an obligation to restore what they destroyed.

In a post-Clinton visit analysis, Mr. A. J. Langguth, a Vietnam analyst wrote in the *International Herald Tribune*: "Last year the U.S. offered Vietnam \$3 million, while continuing to hold Vietnam to the \$145 million debt that the communists inherited when they took over the South. Vietnam prevailed in the war, but it was Vietnam, and not the U.S., that saw its land devastated, and it is the U.S. that has the power now to deal with the lasting damage both to Vietnam and to the relationship of our two countries. The U.S. should give the kind of substantial aid it once gave to Germany and Japan. It is time America forgave the Vietnamese for winning."

This perhaps, the core of what the Vietnamese want. But, equally, the U.S. is loath to admit that its war for "democracy" in Vietnam was wrong. But substantial amounts of economic assistance will be a way of saying it without actually doing so. However, the U.S. is still not convinced that the spraying of millions of litres of Agent Orange (it is called dioxin or herbicide by the Amer-



Mr. Bill Clinton stands next to a statue of Ho Chi Minh in Hanoi... potent symbolism.

icans) did damage to Vietnam and its people.

At a briefing in Hanoi, the U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam, Mr. Pete Patterson, had this to say when asked about the U.S. addressing the consequences of the war: "And my response is... they would like for us to, obviously, take over all their concerns about that. The problem with that is science does not necessarily support a conclusion. And if one was to have concluded already that the herbicide problem is this, this, this, then why would he enter into a joint scien-

tific effort." The Ambassador clearly identified that the Vietnamese want the Americans to "take over" their concerns on addressing the consequences of the war; something which Washington is clearly wary of doing.

In a sense, Vietnam is all about America coming to terms with its world view. Can the only superpower admit that it was wrong about the Vietnam war, a distant war in which at one single time in June 1969, 540,000 U.S. troops were committed to fight?

But the U.S. should still be accountable for its role in mercilessly bombing and attacking Vietnam, killing at least three million Vietnamese citizens in the bargain. And that accountability should begin with America putting its money where its mouth is. Mr. Clinton did not even go as far as to renounce the debt of South Vietnam, a gesture that was expected. Some can have the luxury of forgetting history on the path of arriving at a better future. More important, however, is the need to learn from history and then build the future.

The Vietnamese do not want an apology, but they think the Americans should restore what they destroyed. AMIT BARUAH on the recent Clinton visit to Vietnam.

Lessons from Florida

The US needs to learn a few things from India on how to conduct elections, says Swaminathan S Anklesaria Aiyar

8-8 29/11
Many lessons flow from the deadlocked US presidential election, which is beginning to look like something out of Never-Never Land. One major lesson for the United States of America is that pride goes before a fall. Having lectured other countries for decades on how to conduct democratic elections, US politicians are being lampooned by the media in dozens of countries, including the US itself. The satirical US journal, *The Onion*, carried two rib-tickling lampoons the other day.

One is headlined "Serbia deploys peace-keeping forces in US". It says Serbian President Kostunica has deployed more than 30,000 peace-keeping troops in the US, pledging full support to the troubled American nation as it struggles to establish democracy. "We must do all we can to support free elections in America and allow democracy to gain a foothold there," Kostunica said.

Another satirical item takes off on the fact that Bush as governor of Texas has sanctioned a record number of executions of prisoners on Death Row. The headline: "Bush executes 253 New Mexico Democrats." The story: New Mexico's five electoral votes swung back to George Bush after he executed 253 New Mexico Democrats visiting Texas. With their deaths, the votes of these Al-Gore backing Democrats were declared ineligible, wiping out the Democratic candidate's 252-vote victory margin in the state. "We express great sorrow for the families of the condemned" said Karl Rove, Bush's senior strate-

gist. "We must keep in mind however that these are not innocent people we're talking about here. These individuals were guilty of a variety of crimes ranging from jay-walking to reckless endangerment of pedestrians' lives through the inappropriate use of rollerblades." Bush is quoted as saying "All 253 individuals were found guilty in a court of law. They were given a fair 30-minute trial and handed a punishment commensurate

with their misdeeds. Blatant disregard for the law may be tolerated elsewhere but not in the great state of Texas. Or states close to Texas."

It is a sign of a mature democracy that it is able to laugh at itself. Forget all the sanctimonious statements of politicians saying American citizens are worried by the uncertainty of the election. In truth, Americans love the twists and turns of the presidential race, which has become the most-watched serial on TV these days.

Amidst the welter of accusations, one lesson stands out. Decentralised electoral systems are a recipe for confusion, contradictions, lack of uniform norms, and lack of fairness.

In most countries Gore would be a clear winner, since he has a majority of the popular vote. But the federal constitutional history of the US has created a series of quirks. First,



the President is elected indirectly by an electoral college, and so some states become more important than others. Second, there is no central election authority. Each state has its own electoral laws, rules, and appeal systems. Uniformity does not exist even within states. Counties are authorised to devise their own procedures.

The result is a bewildering diversity of electoral systems that cannot but lead to controversy and outrage in a close election. Within Florida, four different voting systems co-exist in different counties: punched ballots, ballots where you shade in a square box next to each candidate's name, ballots where you tick your preference, and electronic voting machines. Counties are free to decide the design of their ballot papers. This led to the now infamous butterfly pattern in ballots in Palm

Beach county, which misled Al Gore supporters into voting for Pat Buchanan. Decisions on a manual recount were taken county by county, not at the state level. And the standard for deciding whether a ballot was valid (the extent of indentation or separation of a chad) was also left to the discretion of each county. Palm Beach county applied a stricter standard than Broward County, and

Gore believes this cost him victory, and is going to court over it.

Americans are proud of their historical tradition of strong powers for states and counties. But this pride is seriously misplaced in a federal election. Equality before the law is a fundamental democratic principle, and equality is impossible when every county and state can have different electoral procedures and standards. India has very serious problems like booth-capturing and bogus voting. Yet in one respect it is fairer and saner than the US. It has a single, independent Election Commission, dedicated to the proposition that uniformity and equality of electoral procedure is fundamental for fairness. No state government or zilla parishad can devise its own election procedures, ballots, or anything else. The Election Commission lays down uniform norms for the whole country.

In the US, a repoll seems justified in the county with the butterfly ballot, which according to some experts violates state law on ballot design. But a repoll is impossible since election dates are set by Congress. Separately, the Supreme Court of Florida set an arbitrary deadline for hand-counting which proved impossible to achieve in two counties, to Gore's outrage. Here again vital powers were spread over too many authorities. In India the Election Commission decides election dates. It does not set artificial deadlines for counting but continues counting till convinced that the outcome is fair. It orders repolling wherever necessary. Such integrated supervision means that India does not suffer from the US disease of diverse institutions mucking up the uniformity that is essential for fairness.

The US election also shows that the world's technical superpower has the pathetic electoral technology. The punching machines used in Florida were designed a century ago, and suffer from mechanical flaws (some do not punch a clean hole).

The US needs to learn a few things from India. It needs an independent Election Commission integrating all the powers currently spread over diverse authorities. It also needs a modern electronic voting system where voters just press a button, can erase errors and make corrections without having their votes invalidated. Overseas ballots should come in by internet.

Alas, US loyalty to a decentralised system designed for a different century remains so strong that it will probably refuse to change. Such is the power of inertia. India is not alone in being knowledge-proof.

The Economic Time

29 NOV 2000

Deadlock 2000: *The finaaaaaaal... countdown*



*Mr Gore, it
is time you
left the race*

29/11
AA-7

BY BOB DOLE

Washington: Four years ago, I conceded the presidential election as soon as the winner was determined. There was a lot less suspense that year than this time around. But when the outcome was clear, so was my duty.

Vice president Al Gore has waged a strong and determined campaign. But a narrow loss is still a loss — and for him, the moment to concede has come.

It arrived when the Florida secretary of state certified that George W. Bush had carried the state. The margin of victory that was certified is smaller than the electoral college itself, with its 538 electors. But the Constitution does not recognise near-victories. There can be only one winner, and one president.

Governor Bush prevailed in not one but four counts of the votes in Florida: the tally on election night; the automatic recount; the count including absentee and overseas ballots; and now the final, certified total.

The vice president has been given a machine recount required by law, a hand recount in counties of his choosing, a generous extension of time for vote counting from the Florida State Supreme Court, and almost

every advantage that local canvassing boards could offer. The one thing he has not received is enough votes to win.

Now our country must receive something from him. The vice president must have the good grace to accept defeat.

What is the alternative? We've already had glimpses of how a full and formal election contest would look. By Inauguration Day, Jan. 20, the confusion, anger and ill will of these past three weeks would be multiplied beyond anything this country has ever seen.

It would be a courtroom circus on a staggering scale, a televised spectacle of legal ploys and power plays, carried, recapped and argued 24 hours a day.

The "contest" permitted under Florida law is, in fact, a lawsuit — a legal manoeuvre by the vice president to overturn the certified result of Florida's election. There would be a trial with witnesses, examinations and cross-examinations, evidentiary rulings, motions, briefs — and, of course, teams of lawyers. The

It would be a courtroom circus on a staggering scale, a televised spectacle of legal ploys and power plays, carried, recapped and argued 24 hours a day

first election of this new century would become the trial of the century — followed, inevitably, by appeals. Choose this path, and there is no going back.

The outcome of it all? Quite likely, the same result we have today, but with a nation even more divided and confused and embittered. Never in our history has a presidential candidate filed suit to overturn an election he has lost, and for good reason: because the damage done would be far greater than any advantage gained. To their everlasting credit, unsuccessful candidates in all of our closest elections — most recently, Richard Nixon in 1960 and Gerald Ford in 1976 — put the nation's interest ahead of their own.

I knew both these men, and trivia buffs may recall that I was President Ford's running mate in our contest with Jimmy Carter and Walter Mondale. We came just 30 electoral votes short of victory. But when President Ford was urged to contest the result in certain states, he wouldn't hear of it.

I know Al Gore, too, having served in the Senate with him and with his father years before. I well understand what he and his family must be feeling right now: defeat would seem like the end of long-held hopes and ambitions. But I am certain that he is able to rise above partisan anger and personal calculation, and I trust that he will.

It's been reported that on election night, an aide advised the vice president to "never surrender." In the drama of the moment, it was an understandable reaction. Three weeks and four counts later, they have seen it through. Yet what was once daring and defiant is now merely destructive. There is a transition to begin, a new administration to prepare, and to have a president we need a president-elect.

For governor Bush, the reward is a chance to serve his country and four years to build a legacy. For vice president Gore, the chance to serve is now. He can spare our country a terrible ordeal and leave a legacy of honourable concern for the nation's good.

BOB DOLE was the Republican candidate for American president in 1996 and for vice president in 1976

By arrangement with the New York Times

I think, so I am more

BY RICK MORANIS

While we're talking about recounts... I think I may have done better on my SAT's. I also think I won the New Jersey state lottery last week. I think the bank miscalculated the mortgage rate and payment schedule on the co-op loan for my six-room, fourth-floor apartment. I also believe it is actually a nine-room unit on the 12th floor.

I believe God created the world in eight or nine days. I think my cholesterol is lower. I think that my zip code is one digit off and that I deserve more frequent-flier miles. I think I was served only five oysters at the Three Seasons yesterday. I think I overtyped.

I think I may have had fewer moving violations on my newer car, with more cylinders and fewer miles. I think I'm taller. I think I read a lot more and watch much less television I think I have more channels.

I think I may have been a Beatle. I think I have a fever. I think everything I own is still under warranty and all my expiration dates are wrong. I think pi is slightly off. I think I hear everything in Dolby. I think I'm justified in thinking more highly of myself.

I think I bought Yahoo stock much earlier. I think I sold it. I think I birdied the 18th.

I think I overpaid my taxes and underreported my personal expenses and charitable donations. I think the refund is way, way overdue.

I think much more separates the men from the boys. I think men are from Mars and women are from a galaxy far, far away. I think brunettes have just as much fun.

I think, therefore I am more.

*RICK MORANIS is a writer and actor
By arrangement with the New York Times*

✓
THERE was nothing to choose between them, the presidential nonentities; only the shrunken office of president waiting like a garment laid out to be filled with their empty presence.

They have embraced the centre ground, kissed the sacred spot where conflict melts away and all the hopes of the people join together in communal celebrations of wealth.

The only thing that separates them are words, the ghost of abandoned ideologies of social justice, which the Democrats live off, like the dwindling income of an ancient investment eroded by inflation. As for the compassionate conservatism of the Republicans, this is only a euphemism for the passionate conservatism of privilege in places where this is highly concentrated.

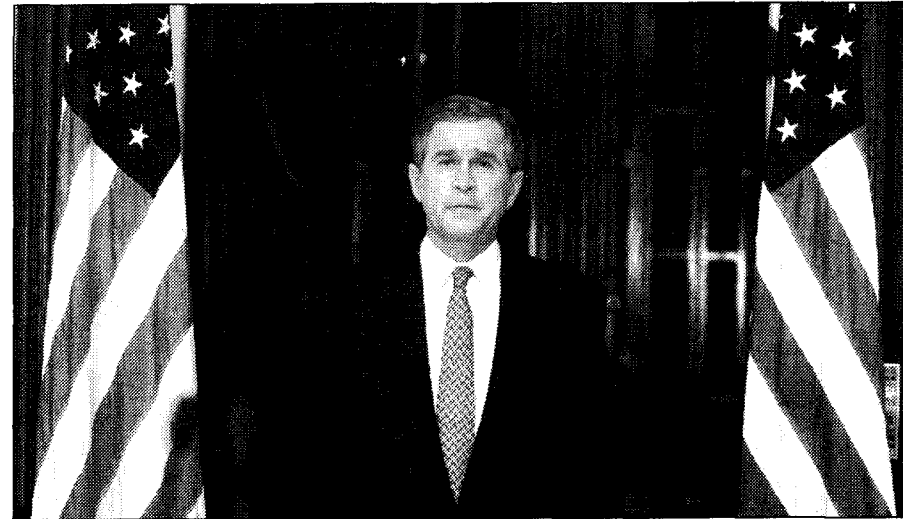
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The faultline does not run between the parties, but between voters and non-voters.

The power of wealth and the wealth of power — these are the determining influences; no wonder that half the people leave their vote uncast. A Republican spokesman proclaimed that this indifference was a consequence of the fact that most people's lives are untouched by Federal government; he took their silence as a sign of their benign acceptance of the choices of others. It could not possibly be that they disdain to express an opinion over quarrels between factions of the rich, in which their participation in the guise of electoral mercenaries is canvassed. When the people become passive spectators of their fate, why should they be expected to intervene? Apathy is rational behaviour in a changeless order.

The greater the wealth, the wider the gap; the wider the gap, the more filled with rancour and dissatisfaction the hearts of the poor; the faster grows crime, organised and spontaneous, in imitation of its corporate and entrepreneurial begetter; the bigger the security gates, the more numerous the guards around property, the louder the guns, the more visible the defences of privilege.

A sullen disengagement only thinly masked by the shrillness of party functionaries and the

That poor wind-blown thing



shrill carnival of majorettes glowing with the hormones fed to the beef on which they have grown. What does it matter, a handful of votes separating victor from vanquished, when the spoils have already been divided, the losers determined in advance, the scenario written, the drama unfolding in its endless epic circularity, a *comedia* with little *arte* and with no comedy at all. The only difference this time was that the warring factions broke the truce that is supposed to be declared as soon as the results are known. It is part of the covenant that they must not let a breath of scandal touch the shrine, in which are interred the remains of the holy mystery of the democratic process.

The will of the people, that poor wind-blown thing, that tender plant over which blow the gales of money power, twisting it this way and that in the resistless wind!

Let it not be said that the electoral process is politicised. You cannot contest it when the people have spoken, even if their voices are those

of the ventriloquists of power.

It is a strange paradox, that it is not the indistinguishability of the candidates that is at issue: only when the mechanisms are shown to be faulty whereby the popular verdict is delivered does an argument about legitimacy break out. Once that happens, it is only a step away from a destructive scrutiny of what happens when the poor, the blacks, the disfranchised do try vote: they are thwarted by accident or design from doing so. It is clear that democracy is a kind of obstacle race for the poor.

Those who have hitherto remained aloof from it have at least salvaged dignity in their poverty. Electoralism, with its hundreds of millions of dollars spent to persuade people to punch a piece of paper, pull a lever or write a cross every four or five years has a similar relationship to democracy as the food industry has to nutrition, as consumerism has to prosperity, as globalisation has to internationalism: — in other words, it is a counterfeit, created by those who

What does it matter, a handful of votes separating victor from vanquished, when the spoils have already been divided, the losers determined in advance, the scenario written, the drama unfolding in its endless epic circularity, a *comedia* with little *arte* and with no comedy at all, says JEREMY SEABROOK

have everything to lose by the real thing, which would produce perennial majorities against them. This has been the nightmare of the powerful ever since the franchise was conceded, first of all to men of property, then to adult males, then to women and finally to all over 18. The spectre that the poor might vote away privilege through an orderly and peaceable exercise of voting rights has led to intimidation, corruption, ingenious forms of buying votes, the piecrust-promises that have become the staple fare of all electioneering, which has itself become the substitute for popular participation in the running of any country.

Once faith is cracked, not only are questions asked about the majesty of the process, but the ossified structure through which it must pass is also open to interrogation. Whoever learned anything in the shadowy academy of an electoral college? And why are these intermediaries required to filter the judgment of the people? Could it be that the sovereignty of the people is

not to be trusted in the home of democracy?

Anatole France, in his novel, *Penguin Island*, described a great nation, whose founder and martyr has lain for centuries in an ornate

tomb. In a desire to honour his memory even more ostentatiously, they disinter his remains; only to find that in the splendour of the monument lie the remains of a dead cat, The dead cat of American electoralism is plain for all to see.

But not of American power. The idealisation of archaic democratic forms is only a decorous vestment, so that our providential might should not be seen as coercion, so that it should not appear that our freedoms have been won at the cost of deeper liberties, that our version of democracy is an edifice constructed on multiple exclusions. We are the template and the model, we are the aspiration and hope; and we have the weaponry to enforce them. This is why governance of the planet requires dignity in defeat and magnanimity in victory — everyone knows the story. Departures from the script are not permitted.

An orderly transition. For the good of the country. Our standing in the world. The political process may not be able to take the strain. The highest office may be tarnished. He holds the whole wide world in his hands. Beneath the patriotism and the pietism, the world has been granted a rare glimpse of another reality: the insatiable greed of privilege, the desperation of the money spent to ensure that millionaires may masquerade as representatives of the people, and that participation mimics the choicelessness of a market that tells its captive people they can have anything they want, as long as it is a commodity.

(The author is a British writer, whose *Cities of the South* was chosen by the *New Internationalist* magazine as top of their list of 1996 best books. He has been described by *The Guardian* as "one of England's most imaginative and creative writers...reminiscent of George Orwell" — this comment was made about his book, *Colonies of the Heart*.)

Bush ready to take over, Gore goes to the people

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 28. Even as the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, is going ahead with the transition process, the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, has asked the American people to stay behind him. The Constitution mattered more than convenience, he said and appealed for patience.

In an address to the nation from his official residence on Monday night, Mr. Gore alleged that all votes in Florida in the U.S. presidential election had not been counted which was why he was seeking legal recourse. "I believe our Constitution matters more than convenience. So, as provided under Florida law, I have decided to contest this inaccurate and incomplete count in order to ensure the greatest possible credibility for the outcome."

"This is America. When votes are cast we count them. We don't arbitrarily set them aside because it's too difficult to count them," the Vice-President said and claimed that the counting in the State was neither fair nor complete. Mr. Bush was certified the winner in the State by a margin of 537 votes.

Mr. Gore also criticised the Republicans for preventing a full recount by resorting to intimidation. "A vote is not just a



piece of paper. A vote is a human voice, a statement of human principle and we must not let those voices be silenced."

Support waning for Gore

A second poll on Monday showed that support for Mr. Gore was slipping. Fiftysix per cent of the respondents in a CNN/USA Today/Gallup Poll said he should concede while 42 per cent approved his handling the situation.

Senior Republicans also criticised Mr. Gore's televised address. "The Vice-President was spinning tonight; it wasn't statesmanship. What is going on... is that their base of support is eroding?" wondered the chairman of

the Republican National Committee, Mr. Jim Nicholson.

Meanwhile, lawyers for the Gore campaign filed papers in court in Tallahassee contesting the outcome of the elections in the State, especially in the three counties of Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Nassau. Besides, the Florida Supreme Court said it would hear briefs on the so-called butterfly ballot where some voters said the confusing ballot led them to vote for the Reform Party's Mr. Patrick Buchanan instead of Mr. Gore.

Bush team unfazed

Unfazed that the General Services Administration has refused to hand over either the keys for a suite of offices or the cheque for \$5.3 millions allotted for transition, the Texas Governor has begun moving more members of his team to Washington D.C. Mr. Bush's running mate, Mr. Richard Cheney, who is already here, said private funds would be sourced to meet the expenditure.

Mr. Bush is likely to name Gen. Colin Powell as his Secretary of State. The Texas Governor received a shot in the arm when the Senate Majority Leader, Mr. Trent Lott, asked all Committee Chairs to begin hearings on January 4, 2001 for Cabinet appointments.

THE HINDU

29 NOV 2001

Gore rating up on eve of debate

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

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BOSTON, OCT. 3. Final touches are being given to the first of the three debates between the presidential candidates that gets under way here tonight. The 90-minute event between the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore Jr, and the Texas Governor, Mr. George W Bush, is being co-hosted by the University of Massachusetts and the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library.

The televised debates that began in 1960 — with breaks in 1964, 1968 and 1972 — between John F. Kennedy and Richard Nixon has averaged a prime time audience of about 65 millions in the last 20 years. With that kind of numbers expected to watch, others in the presidential fray such as Mr. Patrick Buchanan of the Reform Party and Mr. Ralph Nader of the Green Party have lashed out at the Commission on Presidential Debates for leaving them out.

On the eve of the first televised debate, a tracking poll showed Mr. Gore inching back to the first place with a four percentage point lead over Mr. Bush. Last week, polls had shown Mr. Bush catching up with Mr. Gore and even surpassing him. But statistically speaking taking into account the margin of error in the surveys, the race is a dead heat.

Mr. Gore spent his time in Sarasota, Florida, not just with his briefing books and taking part in mock debates featuring the former White House aide, Mr. Paul Begala. Mr. Gore took with him a small group of

"special advisors" that included a retiree from Florida, a steel worker from Pennsylvania, a fire fighter from Georgia, a high school freshman from Illinois, a mother from Oregon and a construction worker from New Mexico.

Mr. Gore is being focussed on issues, primarily on the domestic front that would include the economy, health care and education. The thinking is that the Vice-President will seek to repeat his performance at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles when he went to great lengths to spell out in minute detail policies in a Gore administration.

Analysts and political pundits are making the point that given his background and style of performance in debates, the expectations are higher for Mr. Gore. At the same time, he is being continually cautioned to see that he does not sound condescending or arrogant. The point being emphasised is that Mr. Gore should show his humane side. Mr. Bush may be no great debater but he is not a rookie in the business. One view is that the American people may be impressed by the Texas Governor's less-than-formal style; but at the same time what is being stressed is that Mr. Bush would have to show that he can master issues as well and stay away from verbal gaffes. Says the Republican Governor of Pennsylvania, Mr. Tom Ridge, "If America was going to elect the President of the debate society, we'd go with Al Gore. But we're electing a President of the United States."

THE HINDU

4 OCT 2 000

40-18

GOP launches aggressive campaign

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

NEW YORK, SEPT. 30. Public opinion surveys are only a part of the attention in the presidential elections of November 7. The other side to the ongoing struggle between the candidates is how the strategic planners are using the polls to their advantage. In the case of the Grand Old Party nominee, Mr. George W. Bush, it is pointed out that he is coming out more aggressively than he has been in the last few weeks, a sign of confidence in the context of the so-called trends.

For a campaign and a candidate that have been looking for an "opening" in the aftermath of the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, the latest opinion polls may have handed the Texas Governor just what he has been looking for, even if not in quite concrete terms. Analysts and pundits are saying that Mr. Bush is certainly buoyed with the polls

that show him closing a 17 percentage point deficit — and has taken on Mr. Gore in a more spirited fashion.

As has been the case with many presidential elections, this one is also going to be decided by domestic issues with a little bit of national security issues thrown in, especially as it relates to the readiness of the American military machine and the so-called achievements of the Clinton administration over the last eight years. And domestic issues are going to be defined, for the most part, by social security, medicare, prescription drugs, taxes and education. And to this list could be added guns, violence in movies, campaign finance laws and the general state of society as it pertains to values.

The Bush camp has started attacking Mr. Al Gore and all that he stands for. In the view of the Texas Governor, the Democratic nominee is nothing but a big

spending liberal who can be considered a threat to prosperity. Mr. Bush has argued, for instance, that Mr. Gore is offering at least 200 new or expanded Federal programmes that could cost as much as \$ 2 trillions over the next 10 years, or \$ 20,000 per household.

At a time when much of the focus in the last few years has been on "big government", the Republican nominee is also making the point that Mr. Gore's programmes would also require an additional 20,000 to 30,000 bureaucrats. Mr. Bush is hence saying that the assertion by the President and others that the era of big government is over is not accurate.

Supporters of Mr. Bush, including in the media, argue that there are reasons for his surge in recent days and a lot of this has to do with gaffes by Mr. Gore which have been subsequently passed off as unintended jokes. For instance, GOP backers are saying

that for long the Vice-President had maintained that he did not know that an event he attended at a Buddhist temple in Los Angeles was a fund raiser; subsequently, a White House e-mail turned over to investigators revealed that he did in fact know that it was a fund raiser.

Mr. Bush's supporters argue that Mr. Gore backed away from his original position on using the Strategic Petroleum Reserve to lower domestic oil prices; as also a claim to Union Leaders that his mother used to sing him to sleep with a union song which was not written until he was 27 years. The Vice-President has maintained that he was only joking and not exaggerating, but the Bush camp sees it differently. "We've regained momentum. The afterglow of the Democratic convention is gone and voters were reminded of the Al Gore they thought they knew", remarked a spokeswoman for Mr. Bush.

THE HINDU

1 OCT 2000

A gentlemanly exchange after Gore-Bush faceoff

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, October 6

BY ALL accounts, it was a refreshing contrast to the fire and brimstone that marked the Gore-Bush face-off two days earlier. Their running mates, Joseph Lieberman and Dick Cheney, conducted a dignified, almost gentlemanly, debate on Thursday night, even while standing their respective ground on policy matters.

Ahead of the encounter, there was a general expectation that the Lieberman-Cheney debate at Danville would be more "presidential" than the Gore-Bush one at Boston. And the two seasoned politicians - Senator Lieberman and former Defence Secretary Cheney - did not disappoint anyone.

The stark differences between the Democrats and Republicans on every major issue remained very much in place. But the two vice-presidential candidates, even while holding their own, did not rub one another the wrong way, save for an occasional light-hearted banter.

Although domestic issues held the centre-stage, they dwelt more meaningfully on a couple of foreign policy matters than the presidential candidates themselves. On Yugoslavia, both hailed the expected demise of the Slobodan Milosevic rule. Mr Cheney, however, made it clear that he was against any US military involvement in case things did not go that way.

The Cheney comment came after Mr Lieberman had hailed the leadership role played earlier by the US in an effort to stop Mr Milosevic's "aggression and genocide" in Bosnia and Kosovo. The Republicans

have been expressing themselves against committing American troops in situations that do not impinge on the US's national security.

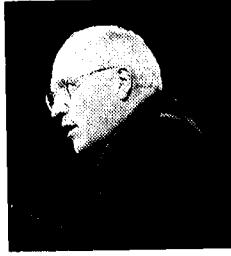
On the prime issues of tax cuts, defence, health care, social security, education and abortion, Mr Lieberman and Mr Cheney stuck to the diametrically opposite views of their respective parties. But, unlike the Gore-Bush exchange, the two vice-presidential candidates said their lines, without unduly offending one another.

The tone for the debate was set by Mr Lieberman by commenting at the outset: "I am going to be positive tonight." Mr Cheney, the suave and soft-spoken

Republican, concurred. "I too want to avoid any personal attacks and I promise, Joe, not to bring up your singing," he remarked. The reference was to his opponent's singing of a song in a TV programme.

Mr Cheney, however, did not miss the opportunity to take a dig at Mr Lieberman for changing his well-known stand on some important issues after Mr Gore picked him up as his running mate. He made a particular reference to Mr Lieberman's liberal stance now vis-a-vis the entertainment industry. The latter, however, insisted that he has not changed a single position, consequent to his nomination.

An area of sharp difference between the two, articulated yet again, was defence. Mr Cheney attacked the Clinton-Gore Administration for the prevailing state of the defence forces, the deterioration in their combat readiness of troops and their long commitments abroad. Mr Lieberman strongly contested it, insisting that American military remains "the best-trained, best-equipped and most powerful force in the world".



Joseph Lieberman and Richard Cheney

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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Americans pick frontrunner by the length of the kiss

Gore pips Bush in pecking order

GA FROM K.P. NAYAR 8/10

Washington, Oct. 5: Ever heard of the peckerometer? As the campaign for electing a new US President enters its final lap with the two main contenders neck and neck, the victor's passage to the White House may be determined by this meter.

A mythical instrument meant to measure the worth, effect and emotion of a kiss, the peckerometer is the product of the fantasy and imagination of a former aide to Michael Dukakis, the failed presidential aspirant put up by the Democrats against Republican George Bush in the 1988 campaign for the White House.

The instrument may be mythical, but the logic behind its use in the current election blitz is one that clearly appeals to American voters.

After having been tied for months in opinion polls, Vice-President Al Gore

raced ahead of his Republican rival in August, immediately after his appearance at the Democratic convention in Los Angeles to accept the party's presidential nomination.

But pollsters and political pundits insisted in the weeks that followed that Gore's surge in opinion polls had nothing to do with his speech at the convention.

They laboured successfully on TV and in the print media to prove that the magic for Gore was worked by the kiss the Vice-President planted on wife Tipper's mouth in full view of the world.

Every single detail of that historic kiss in Los Angeles is now known in most American households. In fact, there are intense debates at family dining tables from coast-to-coast in this country on how long the Vice-President kissed his wife on the party's convention stage.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Kiss & tell winner in US race

FROM PAGE 1 8/10

The range of family disputes in this regard varies from four to seven seconds depending on whether the hug Tipper received from Al is included in the count.

Weeks passed, but Gore stayed ahead of Bush in the opinion polls — until both the candidates separately appeared on Oprah Winfrey's TV chat-show.

Gore appeared first, but what he said made no difference to the opinion polls.

After all Oprah and the vice-president — or for that matter Bush and the show's hostess later — hardly discussed matters of state. They concentrated their talk on their favourite breakfast cereal and the like.

However, after Bush appeared on Oprah's programme, he successfully closed the gap and the two candidates were tied again. Pundits are now saying that a kiss the Republican candidate affectionately planted on Oprah's cheek was what enabled Bush to make up in the opinion polls only weeks before the election.

To be fair to Bush, he did not simply walk up to the hostess and kiss her. Oprah complained when she was hosting the Republican candidate that his rival had failed to kiss her during his appearance. Lest he should lose votes for being unchivalrous, Bush immediately smooched Oprah on the cheek with results that the Texas gover-

nor's aides have been hoping for since the party's convention in Philadelphia in August.

Bush also let it be known during the Oprah show that he was equal to the vice-president. Bush volunteered the information to millions of American voters that he often displayed his feelings for wife Laura with — you guessed it — a kiss!

After eight years of washing Bill Clinton's adulterous gubernatorial and presidential dirty linen in public, it is not surprising American voters are lapping all this up — indeed, deciding the future of the White House on the power of a kiss, if pollsters are to be believed.

But neither Gore nor Bush can be a match for Clinton in this. Presidential watchers recall that just before the Monica Lewinsky scandal broke, Clinton and his wife Hillary were shown dancing on a beach in their swimsuits while on a holiday.

No one has disputed that the photograph was no accident, but a cynical ploy to pre-empt the scandal by showing an affectionate First Couple in love and in harmony — a ploy that failed in retrospect.

The question now, with voting only weeks away, is: will Gore and Bush succeed where Clinton failed? After the first presidential debate this week, Gore has moved ahead of Bush in opinion polls. Bush may stage an upset at the second debate next week by kissing Laura before speaking.

THE TELEGRAPH

6 OCT 2000

A civil exchange ends on a sharp note

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

BOSTON, OCT. 4. Whether it was tax cuts, health care, social security or the environment, the first Presidential debate here was punctuated by philosophy and vigour with both the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore Jr and the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, holding their own for 90 minutes.

A skilled debater and one who has the head for numbers, Mr. Gore seemed to waste no time in going after his opponent — and repeating several times during the course of the debate — that he is not for giving breaks to a small minority of the wealthy. And the Texas Governor, true to where he comes from, labelled it all between who decides and who gets the breaks — the government or the people.

Call it carefully scripted or whatever, Mr. Bush accused his opponent of coming up with "phoney numbers" or "fuzzy Washington Math" when the Vice-President was ripping apart Mr. Bush's tax cuts, who would benefit from the prescription drug plan or where the social security was heading down the road. On one occasion, Mr. Bush took a dig at his opponent in a direct fashion.

"This is the man who has got great numbers. He talks about numbers. I'm beginning to think not only did he invent the Internet, but he invented the calculator. It's fuzzy math," he said when Mr. Gore argued that the wealthiest one per cent get their tax cuts in the first year but that 95 per cent of the seniors would have to wait for five years before they saw a single penny coming their way.

For the most part, the first debate revolved around domestic issues with the Yugoslav President, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, thrown in as a foreign policy question. The response from the candidates came not only by way of what the United States should do with the Yugoslavian strongman — the only agreement the whole night perhaps was that Mr. Milosevic had to go but that American force should not be used — but on the role of Russia, the limits of American power, and the role of the U.S. overseas. And the Iraqi President, Mr. Saddam Hussein, too figured, not by way of Washington's policy towards Baghdad, but on the issue of energy security and policy.

Clearly focussed on his core supporters of environmentalists, Mr. Gore opposed his opponent's

plan to partially open up Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge to oil drilling. "The only way to become less dependent on foreign sources of crude oil is to explore at home... Today we import a million barrels from Saddam Hussein," Mr. Bush retorted.

Dressed in identical dark suits, white shirts and red ties, neither Mr. Gore nor Mr. Bush made any serious mistakes; but the expectations were certainly more on the Vice-President given his skills as a debater as also in the experience of the last seven years. For that matter, Mr. Bush had to rise up in the charts, the first challenge in proving to the American people that he is up to the job as President. Analysts believe that Mr. Bush has more than passed his first test.

Abiding by strict rules, Mr. Gore

seized the first opportunity by saying that the Bush economic plan would mean spending more money on tax cuts for the wealthy one per cent than all of the spending proposed for education, health care, prescription drugs and national defence combined. Mr. Bush countered by saying that Mr. Gore's plan would lead to a "dramatically" bigger government with at least 200 new or expanded programmes and an additional 20,000 bureaucrats on the payrolls.

The two candidates also sparred on the issue of abortion. Using the recent Federal Drug Administration's approval of the abortion bill as a starting point, Mr. Gore went on the offensive saying that he supported a woman's right to choose and that he would appoint justices to the Supreme Court who would not tamper with the 1973 Roe vs Wade case that legalised abortion. Mr. Bush for his part, said that he was pro-life, but discounted the suggestion that he would use this as a litmus test for appointments to the high court.

The exchange, which was quite civil, got somewhat sharp towards the end when the question turned to character. Mr. Bush criticised Mr. Gore on the fund raising scandals and argued that the latter has to take responsibility for what went on in the White House.

Mr. Bush remarked that he believed that the sign "The Buck Stops Here" had moved from the Oval Office to the Lincoln Bedroom and that was not right. To which Mr. Gore's response was, "You may want to focus on scandals; I want to focus on results."

THE HINDU

5 OCT 2000

Gore packs punch, Bush lost on specifics

DESIKAN THIRUNARAYANAPURAM
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Oct. 4 — The Vice President, Mr Al Gore dominated the first of the three presidential debates in Boston yesterday, focussing on his pet issues of medicare, prescription drugs and social security and hammering at Mr George W Bush's tax plan.

Mr Bush, the Republican candidate, remained within the agreed-upon time limit of two minutes for most of his answers unlike his Democratic opponent, Mr Gore. During the debate, Mr Bush sometimes appeared at a loss over specifics and resorted to jabs at

the Clinton-Gore administration's handling of issues.

At times, the Governor seemed too deferential, waiting for moderator Mr Jim Lehrer, news anchor for the public television network, to give him the go-ahead even in the middle of an answer.

Mr Gore, on the other hand, appeared a shade over-confident as he used figures and examples to illustrate specifically his vision for America that included better schools, a tax plan focused on repaying the national debt and building social security.

Mr Bush responded by promising taxpayers a 50 per cent tax cut. When Mr Gore

attacked his plan, he replied, "I'm beginning to think not only did he invent the Internet, but he invented the calculator. It's fuzzy math."

The 90-minute debate, the first of three, was sponsored by the bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates and was held on the campus of the University of Massachusetts-Boston, near the John F Kennedy Presidential Library.

None of the plans that the presidential candidates spoke about in yesterday's debate, however, came as news to the American public. The two kept in line with their own and their parties' stands as they touched issues like the military, foreign

policy, education expenditure, energy, abortion and Supreme Court Justices.

Four of the country's Supreme Court Justices could be appointed by the next President, which makes this election particularly crucial.

Mr Bush said Mr Gore would appoint "activists, liberals" to the country's highest court. Mr Gore responded that Mr Bush would appoint conservative Justices who would overturn the Supreme Court's Roe vs Wade decision that gave women in America the right to choose.

On the controversial abortion pill RU-486 that was recently approved by the Food and Drug

Administration in the country, the two candidates took predictable stands.

Mr Bush spoke about wanting to protect the life of Americans, including "unborn" ones. Mr Gore stressed the need to give women the choice instead of letting laws govern them.

Yesterday's debate was particularly important to the candidates because it was expected to reach 75 million television viewers.

A large section of undecided voters could go either way after listening to the three presidential debates. At present, several polls indicate that the two presidential candidates are in a close race.

THE STATESMAN

10 10 10

Gore and Bush clash over tax cuts, prescription drugs

BOSTON: Vice-President Al Gore and Texas governor George W. Bush clashed over tax cuts, prescription drug assistance and abortion in the first of the three nationally-televised heated debates on Tuesday.

Combative from the outset, Mr Gore charged that his rival's tax plan would "spend more money on tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 per cent than all of the new spending he proposes for education, health care, prescription drugs and national de-

fence all combined."

But Mr Bush, standing a few feet away on a debate stage at the University of Massachusetts, said Mr Gore's economic plan would offer relief only to the middle-class. "Everybody who pays taxes ought to get relief," he said. At the same time, he said, it would produce "dramatically" bigger gov't. with 200 "new or expanded programmes."

"It empowers Washington," added the Republican governor,



Al Gore



George W. Bush

who hastened to tell a nationwide viewing audience he was from West Texas - not the nation's capital. Over and over, he accused Mr Gore of "fuzzy math."

Jim Lehrer, a news anchor was moderator, operating under strict rules negotiated in advance by the Gore and Bush camps. It was, he

said at the outset, the first of three 90-minute debates between the two major party rivals - a format that excluded Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan, running as minor party candidates.

In a reprise of his acceptance speech at this summer's Democratic National Convention, Mr Gore

said it was important to stand up to the special interests, pharmaceutical companies among them. "Big drug companies support governor Bush's prescription drug proposal," he said. "They oppose mine."

Mr Bush made a sour face when he heard that, and in his next breath offered a swift rebuttal. "I've been standing up to big Hollywood and big trial lawyers," he shot back, mentioning two groups that have lavished campaign donations on Gore and Democrats.

The two men argued at length over prescription drugs, a key issue, particularly in the battleground states of West Asia. Mr Bush blamed Washington for failing to pass legislation, and touted his own plan to have states offer benefits. "You've had your chance, Mr. vice-president," the governor said. Mr Gore said that under Mr Bush's plan only low-income seniors would receive immediate help. Everyone else would have to wait up to four years, he said. (AP)

Political pundits give Gore's 'fuzzy math' the edge over Bush's repartee

Debate fails to be pivotal moment of election

FROM ALAN ELSNER

Boston, Oct. 4 (Reuters): Republican George W. Bush accused Democrat Al Gore of using phony figures and fuzzy math during a spirited presidential debate yesterday, but the vice-president kept pouring forth statistics to show that Bush would give billions of dollars to the very richest Americans.

The first of three debates scheduled within the next two weeks had been keenly awaited as a pivotal moment in a presidential campaign that has been neck-and-neck for weeks. Of six political scientists around the country interviewed by Reuters, four gave the edge to Gore. The other two said it was a tie. But none thought it would have a major influence on the race.

For Gore, the debate was a chance to show his mastery of details, without talking down to Bush and the audience. For Bush, the governor of Texas, it was an opportunity to demonstrate he could match Gore's intellectual firepower and have more to offer than a ready smile and easy wit.

Gore quickly jumped on the offensive against the Texas governor when asked during the first

question by the moderator, Jim Lehrer of Public Broadcasting Service, whether he thought Bush was experienced enough to be President. Gore said he had not questioned Bush's experience but his proposals, which he called the wrong priorities.

"I believe it's important to resist the temptation to squander our surplus ... Under Gov. Bush's tax cut proposal, he would spend more money on tax cuts for the wealthiest 1 per cent than all of the new spending that he proposes for education, health care, prescription drugs and national defence, all combined," Gore said.

During the course of the 90 minutes, Gore repeated those numbers half a dozen times. Every time Bush challenged them as "fuzzy math," he went right back to the same mantra.

Bush quickly defended his proposal for a 10-year, \$1.3 trillion tax cut. "Surely we can afford 5 per cent of the \$25 trillion that are coming into the treasury to the hard-working people who pay the bills," he said.

"My opponent thinks the government surplus is the government's money. That's not what I think. I think it's the hard-working people of America's money,"

a much better command of facts. It was clear Bush lacked numerous details." But University of Texas political scientist Bruce Buchanan said Bush had held his own.

"I don't think it changed many minds," he said.

As Gore let loose a torrent of figures, Bush kept hitting back. "Obviously tonight we're going to hear some phony numbers about what I think and what we ought to do," he said. Gore: "The governor used the phrase 'phony numbers,' but if you look at the plan and add the numbers up, these numbers are correct."

Bush: "Look this is the man who's got great numbers. He talks about numbers. I'm beginning to think not only did he invent the Internet, but he invented the calculator. It's fuzzy math," he said, referring to Gore's exaggerated claim several years ago to have helped invent the Internet.

They next moved to the issue of Medicare, the programme which provides health insurance for retirees. Gore said that under Bush they would have to wait for help while the richest Americans enjoyed their tax cuts.

Bush: "I guess my answer to that is, the man's running on

Medicare, trying to frighten people in the voting booth ... You've had your chance, vice-president. You've been there for eight years and nothing has been done."

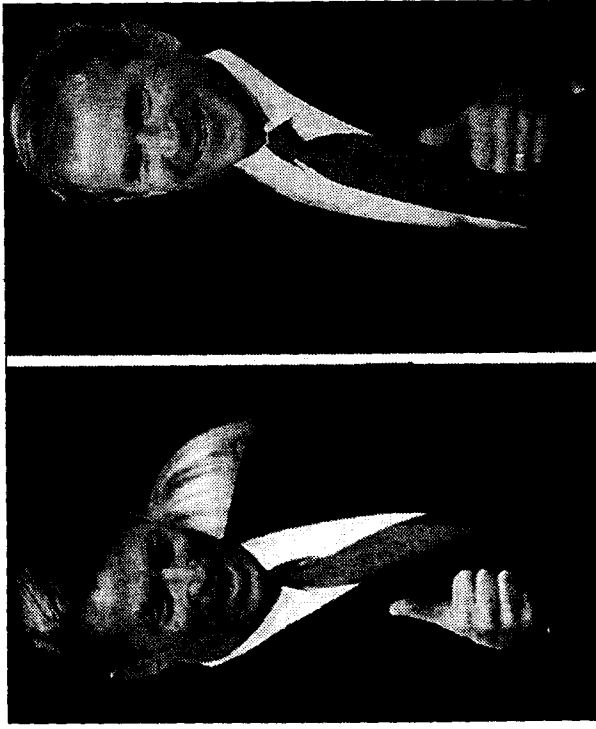
Lehrer tried to sum the topic up. "As a practical matter, both of you want to bring prescription drugs to seniors. Correct?"

Bush: "Correct." Gore: "Correct, but the difference is I want to bring it to 100 per cent, and he brings it only to 5 per cent." Bush: "That's just totally false."

At another point when the two were discussing the US economy, Bush said, "I think the economy has meant more for the Gore and Clinton folks than the Gore and economy."

The vice-president, known for his brutal demolition of past debate opponents, declined to respond to Bush's more personal attacks, sticking doggedly to his script.

"For every new dollar that I propose for spending on health care, Gov. Bush spends \$3 for a tax cut of the wealthiest 1 per cent. For every dollar that I propose to spend on education, he spends \$5 on a tax cut for the wealthiest 1 per cent. Those are very clear differences," Gore said.



Al Gore (left) and George W. Bush during the first presidential debate in Boston on Tuesday. (Reuters)

neck-and-neck White House campaign.

Political scientist Shirley Anne Warshaw of Gettysburg College, an expert on debates, said Bush had failed to show a sufficient command of details. "That was his great weakness. Gore had

Gore moves U.S. Supreme Court to stop legislature 'meddling'

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 30. Lawyers for the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, have moved the U.S. Supreme Court seeking to stop the Florida legislature from appointing its own slate of Presidential electors. The move comes ahead of a decision by a committee of the Republican-controlled legislature to go in for a special session 'as soon as practicable' to consider appointment of 25 electors.

Arguing that Congress has set the election day as the uniform national date for the selection of

electors, the lawyers say it is not self-evident that direct legislative appointment of electors is even available.

In their brief, the Gore team points out that the vote in Florida was "so close under a counting process, so flawed that the State's courts are still attempting to ascertain... what the choice was".

The legal moves aside, politically there is an apprehension in the Democratic quarters that the Republicans will make a pre-emptive strike in case Mr. Gore succeeds in Florida courts. The legislative 'meddling' is seen as

being made on behalf of the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush's brother, Mr. Jeb Bush, who is the Governor of the State.

"The real issue here is the Bush brother's brazen power play designed to circumvent the counting of votes in our court system," said a Gore campaign spokesman.

Meanwhile, a truckload of ballots is being taken with full police escort from Palm Beach to Tallahassee as ordered by a Circuit Court judge. Another truck with ballots from Miami-Dade will go to the State capital tomorrow.

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THE HINDU

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