

US presidential race

for the '51st state'

WHEN historians come to write about this, the first US presidential election of the Internet Age, they may start with the moment during the first Republican debate in December, when Senator Orrin Hatch turned to the Texas Governor, George W Bush, and fired off a criticism never heard in the history of politics: "Yours," Hatch sneered, "is not user-friendly."

He was alluding to the official "Bush for President" web site, and his remark was only one, symbolic, example of the way this election is being fought in, against and over cyberspace.

With 56 per cent of American adults already logged on and the online population rocketing, Net culture is permeating every corner of the electoral process in ways that are admirable, deplorable, unpredictable and likely to change the shape of democracy.

Candidates have raised millions of dollars via the Net; rival campaign web sites are competing with increasing ferocity and ingenuity; e-mail is transforming the way candidates campaign and creating a powerful new lobbying tool in the form of interactive political representation.

Vice-President Al Gore embarrassed himself by claiming to have invented the Internet, but his political instinct was right on the button, for US presidential candidates have always been swift to adopt and adapt new technology for political purposes.

In 1908, William Jennings Bryan astonished voters by using a gramophone as a campaign tool; in 1924 Calvin Coolidge was the first candidate to use the radio; television came into its own politically with the 1960 debate between Richard Nixon and John F Kennedy. Now it is the Net's turn, and every would-be President is scrambling to demonstrate his superior dexterity with a mouse and keyboard.

"Ignore the Internet at your peril, and the peril of your issues," says Pam Fielding of e-Advocates, a new Internet political consultancy.

Voters can sidestep the process of making up their mind by tapping their views into the web site selectsmart; this tells them

^{51st} This year's US election is virtually being fought on the Internet, with more than half the nation logging on to the candidates' competitive web sites. And in some states, for the first time, voting will be online, writes **BEN MACINTYRE**

which candidate most nearly reflects and represents their opinions.

A range of sites is aimed at galvanising interest, on a non-partisan basis, among specific segments of the population: latin-voter.com, shesgotvote.com and so on. Last November, in a taste of future virtual political assemblies, President Clinton offered an electronic version of Roosevelt's fireside chats, hosting 30,000 people in the first presidential town hall meeting in cyberspace.

This is the first election in which voters will be able to vote online. The Democratic primary contest in Arizona on 11 March will be the "first legally binding public election over the Internet." E-voters will be able to sign in with their party to obtain a personalised ID code, a "digital certificate" that can be used to cast a ballot online, from a home computer or at terminals in polling places. (In Texas, citizens can already vote online as long as they are astronauts in outer space.)

A California task force is expected to recommend phasing in e-voting over several years, though advocates may force a state referendum on the issue in November; Florida, Iowa and Washington are moving the same way, and plans are in place to enable about 350 US soldiers stationed abroad to cast their votes online. About 80 per cent of Internet users want to be able to vote online.

"By 2004 it will be a permanent part of the mix," says Phil Noble, president of "Politics Online," an Internet consultancy.

The e-vote is coming and a big debate is under way over its potential effects. Some say online voting will reverse the decline in voter turnout and bring young, technologically adept voters into the process. "It has the potential to broaden our democracy for more Americans to participate," says Jesse Jackson Jr, a Democratic Congressman and son of the civil rights leader who has introduced a Bill calling for a federal study of online voting.

But others fear that if the traditional polling station gives way to a computer ballot, this will marginalise even more the very people already most alienated from the political process — the poor and ill-educated, further turning American politics into a preserve of the more affluent and technically advanced.

Some analysts predict a "digital divide" that could exclude the Internet-ignorant from much of politics. "This question will become as important over the next 20 or 30 years as the literacy question. We'll have a new literacy problem: digital illiteracy," says Robert Arena, the Republican political consultant.

Online ballots are also an invitation to political fraud and com-

puter sabotage.

In one sense, the Net could reduce the power of money in elections by somewhat levelling the playing field between wealthy and impoverished candidates, giving those with limited resources access to a political tool that is cheap, adaptable and effective. Surveys show that campaigns can grab voter attention for an average of 45 seconds in a telephone call, compared with eight minutes on a web site.

Some argue it will enable the people to speak back to political figures and increase their capacity to participate at all levels of government.

But "e-mail democracy" will be only for those with the computers and know-how, perhaps again narrowing political participation to a politically active "techie" elite, albeit a vast one.

The Net is an ideal vehicle for grassroots, chain-reaction political campaigns. But it is also a useful tool for slinging mud.

At the start of this election, George W Bush had been secretly buying up vacant web sites with names such as bushsucks.com and other unflattering titles to prevent his enemies from using them for negative Internet flak.

He became so enraged with one such site, gwbush, which shows digitally enhanced pictures of the candidate with a

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smear of white powder under his nose, that he threatened legal action against the site's author, ensuring a fresh tide of Web surfers.

Attack sites are spreading, and range from the parodic and informative to the libellous and nasty. Hillaryno.com, aimed at undermining the First Lady's Senate campaign, has the tone of her likely opponent, Rudolph Giuliani, New York Mayor. The site Goretopia satirises the Vice-President's ponderous wordiness.

The candidates have responded in various ways to the Internet challenge, but none has been able to ignore it. The Pew Research Centre says 11 million people used the Net to obtain political information at the last election; that figure may be nearer 80 million this time.

In online fund-raising, which required an alteration of the electoral rules to permit credit card donations, the two insurgent candidates, Democrat Bill Bradley and Republican John McCain, are well ahead of the pack. So far McCain has pulled in \$ 500 million in Net contributions, five times the amount collected by Bush, partly thanks to a device that ensures a little box keeps popping up on the screen if you leave the site unattended for any time, like a polite but insistent begging bowl.

Several presidential candidates have used it as a way of showing personal integrity: McCain offers photographs of himself in uniform after his release from a Vietnamese prison camp; Bush has a list of all donors and donations to his campaign as an illustration of financial muscle, openness and the broad base of his support; Orrin Hatch, a Mormon bishop, gives Bible readings and sings hymns. In December, Gore dropped into a Washington cybercafe to fire off an e-mail to an opponent, challenging him on healthcare.

Steve Forbes, as one might expect of a millionaire publisher, is especially proud of his technological grip. His candidacy was announced electronically before it was declared to the rest of the

world.

The latest Net battleground is political advertising. By integrating nationwide voter lists with demographic information that computer users have supplied voluntarily to Internet companies, the candidates can achieve a level of precision targeting of specific voters denied to the more costly TV advertising.

No candidate will ever again be able to proclaim themselves, as Clinton once could, a computer illiterate, for the Net has become the motor for a new form of democracy. It is a powerful weapon and a dangerous liability. The Internet, in short, is the 51st state.

— *The Times, London*

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29/1 U.S. CAUCUSES / THE FIRST TEST IS ON 40:16

Gore, Bush set to win backing

IOWA, JAN. 23. The U.S. Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore is poised to brush aside Mr. Bill Bradley, his Democratic rival for the presidency, and sweep to victory in the Iowa caucuses on Monday, the first real test in this year's race for the White House.

Mr. Gore has opened up a lead of more than 10 points over the former New Jersey senator and basketball star, all but guaranteeing a win.

Defeat by such a margin in Iowa would deal a serious blow to Mr. Bradley's challenge to Mr. Gore elsewhere, and could help tip the balance against him in New Hampshire, where the first primary election is held in nine days' time.

Both Mr. Gore and Mr. Bradley are campaigning fast and furiously across Iowa for long hours this weekend in a last-ditch effort to mobilise their supporters.

Mr. Bradley's lead in New Hampshire, which he first established late last summer, has steadily dwindled over recent weeks and the two are now level-pegging.

But in Iowa he has downgraded his hopes. Mr. Bradley said last week: "I didn't say anything about winning in Iowa," and campaign officials said that they would be delighted with just 31 per cent of the caucus vote.

If Mr. Gore is as successful as seems likely, both parties' national front runners will be able to declare their first victories Monday.

Mr. George W. Bush, the Texas Governor, is expected to win the most support at Republican caucuses, with only the scale of his margin of victory over his closest rival in Iowa, the wealthy magazine publisher, Mr. Steve Forbes, in doubt.

Much of the Democrat party establishment has turned out to stomp for Mr. Gore in Iowa over the final days, ranging from members of the President, Mr. Bill Clinton's Cabinet to members of the Kennedy clan.

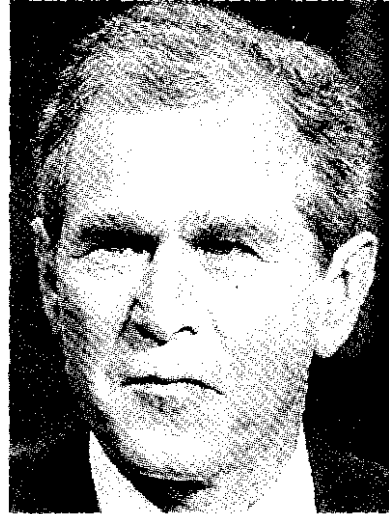
A race among states

The race to the White House has become a 100-yard sprint this winter, as States try to jostle one another aside to be first to pick the winning candidates.

Both the Democrat and Republican candidates for the presidency are likely to be known by the end of March



Al Gore



George W. Bush

because so many party organisations have moved the dates of their primary elections — where registered Democrats and Republicans vote on their respective presidential hopefuls — forward to have a bigger say in the selection process.

The political ambitions of Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore could even be decided on March 7, the "Super Tuesday" when primaries will be held in 15 States, including New York and California, both voting weeks earlier this year.

In the past the elections, at which the delegates are chosen who officially approve the candidate for the White House at party conventions in August, have lingered well into early summer.

This year's changes are the result of a growing irritation among several States which had voted late in the primary season, when the nominations are almost always wrapped up. The result is a game of political leapfrog. California, one of the biggest and most powerful States, has switched from June to early March, and, as a result, will receive much more attention from both candidates and media.

At least 60 per cent of Republicans and 70 per cent of Democrats will have voted by the end of March, with crucial electoral tests in Florida, Mr. Gore's home State of Tennessee, and Texas where Mr. Bush is the Governor, on what has been dubbed "Southern

Tuesday". Candidates then tramp to the bleak northern wastes of New Hampshire for February 1, where temperatures outside politics are usually in the single digits and campaigning often involves battling through snowdrifts.

Larger States have become resentful at the attention given to what are otherwise political minnows. But both Iowa and New Hampshire fiercely guard their place in pole position. An attempt by Louisiana Republicans to vault ahead with a caucus a week earlier than Iowa was blocked after furious protests to the party's national organisation.

A lengthy primary season usually favours the underdogs who, if they can manage an early upset, can build a momentum for later polls. This year, a poor showing by Mr. Bradley and Mr. McCain in the early stages could doom their challenge within weeks.

In contrast, early failures by either Mr. Gore or Mr. Bush, both of whom have the money to campaign at a more furious pace, are likely to be quickly forgotten in the rush of primaries by early March.

Several of the States which have found themselves pushed to the back of the queue are now threatening to advance their primaries even earlier for the next election in 2004. — © Telegraph Group Limited, London, 2000

THE HINDU

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Bush, Gore poised to win

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BEN MACINTYRE
THE TIMES, LONDON

DES MOINES (USA), Jan. 25. — Vice-President Al Gore and Texas Governor George W. Bush appeared poised for victory last night in the Iowa caucus, the first official test of political strength in the US presidential election.

As Iowans gathered to vote in hundreds of local meetings across the state, opinion polls predicted that Mr Bush would easily beat Mr Steve Forbes, the multi-millionaire, in the opening round of the contest for the Republican presidential nomination.

While cautioning against complacency, Mr Bush was looking ahead to the election on 7 November, as he called on supporters "to cast a vote which will be the beginning of the end of the Clinton era in Washington."

Mr Gore has pulled well ahead of Mr Bill Bradley, former Senator and the only other contender in the Democratic race. During a last-minute swing

IOWA BATTLE FIRST TEST OF STRENGTH IN PRESIDENTIAL RACE

through rural Iowa yesterday, Mr Gore also urged his backers to translate their support into votes.

give both an important boost going into next Tuesday's crucial primary in New Hampshire, where Mr Bush

"We could surprise a few people," he said. After weeks spent cajoling the Iowa voters, the candidates



The Republican presidential candidate, Mr George W. Bush at a rally in Des Moines, Iowa, on Monday night. —AP/PTI

"Do not believe the polls," Mr Gore said. "The only decision that matters is the one that comes out at the caucuses themselves."

Substantial wins by the two front-runners in the first tests of the 2000 campaign would

showed no inclination to linger there.

Within hours of last night's vote, the contenders were due to fly on to New Hampshire.

Mr Bradley dismissed any suggestion that he might drop out if he lost badly in Iowa. House.

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Al Gore in final, Bush nearly there

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, March 8. — Vice-President Al Gore effectively wrested the Democratic Party nomination, while Texas Governor George W. Bush raked in big victories in 'Super Tuesday' primaries and caucuses in 16 states.

Mr. Bush grabbed the best and biggest pieces of the primary pie, including the states of New York, California, Georgia and Ohio. He lost four of the smaller states in New England to Senator John McCain, who won in Massachusetts, Vermont, Rhode Island and Connecticut.

Mr. Gore won all 11 Democratic contests, dealing a humiliating blow to his contender, Mr. Bill Bradley, who has not won a single primary so far.

Mr. Bradley had signalled that he would quit the race unless he managed to pull off a surprise yesterday. The former New Jersey Senator is now likely to issue a formal withdrawal.

Mr. McCain, however, has decided to stay in the race, even though it looks nearly impossible for him to stop Mr. Bush now.

In California, the largest state, Mr. Bush won 60 per cent of the Republican vote, as against 36 per cent for Mr. McCain. In the Democratic

vote, Mr. Gore received 80 per cent support, against Mr. Bradley's 19 per cent.

In New York, Mr. Bradley received only 34 per cent of the Democratic votes, against Mr. Gore's 65. Mr. Bush beat Mr. McCain with a narrow margin of 51-43 per cent.

Mr. Bradley, who called Mr. Gore to congratulate him, told his supporters wryly: "He (Gore) won, I lost... Winning isn't everything. It is the only thing."

That this is a final step before the presidential nominations was reflected in the conciliatory, wrap-it-all attitude that candidates adopted towards their direct competitors, and in their victory speeches where they spoke of their plans for the country.

As reports of his victory poured in, Mr. Gore applauded Mr. Bradley as a "good man for whom I have great respect". He said Mr. Bradley believed in his commitment to healing

the racial divide in the country and for that "I salute Bill Bradley".

Mr. Bush also paid tribute to his rival, Mr. McCain for "raising a very strong challenge" and said he was "the better for it". The Texas Governor also shifted his attack to Mr. Gore, his likely rival for the presidency, calling the Vice-President the symbol of Washington status quo.



Al Gore: on the top



George Bush: goal in sight

U.S. PRIMARIES / CAMPAIGN SHIFTS GEAR

Bush, Gore emerge front-runners

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MARCH 8. Super Tuesday provided what it was supposed to — momentum to two candidates and directions to the exit door to definitely one, if not to three others. With impressive wins in New York, California and Ohio, the Governor of Texas, Mr. George W. Bush, has emerged as the front-runner within the Republican Party; and the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore Jr., in sweeping the events of March 7 has now turned his attention nationally and in a much stronger position.

To the Arizona Senator, Mr. John McCain, who won four New England States, it is time to make the tough decision — whether to stay on and fight the South next Tuesday or exit gracefully informing the Grand Old Party that his ideas matured in the last two months. His advisors are urging him to withdraw from the process now that the writing on the wall is clear. Mr. Bush has now nearly 660 delegates as opposed to Mr. McCain's about 200. The Republican nomination needing a total of 1034 delegates. Technically, the social conservative, Mr. Alan Keyes, is still in the race.

Mr. Bill Bradley has simply no choice and his departure from the nomination scene is just a matter of days. The former New Jersey Senator was advised even before Super Tuesday to get out of the

egy from now on. But analysts say that the six southern States that stage their events next week — what is now said to be the "Brothers' Primaries" (a reference to Florida and Texas) — will be a virtual rout for him.

But the tenor and the tone of the campaigns has already turned at the national levels with Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore starting to trade jabs at each other.

Calling for Republican unity and an end to eight years of Democratic rule in the White House, Mr. Bush, while congratulating Mr. Gore, called him a candidate of the status quo. "Tonight we have good news from sea to shining sea. We were challenged and we met the challenge. We are ready, and I believe our country is ready, to return exalted honor to the White House," Mr. Bush said addressing supporters in Austin, Texas.

Unlike the Republican camp where a lot of venom had come into the campaign, the Democratic rivals were far less charged, at least on the personal front. In fact, Mr. Bradley had long ago remarked that if he lost the nomination he would campaign for Mr. Gore for the Presidency.

Mr. McCain too said this of his opponent but qualified it by saying that Mr. Bush should run a campaign that was different from that of the primaries.



The Republican presidential candidate and Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, and Mrs. Laura Bush wave to the crowd at a Super Tuesday rally in Austin, Texas. At right, an equally jubilant Democratic candidate and Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, holds hands with Mrs. Tipper Gore at the 'Gore 2000' campaign victory in Nashville. — AP

rather the mood seems — at least outwardly — to be one of a busyness as usual attitude. "We won a few and lost a few today...I want to assure you all that our campaign continues tomorrow, the next day, the day after that, as long as it takes to restore America's confidence and pride," Mr. McCain said.

Mr. McCain is taking a one or two days off reportedly to closet with his top aides to map the strat-

the Senator have taken New York and made some strong dents elsewhere, Mr. Bush would have been given a run for his money. But with mainstream Republicans in California virtually sure of handing the State's 162 delegates and New York and Ohio showing a leaning towards Mr. Bush, the game was generally seen to be up. But it was indeed a fight to the finish.

The McCain camp denies that the candidate is about to quit:

race to avoid a huge embarrassment; but there was this hope in the Bradley camp that somehow New York would come through. Now the professional basketball star, who was hoping for a fourth quarter comeback, will be leaving the Democratic race without even having won a single State.

By far the focus of Super Tuesday was on the Republican camp with a lot of attention on the candidacy of Mr. McCain — should

It's down to Bush and Gore

The political circus involving the U.S. Presidential primaries is all but over with the major challengers pulling out. But, reports SRIDHAR KRISHNASWAMI, the McCain phenomenon cannot be written off all that easily.

AFTER THE initial excitement, the U.S. Presidential race is heading back on to the normal track — the main candidates of the two parties are seeking to reach out to broader sections of society by trying to come up with policy alternatives, both domestic and foreign. And, in the midst of all the ensuing hoopla, there is the predictable noise about bringing back "honor" to the White House.

With the exception of the social conservative, Mr. Alan Keyes, who is still holding out, all others are out of the race. The Republican Senator, Mr. John McCain, has "suspended" his campaign but has stopped short of endorsing the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush. On the Democrats' side, the former New Jersey Senator, Mr. Bill Bradley, threw in the towel and endorsed the candidacy of the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore Jr. All these developments came within two days of a multi-event that changed the face of the Presidential politics of 2000.

Super Tuesday, March 7, was bound to be exciting. The Republican front-runner, Mr. Bush, had to come out on top; Mr. McCain had to do well for what lay further ahead was shaky ground in the south where he had already alienated the religious conservatives and the political right.

But, for Mr. Bradley, Super Tuesday was a mere formality. After some initial bursts of brilliance in his campaign, he started fumbling to the point that there was pressure on him to quit ahead of the marathon on March 7. A true professional player, he stuck it out till the end and then bowed out even more professionally and gracefully. The big question now is if he has a shot at the Vice-President's ticket. Mr. Bradley had said earlier that he was not interested in the number two slot. But then that's what every candidate says at the beginning. The compulsions of August are quite different from those at the beginning of the year. The issue is not of Mr. Bradley's competence but whether Mr. Gore needs a left-of-centre candidate, as opposed to reaching out to women and minority voters.

If there was one person who was not unduly perturbed by Super Tuesday, it was Mr. Gore. In fact, he found time to even target some of the Republican candidates, especially Mr. Bush. But the bottomline is that Mr. Gore understands that this Presidential ballgame has not even begun and when it does he has to handle not only his role in the fund-raising scams of the Democratic Party but defend the extra baggage of the Clinton era, notably the times he was the main cheerleader of the President.

But the focus on Mr. McCain will continue for some time to come. And that is because the maverick politician from Arizona not only gave Mr. Bush a real scare but also made the Republican Party establishment take another look at itself on more than one occasion. It was not just his hammering of Mr. Bush in New Hampshire that was of interest

in the last two months. The fact that Mr. McCain took on and beat the John Engler machine in Michigan was also a noteworthy point.

What made Mr. McCain a phenomenon within the Grand Old Party was not the campaign finance reform lectures that the party bosses hated to hear. It was his unique ability to reach out to the moderates, the independents and even the Democrats, if one were to go by his campaign. Of course, the refrain in the Bush campaign and among mainstream Republicans was that the crowd that Mr. McCain was attracting was actually a dubious one — that it was more interested in getting Mr. Gore elected on November 7.

These allegations cannot be proved one way or the other; but Mr. McCain really believes that he has contributed to the Republican Party by making it more inclusive. But what the Arizona Senator also realised was that in the process of reaching out, he had alienated the mainstream Republicans — a group whose support he absolutely needed if he were to mount a real challenge to Mr. Bush.

Mr. McCain, in other words, eventually found out that he could not have it both ways — challenging the establishment, the machinery, the bosses and the cronies, and at the same time hoping that by talking conservatism and invoking the name of the former President, Mr. Ronald Reagan, he would be accepted. If anything, the comparison of the primaries scene of 2000 to that of 1980 was itself questionable. Two decades ago, Mr. Reagan did not need the so-called Reagan Democrats to win in the primaries — Mr. McCain had to lean on these numbers even in the early stages.

If Mr. McCain got himself into trouble and eventually received a good beating on Super Tuesday, he "owes" it all to himself on two counts. First, a Republican candidate should have been smart enough not to play the "religion" card. It is one thing to talk about the banning of inter-racial dating at the Bob Jones University in South Carolina. But it is a totally different thing to extract an anti-Catholic message out of that and pin it on Mr. Bush.

It was politically suicidal on the part of Mr. McCain to start this kind of charade and to pretend in the early stages that he had nothing to do with it. In one stroke, Mr. McCain was seen as involved in the kind of campaign that he swore he would not run — something that Mr. Bush very cleverly pounced on, in New York especially. But the real blow to the Arizona politician was not just in starting the debate over the "R" word but in going after Christian leaders of yesteryear such as Mr. Pat Robertson and Mr. Jerry Falwell. Mr. McCain

made this frontal assault on religious leaders in their own backyards, calling them agents of intolerance and saying that the Republican Party should have nothing to do with the religious right.

Mr. McCain, the argument goes, should have really taken on the religious right of today. But after accepting the endorsement of the Christian leader, Mr. Gary Bauer, Mr. McCain could only pick on religious leaders who really do not count for much in today's Republican politics.

Even Mr. Bauer condemned the strategy of playing the religion card. The backtracking on the part of Mr. McCain was clumsy, to say the least, and he paid an immediate price for this in the State of Virginia.

At a really high point in his campaign for the Presidency, Mr. McCain looked like a desperate person throwing stones at anyone who did fit into his scheme of things. And the worst part is that the results of Super Tuesday showed that for all the noise made on the religion front, it hardly mattered, even in New York. A lot of grief for nothing tangible in return.

Secondly, from a strategic perspective, Mr. McCain boxed himself into a corner by saying that he was not going to indulge in negative campaigning. That he went ahead and nevertheless did this by trying to whip up the sentiments of the Catholic voters in the state of New York is a different story. But in Presidency politics, one of the first rules of the game is that there is nothing called "unilateral disarmament". After climbing up to a so-called high moral plane, the Arizona Senator found it difficult to, at least theoretically, come down.

There is a view among observers that in the aftermath of Super Tuesday, it is Mr. Gore who has come out stronger from the exercise thus far. Technically it is true, although one cannot draw too

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many lessons from this or get too comfortable with the notion that it is going to be an easy ride for the Vice-President from now on. Mr. Gore, it has to be remembered, did not face a primary challenge on the lines of what Mr. Bush did.

Mr. Bush came out on top from an original list of about ten contenders. In the case of Mr. Gore, he had to contend with just one; and that too a professorial, professional and soft-spoken person who was not even taken much note of by the Vice-President and the national media until such time as the dollar bills started showing up on his side.

The political circus involving the primaries is all but over with the major challengers pulling out in both the Republican and the Democratic Parties. But the McCain phenomenon cannot be written off all that easily, even after the Senator has called it quits.

Unable to get New York, falling far short in a critical mid-western State such as Ohio and beaten in a large State such as California — which was a sure write-off to begin with, given that only registered Republicans could pick delegates — Mr. McCain would certainly have had difficulty in raising cash to keep the game going. And money is what much of Presidential politics is all about.

At one time, it was fashionable to toy with the idea of a Bush-McCain ticket, the advantages and disadvantages of this in November 2000. Like Mr. Bradley, Mr. McCain has said that he is not interested in the number two spot; and, like the former about Mr. Gore, he has said that he will support Mr. Bush if the latter gets the party nomination. But unlike Mr. Bradley, the support of Mr. McCain is not unqualified — Mr. Bush must run a "different" campaign than the one seen in the primaries, a clear reference to the negative tone and all the stealth attack advertisements.

But if a Bush-McCain ticket looks more improbable right now it has to do with all the bad blood that has been generated: the shrill rhetoric of the two camps, the total alienation of groups within the party and the questioning of the party establishment. The Grand Old Party has a lot of distance to travel if it is to get its act together and challenge the Democrats; and the first battle will be not on the policy alternatives but on the ideological front. The internal parameters will have to be redrawn in such a way that the Republicans are able to attract from a wider base, something that has been stressed by the McCain Camp all along.

The Democrats will gleefully pounce on all this "dissension" in the Republican Party once the battle for the air waves begins. The Democrats are probably breathing a little easier because Mr. Bradley went a little soft on Mr. Gore, but the Grand Old Party has stacked up a whole lot of things against the incumbent Vice-President, if not personally, for his association with the President, Mr. Bill Clinton.

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Gore, Bush take stock of primary triumph

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, March 12. — Triumphant in their primaries, Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W Bush are testing messages, raising cash, counting electoral votes and considering potential running mates for what promises to be a hard-fought presidential election. "I think Mr Gore came out of the process strengthened and Mr Bush came out of the process weakened. And that probably puts them on equal ground," said Chicago-based Democratic consultant, Mr David Axelrod.

Republican consultant Ed Gillespie of Washington predicts "an incredibly tight election" and said "both of them have a lot of work to do in the next eight months". In the span of an hour, former New Jersey Senator Bill Bradley conceded defeat on Thursday to Mr Gore and Arizona Senator John McCain bowed to Mr Bush — leaving only the collection of delegates in one-sided primaries to cinch their nominations. In a quick pivot, Mr Gore and Mr Bush began planning for the fall election.

What the polls say: Mr Bush and Mr Gore emerged from primary fights in a dead heat for the presidency. National polls released after their Tuesday landslides showed the pair even in both head-to-head matchups and in public

perceptions of their political skills.

In actual voting, exit polls showed that Californians, given a choice between Mr Bush and Mr Gore, selected the vice-president over the Texas Governor 51 percent to 44 per cent.

Hispanics, an emerging force in national politics, chose Mr Gore by more than a 2-to-1 margin in the state.

Though not binding, the balloting was closely watched because California is the biggest electoral prize in November. Mr Gore almost certainly can't win the presidency without the state's 54 electoral votes, analysts say. Republican advantages elsewhere make the state slightly less critical for Mr Bush.

What it takes: It takes 270 electoral votes to be President. If Mr Bush can win states claimed by the 1996 Republican nominee, Mr Bob Dole, he starts with a base of 156. The Texas Governor hopes to add Louisiana, which borders his home state, and Florida, where his brother, Jeb, is Governor. That's not enough.

So, Mr Bush and Mr Gore both will look to the same six battleground states in their race to 270: Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Missouri and New Jersey. These states, which award more than 100 electoral votes, traditionally swing between Democrats and Republicans, and polls suggest Bush and Gore evenly matched.

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Clinton's new aide to persuade Senators to ratify CTBT

WASHINGTON: Retired General John Shalikashvili has made his debut appearance as special adviser to President Bill Clinton in an attempt to persuade senators to ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT).

But Mr Shalikashvili, a former chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, told a news conference that the administration did not plan to seek another Senate vote before Mr Clinton's term ends in January.

The Senate rejected the treaty last October on a vote of 48 to 51 after a debate, which the administration said was too brief and partisan. It was the most important treaty rejected by the Senate since the Treaty of Versailles after World War I, and the vote was a major blow to Mr Clinton's international prestige. The rejection dismayed Washington's European allies and advocates of arms control within the U.S., who argued that the treaty could help prevent new countries from going nuclear.

Secretary of state Madeleine Albright formally announced on Monday the appointment of Mr Shalikashvili as special adviser to both Mr Clinton and herself on matters related to the treaty. In January the state department had said that he had been asked to take up the job.

"I can think of no better person to work with senators of both parties on the crucial national objective of CTBT ratification," she told the news conference. "(He) will meet with senators and others to hear their concerns and suggestions, help clear up misconceptions about the treaty, and recommend steps the administration might take to gain a favourable Senate vote," she added.

The treaty, which has not been ratified by 28 countries, would ban all nuclear tests, greatly complicating the task of building a nuclear bomb without detection.

But opponents said that the verification system was too weak and that the U.S. might want to test again to ensure that its own nuclear arsenal is still in good shape. The general, a strong supporter of the CTBT, said that the treaty was too important to "leave on a shelf".

"Instead, we must use this time to lay the groundwork for eventual ratification by engaging in a non-partisan dialogue with every senator interested in understanding better the different views," he added.

The general denied any link between his appointment and Mr Clinton's visit next week to India and Pakistan, which tested nuclear devices in 1998 and which might be willing to sign the treaty at some later stage.

He said: "It is important that the world understand that here in the United States we are making a serious effort to try to bridge our differences, and to eventually, at the right time, ratify the treaty." (Reuters)

THE BIG FIGHT

Gore versus Bush

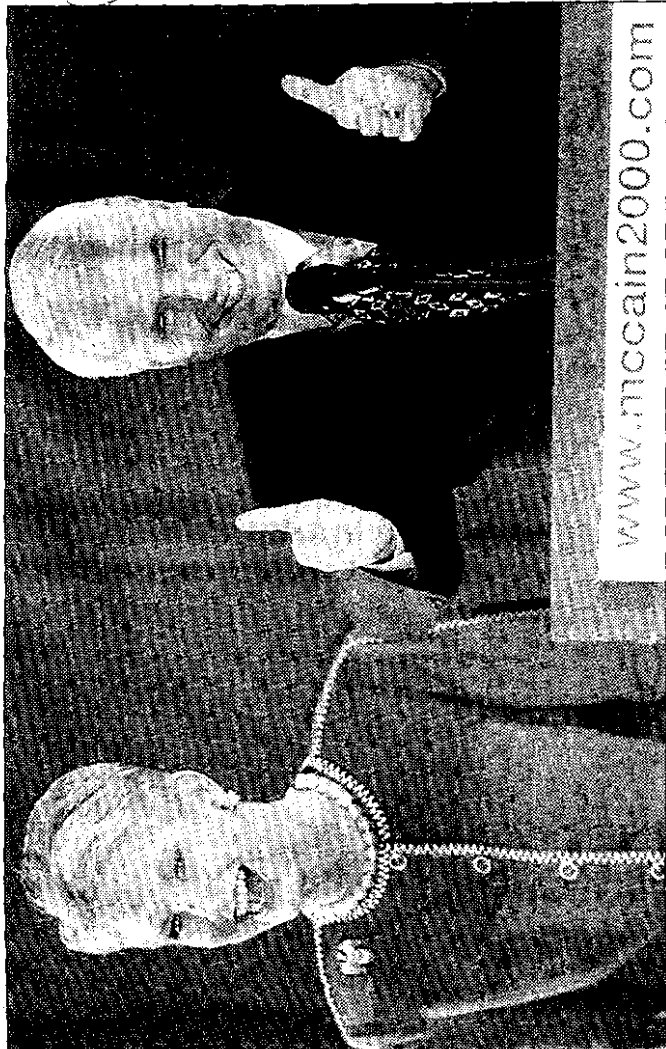
WHAT can be said about the faceoff between George W. Bush and Al Gore, except repeating the obvious point that Bush will have to recover the centre ground that he ceded, in the primaries, to John McCain? What is curious about this election is that there are no big issues. In 1992 it was the economy and in 1996 it was Dole and his execrable sense of balance. There are broad ideological orientations that may express themselves in a plethora of issues, local and national, but there is no single theme. Bush, after winning the major primaries, said he understood his mandate to mean the end of Clinton-Gore as a political team, but he doesn't spell out what exactly that implies in terms of policies or vision, excepting that everyone in the Republican Party swears by Reagan (this is like having Mickey Mouse for party ideologue).

He understands, of course, that after the Cold War, the successful reorientation of foreign policy under Clinton and the social investments allowed by America's whopping trade surplus, it is not possible to revive a classic Reaganesque agenda of minimum government and representation of the US as the ultimate defender of the free world. His "compassionate conservatism", shot through with lacunae, tries to adapt traditional Republican conservatism to the kind of social concerns that Clinton-Gore have been articulating. Also, as McCain demonstrated in the states that he won, there is a liberal current even within Republican ranks. It may not be enough to tilt the scale against the favourite in a primary, but may provide crucial extra votes in the final face-off. The equation for Bush is that in making a pitch for these "liberal" Republicans, the uncommitted and the cross-voting Democrats, he will have to be careful not to alienate his core constituency which is the Right. His message will have to be much more carefully calibrated than Al Gore's who will look to reap the benefits of the boom and foreign policy successes, while avoiding the scandals that dogged his boss. This is one area where Bush's conservatism may give him the advantage: on family values and religion, Republicans are always going to sound more convincing than the Democrats. Of course, any presidential race is about personality as well. Al Gore may have emerged out of Clinton's shadow and Bush looks solid too. The better man will be the one who captures the American imagination. Some may find Gore a bit jaded. He has been around for a long time.

THE STATESMAN

18 MAR 2000

Landslide win for McCain as Gore survives tough challenge from Bradley in New Hampshire primary



FIRST STEP: Republican presidential hopeful John McCain and wife Cindy celebrate his victory over Texas Governor George W. Bush. (AFP)

Bush beaten in round one

FROM KON FOURNIER

Manchester (New Hampshire), Feb. 2 (AP) — John McCain scored a landslide victory over George W. Bush in the nation's first presidential primary, weakening Bush's drive to be the inevitable Republican nominee.

Vice-President Al Gore survived a tough challenge from Bill Bradley in the Democrats' primary.

It was a typical New Hampshire primary yesterday, with voters delivering a lecture to front-runners in both parties and recasting the Republican race in particular as the candidates looked to larger states. Primary winners collect delegates to party nominating conventions in the summer.

"We have sent a powerful mes-

sage to Washington that change is coming," McCain told cheering supporters, crediting his agenda of political and campaign finance reform for his victory.

Gore declared to supporters: "We're going to march all the way down the field from state to state, from coast to coast... all the way to victory in November."

With returns from almost all New Hampshire's 300 Republican precincts, McCain had 49 per cent of the vote compared to 31 for Bush. Millionaire publisher Steve Forbes was a distant third at 13 per cent, former ambassador Alan Keyes was at 8 per cent, and conservative Gary Bauer barely registered 1 per cent.

In the Democratic race, Gore was winning 52 per cent of the vote, Bradley 47.

The Vice-President cast his

narrower victory as a bad omen for Bradley, who lost the Iowa caucuses to Gore last week by a much wider margin. "If he cannot win here, then that's a devastating blow to him," Gore told reporters.

Bradley, however, has enough money to compete with Gore in a coast-to-coast day of primaries on March 7.

"We are smarter. We are better prepared" to go on to victory in other states, Bradley told supporters after the outcome was clear.

McCain invested most of his time and money in the first primary, gambling that New Hampshire's independent-minded voters would be drawn to his reform agenda.

"New Hampshire has long been known as a hump in the road for front-runners and this year will be no exception," Bush told

The Associated Press in an interview after his defeat. He congratulated McCain and pledged to campaign hard against the Arizonaan in follow-up primaries.

"The road to the Republican nomination is a long road. Mine will go through all 50 states and I intend for it to end at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue," the White House where Bush's father served as President for four years.

An Associated Press analysis of delegates for the critical nominating conventions showed Gore winning 13 out of the 22 Democratic delegates at stake in New Hampshire, with Bradley winning 9.

McCain won 10 out of the 17 Republican delegates at stake. Bush 5 and Forbes 2. The delegates will choose their party's presidential candidates at national conventions this summer.

McCain stuns Bush in round one

DESIKAN THEERUNARAYANAPURAM
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2. — Mr John McCain, the straight-talking Senator from Iowa, stunned popular candidate Mr George W Bush and the rest of the country with a clear victory in the Republican presidential race at the country's first primary in New Hampshire yesterday.

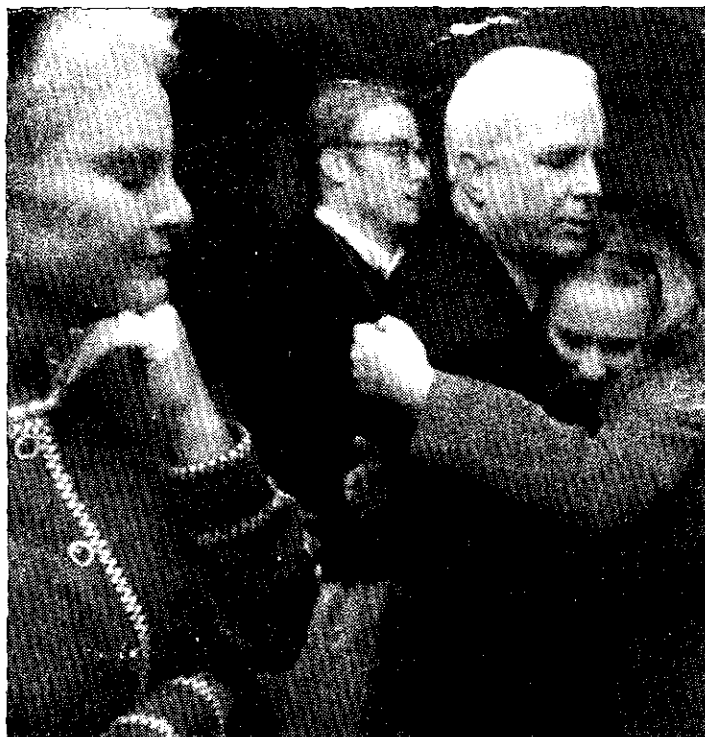
On the Democratic side, Mr Bill Bradley's attacks on Mr Al Gore's candidacy in past few weeks fell a hair's breadth short of success, with the Vice-President grazing to a narrow victory over the New Jersey Senator.

"A wonderful New Hampshire campaign has come to an end, but a great national crusade has just begun," Mr McCain told New Hampshire voters after the results, surrounded by his wife Cindy and seven children, his silver hair and dark suit covered with glittering tinsel scattered by celebrating supporters.

"There is no way I will forget this most exhilarating, wonderful experience of my life," said Mr McCain, a Vietnam prisoner of war who is adored as a "hero" by the public and is known for his approachability.

Mr McCain got 49 per cent of the vote against Mr Bush's 31 per cent, while Mr Gore got 52 per cent of the vote to Mr Bradley's 47 per cent.

Even though recent polls in New Hampshire had predicted a neck-and-neck race between Governor Bush and the Senator, the 18 per cent lead came as a surprise to Mr McCain himself. New Hampshire's huge segment of registered independent voters, believed to be as much as 40 per cent, is a major reason for Mr McCain's huge win. Independents usually end up voting Democratic, but in this



Mr John McCain hugs his daughter Meghan, as wife Cindy (left) smiles after hearing of the Senator's victory over Mr George W Bush in the Republican presidential race in Nashua, New Hampshire, on Tuesday. — API/PTI

primary six in 10 independents voted for Mr McCain.

Among other Republican candidates, millionaire publisher Steve Forbes got 13 per cent of the vote. Mr Alan Keyes, pitching for the candidacy on a platform to restore America's moral values and the first to bring the abortion issue into the Republican presidential race, won 6 per cent of the vote but promised to stay in the race.

Even as Mr Gore's supporters celebrated his victory, the Vice-President whose change of image seems to be paying off declared that "we have just begun to fight."

Mr Bradley, meanwhile, invited Mr Gore to weekly debates that could intensify the deep personal attacks made by the

two Democratic candidates against each other.

The New Hampshire primaries are the first of a decisive round of primaries for presidential candidates held in states across the country. The next round will be in South Carolina on 19 February, followed by California, Ohio and New York on 9 March.

But the New Hampshire vote's significance lies in the state's image as a "maverick" state where voters are known for their political independence. It is also valued nationally because voters here are accustomed to having candidates appear in person to answer questions directly posed by the electorate.

Mr McCain's victory is now

expected to make the Republican candidacy much more competitive than was previously expected, especially by Mr Bush's campaign managers. After the results were declared, a smiling Mr Bush vowed he would win the state at the presidential elections in November 2000.

Exit polls of New Hampshire voters today found that nearly nine in 10 voters expressed satisfaction with the candidates they chose. The issues that mattered most among Republicans were moral values, followed by taxes, Social Security and Medicare. Democrats identified education and health care as issues important to them.

Among the Democrats sampled, women were more inclined to vote for Mr Gore and men for Mr Bradley. No such disparity was noted among the Republican voters sampled.

Mr Bradley also appeared to do better with independent voters, and slightly better with college-educated voters than Mr Gore.

Mr Bush's poor performance was one of the worst defeats suffered by a Republican front-runner in the modern history of the New Hampshire primary. He put far less time into the state than Mr McCain, and his decision to skip two early debates hurt him.

Mr McCain, meanwhile, covered more than 15,000 miles aboard his chartered campaign bus and conducted 114 town meetings with the voters of New Hampshire during 79 days of campaigning here.

But despite his defeat, Mr Bush put forward an unfazed face and vowed after the results: "I will go through all 50 states, and I will end at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue."

Bush looks to South Carolina

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 3. Still dazed from the shock defeat in New Hampshire on Tuesday, the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush started his campaign in South Carolina on Wednesday, hoping that his conservative and very Republican credentials will give him the much needed boost on February 19.

Mr. Bush's main competitor, the Arizona Senator, Mr. John McCain too started campaign hoping for a repeat of the "mandate" of New Hampshire. An advantage for Mr. McCain will be that South Carolina has a high concentration of military personnel and veterans. There is no doubt that the February 19 showdown in South Carolina will be critical for Mr. Bush in the context of the "blowout" in New Hampshire. The Texas Governor has done long hours in this southern State and opinion polls show him in the lead over Mr. McCain by at least 15 per cent. And the State has traditionally been conservative while voting.

If the Bush campaign learnt one thing from its defeat, it is that money or heavyweight political endorsements alone cannot bring easy victory. To the credit of Mr. McCain, it has to be noted that he spent long hours in this tiny State

South Carolina has traditionally been more conservative and down to earth with the voters more likely to identify themselves with the religious right.

Political pundits say the residents like a Presidential candidate to stand up to his beliefs — a point that went in favour of Mr. McCain in New Hampshire. Mr. McCain's military background and the fact that he was a prisoner of war at the infamous Hanoi Hilton for five years, gives him a hero status among the military brethren.

But South Carolina does not always follow New Hampshire. In 1996, for instance, Mr. Patrick Buchanan won in New Hampshire but was defeated by Mr. Robert Dole in South Carolina and four years earlier, after nearly losing to Mr. Buchanan in New Hampshire, the former President, Mr. George Bush won the next primary.

That the Texas Governor is aware of the voting pattern of the State was reflected in his speech to students of the Bob Jones University. "I look forward to publicly defending my conservative philosophy and I look forward to making it clear to the people of this State and other States that our conservative philosophy will lead to compassionate results," he said.



The Republican presidential candidate, Mr. George W. Bush (center), flanked by his wife, Laura, hugs the former Vice President, Mr. Dan Quayle, after Mr. Quayle announced his support for Mr. Bush at a GOP rally in Spartanburg, S.C. on Wednesday. — AP

primary where independents and perhaps even Democrats could play a major role in the Republican battle. The New Hampshire experience showed that Mr. McCain not only dipped into Mr. Bush's Republican votes but did well with apolitical voters too. Analysts feel that if the mainstream Republican votes begin to "wander" then Mr. Bush is in big trouble.

and addressed 114 town hall meetings where voters questioned him intensively. Also, Mr. McCain did not contest in the Iowa caucus, a strategy to concentrate both time and money in New Hampshire and South Carolina.

Mr. Bush must campaign more vigorously in South Carolina, not merely to stave off another defeat but because the State is an open

It's more good news for McCain

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 4. After the stunning victory over the Republican front-runner for President, Mr. George Bush, in the New Hampshire primary, the Arizona Senator, Mr. John McCain has received good news that augurs well for the next primary in South Carolina.

The McCain campaign website raked in nearly \$1 million in contributions, of which nearly 80 per cent will be eligible for matching funds.

Then Mr. McCain was told that he will not be kept out of the New York race on account of technicalities. And the best news of all, after trailing Mr. Bush in South Carolina by a consistent 20 per cent, Mr. McCain has actually vaulted to first place, according to one poll.

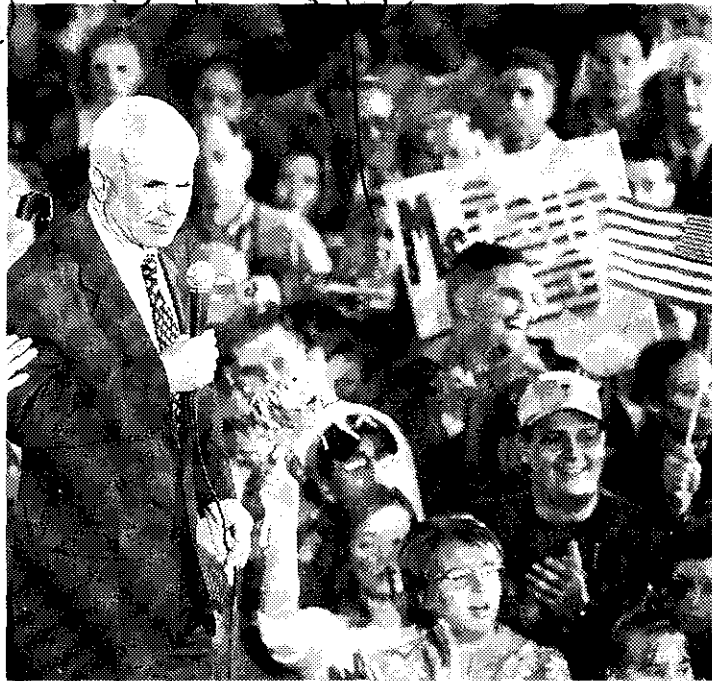
The Bush campaign though has not panicked because of the belief that South Carolina will live up to its conservative image and that the political establishment of the Grand Old Party will ensure a win for the Texas Governor.

But it also has to be noted that the Bush campaign is aware that if there is a repeat of New Hampshire on February 19 in South Carolina, Mr. Bush's candidacy could be in deep trouble.

Mr. McCain has not changed his campaign strategy though he has been exploiting everything coming his way since the February 1 win in New Hampshire.

In fact, the Bush campaign, worried about the Senator getting mileage from not contesting in New York, ensured that he could enter the race — the point being made that issues and not technicalities were important.

Clearly, the Bush campaign does not want any advantages



The Republican presidential candidate, Sen. John McCain, being applauded by supporters as he addresses a campaign rally at Presbyterian College in Clinton, South Carolina, on Wednesday. — AP

heading the way of Mr. McCain in South Carolina.

Mr. McCain has an advantage in South Carolina in that it is home to nearly 500,000 retired and active duty military officers.

He has made sure to highlight not only his active duty military service but his knowledge on foreign and defence affairs.

Criticising the Clinton administration for conducting foreign policy as some kind of a "social work" by dispatching troops around the world whenever a problem arose, Mr. McCain said, "I am fully prepared to be Commander-in-Chief. I don't need on the job training."

The Bush campaign over the

next two weeks will be relatively straightforward: count on the political establishment in South Carolina to deliver the goods and then turn and beat Mr. McCain in his own backyard of Arizona.

Meanwhile, the Christian Conservative leader, Mr. Gary Bauer may withdraw from the race today.

Mr. Bauer is a voice to contend with on religious-social issues but has not made much headway in the primaries so far.

He was placed last in New Hampshire having polled about one per cent of the vote. Mr. Bauer is known to be close to Mr. McCain and may decide to throw his weight behind him.

A budget package to put Al Gore in White House' (1)

Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 8. The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, has sent to Congress his last Budget — a \$ 1.84 trillions package that has drawn a lot of scorn from the Grand Old Party even on the first day. In his parting package to the American people, Mr. Clinton plans to spend money on almost all the areas that he has deemed important and critical — from health care and education to fighting crime.

In the realm of international affairs, the administration has earmarked some \$ 22.8 billions that will fund a programme to advance American interests and values on a global level and bring about a more secure world. The proposed State Department Budget includes some \$ 2.5 billions as Economic Support Funds and \$ 3.5 billions in Foreign Military Financing to promote progress and stability around the world, particularly West Asia.

Of the \$ 20 millions earmarked for South Asia under a variety of heads, India has been allocated some \$ 5 millions for economic reforms and liberalisation measures but this is "contingent on progress in our dialogue with India". The administration has asked for \$ 475,000 for International Military Education and Training for Indian defence personnel; and generally \$ 1 million for funding programmes that promoted regional stability and confidence-building between the peoples of India and Pakistan.

The Clinton administration has also set aside some \$ 168 millions in aid to East Asia that would include \$ 50 millions to Indonesia's transition to democracy; \$ 10 millions to East Timor's shift to independence and \$ 20 millions to finance democracy and humanitarian programmes in Cambodia.

Defending the allocation and pointing out that the money was actually only a penny for every federal dollar spent on the budget, the Secretary of State, Ms. Madeleine Albright, said, "But that one per cent may be responsible for 50 per cent of history that is written about our era and it makes a difference in the lives of

100 per cent of the American people". The allocation for 2001, which Ms. Albright would have to start defending on Capitol Hill from Tuesday, is seen in terms of a 41 per cent reduction in real dollar terms when compared with the international affairs spending in the mid-1980s.

The package is seen in terms of averting military operations, fighting terrorism and assisting American investors. To this end, more than \$ 1 billion has been set apart for security improvements, about 50 per cent of this going to American Embassies; and more than \$ 3 billions in terms of advance operations to continue replacing facilities.

The Clinton Administration is also requesting \$ 600 millions for the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) programme to help and bail out some of the world's poorest nations. The administration is also seeking \$ 175 millions to help Kosovo build a democratic society and a stronger economy; and nearly \$ 430 millions for the Southeast Europe Initiative that would assist in bringing the Balkan countries to the European and global community.

The package has come under some heavy criticism in the Republican camp with many lawmakers saying it is nothing but an attempt to get the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore, into the White House. Calling it the President's "fantasy budget", the Chairman of the House Budget Committee, Mr. John Kasich, said, "It has all things for everyone they feel they'll need to get Al Gore elected President."

"I look forward to working with the President in putting together a serious spending proposal. But this is a document designed to help Al Gore win election," said the Senate Budget Committee Chairman, Mr. Pete Domenici. The Republicans are up in arms that Mr. Clinton has proposed only \$ 351 billions in tax cuts over a 10-year period; and the various "goodies" in the budget package as an attempt by the Democrats to keep the White House and take control of Congress in the November elections.

THE HINDU
9 FEB 2000

Hillary declares candidacy for Senate

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 7. The U.S. First Lady, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, has made it official. She is seeking the Senate seat from New York that is being vacated by Mr. Daniel Patrick Moynihan. The formal announcement at a state University campus in Purchase, New York on Sunday sets at rest more than six months of speculation of whether or not she will run for Senate from this State.

"I may be new to the neighbourhood, but I'm not new to your concerns", Mrs. Clinton remarked in an obvious reference to her critics who have been calling her a "carpet begger" and one who has no business running for office from the State of New York. But Mrs. Clinton is not the first to "adopt" New York as her home. In 1964, Robert Kennedy, the brother of the former President, John F. Kennedy, moved to New York to run for the Senate and won there.

In addition to all her concerns on the domestic front that included education, health care and hate crimes, the First Lady also talked about foreign policy. "I'll be on your side in the fight for a safer world, to pass the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, to strengthen our defenses against biological, chemical and cyber terrorism, to provide debt relief to the poorest countries in Africa, Latin America and Asia and to work for peace, from Northern Ireland to Bosnia and Kosovo, to Greece and Turkey, to India and Pakistan and to a comprehensive peace in the Middle East which finally guarantees Israel's security", Mrs. Clinton said.

"The President will do anything he can do to help her in her election bid. And that will include campaigning for her, I think", said the White House Chief of Staff, Mr. John Podesta. The President, Mr. Bill Clinton, daughter Ms Chelsea Clinton, and Mrs. Clinton's mother, Ms Dorothy Rodham, were on hand at the campus gymnasium as the First Lady made her announcement. Mrs. Clinton, in the process, created a record of sorts of becoming the first U.S. President's wife to seek political office.

Even while making the formal move into Washington politics all over again, Mrs. Clinton was under no illusion of what was in store in the next few months by way of a campaign fight. "I know it won't be an easy campaign.



The U.S. First Lady, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton (left), is joined by the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, their daughter, Chelsea and Mrs. Clinton's mother, Mrs. Dorothy Rodham, at the announcement of her Senate candidacy in New York on Sunday. — AP

But, hey, this is New York", Mrs. Clinton told cheering supporters on Sunday. Opinion polls have shown that the First Lady and her "likely" opponent, the Mayor of New York, Mr. Rudolph Giuliani, are running neck and neck; but many polls have shown that the Mayor has a slight lead at this point of time.

For the Democrats and the Hillary campaign organisation, it is a tough challenge from now on; and this stems from not only the fact that Mr. Giuliani is a tough pro-nonsense campaigner and one who could get on to really painful political blows if only this is going to deliver the goods. For her part, Mrs. Clinton is not a pushover by any stretch of imagination, but she comes under the microscope not just as a candidate in the Senate race but as the wife of a sitting President whose politics will have to be defended or distanced from during the course of the campaigning.

Mrs. Clinton, in the last six months, had a

taste of what New York style of politics is all about when she was bitterly criticised for her visit to West Asia and in some critical remarks by the wife of the Palestinian leader against Israel. More recently, the First Lady took some flak for not coming out in the open on what she felt about the six-year-old Cuban boy, Elian Gonzalez, who is caught up in a political game between Washington, Havana and anti-Castro Cuban exiles in Florida.

The Hillary campaign has not made it known as to the extent to which the President will be campaigning for the candidate. Mr. Clinton has made it known that he is always there for his wife, but all indications are that this race will primarily be the First Lady's show — her ideas, issues and style. Over all, in the elections of 2000, this Senate race from New York will not only be one of the most difficult but also one that will see a lot of media attention.

Disappointed Forbes out of presidential race

DESIKAN THIRUNARAYANAPURAM
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10. — Millionaire publisher, Mr Steve Forbes, has given up his second bid for the Republican presidential nomination after finishing third in the Delaware primaries — a state where he won four years back. "I am disappointed but I have no regrets," Mr Forbes told the *Washington Times*.

He had spent \$30 million of his own money and \$5 million from donors on his campaign. The publisher said he decided to withdraw after finishing third behind Texas Governor George W Bush and Arizona Senator John McCain in Delaware.

Mr Forbes claimed a respectable second place with 30 per cent of the vote in the Iowa caucuses on 24 January and in the New Hampshire primaries on 1 February, he secured 13 per cent of the vote.

In Delaware — where Mr Bush and Mr McCain didn't contest — Mr Forbes won only 20 per cent of the vote despite rigorous campaigning.

From the primaries so far, Mr Forbes had collected

10 delegates to the Republican National Convention against 27 by Mr Bush, 11 by Mr McCain and 4 by Mr Alan Keyes. A candidate requires 1,034 delegates to win the party's nomination. The withdrawal came after Mr Forbes looked at the primary calendar and realized that there was no state where he could finish first or even get 25 per cent of the vote, his aides said.

Many of Mr Forbes' supporters are now expected to switch loyalties to Mr Bush in the primaries at South Carolina on 19 February and at California on 7 March.

Mr Bush, who won the Delaware primaries, is still seen as the best bet for the Republican nomination though he lost the New Hampshire primaries to Mr McCain. In South Carolina polls, the two are running neck-and-neck. Conservative former diplomat, Mr Alan Keyes is also still in the race, albeit a distant third. Polls of voters in the early contests show that Mr Forbes' backers are most likely to move over to the Bush camp because they are quite conservative, favour making all abortions illegal and repealing the tax code.

Mr Forbes said he had not yet considered endorsing

one of the remaining Republican candidates. "All I care about is ending this campaign the right way," he said.

While Mr Bush had always shown disdain for Mr Forbes during campaigning, he praised the publisher, yesterday, saying he had "introduced new ideas into the campaign". The Republican publisher who rode the 1996 presidential nomination race on an economic plank, promising a flat tax rate tax, switched to conservative themes this year, which struck a chord with a small section of Republicans but not enough to keep him in the reckoning.

Mr Paul M Weyrich, one of his most prominent conservative backers, lamented the lack of choices left in the race. "It is regrettable that the candidates who have raised important issues have not done well," Mr Weyrich said, "it is indeed a commentary on the culture of our times." Republican Bob Barr from Georgia who also backed Mr Forbes, said: he and other Social Conservatives felt they now had nowhere to go because they did not consider Mr McCain or Mr Bush "strong, consistent, committed Conservatives".

THE STATESMAN
11 FEB 2000

Jousting for the Presidency



Mr. George Bush Jr... time for some smart moves.

IN THE next four weeks it will all be over. When the two Big Tuesday Events are out of the way in March, only two front-runners will remain. From then on, in a largely cosmetic show, the major parties, the Republicans and the Democrats, will be getting ready for their national conventions in Philadelphia and Los Angeles this August. While the main candidate within the Democratic Party can be "predicted" with some ease, this is not the case in the Grand Old Party (GOP).

The Bush campaign hopes it is the Texas Governor and the Gore Camp is confident that the sitting Vice-President will come out clearly on top. But at least from the Republican camp there is the prospect of a toss-up and a real challenge to the political establishment if someone like the Senator, Mr. John McCain, were to emerge suddenly, upsetting not only the current scheme of things worked out in the GOP but also, in the process, knocking out the moneybags. In the case of the professorial Mr. Bill Bradley, it is much more of a long shot. After taking a lot of "elbows" in the initial days, the Bradley Campaign is now making shrill noises about Mr. Al Gore Jr. But Iowa and New Hampshire showed that Mr. Gore still has the "meat" to go after his challenger, even if the margin of victory in New Hampshire was less than impressive. Mr. Bradley may have lost the early momentum, but he can still make enough trouble and give Mr. Gore a run for his money. Which is what presidential election politics is all

With issues still on the sidelines, the campaign for the U.S. Presidency is still being confined to geographics, loyalties and winning over the establishment, reports SRIDHAR KRISHNASWAMI

about. With the publisher magnate, Mr. Steve Forbes, out of the race, the Republican pack is down to three; and in all probability will be down to two once South Carolina is out of the way on February 19. Mr. Alan Keyes, the African-American social conservative, really does not lose much by staying on, for his campaign is not about money and big spending. But, seen as an ally of Mr. George W. Bush, Mr. Keyes is unlikely to do anything before South Carolina that would even inadvertently hurt the Texas Governor.

Mr. Forbes pulling out of the race, after spending nearly \$ 80 millions in two presidential bids over the last six years, means a scramble for his supporters, especially from amongst the anti-abortion and the big tax cut — or the "flat" tax — crowd. Add the general gambit of social conservatism of Mr. Keyes, and this is really a sizeable group of people who cannot be wished away from within the Republican Camp. There is no doubt that both Mr. McCain and Mr. Bush would love to have this group on their side. And the scramble has already begun, first to get Mr. Forbes on

their side. With issues still on the sidelines, the campaign for the Presidency is still being confined to geographics, loyalties and winning over the establishment. An impressive aspect within the Republican camp is that no matter how close the race has become between Mr. McCain and Mr. Bush, the two have not traded blows below the belt even if the same could not be said of Mr. Gore and Mr. Bradley. But the time is not too far when candidates will have to start trading real punches to draw the distinction and, in some ways, both Mr. McCain and Mr. Bush have started this round.

Knowing that after March he really has nowhere to go, Mr. Bradley has started questioning the fundraising by Mr. Gore — an issue that cropped up late in the 1996 race and could not be pursued then. This time around, Mr. Gore is on the defensive, fending off his Democratic rival even while anxiously trying to get an idea as to what this could mean in a Republican-Democratic matchup starting this Fall. There is no doubt that the former Senator and basketball star is giving a lot of fodder for the Republicans to take on Mr. Gore. And no amount of legal mumbo-jumbo is going to do the trick this time around.

The Democrats are getting a breather now — both Mr. Bradley and Mr. Gore are gearing up for some of the bigger States such as California, New York and Florida pitching on themes that are all too familiar and peculiar to those States. Mr. Bradley has to make a dent in the Gore machine in New York if he is going to make much headway at all. While the Gore-Bradley matchup in New York seems to be close, it appears really one-sided in California the largest electoral State in the United States. If Mr. Bradley comes up with little or nothing to show for by March 14, it is all over for him.

But unlike the Democrats, the Republican contenders do not have the luxury of any breathing space between New Hampshire in February and the second week of March. The GOP is anxiously bracing itself for February 19 when the contest takes place in South Carolina, seen as the gateway to the South. If Mr. McCain rattles the Texas Governor here, he would be unnerving not just Mr. Bush but almost the entire Republican political establishment.

At one time, the Bush Campaign must have felt quite impressed with its own "achievements" — it was not only able to collect millions of dollars, and that too just for the asking, but Republican Governors and other elected representatives were tripping over one another trying to endorse Mr. Bush. And even among those who had



Mr. John McCain... mounting a challenge.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

THE HINDU
13 FEB 2000

P. T. O.



Mr. Al Gore... what can he serve up.

thrown their hats in the Presidential ring, the word got around that it was better to step aside early on, so as to position for "goodies" at a later date, perhaps in a Bush administration. Some of the Republican contenders dropped out early on and others learnt their lessons the hard way. At one time, the Bush train seemed unstoppable.

Suddenly the bubble was pricked by a maverick politician from Arizona. Now, the entire Republican establishment seems to be working overtime to ensure a Bush victory in South Carolina. A defeat here for Mr. Bush would spell real trouble and the Party would not know how to deal with someone like Mr. McCain who is not considered an "insider", by any standards. But to shake the Senator off in the face of a strong and determined showing would only be exposing the GOP and embarrassing it. And Mr. Bush would not stand to benefit from all of this come November 2000.

Mr. McCain makes the Republican establishment uneasy, not because of the way he does things but because of what he says. The Arizona politician is not generally known for his depth in domestic politics but is seen as a knowing hand on foreign affairs and defence. The fact that he was a Navy pilot who saw action in Vietnam and spent about five years in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" gives him the added advantage from among the veterans. But what makes the establishment uneasy is his frank talk about Campaign Finance Reform and his determination to do something about this.

It is a little humorous that some in the Republican Party are talking of the media 'making' much of the McCain campaign forgetting that nearly all of the hype surrounding Mr. Bush, his background and what he stood for was itself the making of the media. After pushing Mr. Bush into the middle of the Presidential election race and surrounding him with a campaign organisation to make him look invincible, suddenly the Bush supporters are finding themselves cornered and pressured. And for good reasons.

The McCain victory in New Hampshire was not a fluke by any stretch of imagination. It was a solid victory and by nearly a 20 percentage point margin. New Hampshire traditionally has supported the underdog, but this was more the case with Democrats than with the Republicans. The last time around in 1996, Mr. Patrick Buchanan gave Mr. Robert Dole, former Senate Majority Leader, a run for his money in New Hampshire. Following the defeat here, Mr. Dole went on to win South Carolina and thereafter was the Party's nominee.

Four years later, New Hampshire has again bolted from the Republican mainstream; and Mr. Buchanan is not with the GOP any longer. Now in the Reform Party it remains to be seen if he is the official Third Party candidate of the Reformists. Mr. Bill Clinton's victory in 1992 has been credited by some to the Reform Party successfully standing in the way of the



Mr. Bill Bradley... falling behind.

elder Mr. George Bush getting a second term in office. It remains to be seen if the Reform Party will be playing the role of "spoiler" in this Presidential election.

The implications of New Hampshire will be felt in the McCain camp for some time to come. In the days after the stunning victory here, Mr. McCain raked in thousands of dollars from his website; and more and more, there is the realisation that he is the candidate who appeals to a broad spectrum of voters within the party and is also dipping liberally into the pool of independent voters. And some argue that Conservative Democrats too could vote for the Arizona Senator. In contrast, Mr. Bush hopes to get by South Carolina leaning on the traditional conservatives, the party machine, political bosses and known individuals like the respected Senator, Mr. Strom Thurmond.

In spite of the immediate pressures on Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore, on a national scale these are the two contenders who appear to be making much headway. Of late, there is the McCain phenomenon that would have to be factored in, but even within the Democratic Party. Mr. Bradley is nowhere near the Vice-President. If anything, this sends signals to the parties on the choice of Vice-Presidential candidates, their suitability and the kind of weight the number two candidate would add to the ticket.

Thus far, however, none of the four candidates of the two parties have made it known who their running mates would be, although there has been frequent speculation on whether or not the Republican and the Democratic Parties would go in for a woman as a running mate. In fact, one speculation at the time of Ms. Elizabeth Dole dropping out of the Republican race was that she was setting herself up for the number two spot and in the process making things difficult for the Texas Governor.

If there is one thing that Mr. McCain has said emphatically, it is that he would not accept the number two spot if that were offered to him by Mr. Bush. But at this stage of campaigning it was only politically prudent for Mr. McCain to say that — his candidacy would have been doomed if he had said that he will accept the Vice-President's slot. As for Mr. Gore, there is still no inkling on his choice whether he will opt for a woman or settle for a candidate who will geographically help him or look for someone who will help him out with the Hispanic vote — someone like Mr. Bill Richardson.

The process of the "real" front-runners emerging in the two major parties may be narrowing down, but the last word has not been said. At this point of time, it would not be an exaggeration to say that Mr. Gore is in a definitely better position than Mr. Bush. For all the hoopla made several months ago on the candidacy of Mr. Bush, the time has come for his campaign and his backers within the establishment to deliver the goods.

INDIANISTANIPR

THE HINDU

13 FEB 2000

Hackers strike fear into net businesses

BY GARTH ALEXANDER
NEW YORK: Agents of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) are frantically trying to catch the mysterious hackers who brought down half America's top websites. They admit the chances of stopping the culprits are slim and warn that more attacks could occur this week.

The attackers, thought to be teenagers, used a powerful new form of hacking called "smurfing". Smurfers bombard and overwhelm websites with continuous streams of messages from hundreds of computers. Amazon, eBay, Yahoo and other well-known sites were paralysed and inaccessible for several hours last Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

As e-business firms scrambled to protect themselves from attack, the shares of internet security companies soared. Internet Security Systems (ISS), Watch Guard and SonicWall were among several that rose by between 25 per cent and 70 per cent.

FBI agents are quick to note there had been no theft or data corruption in the attacks, but they are appalled at how easily they were conducted. Ron Dick of the FBI's national infrastructure protection centre says: "There are fools out there that a 15-year-old kid could use to launch these attacks. This is not something that takes a great deal of sophistication."

Agents think "bragging rights" may be behind the attacks. Rival "cyber gangs" often brag about their hacker achievements in online chat groups. They use programs called Iribal Flood,

determine the masterminds' identities.

Last week's attacks, which cost the websites millions of pounds in lost sales, could slow e-commerce growth. Analysts fear that many companies will shy away from doing business on the net if attacks continue. They also fear that it could lead to tighter government control of the net. Patrick Taylor at ISS says legal action and fines will force organisations to tighten security and make it impossible for hackers to use them as launch pads for denial of service (DOS) attacks. He says: "Part of the responsibility lies with people whose servers have been co-opted for attacks. If your server was used to attack another company, you could be held legally and financially liable."

Last month American International Group (AIG) started offering insurance against hacker attacks. "My phone has been ringing off the hook from companies seeking insurance," says Ty Sagalow of AIG. The policy, with premiums of about 1 per cent-2.5 per cent and paying up to \$25m, covers theft of assets, liability to other companies (if a computer virus is inadvertently transferred to them) and the illicit release of confidential data. Sagalow says: "We will hire investigators to go after attackers. We may even reimburse victims of extortion payments. We will post a reward of up to \$50,000 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the criminal."

AIG, in a joint venture with other insurers such as Lloyd's of London and Zurich, also of-



Hit by cyber vandals: Jeff Bezos of Amazon was among the hacker's victim last week

Trinoo and Stachelbraht (German for barbed wire) to identify computer systems with security flaws, then they penetrate the systems through the net and plant software that can be activated later to turn the systems into launch pads for attacks on targeted websites.

By falsifying the network addresses from which the attacks are launched they make it difficult for investigators to trace their origin and almost impossible to

fers \$250m jumbo policies. But none of last week's victims appears to have been insured.

Some analysts believe that the only way to make a computer system completely secure is to isolate it from the net itself. Alex Stein at Gomez Advisors says: "You need to build tiers of trust and virtually private networks where companies with a similar security clearance communicate with one another but not with others. But that is not practical for companies such as Amazon that will always want to let everyone in. They may have to differentiate well-known customers from others and allow different customers access to different parts of their site."

RSA Security, a Boston company, has developed a "client puzzle", which will be sent to every computer trying to communicate with a website or network. The puzzle will be a simple question that can be automatically answered and will only marginally slow down access time. But if it is directed to a server launching millions of attacks, it would overwhelm and paralyse the attacker. RSA's Bill McQuade warns there will be no quick victory over hackers. He says: "The worst attacks are those where information is compromised, such as the Russian hacker who got into Citibank and stole cash, or the hackers who steal credit-card numbers, or the people who steal a company's product plans and sell them to a competitor. There will always be hackers." And, presumably, there will always be plenty of work and profit for RSA and other net-security companies. *(The Sunday Times)*

Clinton handles hackers, questions with ease in first online interview

WASHINGTON: President Bill Clinton gave his first live online news interview on Monday, proving that he could dodge questions in the new media as well as in the old, while Internet hecklers had a



Bill Clinton

field day. "I think I should pass on that," Mr Clinton responded to the first question in the interview, which CNN billed as an historic first. The question, posed by Frank Williams of Illinois, asked for the President's assessment of the Republican presidential battle between George Bush and John McCain.

Although he went on to answer most of the questions put to him in the 25-minute interview, the President said that he did not want to speak about the race until the Democratic convention, or unless he was provoked by a candidate's comment.

Mr Clinton was interviewed live on CNN television by journalist Wolf Blitzer, who read questions submitted through e-mail and CNN's Internet chat room and selected by CNN news officials. Mr Blitzer and the President sat by laptop screens. The event was broad-

cast over cable and the Internet, and Mr Clinton's answers were typed onto a CNN online chat auditorium.

Hecklers took the opportunity to chime in. One evaded CNN's filtering software — aimed at screening out inappropriate questions — to state, under the President's name: "Personally, I would like to see more porn on the Internet."

CNN spokesman Paul Schur said he did not know exactly how the filter was breached, but he said CNN's computer system was not broken into, or "hacked."

Others hecklers submitted questions on CNN's e-mail message board, referring to Mr Clinton's sex scandals or political controversies. "Can you define 'is' for us yet?" asked one, referring to the President's tortuous explanation of his relationship with Monica Lewinsky.

The interview covered a wide range of topics — from Russian policy to the economy, and frequently delved into issues regarding the Internet itself.

Mr Clinton said that he was opposed to taxing people's connections to the Internet, but said the issue of whether online sales should be taxed was a "tough question."

He also sought to reassure Americans over a spate of computer hacker attacks that temporarily

shut down major sites last week. There probably was more the government could do to improve computer security, Mr Clinton said.

"I think it's important the American people not overreact to this," he said. "That is, we're into a whole new world with the Internet, and whenever we sort of cross another plateau in our development, there are those who seek to take advantage of it ... This is a replay of things that have happened throughout our history, and we'll figure out how to do it and go forward," he said.

Asked about his favourite Internet sites, Mr Clinton said "I love books, so I like amazon.com, and I'm fascinated by Ebay, because I like to swap and trade and it reminds me of the old, you know, kind of farmer's markets and town markets I used to visit when I started out in politics in Arkansas so many years ago."

Mr Clinton danced around a question about the stalled West Asian peace process, saying that he did not want to detail his plans. "I think that there will have to be some forward progress here in the next few weeks, and I'll do whatever I can to facilitate it in whatever way I can," he said.

"But beyond that, I don't want to say anything right now. We're working it and the parties are working it." (Reuters)

THE TIMES OF INDIA
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Clinton to keep Web open and free

Washington, Feb. 16 (Reuters): President Bill Clinton has met computer executives to plot strategy to prevent website hacking, saying last week's attacks had raised the alarm for tighter Internet security but were not a "Pearl Harbour."

The President said he wanted to make sure the Internet remained "open and free" and experts suggested that the government's efforts should be limited and that it was mostly up to the private sector to ensure its own security.

Clinton made the remark yesterday as he gathered high-tech executives — including a long-haired hacker named "Mudge" — with privacy experts and government officials at the White House to discuss ways to ward off a new wave of the attacks that took down

popular websites like Yahoo!, eBay and buy.com last week.

"I think it was an alarm. I don't think it was Pearl Harbour," Clinton said of the denial-of-service attacks in which hackers bombarded

ed websites with so many requests for information that legitimate users were effectively shut out.

"We lost our Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbour," he added, referring to the December 7, 1941,

Japanese attack on the US Navy in Hawaii that killed nearly 2,300 Americans. "I don't think the analogous loss was that great."

The White House said its meeting aimed to ensure that the pri-

vate sector was doing all it could to protect itself against attacks, which last week cost websites millions of dollars in lost revenues and raised fears about Internet security.

The more than two dozen people crowded into the White House Cabinet room included MCI Worldcom's Vinton Cerf, acknowledged as a founder of the Internet, and Sun Microsystems' Whitfield Diffie, a white-bearded cryptology expert.

A few seats to Clinton's left was a man known as Mudge, an executive at Internet security company Zstake who was named by the White House as Peiter Zatko. Mudge is a self-described "grey hat" hacker, a term that describes people who publicise security weaknesses as a way of strengthening the Internet.

Online prankster mimics President

Washington, Feb. 16 (Reuters): A prankster who usurped President Clinton's name to urge more Internet pornography in an online presidential interview yesterday said it was an easy trick that highlighted flaws in new-media journalism.

"It was completely unplanned. I was just on there monitoring the chat just like everyone else. It asked me for a nickname," said Christopher Petro, a computer security consultant for an Internet company Larcom Technologies.

The incident took place on Monday during an interview of Clinton by CNN. Users who had logged into CNN's chat room carrying the event saw what appeared to be the President declaring: "Personally, I would like to see more porn on the Internet." Petro said the remark was "the first thing that popped into my head." He posted an account of the incident, under the nickname Wankel on his personal Internet site (www.boredom.org/CNN/).

He stressed that he had not "hacked" the system, or broken into it from the outside. "I hope that this harmless prank has served to let CNN know that this system is insecure and needs to be overhauled before someone does actual harm to them or one of their guests," the account said.

Bush back in control with S. Carolina win

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

ATLANTA, FEB. 20. In a dramatic comeback, the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush not only won the critical South Carolina primary on Saturday but did so decisively. Mr. Bush posted at least a 10 percentage point difference over Senator John McCain with Mr. Alan Keyes, the African-American social conservative getting five per cent of the vote.

After the drubbing in the New Hampshire primary of February 1, Mr. Bush has shown that he is indeed the front-runner for the Republican Party nomination. The victory in South Carolina will now help the Texas Governor face the primaries in Michigan and Arizona with renewed confidence. In South Carolina the "collective wisdom" was that Mr. McCain would stand to gain from a large number of people turning out to vote. Though there was a massive turnout, it was Mr. Bush who emerged winner.

In an open primary run by the Republican Party, the perception was that a number of independent and Democrats would want to embarrass the Texas Governor if not thwart the wishes of the Republican Party establishment. This clearly did not work as traditional conservatives turned en masse in strength to endorse the Texas Governor. And Mr. Bush has promised to stay by these conservative and "reform" credentials. Following his defeat, Mr. McCain claimed that he was the "real reformer".

On the face of it, it appeared that Mr. Bush not only stayed with his conservative credentials but wrenched the high moral ground from the Arizona politician by claiming that he was the "reformer". The bottom line, however, was that there were little substantive differences between Mr. Bush and Mr. McCain. Where Mr. McCain erred was in his little running of negative advertisements - for instance, in comparing Mr. Bush to the President, Mr. Bill Clinton which is a clear "no no" in the Republican and conservative establishments.

Mr. Bush had to win South Carolina to sus-



A COMEBACK: George W. Bush

tain his Presidential ambitions. Now, Mr. McCain has to win in Michigan to keep his hopes of getting the party nomination alive. Needless to say, Mr. Bush's rather facile win in South Carolina gives him the momentum, not just politically but to fill up his campaign coffers. Normally, the showdown in South Carolina does not get the kind of national media attention as has happened this time. The reason is that while the Bush campaign complained of the media whipping up the McCain hysteria, it was the same media which projected Mr. Bush as an "invincible" candidate for the Republican party nomination this August.

A problem for Mr. McCain in Michigan is that he does not have the time that Mr. Bush had in the post-New Hampshire phase. Michigan, which is also an open primary, has its primary only two days from now as opposed to the nearly three weeks that the Texas Governor had in the aftermath of his New Hampshire defeat. Coming from Arizona, Mr.

McCain is expected to do well in his State, which is also hosting its primaries next Tuesday. But if Mr. Bush wins in Michigan, it may be rough sailing for Mr. McCain in States like New York and California which fall under the Super Tuesday category of March 7. Mr. McCain has argued that it was not necessary to win every skirmish to win a battle, but in Presidential politics, it does seem necessary.

Mr. McCain has pledged to quit negative campaigning which means that he cannot go after the Texas Governor aggressively. His message of "taking over" the Republican party has most definitely alienated the party conservatives who have shown their strength and numbers in South Carolina.

Al Gore, Bush win Iowa caucuses

DES MOINES (IOWA), JAN. 25. The U.S. Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore and the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush took confident first steps towards the Democratic and Republican Presidential nominations by winning the Iowa caucuses, the first vote of the 2000 campaign.

Mr. Gore emphatically defeated the former Senator, Mr. Bill Bradley by 63-35 per cent yesterday, giving the Vice-President strong momentum for the next crucial vote in the campaign — the February 1 New Hampshire primary. "Thank you for the biggest victory in the history of contested caucuses in Iowa. My message to you this evening is very simple: we've just begun to fight," Mr. Gore told cheering supporters. Another vic-



Al Gore

paign in Iowa, had five per cent, and the Utah Senator, Mr. Orrin Hatch had one per cent.



George W. Bush

tory on February 1 would put the Vice-President firmly on the path to the Democratic Presidential nomination and deal a serious blow to Mr. Bradley's White House hopes.

On the Republican side, Mr. Bush led the six-man field with 41 per cent. That was a respectable result but not a blowout. The publisher, Mr. Steve Forbes was second with 30 per cent, a much stronger result than earlier public opinion surveys predicted, which may help him revitalise a struggling campaign. The talk radio host, Mr. Alan Keyes followed with 14 per cent, the conservative activist, Mr. Gary Bauer polled 9 per cent, the Arizona Senator, Mr. John McCain, who did not cam-

"We've had a record shattering victory and I've never dreamed I'd be able to get such a high vote," Mr. Bush told reporters. The previous best result by a Republican in a contested Iowa race was the 37 per cent recorded by the former Senator, Mr. Bob Dole in 1988. In his victory speech, Mr. Bush again stressed his central campaign theme — that he is a "compassionate conservative." "Seven months ago I came to Iowa on a plane dubbed 'Great expectations.' Well tonight, Iowa has exceeded them," he said.

But Mr. Bush's claim of a historic victory was likely to be disputed by his rivals. Polls had predicted the Texas Governor winning an even bigger victory. Mr. Forbes said he was the moral victor. "It gives us fantastic momentum and creates a good three-way race," he said. Around 500,000 registered Democrats and a similar number of Republicans can attend local precinct meetings in the evening to cast their votes. But less than 100,000 in each party were actually showing up. — Reuters

THE HINDU

26 JAN 2000

It's the Fed, stupid

Alan Greenspan's verdict on interest rates will hold the key to the White House, writes WILLIAM REES-MOGG

The polls currently show Al Gore and George W Bush (right and far right) level in the race for November. On the precedents, the state of the economy will decide who will win and Alan Greenspan (above) has been uttering increasingly anxious warnings about the US expansion, which he says is running much faster than the economy can sustain.

IN all elections, arithmetic is king. I do not think most Americans have yet realised how difficult it would be for Senator John McCain to win a majority of delegates and gain the Republican nomination for the presidency. Nor do they realise how strong the statistical probability is that the Democrats will win in November if the US economy remains strong, and lose if it weakens.

Even before his damaging

defeat in South Carolina, McCain faced an extremely difficult set of primary elections on 7 March, Super Tuesday. The three states which matter most are California, Texas and Florida. In all three, the delegates will be elected by registered Republicans only; although California does also have an open "beauty contest", there will be no crossover votes for the delegates themselves. In California, the winner in the primary takes all the state's delegates. In New York, the second largest state, they are split according to the candidates' shares of the vote. Texas and Florida also have Republican-only primaries, and have variants of the winner-takes-all rule.

George W Bush is the very popular governor of Texas; his brother, Jeb Bush, is the popular governor of Florida. It is highly probable that George W Bush will win the great majority of delegates from both these states. If he wins in California as well, then he could have some 35 per cent of all the national delegates. His appeal to Republicans is stronger than that of Senator McCain; he has more money and still more will be coming in after South Carolina; he has a much stronger organisation.

If Bush does win in California, Texas and Florida, McCain will have to win over 75 per cent of the delegates in all the other primaries to gain the nomination. That is virtually impossible. Without California, McCain's campaign is dead in the water, and Bush is the favourite to win the state.

That part of the electoral arithmetic looks very good for governor Bush. The arithmetic for the presidential election itself looks much more doubtful. There have been 20 elections since 1920, the year American women first had the vote. Ten of these were won by

the Democrats and 10 by the Republicans. The decisive influence on these elections has been the state of the economy.

In 13 of the elections, it has been relatively strong, either in a boom, a recovery or in wartime full employment. Twelve of these 13 elections have been won by the incumbent party, whether by the President or by his successor as the nominee. The only exception was the election of 1968, when Richard Nixon regained the White House for the Republicans, narrowly defeating Hubert Humphrey. That election occurred in the year of riots against the Vietnam War, and was lost on the war issue.

The incumbent President, Lyndon Johnson, had decided not to run, because he thought the Vietnam issue made it impossible.

The other seven elections occurred in years of economic downturn, ranging from the mild recession which defeated President Bush in 1932 to the slump which defeated President Hoover in 1932. In all seven elections, the incumbent party was turned out. When Bill Clinton said that the issue of the 1992 election was "the economy, stupid", he was right, for the economy has been the decisive issue in 19 out of the past 20 elections. The only other issue with anything approaching the same weight has been that of war.

World War II, Korea and Vietnam each influenced presidential elections in their time. In 1964, Lyndon Johnson defeated the Republican candidate, Senator Barry Goldwater, partly on the Vietnam issue. In 1968, Richard Nixon defeated Hubert Humphrey by blaming the war on the Democrats, who were indeed deserving of blame. In 1972, Nixon won again, with the Democrats still

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P. T. O.

split on Vietnam.

Since 1972, American politicians have wanted to keep away from the Vietnam issue. Few active politicians of the current generation are Vietnam veterans. Some, like Bill Clinton, avoided the draft altogether; others found more or less safe military jobs, either at home or in supporting roles in Vietnam. Now McCain's challenge has come as a ghost from the only major war the USA has ever lost; his fellow veterans and right-wing super-patriots have gathered around him in what looks like their last hurrah.

In his domestic policies Senator McCain has moved to outflank George W Bush on the liberal side, though Bush is himself one of the most liberal Republicans to be a serious candidate for the nomination since Nelson Rockefeller in 1968. Senator McCain's foreign policies are of a different kind; they would become an issue only if he were to win California on 7 March, and go on to win the nomination. He turns out to be a liberal at home, but a hawk abroad. He is not only a Vietnam veteran, but almost a Vietnam recidivist.

During the South Carolina primary, McCain said of himself: "I'm the one fully prepared to be Commander-in-Chief." That is some boast. He also said, in a debate with Bush, that he would "institute a policy that I call 'rogue state rollback'. I would arm, train, equip, both from without and within, forces that would eventually overthrow the governments and install free and democratically elected governments. Until these governments are overthrown, they will pose a threat to US national security".

McCain did not say whether he was going to apply "rogue state rollback" to North Korea,

Afghanistan, Iraq, Serbia or Cuba, though these countries would seem to be some of the states which would best meet his definition. It is perhaps just as well that he did not win in South Carolina. If his foreign policy had to meet a real election campaign, he would be the most hawkish Republican candidate since Barry Goldwater. Goldwater's slogan was: "In your heart, you know he's right." The Democrats countered with: "In your guts, you know he's nuts." The Democrats won by a landslide in 1964.

So far the primaries have worked well for the front-runners, as they usually do. Al Gore had to raise the quality of his campaign to see off Bill Bradley, and he did so in Iowa and New Hampshire. That was helped by public anxiety about Bradley's heart problem, and Bradley's campaign remained too intellectual and remote. Bush's defeat in New Hampshire forced him to raise his campaign in South Carolina, and again he did so. It is still theoretically possible that Bradley or McCain will make a comeback, but it is long odds against either winning his party's nomination.

The polls currently show Gore and Bush level in the race for November. On the precedents, the state of the economy will decide who will win. One can most put it in terms of the Dow Jones index: above 10,000, Gore to win; below 9,000, Bush to win; between 9,000 and 10,000, an open race. Who will decide whether the Dow is at one end or the other of this scale? It will be one man, Alan Greenspan, the chairman of the Federal Reserve Board. He has been uttering increasingly anxious warnings about the US expansion, which he believes to be running much faster than the economy can sustain. Wall Street forecasters expect rising short-term interest rates for the rest of the year. Rate increases are also forecast in London and Frankfurt. Last Friday, after Greenspan's latest statement, shares fell very sharply on Wall Street.

Greenspan certainly does not want to create a recession, though he might prefer a slowdown in 2000 to a crash in 2001. The outlook for global short-term rates resembles that of 1994, which is still remembered as a dreadful year for the hedge funds on Wall Street. That was also a bad year for the Democrats in the mid-term elections, one of their worst. The Fed cannot now bring the US economy back under control without higher rates, a lower stock market, much reduced growth and reduced demand for jobs. These will not be good for the Democrats. If Bush wins in November, it will be "the Fed wot dun it".

— The Times, London.

THE STATESMAN

22 FEB 2000

Battle hots up in Michigan, Arizona

By Sridhar Krishnaswamy

ATLANTA, FEB. 21. The battle for Michigan and to an extent, Arizona, has begun with the consensus remaining that Mr. John McCain has to do well in Michigan if his candidacy for the party nomination is not to be jeopardised.

The victory in New Hampshire was indeed a crucial one and something that gave momentum to his race, but Mr. McCain's defeat in South Carolina has raised a lot of questions.

The outcome in South Carolina has presented some critical concerns for the Bush campaign as well. The margin of the win was indeed comfortable — perhaps a sweet revenge after New Hampshire — but the question is from where Mr. Bush got his victory and indeed, what this would imply in Michigan and further down the road.

The argument has been that, in an effort to ensure that the Texas governor came out on top, his campaign leaned too much on the Christian right, which turned out in record numbers to offset any advantage Mr. McCain might have among the independents and the Democrats.

However, independents and the Democratic vote are crucial in an open primary like Michigan.

The religious and Christian fundamentalist right are not. Therefore, Mr. Bush would

seem to be in a tight spot.

Michigan, for instance, does not share the conservative history of a state like South Carolina. Neither does New York nor California, two large states polling as part of the Super Tuesday primaries on March 7. So if Mr. Bush's win in South Carolina has truly been passed off to the Republican and religious right, there could be a real problem come Tuesday.

The McCain camp continues to lean on the independents and the Democratic vote in the run-up to Michigan and Arizona, in spite of the lessons of South Carolina.

Where the Arizona senator got it wrong in South Carolina was in trying to whip up the sentiment that he was trying to take over the Republican party with the help of independents and Democrats.

And what has been the consistent defence by the McCain camp is Mr. Ronald Reagan's 1980 strategy to knock off his opponents in the primaries, then going on to win the Presidency twice with the help of these groups.

What has been pointed out in the last two days is the manner in which Mr. Reagan sought the Democrats — the important difference being that he did not need the Democrats to win the primaries, whereas Mr. McCain has to get the help of this group to increase his vote base.

The constant attention paid to the inde-

pendents and the Democratic voters, however, fuelled a sense of urgency from within the hard-core conservatives and the Republican voters.

If the tenor of Mr. McCain's campaign in the aftermath of the South Carolina defeat is anything to go by, the last of the attacks by the main candidates in the Republican party is yet to be seen.

What has surprised many is the Arizona Senator's "concession" speech in Greenville, South Carolina on Saturday night, where he attacked the Texas governor for the style of his campaign and all that he stood for by way of issues and ideas. The attack was sharp and pointed.

The Republican Party establishment in Michigan — led by the Governor, Mr. John Engler — already working overtime to secure a victory for Mr. Bush in the state — has been further cranked up following the South Carolina verdict.

Given the manner in which the party establishment and local party bosses have been lined up, the belief is that Mr. Engler will deliver the goods.

Some argue that the stakes are high for Mr. Engler as well: for, restricted by term limits in continuing in his gubernatorial post for another term, he may be looking for "something" in a Bush presidential administration.

John McCain beats Bush in Michigan and Arizona

Washington, February 23

ARIZONA SENATOR John McCain upset Texas Governor George W. Bush in crucial Republican primary in Michigan, with a record turnout bringing crossover independents and Democrats to the polls.

In his home state of Arizona, Mr McCain was an easy winner yesterday with a double-digit margin, despite Bush's last-ditch effort to spend heavily in the state and sway voters.

Official voter tallies showed Mr McCain leading Mr Bush in Michigan by 49.9 per cent to 44.2 per cent, with 74 per cent of the votes counted. Talk show host Alan Keyes had gathered 4.5 per cent in Arizona. Mr McCain led Mr Bush by 60.2 per cent to 35.4 per cent, with 60 per cent of the precincts counted.

The victories in the "open" primaries -- where independents and democrats were allowed to cast their votes for the Republican

nominee-- showed Mr McCain's support strong among those groups but weaker among registered Republicans, who voted 3-to-1 in favour of Mr Bush.

"We are creating a new majority," Mr McCain said in a victory speech at a rally in Phoenix. "A Mr McCain majority."

Calling himself "a Reagan Republican", he told fellow party members, "Don't fear this campaign. Join it." He trumpeted his attraction to independents and democrats by calling himself "Al Gore's worst nightmare", referring to the US Vice-President and likely Democratic nominee.

Networks accustomed to calling winners within moments of the polls closing were stymied by exit poll data in Michigan, a crucial state for both candidates. They issued their projections about 40 minutes after voting ended.

Victory in Michigan was considered crucial for Mr McCain's effort to regain the momentum of his February 1 victory in New

Hampshire, while Mr Bush sought to maintain his front-runner status that was reinforced with his win on Saturday in South Carolina.

The clearest result from yesterday's voting was that Mr McCain's maverick campaign would continue, and the Republican nomination struggle was likely to become even more bitter in the weeks leading up to the March 7 and March 14 primaries. Mr McCain was counting on independents and so-called "Reagan Democrats" to vote in the open Michigan primary to counter the support of Michigan's Republican Governor John Engler, who has thrown the party's establishment behind Mr Bush.

Arizona's primary was considered less crucial. Michigan was selecting 58 delegates for August's nominating convention, while Arizona was electing 30. CNN estimated that Mr McCain won 73 of the 79 delegates at stake yesterday. That still left Mr Bush ahead with 105 delegates committed to Mr McCain's 86. (Agencies)

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Bush gets some good news

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, FEB. 28. The Republican front-runner for the Presidential elections, Mr. George Bush received some good news over the weekend. The 26 delegates from the American territories of Virgin Islands, American Samoa, Guam and Puerto Rico endorsed him for the party nomination this August. This is some solace for the Texas Governor who knows that the islanders can take part in the primaries but cannot vote for him in the Presidential elections to be held on November 7.

Mr. Bush must derive satisfaction, particularly from the 90 per cent plus endorsement from Puerto Rico, where nearly four million Spanish speakers who are all American citizens overwhelmingly favour Statehood. The Texas Governor is in favour of Statehood. Above all, the solid endorsement of Puerto Rico is being seen as the first indication of the Hispanic mood in the country. Mr. Bush is seen as having the backing of the Hispanic population, not only in his own State but is making some headway in other States where this community has a large population, like in California.

The "sweep" of the primaries in the islands over the weekend meant that Mr. Bush can now take his delegates' total to 93, or just three short of what his main rival, Mr. John McCain has. Both Mr. Bush and Mr. McCain are looking to November 29 when the Republicans will hold their primaries in Virginia, the State of Washington and North Dakota. For Mr. Bush, a strong showing in these States a week before Super Tuesday on March 7 will help. But the Texas Governor is finding that the tide is not



going to be smooth at all. For instance, Mr. Bush was at one time leading Mr. McCain by at least 25 percentage points in Virginia. Now that lead is down to 11 per cent. Still, with the Republican Governor in Virginia and the establishment behind him, the Texas Governor hopes that he can bag the 55 delegates in that State.

That the race has really become intense within the Republican Party can be seen in the fashion the two major candidates are going about their business. For the Texas Governor, the time has come to go on the offensive against his opponent, even if this meant reversing a little what he had said earlier. For instance, Mr. Bush had said he was not going

to apologise for what he did on the campaign. But in a letter to the religious leader of some 2.5 million Catholics, Mr. Bush said he regretted his appearance at Bob Jones University in South Carolina — a school whose leaders have criticised the Pope and called the Catholic Church a "Satanic cult". Civil rights activists also pounced on Mr. Bush for making an appearance at a school that prohibits inter-racial dating on its campus.

"I should have been more clear in dissociating myself from anti-Catholic sentiments and racial prejudice. It was a missed opportunity causing needless offence which I deeply regret," Mr. Bush said in a letter to Cardinal John O'Connor. But he also lashed out at the McCain camp for seizing the opportunity to place calls pointing out the anti-Catholic credentials of Bob Jones University. Initially, the McCain camp denied making the calls but now the candidate himself says that he approved the strategy. But Mr. McCain says that the calls never said Mr. Bush was a bigot.

"This is a mania reference to Senator McCain) who says he talks the straight talk... The campaign of pitting one religion against another has got to end. Senator McCain, when given the chance to set the record straight on who did it, could not come to the truth," Mr. Bush remarked. Political analysts say the perception of how Mr. Bush won in South Carolina — with the help of the religious right — may have had an impact in Michigan and could continue to pose problems for the Texas Governor in multi-racial States like New York and California on March 7.

Main focus will be on Africa at UN Security Council meeting

UNITED NATIONS: Africa will be the main focus this month in the Security Council as it will have debates, both open and closed door, on various problems facing the continent whom development seems to bypass.



Nelson Mandela

Addressing the issue will be U.S. vice-president Al Gore, now seeking Democratic Party's nomination for presidency, and former South African president Nelson Mandela, who is an African leader in his own right.

But how far the Council's focus on Africa would help the people, one of the poorest in the world, is not clear. Last year too, there were several debates where forceful speeches were made but never translated into action.

Sessions will be devoted to aids which is devastating the families, societies and economies, conflicts under which large populations are suffering for several years, grinding poverty and social ills.

The idea of focusing on Africa in January was of new U.S. ambassador to the United Nations Richard Holbrooke, who is also president of the Council for the month and thus entitled to set the agenda.

But diplomats say there is little what is not known about the issues. What the continent needs is massive infusion of funds which are unlikely to be forthcoming despite pious hopes expressed in debates.

The first session on Africa will be held on Monday on "impact of

AIDS on peace and security" with the Council making its maiden foray in health issues.

It will be a high profile affair with Al Gore presiding over it and Secretary-General Kofi Annan making his suggestions. This will be the first time that an American vice-president would address the 15-member Council.

Annan, his spokesman said, will suggest that the Council's role in the battle against AIDS must be to prevent conflict contributing to the spread of the disease.

AIDS was the subject of a high-level conference in December involving African governments, UN agencies, donors, corporations and non-governmental organisations.

At that meeting, Annan had called for a "response commensurate with the crisis."

Later in the week, the Council is scheduled to be briefed on the refugee situation in Africa by United Nations high commissioner for refugees Sadako Ogata.

The council is also scheduled to be briefed later in the month on Angola by ambassador Richard Fowler of Canada, the chairman of the sanctions committee, who will have returned from a trip to the country, the spokesman said.

Mandela, now facilitator for the Burundi peace process, is also expected to attend an open briefing of the council scheduled on Burundi.

From January 24 onwards, a series of meetings are scheduled on the situation in the democratic republic of the Congo, which are expected to include a number of heads of state and government involved in the Lusaka ceasefire agreement. (PTI)