

Now, the focus is on Pakistan

By K. K. Katyal

NEW DELHI, MARCH 9. It may be a brief affair, but the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton's stopover in Islamabad is certain to sharpen the focus on Pakistan's domestic situation as also its none-too-happy relationship with India. Not that the two issues would have been ignored, had Pakistan been excluded from Mr. Clinton's South Asian itinerary, but his presence there could make a qualitative difference to the emphasis to be laid on individual items slated for discussion with the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee. There may not, however, be any shift in New Delhi's priorities. As seen here, the thrust of the discussions would be on the enhancement of bilateral relations, especially in the economic area, and the medium-term vision of the two sides on these as also on regional and global matters.

At the same time, it is to be realised that India, in any case, intended raising the question of trans-border terrorism and the havoc it caused in Jammu and Kashmir. Already the two sides were jointly seized of counter-terrorism — that was included at India's insistence on the agenda of the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh's on-going dialogue with the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott, so far devoted to issues arising out of the nuclear tests. As a matter of fact, it turned out to be a major subject in their last round.

Even otherwise, it was inconceivable that a dignitary from a major nation would not have taken up this matter — or would not have been acquainted with the horrendous reality by his hosts. By now, the U.S. Administration and intelligence agencies are fully posted with the activities of terrorist outfits, which thrive in Pakistan under official patronage, the nexus between them and the equally deadly groups in the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan and the involvement of all of them in the "jihad" in Kashmir. The trade in narcotics and the vast

monetary resources, used for buying sophisticated arms, too, are no secret to Washington. Mr. Clinton's presence in Islamabad could be used for confronting the military rulers with pointed queries on these subjects. In response, the Pakistan side could be depended upon to repeat the myths, employed in the past to justify "political, diplomatic and moral support" to "Kashmiri freedom fighters" and make a case for intervention by the world community.

The U.S., by now, should be in a position to sift facts from the huge mass of fiction — hopefully, enabling Mr. Clinton to do some plain speaking in Islamabad. New Delhi should, however, be prepared for emphatic exhortations by him for early steps to resume the dialogue with Pakistan. India's view on

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trans-border terrorism is understood but its stand on the rest of the Kashmir problem is not fully appreciated.

Mr. Clinton will go to Islamabad on his way back home after a five-day stay in India. He will, thus, have an opportunity to convey to the military ruler India's latest thinking on the situation in the subcontinent. The visiting President will not be, however, in a position to tell the Indian leaders what he is told in Islamabad. This may well become the subject of subsequent diplomatic exchanges though one should not expect a sustained interest in this matter because of the U.S. preoccupations with the Presidential election.

Regarding the domestic situation in Pakistan, Mr. Clinton, as pointed out by Washington, would be talking to the Chief Executive, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, on the prospects of a return to democracy. This issue had been raised by Washington more than once since the military coup in October last. The explana-

tions, offered by the present regime, did not satisfy the U.S., which found no evidence of a credible, time-bound timetable for holding elections that did not deter Mr. Clinton from planning a visit to Pakistan. What he hears in Islamabad now will be no different from what the U.S. had been told in the past. What will be the U.S. response? Nothing dramatic or major should be expected, though it may keep nudging Pakistan.

Washington justifies Mr. Clinton's Islamabad stopover on the ground that it is better to engage Pakistan than to isolate it. This may continue to be the rationale of its dealings with the military regime in the coming months.

It would have been better for New Delhi to have confined itself to conveying its views against the propriety of Mr. Clinton's Pakistan visit. India, however, sought to put in considerable diplomatic effort to prevent such a trip. It, thus, unnecessarily and avoidably placed itself in a position where the Islamabad stopover could be regarded as a case of discomfiture to New Delhi. As a matter of fact, it is the U.S. which finds itself in the unenviable position of reconciling its concern for democracy with a move that is bound to be regarded by the military leader as an endorsement of the coup. Gen. Musharraf was quick to put this interpretation on the U.S. decision, even as Washington was at pains to explain that it was no approval of the demise of democracy.

Mr. Clinton's decision now contrasts sharply with the action of one of his predecessors, Mr. Jimmy Carter, who, in January 1978, decided to skip Pakistan at the time of his trip to India. That was intended to be a message of disapproval of the military dictatorship imposed by Gen. Zia-ul-Haq. It took Pakistan 10 years to return to democratic rule then. The U.S. "engagement" with a coup leader now would serve a useful purpose if the Pakistani history does not repeat itself.

A South Asian issue too

By Achin Vanaik

FOR DECADES, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Nepal have voted in yearly U.N. resolutions for the establishment of a South Asian Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (NWFZ). When Pokhran and Chagai happened, all these three Governments were deeply unhappy. But because of the disproportionate regional power of India and Pakistan, particularly the former, they contended themselves with general murmurings of unease without specifically blaming either country. Of course, they all recognised that India was the principal culprit in nuclearising the region with Pakistan the reactor. Despite the highly subdued official position of these countries no one in India or Pakistan should be in any doubt about the true sentiment prevailing. The Governments and the peoples (in their overwhelming majority) of Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka are against nuclearisation of the region and see Pakistan, and particularly India, as nuclear bullies contemptuous of their security concerns.

They have to find a way of making their voices heard — of making it clear that they want to de-nuclearise this part of the world no matter what India and Pakistan think is in their "national interests". What then are the ways for them to intervene to promote the eventual establishment of a South Asian NWFZ? To call for such a zone openly after Pokhran and Chagai, while no doubt courageous and justified, would mean directly confronting their more powerful neighbours. This would be difficult and would entail significant political-diplomatic costs which understandably Dhaka, Colombo and Kathmandu wish to avoid at least until such time as they can be more explicitly defiant. There are, however, two distinct alternative strategies — one for Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, the other for Nepal — to seriously consider.

Bangladesh and Sri Lanka should carefully move towards generating the political and technical pre-conditions for eventually applying to join the Southeast Asian NWFZ or Bangkok Treaty whose geographical spread currently covers the area up to and including Myanmar. That is to say, demand a 'stretching' of an existing NWFZ to include them. This idea of stretching an NWFZ has precedents. The original Latin American NWFZ as it gathered momen-

tum changed its name to include the Caribbean countries. At the moment, the South Pacific NWFZ or Treaty of Rarotonga does not include the U.S.-controlled Marshall Islands and there is already an existing demand for such stretching to include them.

The advantages of such an approach in comparison to an explicit and aggressive campaign by Bangladesh and Sri Lanka for a South Asian NWFZ are obvious. Both India and Pakistan would find it much more difficult to overtly oppose and work

cles to it are dealt with. Such an application for membership by Bangladesh and Sri Lanka does not create any problems in the way that earlier Sri Lankan efforts to join ASEAN did. Decisions on expanding the ASEAN in principle or in practice are hugely onerous precisely because ASEAN is a material entity bound together by rules, institutions, etc., carrying huge economic and political consequences for all members and for the collective's own functioning. The same can be said for expanding the European Union (E.U.), ex-

Nepal, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka have to find a way of making it clear that they want to de-nuclearise this part of the world no matter what India and Pakistan think is in their "national interests".

against such a demand from Dhaka and Colombo. After all, neither capital would then be demanding that India or Pakistan de-nuclearise. They would merely be exercising their own sovereign right to join whatever treaties or regional arrangements they wish. Yet were such an extension of the Bangkok Treaty to take place it would constitute a powerful indirect rebuke of Indian and Pakistani nuclearisation and the danger that this represents for the region as a whole. It would put both the Indian and Pakistani nuclear elites in the dock, as it were, and would also be a way of these two smaller countries intervening in an issue that New Delhi and Islamabad would like to believe is solely their preserve. Such a stretching of the Bangkok Treaty would stimulate the general effort by the vast majority of the world's comity of nations to denuclearise the region and also politically undermine the 'nuclear credibility' of India and Pakistan.

The political value of such an extension can be perceived by the existing P-5 which should have no objection to it. The overwhelming bulk of the world's non-nuclear weapons states (NNWSs) would also have reason to welcome it. The other members of the Bangkok Treaty knowing of this general widespread support could with quiet confidence move towards endorsing the idea. There are no legal problems in carrying out such an extension of the Bangkok Treaty once all the possible political obsta-

ments of the other South Asian countries to fight for nuclear security in the region — would have been achieved.

Given the landlocked character and lack of geographical contiguity with the South-east Asian NWFZ, Nepal can consider another alternative — the Mongolian precedent of declaring itself a nuclear weapons free nation zone. Again, this would be a powerful rebuke against all its three nuclear neighbours, India, Pakistan and China. It is almost impossible for any other country to oppose Nepal since such a unilateral declaration is any country's sovereign right to consider or carry out. Virtually, all the existing major NNWSs and the P-5 would welcome it, again putting New Delhi and Islamabad into some embarrassment. Once such a nuclear weapon free status is declared Nepal, like Mongolia, can also demand a 'thinning out' of such a country-zone, i.e., that none of its three nuclear neighbours place any nuclear-related facility of any kind (which could be targeted by nuclear weapons) near its borders. For such a country-zone there would be no treaty protocols for other countries to sign and no worries about whether India or Pakistan could get *de facto* NWS status. They would simply have to decide whether or not to accept the declaration and swallow the implicit attack on their irresponsible behaviour.

Should such outcomes eventually emerge, they would greatly strengthen the collective effort by anti-nuclear activists and supporters in all the South Asian countries to restore nuclear sanity — denuclearisation — in the region as well as have a powerful beneficial effect on the worldwide struggle for disarmament. To begin with, it is civil society organisation and groups in these three countries that should discuss these alternative strategies, to familiarise a wider public with them, and to generate pressure on their Governments to move in the desired direction. Even as these Governments do not rush to take an open stand they should themselves be able to see the value of quietly encouraging such discussions by civil society groups in public political spaces and thus generate internal demand for what they themselves could find attractive, and in time, very feasible indeed.

Cheney, Lieberman debate sticks to pattern

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, OCT. 7. With the debate between the Vice-Presidential candidates now out of the way, the focus is slowly shifting not just to what the main contenders are saying now on the campaign trail in key States but in how they are going to face off again for the second time in North Carolina next week.

By many accounts, the exchange between Mr. Joseph Lieberman and Mr. Richard Cheney in Kentucky on Thursday night was far more civil, professional and was without the empty rhetoric that the encounter between the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore, and the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush witnessed in Boston on Tuesday.

Both Mr. Cheney and Mr. Lieberman did not let down their guard but stayed on the offensive without relying on one-liners and pot shots. The exchange may not have been lively — few expected this — but in many ways was academic and professorial as they talked on a range of issues including tax cuts, abortion, education and the readiness of the American military machine. And as expected, both Mr. Cheney and Mr. Lieberman only endorsed what their main candidates have been saying in the last several months.

Mr. Gore may have come out on top in the raft of opinion polls on the debate itself but many are questioning the manner in which the Vice-President took on the questions and his general demeanour during the course of the 90 minutes. Mr. Bush came to Boston debate as the underdog and is perceived to have passed the test in more than an adequate fashion. This, however, does not mean an overall endorsement of the Texas Governor or the kind of policies he has been talking about.

If the first encounters at the Presidential and Vice-Presidential debates are anything to go by, the focus will remain for the most part on domestic issues with Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore having to stick with their broad outlines on medicare, prescription drugs, social security, tax cuts, education and on issues such as abortion. There will be a lot of other equally important issues that will crop up as well, such as racial profiling and hate crimes.

One of the sensitive issues that the Clinton administration has been trying to deal with

has been racial profiling, or the accusation that on a routine basis, police officers stop non-white drivers just because of the colour of their skin. At the Vice-Presidential debate, Mr. Lieberman was asked about racial profiling.

The Senator mentioned the case of a White House aide who was stopped and surrounded by police in Maryland "for no other cause than anyone can determine than the colour of his skin". In the view of Mr. Lieberman, racial profiling is to be denounced and promised White House action to end it. The Montgomery county police have been quick to issue a denial. "The facts don't fit in... This had nothing to do with racial profiling", the county police has said going on to make the point that

the driver was stopped because the vehicle matched the description of a stolen car; and the whole incident was over in about eight minutes when it was realised that the police had stopped the wrong vehicle. The Lieberman camp stands by its version.

The expectation in next week's debate between Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush is that the candidates will come out of their numbers game and get into more broad based themes of policy that will be put in place upon victory on November 7. Both the major party candidates are paying a lot of attention to key battleground States in the South and the Midwest in the hope of coming with the required electoral college votes on election day.



The Democratic Party's Vice-Presidential candidate, Senator Joseph Lieberman (right), and his Republican counterpart, Mr. Dick Cheney, shake hands before their debate at Centre College in Danville, Kentucky, on Thursday. — Reuters

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After forty years Quemoy and Matsu feature prominently in Gore, Bush debate

By Harvey Stockwin
The Times of India News Service

HONG KONG: History came full circle in a small but fascinating corner of Asia this past week as vice-president Al Gore and Texas governor George Bush conducted the first of their three presidential debates.

Thanks to the miracle of the Internet, it's possible to directly compare the past with the present and listen again to the first presidential debates between vice-president Richard Nixon and Senator Jack Kennedy in 1960.

The old debates firmly knocked on the head the idea that, in politics, progress is the automatic way of the world. Kennedy and Nixon spoke throughout the four debates with a commitment and an eloquence that Mr Bush and Mr Gore obviously lack. Both Nixon and Kennedy spoke with a conviction which naturally arose from having a comprehensive vision of what they wanted to achieve, which, in those days, was considered an essential aspect of being a politician.

Both Mr Gore and Mr Bush convey far less conviction mainly because their vision of politics basically arises from what their opinion polls, their focus groups and their numerous professional advisers tell them the public wants to hear. The media cliché is that

Kennedy won the 1960 debates because while he looked young and vigorous, Nixon looked ill and spent, mainly because he didn't put on any make-up.

But that contrast was in the first debate only — and there was much more to the contest than that. In actual historical fact, Nixon won the succeeding three debates on the force of his arguments, which was one reason why Kennedy won the presidency so narrowly in November 1960, and only with the help of Chicago mayor Richard Daley's political machine, plus the resurrection of quite a few dead voters in Cook County.

One reason Nixon was recognised as the winner in the debates was that, in those distant days, many Americans accessed the debates through radio not television. Kennedy was the first politician whose flair for TV image creation helped him capture the presidency. But those listening on radio were not seduced by images; they heard only the arguments. On radio Nixon's 5 O'clock shadow counted for nothing.

The one issue which dominated

the 1960 debates, getting more attention than Cuba or Berlin, concerned two small islands off the coast of the Chinese province of Fujian — Quemoy, the Nationalist-held island adjacent to Xiamen, and Matsu, also Nationalist-held, adjacent to Fuzhou. While Nixon and Kennedy focussed on



Al Gore



George Bush

Quemoy and Matsu, their underlying argument was — how do you best defend Formosa, for these were the days before the United States got around to calling Taiwan,

Taiwan. Further, while the debates focussed on the fate of Formosa, the underlying argument was the Cold War one — how do you best defend the free world against communism? Differences arose, and sharpened, as Kennedy started to argue, in the second debate, that defending Formosa need not involve defending the indefensible Quemoy and Matsu so close to Communist China. Nixon quickly countered by maintaining that to force the Nationalists to give up Quemoy and Matsu would only make it more likely that Formosa would be attacked.

He argued this case so vehemently that, as you listen again, it becomes almost impossible to remember that Nixon, in 1972, a mere 12 years after the 1960 campaign, would be assuring Zhou En-Lai in Beijing that Taiwan was a part of China and the U.S. did not support independence for Taiwan.

Under Nixon's attack, Kennedy was forced to back away from his original contention, though he was able to point out that the then president Dwight Eisenhower had tried, and failed, to persuade the Nationalist leader Chiang Kai-Shek to withdraw completely from Quemoy and Matsu.

The last American advisers to Nationalist troops on Quemoy and Matsu were finally withdrawn in 1976. The arrangement whereby China shelled Quemoy and Matsu on odd numbered days, and Taiwan shelled the mainland on even numbered days continued into the 1980s. Ironically, it was only this week, exactly 40 years after Quemoy and Matsu featured so prominently in the first presidential debates, that Taiwan finally announced that, as from December, after an interval of 50 years, the two offshore islands (both of which are over 100 miles from Taiwan) would resume restricted trading, postal and transport links with their natural hinterland in China.

RACIAL ECHOES

SM 100J vindicated by new evidence 5-6

SIGNIFICANT new evidence indicates that OJ Simpson, the American football star whose trial for the murder of his wife Nicole Brown and her paramour Ronald Goldman ran like a real life soap opera, was almost certainly framed by the Los Angeles police, who, it now seems, planted blood samples implicating Simpson in his house and car. OJ is black, while both Brown and Goldman were whites; at the time of the trial, whites in America almost universally assumed that Simpson was guilty, and that he had been acquitted because the jury was largely black. The case may have touched a chord in the American racial consciousness, where a black man having a relationship with a white woman arouses primordial fears, comparable to upper caste Indian reactions to a Harijan having an affair with an upper caste woman. Additionally, to a television audience accustomed to watching cops chasing dangerous robbers, the sight of Simpson being chased down California's freeways by lawmen must have indicated that the accused was guilty as charged.

Black men suspected of relationships with white women were lynched in the US up to the 1930s, much as lower caste men eloping with upper caste women are lynched in Indian villages even now. Detective Mark Fuhrman of the LAPD, who investigated the murder, was revealed during his courtroom depositions to be a racist; the question now is whether the overwhelming presumption that OJ was the murderer put undue pressure on the prosecution to prove him guilty, and the prosecution responded by planting evidence. The LAPD, in fact, has a reputation to live down; it has been known to plant evidence routinely, which casts serious doubt on its professional abilities. A sprawling city of contrasts, from exclusive Beverly Hills peopled by Hollywood stars to impoverished black ghettos of South Central, Los Angeles has been a tinderbox of racial tensions — it was here that the brutal beating of black motorist Rodney King took place in 1992, triggering nationwide race riots. Something clearly needs to be done to address the racism that has permeated the city's lawmen, as well as the sorry economic and social condition of the black underclass in US cities, which sticks out like a sore thumb in one of the world's most prosperous societies.

THE STATESMAN

Foreign policy may dominate debate

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, OCT. 11. Both the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore and the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, are preparing for their second encounter more carefully as both have come under criticism for the manner in which they went about the first Presidential debate in Boston last week. And by all accounts, the pressure is on Mr. Gore to ensure that he does not emerge as a "know all" again.

The Bush camp is reportedly focussing on foreign policy for the debate today in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. With events in West Asia showing a semblance of returning to normality, questions lingering about the fate and future of former Yugoslavian strongman, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic and the President, Mr. Bill Clinton signing the China Trade Bill and breaking the 50-year impasse with North

Korea by meeting Gen. Jo Myong Rok at the White House, the Bush campaign sees the prospect of foreign policy figuring in a prominent fashion on Wednesday night.

The Texas Governor is perceived to be weak on foreign affairs and to change this image, for the last few days he has spent a lot of time with his key foreign policy advisors like Ms. Condoleeza Rice, Mr. Robert Zoellick and Mr. Paul Wolfowitz, all of whom served in high-profile positions with previous Republican Presidents. Foreign policy did not figure in any major way in Boston but in the little discussion there was, Mr. Bush emerged unscathed. While Mr. Gore did not want a role for Russia to ease the crisis in Yugoslavia, the Texas Governor spoke of a role for Moscow and the turn of events have vindicated Mr. Bush's belief. It is being pointed out that

only after Moscow's intervention did Mr. Milosevic concede defeat and that the Clinton administration had, in fact, seen a role for the Russians all along in the Balkans.

Apart from the speculation on foreign policy figuring tonight, focus will be on the strategy of the two candidates. Both will have to come out of their numbers game, appear aggressive and, at the same time not sound arrogant or condescending. The Vice-President especially will have to make sure that he is not again seen as "making things up" or exaggerating. Mr. Gore may have won the opinion polls in the first debate but Mr. Bush has been credited with holding his own. Overall, the numbers pointed to a disapproval of how Mr. Gore went about the business last week. Mr. Gore's advisors's have taken this seriously.

The major party candidates are

getting into the second debate fully aware that the race is heading to the wires. Opinion polls have some cheer for the Republican nominee but this does not mean Mr. Al Gore is losing. Most of the polls still show a statistical dead-heat but a majority of surveys reveal that Mr. Bush may have wrested back the advantage his opponent enjoyed for a while, perhaps even pulling ahead.

The second debate is seen as critical for the reason of format which is what the Texas Governor fought for and won. For this debate, the candidates will be seated around a table — as opposed to standing behind a lecturn — and taking questions from the moderator. The last debate will be held in St. Louis next week and this will be more of a town hall type meeting with the candidates having to take questions from citizens.

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Hague challenges Blair to call early poll

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, OCT. 7. Three years after they were so comprehensively defeated that a return to power seemed like a daydream, the Tories are sensing power again and they ended their party conference at Bournemouth this week on a "high" with Mr. William Hague, the leader of the Opposition, daring the Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair to call the next elections "now". The Conservatives, he said, were "ready to govern" and they would "govern for all" contrary to the Labour's attempt to portray them as extremists and racists.

In his hour-long key note address to the party delegates, Mr. Hague repeatedly stressed the new Tory theme of "inclusion" saying that "we will govern for the

mainstream"; and in case you missed the point he came back to it more directly emphasising that the Tories stood for "tolerance" and respected the "diversity" of British social life. This was clearly a response to the Labour's charge that the Tories pursued an "exclusivist" agenda and were hostile to ethnic minorities and the poor.

The Conservatives had spent most of their four-day conference trying to rebut the Labour charge and project a new image of their party; a party which they said believed in One Nation cutting across ethnic, class and gender barriers. The former Prime Minister Mr. John Major had been among those who led the campaign to put a human face on Tory policies and by the time Mr. Hague took the floor he had been convinced that the party could

not hope to return to power if it remained alienated from groups which were increasingly becoming crucial to election results.

Mr. Hague called it "commonsense" to carry everyone together and declared that "we are going to lead a commonsense revolution". There were a few brown faces in the audience and they cheered wildly everytime Mr. Hague spoke of his party's "commitment" to Britain's diversity. Outside the conference, however, people were not in a hurry to fall for Mr. Hague's rhetoric, and a general reaction was that they would like to see the rhetoric translated into concrete action before making up their minds.

Mr. Hague was scathing in his attack on Mr. Blair and his team, calling it a "clique" and a bunch

of "spin masters". They were arrogant, out of step with public mood and were either busy trying to grab headlines or "stab" each other in the back. He compared them to the constantly feuding characters in a T.V. soap opera called "Neighbours from Hell". The "new" Labour, he said, was not a philosophy but a "fashion" whose days were over.

The audience was generous with applause as Mr. Hague took potshots at Labour leaders saying they were so out of touch with reality that one Minister when asked if he knew the problems of farmers said: "Yes, I have a cottage in the country".

Another reportedly cashed a £20 pound sent to him by a poor pensioner to protest the Government's pension policy!

'Obscure four' in Booker shortlist

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, OCT. 7. Kazuo Ishiguro who won the 1989 Booker Prize for "The Remains of the Day" is back in the reckoning for this year's Booker, as is the one-time darling of the feminists, Margaret Atwood, who was shortlisted three times in the past but never made it to the big day. Ishiguro and Atwood are the stars of this year's shortlist of mostly obscure writers, and bookies are putting their money on Atwood's "The Blind Assassin" 2 to 1. The odds for Ishiguro's "When We Were Orphans" are 5 to 2.

The other four shortlisted writers, barely known outside very intimate literary circles, are way behind but their mere appearance on the £ 21000 prize short-

list, announced here on Thursday, has already boosted the sales of their novels. The "Obscure Four", as the media has dubbed them, include the debutante Trezza Azzopardi for "The Hiding Place" (Picador), Michael Collins for "The Keepers of Truth" (Phoenix House), Mathew Kneale for "English Passengers" (Hamish Hamilton) and Brian O'Doherty for "The Deposition of Father McGreevy" (Arcadia).

Considering that the Booker traditionally throws up surprises — the shortlist itself is full of surprises — anyone of them can upset the favourites and end up as a dark horse. Indeed, over the years, it has become conventional wisdom to expect the darkest

of horses to win the race. As in the past, the shortlist has raised eyebrows for different reasons, with newspaper headings ranging from "Booker judges shun modern Britain" (*The Times*) to "Obscure authors make Booker history" (*The Guardian*) and "Booker judges stick to the well-told story of pretenders and conspicuous absentees" (*The Independent*). The most astonishing "absentee" is Zadie Smith whose first novel "White Teeth", somewhat overwritten but a brilliant examination of cross-cultural experiences, was widely expected to sail through the shortlist. Its omission is particularly surprising because it is precisely the kind of novel that is known to appeal to the Booker judges — complex, not everyone's cup of

tea, full of allusions, satirical, occasionally over the top but extremely good literature in the end. Others whose omission has been noted include Julian Barnes, Doris Lessing, Fay Weldon, Michael Ondaatje, A. S. Byatt and J.G. Ballard.

The Times columnist, Mr Simon Jenkins, who chaired the jury suggested that the quality of entries this year was rather modest and it was not easy to choose. "It was a year when no book leapt out at us", he said. Last year, on the other hand, the jury had to keep out celebrities like Salman Rushdie and Vikram Seth in order to make it a more level playing field for lesser glamorous novelists; and the result was J.M. Coetzee's haunting "Disgrace".

THE HINDU

OCT 2000

Bush, Gore have a polite debate

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, OCT. 12. Foreign policy was the theme of the second Presidential debate, which saw the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, differing on how United States should exercise its power and influence in the world arena.

"If we're an arrogant nation, they'll resent us. If we are a humble nation but strong, they'll welcome us," Mr. Bush said, adding that it was not the business of the U.S. to dispatch its troops overseas for nation-building. Agreeing that humility was an important factor, Mr. Gore said America should also have a "sense of mission" in the world.

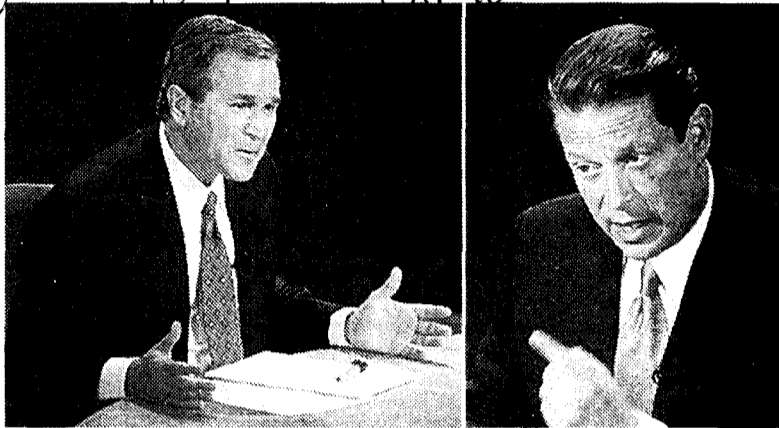
He pointed out that people all over the world looked up to the U.S. as a model for economic and political freedoms. "The power of example is America's greatest power in the world," the Vice-President remarked.

The Democratic and Republican nominees, barely three weeks from their final showdown, appeared to have come to Winston-Salem, North Carolina, with a different strategy for the Wednesday evening encounter — less of argument, less of quibbling over numbers and more civility in the exchange.

For 90 minutes, the two disagreed on domestic and foreign policy issues but did so politely and professionally. Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore were put through the foreign policy test by the moderator.

While the consensus was that the Vice-President displayed his knowledge of foreign affairs and his opponent much less so, Mr. Bush maintained his ground in questions pertaining to Iraq, the Balkans, Somalia, Russia and Haiti.

India got a mention in the context of the environment and the Kyoto Treaty. "... one thing I am not going to do is I'm not going to let the United States carry the burden for clean-



The Democratic candidate for the U.S. presidential elections, Mr. Al Gore (right), and his Republican rival, Mr. George Bush, during the debate at Wake Forest University's Wait Chapel in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, on Wednesday. — AP

ing up the world's air, like the Kyoto Treaty would have done. China and India were exempted from the Treaty. I think we need to be more even handed..." said Mr. Bush. The two candidates basically stuck to their party positions on the role of the U.S. in the post-Cold War era, including with respect to international financial institutions as it pertains to "bailing out".

The International Monetary Fund, according to the Texas Governor, has a role but not to tell world bankers. "If you make a bad loan we'll bail you out".

While arguing that American troops should be used primarily for fighting wars and not for nation-building, the Texas Governor also agreed that troops should be used to overthrow a dictator when it was in the best interests of the U.S. "We can't be all things to all people in the world...I am worried about over-committing our military around the world," the Texas Governor said.

Mr. Bush was critical of the way in which the Clinton administration dealt with Russia, saying billions of

dollars had ended up in the pockets of corrupt officials. "We went to Russia (and) we said, 'Here is some IMF money' and it ended up in Viktor Chernomyrdin's pocket and others," the Texas Governor maintained.

Mr. Bush said only Russians should reform Russia and only that country's President, Mr. Vladimir Putin should make the decision "as to whether or not he wants to adhere to the rule of law and normal accounting practices so that if countries and or entities invest capital, there is a reasonable rate of return, a way to get the money out of the economy."

Wednesday night's debate at the Wake Forest University was not all about foreign policy. The candidates sparred — sharply but politely — on such issues as credibility, commitment to health care, the environment, education and racial profiling.

The Texas Governor did take a jab or two at the Vice-President for "distorting" many of his positions and stressed that credibility was something that the American people must consider on November 7.

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W. Asia 'shadow' on Bush-Gore debate

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI, OCT. 17. Final touches have been given at The Washington University here for the last of the Presidential debates between the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore. The two will be interacting with an audience of uncommitted voters in a town hall setting. Mr. Gore is seen as more experienced of the two in such an environment, but Mr. Bush is determined to make the best out of it.

The setting and environment of the final debate aside, there is a lot of interest on how the Republican and Democratic nominees will use the occasion to drive home their respective points of view on a range of domestic and foreign policy issues. With the developments in West Asia grabbing attention from the political campaign, the question is the extent to which this is going to play out both in the final debate and in the remaining three weeks.

Mr. Gore has been closeted with his small group of private citizen advisors and his principal strategists; and going about the practice sessions discussing issues as they come about. The Gore campaign, including Mr. Gore, have made no bones of the fact that "all" issues are on the table as far as this Presidential election goes.

On his way to St. Louis, Mr. Bush stopped by in the State of Arkansas making sure that he made stops in areas normally considered swing sections in the state. The Republicans are confident that come November 7, Arkansas will move away from being a "Clinton Country" and go along with Mr. Bush and the GOP. The State has heavy Republican pockets and is well represented in the American Congress with one GOP Senator and two in the House of Representatives. The State Govern-

nor is Republican as well.

The State of Missouri is equally important for the Republicans and the Democrats; and both parties have been busy trying to drum up support in the last stages of the electoral showdown. Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush are running neck-and-neck in polls; and the Democrats are keen to see that the organised labour gets out on election day and vote. At stake for the GOP too is the Senate seat of Mr. John Ashcroft.

There is a lot of interest here on the strategy of Mr. Gore. He came away far too aggressive in the first debate in Boston; and was seen as too passive in the second in Winston Salem, North Carolina. The big question now is if Mr. Gore is going to take "his" gloves off and go after Mr. Bush, primarily on his track record in the State of Texas on such issues as education, environment and spending for the needy.

The Gore camp is confident that its candidate can effectively do the job without giving the impression of being condescending. The impression is that he will come away somewhere in the middle of the performances in Boston and Winston-Salem. Mr. Bush is not seen as someone comfortable with a town hall setting; and the critical thing for him, analysts maintain, is to hold his own. To both Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush the important aspect is to stay away from gaffes.

One issue that is meriting a lot of attention in the last several days are the developments in West Asia and the extent to which this is going to make an impact on election day next month. Some analysts are looking beyond and asking the hypothetical question of what would happen should the Clinton administration seek some sort of retribution for the attack on the American Destroyer, the USS Cole.

THE HINDU

18 OCT 2000

Bush Jr leads ahead of the final debate

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18/10

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, October 17

REPUBLICAN GEORGE W. Bush maintains his slim, yet consistent, lead over Democrat Al Gore as the two brace themselves for their third and final telly showdown. What is significant is that the Bush upswing comes through clearly in every single opinion poll.

Vice-President Gore appears to have been caught up in confusion over the face he should project. If he was aggressive and abrasive (as some thought) in his otherwise sound opening debate, he was unnaturally low profile, passive and yielding in his second encounter with the Texas Governor.

Which Al Gore will stand up and be counted the third time round? That indeed has been the subject of animated talk in recent days. If Gore campaign chairman William Daley is to be believed, the Vice-President would "be himself". His ostensible line to Mr Gore is: Be your natural self, you don't have to try to play it safe.

The debate at St. Louis's Washington University will follow the "town hall" format with the audience, instead of a moderator, shooting questions. Of the two, Mr Gore is reckoned to be more at home with this format. He is said to have handled some 1,000-odd sessions of this type over the years.

For Mr Bush, who overtook Mr Gore about a fortnight ago, there was more good news as a slew of polls over the last two days have confirmed his lead. An NBC-Wall Street Journal poll gives him 48

per cent as against Mr Gore's 42 per cent. An ABC-Washington Post poll says it is 48-44 per cent in Mr Bush's favour, while a CNN-Time poll puts it at 48-43.

One or two polls were somewhat less gloomy for the Gore camp. The latest Reuters/MSNBC poll showed Mr Bush ahead by just one point (43-42 per cent), indicating that Mr Gore could retrieve his position ahead of the debates, beginning October 3, when he used to be in the lead for a month or so.

Whichever way things proceed from now on, pollsters and pundits seem to be agreed that the upcoming presidential race might well be the closest since John F. Kennedy narrowly won against Richard M. Nixon in 1960.

If Mr Gore has the advantage of knowledge and experience to handle presidency, in addition to the durable economic

boom of recent years, Mr Bush has struck a chord with people for his sincerity and refreshing approach.

Some of the polls have, in fact, endorsed Mr Bush for being more honest, trustworthy and straightforward than Mr Gore. In the ABC-Washington Post-poll, for instance, Mr Bush came through as one being more trustworthy and more likely to provide a fresh start.

Mr Bush, eager to safeguard the impact he has made in his last debate, says his will be an "American message" and not a partisan one. Nor will he be a "political chameleon", he says, in a clear reference to Mr Gore's purported habit of changing his lines to suit the occasion.



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 OCT 2000

Popular vote may not a winner make

FOR the first time in recent memory an academically interesting, but politically disturbing, question is asked by some about the 7 November election for the American presidency: Could a candidate secure a majority of the popular vote but yet lose the election?

Thanks to the system of electoral college prescribed in the US Constitution for election of the President and the Vice-President, the answer is that it could happen. And it did happen, if only once and as long ago as in 1888.

In the electoral college system — an admittedly difficult one to comprehend — each state has as many electoral votes as the number of those representing it in the Senate and the House of Representatives, while the District of Columbia, where the federal capital is located, has three.

There are, thus, 538 electoral votes, in all. To be elected President, a candidate has to secure a majority of these votes, namely 270. As the system has developed over the years, in all but two states the candidate securing a majority of the popular vote, by whatever margin, automatically takes all its electoral votes. (The exceptions are Maine, with four votes, and Nebraska, with five — allot their electoral votes in proportion to the popular vote polled by the candidates.)

And it frequently happens that a winner may have only a slim majority of the popular vote but yet command a very substantial majority of the electoral votes. In 1980, Ronald Reagan secured just 51 per cent of the popular vote but, because of the winner-take-all system governing electoral votes, he received 91 per cent of the latter.

His popular-vote triumphs quite simply happened in high-count electoral vote states. Hence the question now asked whether a candidate in the coming election could possibly win an electoral college majority, and the presidency, while failing to win a majority of the popular vote.

Some aver that this is extremely unlikely. But these advance the proposition that, in a close race, a candidate who prevails in the states that matter most is likely to win not only the electoral college but the popular

vote as well. Hence, clearly, the spectacle of both major candidates concentrating, at this late stage of the electoral campaign, on "heavy-weight" states with a high count of electoral votes. There are eight such states: Florida, Illinois, Kentucky, Michigan, Missouri, New Jersey and Pennsylvania. These command a high 139 electoral votes. According to a professor of political science at Michigan State University, these "pivotal states may be in doubt right up to Election Day". To clinch the election in his favour and secure the presidency, a candidate must win these.

As of now, according to the latest tabulation cited by a national daily, Al Gore has substantial leads in 11 states with 149 electoral votes, while George W. Bush leads in 18 states with 128 electoral votes.

"At this point," a *Wall Street Journal* analyst wrote, "strategists for both Republican Bush and Democrat Al Gore see the race as a series of state-by-state battles." For, at the end, the point is not to be ahead in the national opinion polls or in the overall popular vote count. "The point is to win enough individual states to claim the 270 electoral votes required to get a majority in the electoral college."

Conservatism at stake COULD there really be an ideological dimension to the contest in the coming US presidential election? According to the conservative weekly *National Review*, there is. "It is, to be specific, a high-stakes election for conservatives," a senior editor of the magazine wrote in its latest issue. "For at least 40 years, the conservatives' unifying goal has been to repeal the welfare state, or at least to force it to retrench. Conservatism, considered as a movement dedicated to that goal, is on life support. Mr Gore's election could be the final blow."

The writer explained: "Mr



Al Gore shares a laugh with supporters after a rally at Sarasota-Bradenton International Airport and George W Bush greets a crowd on the Strawberry Festival grounds in Plant City. Both see Florida's 25 electoral votes as crucial to their chances of winning the election. — AP/PTI



tions have a party in power that will do their bidding. And if the Democrats win, Wall Street knows the DLC will keep them in line."

For aspiring writers ONE noteworthy segment of the prolific Stephen King's latest work, *On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft*, is a list of the best books among those he read over the last three or four years. In a brief preface to the list, King notes: "In some way or other, I suspect each book in the list had an influence on the books I wrote <during these years>." He adds a caution to aspiring writers for whom his book, his first work of non-fiction, is meant: "As you scan this list, please remember that I'm not Oprah and this isn't my 'book club.' These are the ones that worked for me, that's all. But you could do worse, and a good many of these might show you some new ways of doing your work."

Here is a culling from that instructive list that comprises quite a few classics by old masters alongside notable works by contemporary authors: James Agee — *A Death in the Family*; Paul Bowles — *The Sheltering Sky*; Raymond Carver — *Where I'm Coming From*; Michael Chabon — *Wolverines in their Youth*; Joseph Conrad — *Heart of Darkness*; Charles Dickens — *Oliver Twist*; William Faulkner — *As I Lay Dying*; William Golding — *Lord of the Flies*; Graham Greene — *Our Man in Havana*; Harper Lee — *To Kill*

of organised labour. The DLC is believed to have the support of corporate America and control of much of the upper-level of the party; and has been described as "an ideological force that opposes almost all of what the party stands for."

In the current issue of *The Progressive* monthly, one commentator mentioned the nomination of Mr Gore, "a man present at the founding of the DLC and loyal to the organisation ever since", for the presidency, and of Joe Lieberman, "the current president of the DLC and very possibly the truest of true believers", for the vice-presidency, as a measure of the growing power of the council.

The commentator said: "Today, the DLC is not merely the favoured club of Al Gore and Joe Lieberman. It's also at the centre of a web of think tanks, lobbying groups, and electoral activity to create a new-model Democratic Party. This new party favours Wall Street-approved free trade pacts, privatisation of public services, school 'choice', business-friendly regulatory 'reforms', and other planks of the Republican Party's economic platform. With the DLC in a position to influence the Democratic Party, 'Wall Street wins either way', says the commentator. "If the Republicans win, the corpora-

a Mockingbird; Somerset Maugham — *The Moon and Six-pence*; Frank McCourt — *Angela's Ashes*; Mitchell — *Ondaatje* — *The English Patient*; Annie Proulx — *The Shipping News*; JK Rowling — the first three Harry Potter books (*The Sorcerer's Stone*; *The Chamber of Secrets*; *The Prisoner of Azkaban*); Vikram Seth — *A Suitable Boy*; Irwin Shaw — *The Young Lions*; Evelyn Waugh — *Brideshead Revisited*. (Does Stephen King read the Potter books, you might ask. In fact, he has read even the latest, *The Goblet of Fire* — and wrote about it in *The New York Times Book Review* soon after the book was released. He wrote: "The Harry Potter series is a supernatural version of Tom Brown's *School Days*, updated and given a hip this-is-how-kids-really-are shine.")

King's inclusion of that eclectic reading list (comprising 98 titles, in all) is apparently to reinforce his advice that "if you want to be a writer, you must do two things above all others: read a lot and write a lot; there's no way around these two things that I'm aware of, no short cut." He adds: "I am a slow reader, but I usually get through seventy or eighty books a year, mostly fiction. I don't read in order to study the craft; I read because I like to read. It's what I do at night kicked back in my blue chair. Similarly, I don't read fiction to study the art of fiction, but simply because I like stories. Yet there is a learning process going on. Every book you pick up has its own lesson or lessons."

In his book — a warmly conversational one about literary craftsmanship, as a *New York Times* reviewer hailed it — the master of horror fiction talks also about his "pretty clear-cut" writing schedule. "Mornings belong to whatever is new — the current composition. Afternoons are for naps and letters. Evenings are for reading, family, Red Sox games on TV, and any revisions that just can-

not wait. "Basically, mornings are my prime writing time...Once I start work on a project, I don't stop and I don't slow down unless I absolutely have to. If I don't write every day, the characters begin to stale off in my mind." And, he notes elsewhere, he writes a steady 2,000 words each day he works on a book. You now know why Stephen King belongs to the magic circle of bestsellerati, making around \$40 million in a good year. That, however, is the gross. "What finally nets out is maybe a third," he mentioned in one interview.

On the best side JOHN Kenneth Galbraith, the 91-year-old economist and author of several works regarded as classics, including *The Affluent Society* and *The New Industrial State*, is at work on a new book. It is titled *The Economics of Innocent Fraud*.

"It deals with all of the things we do, in an innocent way, to cover up the truth," Galbraith told an interviewer. "I begin with the renaming of the system. It used to be called capitalism. But that evokes Marx and Rockefeller. So now we speak of the market system. That is a nice bland expression, which forgets those off-colour references."

"Then I write about work. We talk of the enormous virtues of work, but it turns out that that is mostly for the poor. If you're rich enough or if you're a college professor, the virtue lies in leisure and the use you make of your leisure time. "Next, I go on to the stock market, where I show, I think without a doubt, that what is called 'financial genius' is merely a rising market." He said: "That whole effort has given me a good deal of pleasure." Incidentally, how does he propose to vote in the coming presidential election? The economist's answer: "I've become accustomed to supporting politicians who are more conservative than I am. This is not entirely a surprise. But I'm certainly going to support Al Gore because, on the whole, he's the more sensible figure and you vote not for the perfect but for the best." Galbraith, as you will recall, was US ambassador to India between 1961 and 1963.

W.D.

blows in final debate ⁵¹³ 19/10/01

DESIKAN THIRUNARAYANAPURAM
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18. — Vice-President Mr Al Gore and Texas governor Mr George W. Bush traded angry words, attacked each other's stand on key policies and stressed their differences during the last presidential debate in Missouri yesterday.

This was the last time before the November polls that both the candidates appeared in the same place, at the same time and had their last chance to convince the voters just how differently they would handle important issues of the nation.

Their last debate at times, appeared as if both the candidates were resisting a strong urge to trade blows as they

often sprang up from their chairs and stood close to each other to answer questions.

The debate, moderated by public television host Mr Jim Lehrer, started with a moment's silence for Mel Carlahan, the governor of Missouri, who died Tuesday in a plane crash. Mr Carlahan, a Democrat, was in the race for a US Senate seat.

Unlike the previous two debates, questions at this one came from the audience and covered not only the candidates' pet issues like health care, insurance, education and taxes, but also other, close-cutting ones like gun laws, the death penalty and cynicism about the government. The audience was made up of undecided voters chosen by Gallup.

Mr Bush framed his answers

within broad invocations of god, family and love. Mr Gore, a quick study for names and issues, rolled out fast facts and figures to illustrate exactly how he would deal with issues — a habit that has, ironically, turned some voters against him for what they deem his "smarty pants" attitude.

At one point Mr Bush played straight into Mr Gore's hands when he agreed that his tax plans would benefit the wealthiest in the country. "Of course they will," he said before fumbling to explain how the cuts would benefit the poor.

The point of agreement came only over foreign policy, specifically over West Asia. "I applaud the President for what he is doing in the Middle East," Mr Bush said.

THE STATESMAN

7 OCT 2001

Bush trails behind Gore in final debate

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, October 18

DEMOCRAT AL Gore appears to have wrested the initiative a wee bit from his Republican opponent George W. Bush with a strong performance in their final TV showdown on Tuesday night in the run-up to what promises to be the closest presidential race since 1960.

Deciding to be his natural self, after many hiccups over the face he should project, Gore went on the offensive from the word go.

Stronger of the two on facts and articulation, though somewhat vulnerable to the charge of exaggeration, Gore repeatedly challenged Bush on his agenda.

The Texas Governor, in comparison, was sober and seemingly yielding ground to the Vice-President's harangues on a host of domestic issues like tax cuts, health care and education.

On occasions, he ducked pointed questions from Gore, who kept on firing them, despite being pulled up by the moderator for transgressing the ground rules.

Whichever way the campaign goes on from now to the D-day of November 7, political analysts are generally agreed that Gore was the winner in last night's climactic round III of the debate series. Round II on October 11 had belonged to Bush, while the opening on October 3 had backfired on

Gore because of his aggression, slip-ups and condescending air.

A snap poll by the CBS soon after the debate indicated that Gore was bouncing back by giving him 45 per cent to Bush's 40 per cent. An ABC poll, however, reported a 41-41 tie.

Either way, it would signify a loss of ground for Bush, who had been steady, though marginally, ahead of Gore over the past fortnight.

By all accounts, it was a feisty debate at the Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. The only moment of solemnity was at the outset when a minute's silence was observed in memory of Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan who had died in a plane crash the previous night.

Gore began on an offensive note. "If you want somebody who believes that we were better off eight years ago then we are now and that we ought to go back to the kind of policies that we had back then, emphasising tax cuts mainly for the wealthy, here is your man," Gore said, pointing towards Bush. "But if you want somebody who will fight for you and who will fight for middle-class tax cuts, then I am your man."

Bush, who kept his cool for much of the 90-minute exchange, countered: "You talk about eight years. They haven't gotten anything done on Medicare, social security, patients' bill of rights. Its time to get something done."



Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush (L) and Democratic presidential candidate and Vice-President Al Gore during the debate at the Washington University in St. Louis on Tuesday. Photo: AP

He promised to get moving on all the issues through bi-partisan con-

Israel begins easing grip on Palestinians, violence rages

Jerusalem, October 18

ISRAEL VERY slowly began easing its tight clamp on the Palestinian territories Wednesday, but sporadic incidents of violence overnight put to the test a truce agreed in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheikh hours earlier.

The Palestinian airport in the Gaza Strip, closed after violence engulfed the region three weeks ago, remained shut early Wednesday despite a promise by the Israelis that it would reopen.

However, a limited number of workers and customs officials were allowed into the terminal, indicating that the facility could open later in the day.

While the main crossing between Gaza and Israel at Erez remained closed early Wednesday, limited exit to Egypt from the Palestinian territory was being allowed at the southern town of Rafah.

The flashpoint West Bank town of Nablus remained closed, with tanks still stationed at positions overlooking it. The Israeli army had said the tanks would be withdrawn overnight.

The easing of security and the opening of the airport are among the stipulations of truce accord worked out between Palestinians and Israelis to end the unrest.

Under the unsigned agreement, both sides are to take concrete measures to stop the fighting, a fact-finding committee is to be set up to investigate the causes of the violence and Washington will try to bring the peace process back to life within weeks.

Israeli PM Ehud Barak said Tuesday he had ordered his security forces to "do everything" to implement the agreement. He added, however, that he would give Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat 48 hours to implement the truce. (AFP)

AND THE WINNER WILL BE BUSH

New Hampshire: When I predicted in the *Daily Telegraph* that Dubya would win the presidential election with 378 of the 538 electoral college votes the men in white coats arrived and bundled me off to the sanatorium. Fortunately, the muscle-control techniques I taught myself as a prisoner of the Viet Cong enabled me to wiggle free of my straitjacket, after which it was simply a matter of shinning down the drainpipe and shaking off the dogs by hiding until nightfall in a culvert upstream of the grounds.

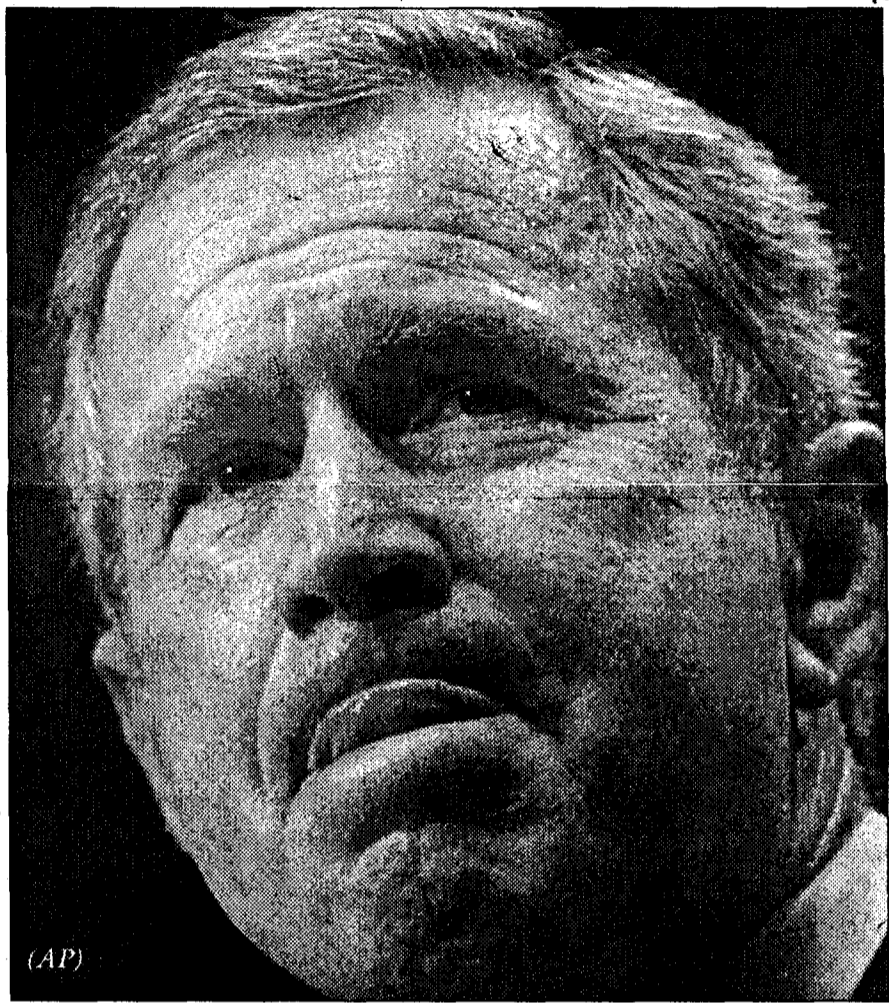
Like many escaped lunatics, I find it's everyone else who's acting strange. Here are some of the more obvious crazies of the current campaign:

● **POLLSTERS:** The other day *Newsweek* came up with a poll showing Gore ahead of Bush by 14 points. This is the same publication whose final poll in 1996, by the same polling organisation, showed Clinton ahead of Dole by 23 points. In the event, Clinton beat Dole by 8 per cent of the vote. Asked to explain a 15-point error, *Newsweek* said, ah, yes, in fact, it had taken another poll which showed something more like the eventual result, but for some reason it had decided not to publish it. I think it's safe to say that, if *Newsweek* polled me, Dubya, Mrs Dubya, Bush Senior, Barbara Bush, Jeb Bush, the Bush nephew who looks like Ricky Martin, Dick Cheney and his cat, the result would show a 14-point lead for Gore. What's odd is why anyone else would take *Newsweek* seriously, given its abysmal track record. Even now, most journalists insist that Gore has sewn up the election on no evidence other than his insurmountable lead in the daily tracking polls — i.e., Rasmussen and Battleground, which show Bush with a one-point lead; Zogby, which shows Bush with a two-point lead; CNN/USA *Today/Gallup*, which show Bush with a three-point lead.

● **THE MEDIA:** Much has been written about whether the US media display a liberal bias. More lately, Governor Bush has helpfully expanded the debate by raising the question of whether they are also 'major-league asshole'. But, leaving aside their liberal and racial tendencies, are they just plain nuts? In recent weeks, supposedly, the Bush campaign has stalled because of a series of 'gaffes'. For example, a campaign ad on healthcare flashed the last four letters of the word 'bureauRATS' across the screen for one-thirtieth of a second and prompted a front-page story in the *New York Times* about whether Bush was trying subliminally to influence the outcome of the election. AL Gore doesn't need subliminally to influence the outcome of the election because he can do it, er, liminally. In this instance, he told the *Times* guy about the Bush ad and they did a big story on it followed by a splendidly asshole editorial warning about the serious questions it raises. Recently, for example, while on his whistle-stop cruise down the Mississippi, AL was photographed in front of a big sign on his boat bearing the word 'families', that being one of the themes of his campaign. Unfortunately, the vice-president positioned himself badly and obscured the first part of the word so that the ensuing pictures showed AL next to the word 'lies'. This could convey the subliminal message to voters that Al Gore lies. Fortunately, Al's aides had a quiet word with the photographers and they sportingly agreed not to run the snaps.

Sadly, Dubya handled his rats more clumsily than AL handled his lies. The governor denied he was up to anything subliminal — or, as he put it, 'subliminable.' This prompted another round of bad press about the new gaffe he'd made while apologising for his old gaffe.

Then he recovered. The media were initially flummoxed by his rebounding poll numbers, but soon got on top of the situation. It turns out Dubya had been on *Oprah* but, instead of just hugging Oprah, as AL



(AP)

He is sane, well almost

BY MARK STEYN

did, the governor kissed her. This was felt by the analysts to have neutralised the impact of Al's tongue sarnie with Tipper at the Democratic Convention. By last weekend, his numbers had improved so dramatically that even the *Newsweek* poll had him within two points of Gore. Unless someone left a zero off.

Okay, I'm strictly a minor-league asshole, but how about this? Out in the real world, no one cared about the subliminal rodents, or Dubya's inability to pronounce 'subliminal', or his meticulous pronunciation of 'asshole', or his alleged dyslexia. Likewise, no one cared about whether he hugged Oprah, kissed Oprah or recreated the refrigerator scene from *9½ Weeks* on her stomach. It's only the media who persist in seeing the road to the White House as a wildly careering series of hairpin bends instead of a perfectly straight two-lane highway. Here's what really happened in the last month or so: after the Democratic Convention, Al belatedly solidified his base, as Dubya had done back in the spring. The Democrats' core constituencies took a lot longer to warm up to Al, and only really came on board in late August. The 'Gore surge' was a tardy consolidation, that's all.

Okay, I'm strictly a minor-league asshole, but how about this? Out in the real world, no one cared about the subliminal rodents, or Dubya's inability to pronounce 'subliminal', or his meticulous pronunciation of 'asshole', or his alleged dyslexia. It's only the media who persist in seeing the road to the White House as a wildly careering series of hairpin bends

many of those single greatest threats — particularly the top-of-the-line, gas-guzzling, four-wheel drive SGTs — are driven by swing voters. Rebutting Dubya's view of the Strategic Petroleum Reserves, AL did his usual shtick and claimed to have invented 'em: "I've been a part of the discussions on the strategic reserve since the days when it was first established." FOE the record, President Ford established the reserves in 1975, two years before young AL was first elected to Congress.

● **AL GORE:** Al has always been kinda weird, but these days he's off the graph. I'm no Gail Sheehy, but I'd say he's suffering from what Churchill used to call his "black dog" depressions. In Al's case, the dog is the family's pet Labrador, Shiloh. As the first Android-American to run for president, he's always gone to inhuman lengths to humanise himself, but a heartwarming anecdote about his mother-in-law, Margaret Ann Aitcheson, and his dog Shiloh, which he lifted from a Congressional report about the comparative costs of arthritis medicine, backfired horribly. Medically speaking, AL has by far the most interesting condition in the Gore household. On 19 September, while addressing a Teamsters meeting, he claimed that his favourite lullaby as a child had been the Union anthem, "Look for the Union Label", a song not written until 1975, by which time AL was already 27 and presumably allowed by his parents to stay up late working on inventing the Strategic Petroleum Reserves.

That's one reason I tend to favour the android explanation. AL has clearly been programmed with human responses but not in any coherent way connected to normal memory processes. What lullabies are really playing in his head? Or did he not have to be sung to sleep at all as a wee bairn? Was he simply switched off and hooked up to his recharger?

Faced with a man who endlessly reinvents himself and lies stupidly about everything from childhood lullabies to his dog's medication, the press has decided that, *au contraire*, the stupid guy is Dubya, whose campaign is so unsophisticated it's unable to reinvent itself. I believe this is what Mrs Sheehy calls 'displacement'. Actually, that's yet another reason the governor is the best thing to happen to American politics in a long time.

The Bush campaign is, by contemporary standards, completely inept. Something trivial blows up and, instead of getting their doctors out to spin the story, the Bush camp say, "Er, well, you've caught us on the hop there, give our rapid-response team a chance to mull it over and we'll get back to you next week." And guess what? The strategy works. In an election where everyone else — press, Gore, panicking Republicans — is, by any rational standard, completely deranged, Dubya is the still, calm, albeit somewhat incoherent voice of sanity. He just stands there while everyone else yo-yos all around him. He never changes. After he was overheard calling Adam Clymer of the *New York Times* a "major-league asshole", the press charged him with being insincere. For what it's worth, I think the episode demonstrates Dubya's sincerity. Invited to apologise for calling Mr Asshole a major league Clymer, Dubya said only that he regretted a private remark had been picked up by the microphones. I'll take a non-panderer who stands firm over an insecure weirdsmobile any day.

That's why I'll stick with my prediction of a Dubya victory, and I'm not worried about the debates, either. Al's bite may be worse than his arthritic dog's bark, but the minute those two guys are side by side on the same stage it's over. Uh-oh. I can hear the guys from the funny farm coming up the stairs again. So I'd better sign off before I get a tranquilliser dart in the Clymer.

By arrangement with *The Spectator*

On the Al trail: When defeat lies in victory

BY WILLIAM SAFIRE

Washington: If the town hall meeting between Bush and Gore were a prizefight being scored on points, the judges would declare Al Gore the winner. He earned more debating points and gets credit for aggressiveness in carrying the fight to his opponent. George W. Bush won the first debate by not losing; Gore lost the second debate by not fighting. In the rubber match, like the sadly victorious King Pyrrhus, Gore won the third debate in a way that may cost him the election.

The wondrous thing about debates is their effect on undecided voters; unconsciously, these fence-sitters find themselves taking sides. Then, to save their minds from cognitive dissonance, they engage in silent self-spinning. Without overtly making a decision, they start to root for one candidate, taking satisfaction in his well-made arguments, forgiving his weak responses, taking umbrage at the other candidate's demagogic shots or personal demeanour.

To the vast army of undecideds, this debate was conducted in body language. Gore bestrode the stage like a Colossus, expressing confidence in a John Wayne swagger, once almost butting his puffed-out chest against Bush in a Lazio-like space invasion. When not speaking, the vice president stood stiffly at attention, feet together, hands rigidly at his sides, to remind us visually of his service in Vietnam.

Playing to an electorate that supposedly dislikes finger-pointing, Gore repeatedly pointed an accusing finger at Bush and all around the room. In this way he goaded and tried to rattle Bush, who airily dismissed these devices as "an old high school debating trick."

Governor Bush, in contrast, often struck a Milquetoast pose, fingers intertwined as if in prayer, rocking from side to side as if his feet hurt. He looked plaintively to the referee to enforce the rules against direct elbowing in the clinches, while Gore — having shed the ill-fitting sheep's clothing of the previous meeting — resumed his lupine lecturing. Bush dismayed his supporters at first by failing to counter-punch when given clear openings. Gore's claim to have cut the federal payroll by 300,000 cried out for the easy comeback: Almost all of that was in Defense Department reduction after the Reagan-Bush cold-war victory. And Gore's campaign finance piety invited a sharp riposte: He's all for putting the barn door in a lockbox after stealing the fund-raising horse.

Not until the second half did Bush rouse himself to remind viewers that cynicism and apathy would be overcome when the nation elected "somebody who'll tell the truth." He got in a good lick about abolishing the unpopular death tax. He used a prepared line to underscore his big-spender charge — "If this were a spending contest, I'd come in second" — and closed strongly by reciting the promise that most irritates die-hard Clintonites: "to uphold the dignity and honour of the office."

Did Gore succeed in showing sharp difference between policies, so necessary to getting out his vote? Yes; to arrest the seeming slide toward Bush, he returned to the populism of the Democratic convention, using "fight" as his keyword, holding himself out as the class warrior out to soak the rich and to drive big oil and the big drug companies to the wall.

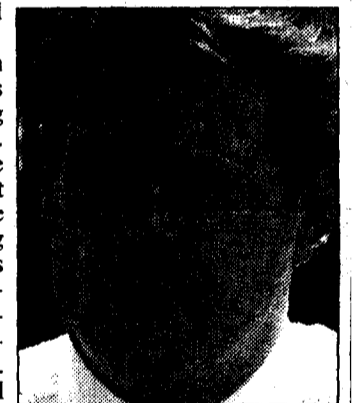
But in so doing, Gore displayed the difference between candidates in personality. He came on strong; he knew it all; he slid around questions to touch all the hot buttons (except, unaccountably, abortion and Supreme Court nominations). ABC's Cokie Roberts noted "the cringe factor": the negative reaction of many women to the ferocity of the policy wonk.

This final debate was less about positions (which will change as surpluses vanish) than impressions. Gore, playing catch-up, was determined to dominate the stage and thereby rally his dispirited troops; Bush, playing not to lose, was out to be so non-threatening as to narrow the gender gap.

For once, the personas reflect the persons; the images are close to the realities; "the style is the man himself." Gore is truly tough-minded, stupefyingly experienced and unabashedly divisive, while Bush is truly amiable and not all that deep and all too eager to unify.

Thanks to the revealing debates, what we see is what we'll get. Now we can make an informed choice.

By arrangement with *The New York Times*



U.K. Govt. under pressure to relax visa rules

By Hasan Suroor

LONDON, OCT. 19. The British Government is under increasing pressure to relax immigration rules for overseas workers with employers complaining of a huge shortage of skilled staff.

Apparently, the 30,000 extra work permits which the Government plans to issue over the next one year would not be enough to fill the gap.

Nor are attempts to train local workers in skilled jobs proving to be successful though the Government says it is spending £6 billion to ensure that the domestic labour force is sufficiently skilled.

Alarm bells are ringing in the job market as a new study by the recruitment agency Reed shows that 72 per cent of the British companies are facing shortage of skilled labour.

The figure has shot up by over 25 per cent in the past six months, and is climbing steadily.

The service sector is worst affected with shortages crossing the 80 per cent mark, followed by retail outlets, manufacturers and public sector organisations.

Information technology is one of the major areas requiring massive infusion of overseas talent.

The chief executive of Reed, Mr. James Reed warned that if the shortage continued to grow at the current rate it could hamper the growth of thousands of British companies as they would find it difficult to grow.

He welcomed the measures recently announced by the Government to facilitate entry of overseas workers, but said more needed to be done.

"If Britain is to be globally competitive I believe it is vital to be able to attract the very best talent from around the globe," he said.

Recently, the Government announced a more relaxed visa regime for certain categories of workers, including engineers, doctors, health technicians and chefs.

With the shortage graph rising and the employers stepping up pressure, more overseas workers can hope to look for greener pastures and the one person they would need to thank is the Employment Minister, Ms. Margaret Hodge who is trying hard to rise to the situation.

Pak. court verdict angers Iran

By B. Muralidhar Reddy

ISLAMABAD, OCT. 19. Relations between Pakistan and Iran have come under strain following the decision of the Pakistan Supreme Court on Monday to acquit eight persons charged for the murder of an Iranian diplomat in 1997. The Supreme Court overturned the death sentence awarded by an anti-terrorism court to the eight accused on the ground that the evidence presented by the prosecution had been fabricated.

The case pertains to 1997 in which eight Pakistanis were accused of murdering Muhammad Ali Rahimi and several local employees of the cultural centre, he headed in Multan. The anti-terrorism court in 1998 sentenced 16 people to death and a Lahore court upheld the verdict on eight of them.

The defendants were reportedly members of militant groups, which charge Iran with supporting rival groups inside Pakistan. Iran, however, denies the charge. There are other cases involving the killings of Iranians in Pakistan, including six Iranian air force cadets who were shot dead in an ambush in the city of Rawalpindi in 1998.

Enraged over the apex court verdict, Iran on Wednesday summoned the Pakistan Ambassador in Teheran and voiced its objection. According to news reports the Pakistani envoy has promised to convey concern, of Iran.

The Pakistan apex court verdict is bound to further strain the already fragile relations between Pakistan and Iran over Taliban and a host of other issues.



Caroline (left) and Andrea Corr, of the Irish pop band The Corrs, pose for photographers at Dublin's Kilmainham Jail on Wednesday. The Corrs were taking part in the launch of an Amnesty International global campaign against torture. — Reuters

THE HINDU

20 OCT 2000

I HAVE said in the past that the radical Right-wing policies of George W Bush would frighten American voters, who see no need for another conservative revolution in the style of the 1980s. I concluded that Al Gore would become the next US President.

After watching the latest debate between the candidates, on Tuesday night in St Louis, I am even more confident about my first assertion that Mr Bush's policies on taxes, pensions, medical care and social issues such as abortion and gun control, are out of tune with the generally contented mood of American public opinion.

But the logical corollary, an easy victory for Mr Gore, no longer seems to follow. My hunch is still that Mr Gore will win, but the race will be uncomfortably close. The most important new influences on the campaign over the fortnight have been the West Asia crisis, the collapse of technology shares on Wall Street and the presidential debates. These events should have been favourable to Mr Gore.

The Vice-President should certainly have gained from the sense of international crisis, which tends to draw people towards the party in control of the White House, especially if the crisis has been competently handled by a generally popular President. The dot-com massacre on Wall Street should have helped the Democrats by reinforcing the sense that the USA's prosperity needs to be carefully managed and that this is no time for taking risks with radical new economic policies. The debates should have favoured Mr Gore.

These televised setpiece battles were universally seen as the moment of greatest danger for Mr Bush, the occasions when the governor might reveal a shallow understanding of the issues, a lack of experience or an inability to think on his feet.

Yet Mr Gore, far from extending the small lead he had, has now fallen behind. While the race is still a dead heat from a strictly statistical standpoint, the Vice-President is seen by most experts as the underdog, with a dwin-

An overkill of objectivity

The US media has devoted much newsprint to the claims made by Al Gore and George W Bush about taxes, social security and trade. But the crucial arguments underlying the statements have remained largely unexamined, writes ANATOLE KALETSKY

ding chance of success. This is true because the campaign now moves into its final, decisive phase, in which Mr Gore will be at a tactical disadvantage.

The candidates will now have to rely on advertising and media stories to reach the voters. Both these channels favour Mr Bush.

Mr Bush has a lot more money to buy air-time than Mr Gore. But why else do I think that media coverage works in Mr Bush's favour? The Bush strategy is built around promoting his personality, while Mr Gore is trying to win a series of detailed arguments over complex policy issues. The problem for Mr Gore is not that the voters are indifferent to these issues, it is that the media finds it difficult to allow a serious intellectual debate.

US newspapers are obsessed with trying to separate their "objective" news reporting and analysis from their political judgments, which are left to the editorial page. In Europe, we are accustomed to more robust and open partisanship, especially in the tabloid papers and particularly during political campaigns.

The US obsession with objectivity has its merits, but it can sometimes serve voters badly, since it discourages papers (and TV stations even more so) from critically examining policies and drawing clear conclusions.

Instead of analysing policy positions and coming to comprehensible conclusions, which might suggest that they were backing



Al Gore and George Bush during their debate at Washington University in St. Louis on Tuesday. — AP/PTI.

one side or the other, the US media tends to reproduce argument and evidence presented by both candidates at great length, but with little or no comment. The unstated implication is either that both sides are misleading the voters, or that the truth must lie somewhere halfway between them. Since this kind of analysis is often pointless and always boring, even the most serious US papers tend to focus on the personalities and tactical trivia of political campaigns, where the illusion of objectivity is easier to maintain by expressing cynicism about both sides' political machinations.

Although the US media has devoted acres of newsprint to repeating simplistic claims and

counter-claims made by both candidates about taxes, social security and trade, the crucial arguments underlying such statements have remained largely unexamined.

On taxes, the partisan division is clearest. Mr Bush wants a major reform that would reduce the progressiveness of the US tax system. Mr Gore proposes smaller measures that would make the system more redistributive in favour of poorer voters. The media has not given the simple calculation that could have been done about the impact of the two candidates' tax policies on specific voters in various social categories and income groups.

In Britain, voters would by now have known exactly how the two parties' tax policies would affect their incomes. Mr Bush's ludicrous rebuttal to charges that he was favouring the rich with the claim that all critiques of his tax plan were typical examples of Washington's partisan "fuzzy math" would not have been allowed to stand for a moment by the media. But tax rates are just the tip of a more dangerous iceberg of hidden differences between the economic policies of Mr Gore and Mr Bush. The real issue is how decisions should be made about the balance between taxation, public spending and reduction of government debt.

Both candidates claim they would continue to repay the national debt and would make crucial publicly funded services,

such as education and Medicare, more efficient. But Mr Bush argues that projected surpluses are too large. He believes that some of the planned debt repayments should be diverted into tax cuts. A further proportion should, he maintains, be handed back to workers who opt to invest in the stock market rather than relying on the Government's pension plan. As for education and health, he maintains that these can be funded while drastically reducing the size of a federal government which is already smaller than it has been since 1963.

The arguments about these issues have oscillated. Voters have been stupefied with meaningless projections issued by the Bush and Gore camps about what may, or may not, happen to federal surpluses and social security pensions under various arbitrary assumptions.

But the American debate has almost completely missed out on the far more important argument about fiscal policy that is familiar to all reasonably informed voters and commentators in Britain and Europe. Changes in fiscal policy can have a crucial effect on economic growth, interest rates and the economic cycle. Mr Bush is proposing to cut taxes at the top of a boom, when the economy is showing signs of overheating and is running an unprecedented trade deficit. This will increase the risk of an inflationary spiral, encourage an even more over-valued dollar and could produce a severe boom and bust. The candidates should be arguing about how to tighten fiscal policy and this debate should have little or nothing to do with the long-term solvency of social security or Medicare.

It should be an argument about the contribution that government can make to the avoidance of economic instability. The fact that this key duty of government, the one unalloyed achievement of the Clinton presidency, has been forgotten by both the candidates and almost all media commentators does not bode well for America's future economic health, or its contribution to global stability.

— *The Times, London*



NOT MUCH TO CHOOSE: A billboard near Charlotte has turned a few heads from passing motorists on Sunday. The GOP candidate, Mr. George Bush's portrait is shown with a message for the Democratic candidate, Mr. Al Gore. The Presidential race is moving into its final two weeks. — Reuters

Stable lead for Bush worries Gore camp

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, OCT. 23. It is finally down to the last two weeks, or what is referred to in some quarters as the "closing stretch" in the U.S. presidential elections. And at this point of time, the Democrats are having to address two serious issues: First, almost every poll at the national level is showing the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, ahead by between three and 11 percentage points, with the Green Party candidate, Mr. Ralph Nader, making a difference in States that are crucial to the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore.

Second, and one that is more of a strategy issue, is the extent to which the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, is to be involved in the campaigning. Pushed to the sidelines — in spite of all that may have been dished out — there is the growing feeling among a section of Democrats that Mr. Clinton must campaign for ensuring Mr. Gore's victory.

The White House maintains that while the President is ready to campaign for Mr. Gore in "some key places", it will only be in a supporting role. The Republicans, for their part, seem to be loving every minute of the debate within the Democratic Party on Mr. Clinton. By and large, there has been this feeling — and not just confined to the Gore campaign — that all that the party wants the President to do is to rake in the millions for the Democratic National Committee and stay out of the campaign for reasons of "Clinton fatigue" and scandals.

"I think that by the end, Al Gore's going to be begging Bill Clinton to come in and help him out... Al Gore will be trying anything in the end. These are desperate folks. They can feel it slipping a little bit more each and every week", quipped the Republican Governor of Michigan, Mr. John Engler. The Vice-President has always maintained that he is his own person and that his campaign is driven by his ideas. But pressure is mounting on Mr. Gore

to do "something" which includes a role for Mr. Clinton in the closing stages of Campaign 2000.

The problem for Mr. Gore is not that the election of November 7 has been written off in his opponent's favour. Rather, it is one of trying to find an opening against the Republican nominee and no matter how much relentless the focus has been on issues and the differences with Mr. Bush, Mr. Gore is not moving up the ratings chart. To make matters worse, voters seem to be giving some kind of weightage to "likability" when it comes to Mr. Bush.

News from the crucial regions has also not brought any cheer to the Gore camp. Political analysts say that in some key areas, Mr. Gore has lost his lead. For instance, a poll in Illinois shows Mr. Gore leading by 45 per cent to 43 per cent, as opposed to a double digit lead last month. And the support for Mr. Gore in the States of Washington and Oregon is being questioned.

There have been indications that the Gore campaign is planning to take out advertisements in Ohio. And there is cautious optimism in the Republican camp that a swing State such as Wisconsin can be added to Mr. Bush's list. But the worst nightmare for Mr. Gore is the Green Party phenomenon and the prospect of Mr. Ralph Nader denying Mr. Gore the victories he is so eagerly seeking in the Mid-West and the West Coast.

While Mr. Patrick Buchanan's exit from the GOP is seen as a blessing in disguise, Mr. Nader continuing to register at least 5 per cent in opinion polls is worrying the Gore camp. "Gore has a problem. In addition to not getting his message through, the difference in this race right now is Ralph Nader. If Gore moves to the left with a populist message, he risks losing ground in the vital centre. If he moves to the centre, he will watch Nader's support increase", says the pollster Mr John Zogby.

THE HINDU

24 OCT 2000

W HILE contending to be President in 1968, Richard Nixon wrote a sensational article in the *Foreign Affairs* magazine, in which he anticipated a more conciliatory US policy towards China. Soon after his election, the USA moved to recognise Communist China, which it had rejected to do for 22 years, and ejected Taiwan from the Chinese seat at the UN. During his election campaign, Jimmy Carter promised he wouldn't "ass-kiss" the Chinese, but like Nixon, he turned his back on China's human rights dissidents, intent on concluding the formal normalisation of relations with China. When Bill Clinton campaigned for the presidency against George Bush, he charged that Mr Bush was soft on China — Mr Bush had soft on quick after the Tiananmen

Square massacre to send to Beijing his national security adviser to reassure the Chinese leadership of Washington's solid, enduring relationship. Mr Clinton promised if elected that the age of conciliation would be over. But once in power, it did not take him long to fall in line with the Nixon legacy, though the main geopolitical reason — to balance the Soviet Union — was no longer relevant.

The policy now was to engage China, go for the long run and tell the American public, in the words of Samuel Berger, Mr Clinton's national security adviser, "through engagement you can get a lot of serious things done and maybe even advance the process of change in China". Thus the American voice on

human rights was muted once more — and the Europeans followed suit. It took many years before the Clinton administration put its China ship on to a more sensible course. In pursuit of its quest to win congressional support, in its effort to open up trade with China, it finally caved in to human rights critics who demanded a more activist and publically critical role from Washington. This spring, the USA finally decided to criticise China in the UN Commission on Human Rights, a major departure.

And now, this election? Barely a word on China. Don't rock the boat appears to be the joint Al Gore-George Bush position. Yet an article in the current issue of *Foreign Affairs* by Paul Heer warns that the USA is in danger of edging into a Cold War with China. Is it really the time to be quite so laid back? Surely this is the occasion for a grand debate on where next to go with China. Failure to establish the right policies could lead China to engage in a major build-up of its nuclear forces, which is bound to lead to a worsening of its precarious relationship with Taiwan and Japan and which could push it into a quite unnecessary nose-to-nose confrontation with the USA.

China possesses a modest nuclear force. It has only about 20 missiles which could reach the continental USA, its submarine capability is minimal — one submarine with 12 medium-range missiles. For all the furore in 1999, around China's espionage success in stealing state-of-the-art US missile and nuclear secrets, the fact is that while China has long had the technical prowess to equip its ballistic missiles to deliver multiple warheads it has chosen not to. Beijing's policy has been essentially a defensive one, designed to pre-empt nuclear blackmail and to help it become a recognised world power.

The old policy is now up for

US campaigns myopic on foreign affairs

USA, China will move to build more short and medium-range missiles, maybe some of them nuclear-tipped, capable of hitting Taiwan and Japan. It all comes back to the pressing need for the USA to restore impetus to the badly flagging effort to reduce

for any move by China to build its nuclear arsenal will provoke India to do the same. There is the added danger that in a more balltose relationship with the

the world's nuclear armoures. This is the Clinton administration's worst legacy, yet neither candidate has given it much more than passing mention. Which is why it is not unfair to say that when it comes to foreign affairs, this is probably the most irresponsible presidential election campaign in memory.

WORLD VIEW

BY JONATHAN POWER

after the election. China is convinced that such a move would totally negate China's current second-strike capability and make China militarily totally subservient to US might.

What the debate in Washington has overlooked as it has dwelt on the future horrors posed by "rogue states" is that the only country that actually fits that picture in terms of nuclear ability is China. Any limited defences that the USA builds, supposedly insufficient to ward off a Russian attack but sufficient to defend against a rogue's missiles, could stop a Chinese attack mid-sky. Since China — like Europe — believes these socalled "nuclear rogues" don't really exist, it concludes that the reason for the US missile defence is simply to out-manoeuvre China.

It will retaliate by building larger forces that could overwhelm new US defences. As we know from the Cold War days, the USA will always react to such a move by over compensating, and the whole cycle of the nuclear arms race will be ratcheted up, merely complicating an issue the first steps were meant to resolve.

Washington, if it were wearing its correct lenses, ought to perceive it is better off with the status quo, with Chinese forces remaining small and composed of only single-headed missiles. Washington's eyesight would be better focussed on China's nuclear relationship with India,

THE STATESMAN

27 OCT 2000

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G ₂	A ₁	E ₁	I ₁	D ₂	N ₁	B ₃	1st Letter Triple								
B ₃	T ₁	B ₃	O ₁	U ₁	O ₁	Y ₄	Double Word Score								
P ₃	A ₁	E ₁	T ₁	N ₁	G ₂	R ₁									
G ₂	N ₁	B ₃	E ₁	I ₁	U ₁	R ₁	4th Letter Double								

PAR SCORE 100-110 by JUDD

FOUR RACK TOTAL TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2 to 7 letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in The Official Scrabble Players Dictionary (Merriam-Webster) and OSW Official Scrabble Words (Chambers). JUDD'S SOLUTION TOMORROW © 2000, United Feature Syndicate, Inc.

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F ₄	L ₁	I ₁	M ₃	S ₁	Y ₄		RACK 1 =	28
J ₆	U ₁	G ₂	H ₄	E ₁	A ₁	D ₂	RACK 2 =	77
E ₁	D ₂	I ₁	F ₄	I ₁	C ₃	E ₁	RACK 3 =	89
E ₁	Y ₄	E ₁	H ₄	O ₁	O ₁	K ₅	RACK 4 =	71

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Bush, Gore touch off aggressive campaigns

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

CINCINNATI (OHIO), OCT. 29. With a week to go for the U.S. Presidential and Congressional elections, the Republicans and the Democrats are seeing this as a very tight race for the White House, the House of Representatives and the Senate. But there is no doubt that the see-saw struggle with the polls between the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush and the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore Jr, has more or less focussed on the Nov. 7 election.

Analysts are pointing to the fact that in most of the national polls, Mr. Bush is ahead, anywhere between two and six percentage points. And at the State level too, there have been marked shifts. Ohio, it is being pointed out, is leaning the Republican way; and it is a critical State in the politically important Mid-West. And the Republicans are maintaining that they have registered a small gain in another key State — Wisconsin.

It has been argued that no one with the exception of Franklin Roosevelt has lost Ohio and still made it to the White House; but in all the talk about a tight race for the Presidency it is being pointed that it is Mr. Bush who needs Ohio "more" than Mr. Gore. But the fact remains that Mr. Gore cannot politically afford to let States off his grip, especially when the equations in the Pacific North-West and the Mid-West are changing rapidly.

The slug fest in the Mid-West has led to some aggressive campaigning in the last few days; and with this comes the usual complaints of over-reaching by the candidates. The Bush campaign is complaining that the Democrats have resorted to the "scummiest" of tactics with voters in Michigan where the two sides are bitterly contesting. The Democrats, for their part, are arguing that their telephone calls to voters in the State are confined only to the record on issues.

At a time when there is an impression among voters that the Vice-President was generally solid on issues during the debates — even if his over-bearing style has caused discomfort — one latest poll shows that Mr. Bush is closing the gap. This is especially so in the realm of medicare, prescription drugs and a patient's bill of rights. All these were seen as the core aspects of a Gore campaign.

But with just a few days to go, both campaigns will have to decide on where to throw money and the candidate's time. Mr. Gore, the thinking goes, still has a shot at Ohio if he were to invest lots of money and energy. The bottomline is a choice between chasing a State with long odds and one within striking distance.

What continues to hurt and haunt the Gore campaign in the final stretch is the role of the Green Party candidate, Mr. Ralph Nader, and the potential for political mischief and trouble on Nov. 7. "Think about it, you wake up

on Wednesday morning November 8, and George Bush is our President-elect because you voted for Nader... Is that what you want to have happen", remarked the Democratic Vice-Presidential nominee, Mr. Joseph Lieberman.

The most bothersome of the States for the Gore campaign is that of California with a rich crop of 54 electoral college votes. Mr. Gore, whose last visit to that State was in September, has not planned any more trips. Now, with his lead down to a mere five percentage points and the Bush

campaign stepping up the advertisements war, Mr. Gore will be making a last-minute change in his schedule and stopping by California. In the meantime, the Gore camp hopes that the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, will help garner the required votes.

With Mr. Nader on the rise in the West and the Mid-West, the Grand Old Party is hitting on an interesting strategy. The Republican Leadership Council has apparently decided to run pro-Nader advertisements from Monday.



The Republican presidential candidate, Mr. George W. Bush, jokingly balances between two platforms as he greets supporters at a rally at the Columbia Regional Airport in Columbia on Saturday. — AP

10 AUG 2000

The change in Washington

By K. K. Katyal

WHATEVER THE outcome of the U.S. presidential election, there will be no escape from a longish transition — and the resultant pause in political-level guidance on policy matters, both domestic and foreign. How will it affect India and the momentum in bilateral relations generated by the top-level visits from the two sides? The commitment to a "closer and qualitatively new relationship", visualised on the two occasions, and the mechanisms and the framework set up to achieve this objective are too solid to be affected by delays due to the changeover. But in the next six months or so, Washington will be so engrossed in the switch from one administration to another that it will not be in a position to think of political guidance, except in cases where it is forced by the gravity of developments. For example, West Asia. But political-level thinking on other issues may have to await the end of the transition. New Delhi's case falls in the second category. The delay however gives Indian diplomacy time to prepare for interaction with the new set-up — a task the immensity of which is underestimated. Also, it would help to present the bilateral relationship in a proper perspective.

Pause or no pause, there could be no question of change in either the vision of the Indo-U.S. relationship, outlined by the U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, and the Prime Minister, Mr. Atal Behari Vajpayee, or the architecture of the institutional dialogue. The bipartisan support for foreign policy matters, such as dealings with India, is a strong enough guarantee against any deviation even if the Republicans wrest the presidency. But a slowdown in decision-taking has to be reckoned with. Soon after the results are known early next month, the transition teams would embark upon exercises for new placements at various levels — of particular interest to outsiders being the changes in the State Department, the Pentagon, the National Security Advisor's set-up and the White House staff. After the assumption of office by the new President on January 20 would begin the ratification of senior appointees by the Senate. Last time, when Mr. Clinton be-

Bipartisan support for foreign policy matters, such as dealings with India, is a strong enough guarantee against any deviation even if the Republicans wrest the U.S. presidency.

40-17 *WLD*

gan his second term, this process continued till March-April. In the case of India, it will not affect the "regular, wide-ranging dialogue" agreed upon during his visit to New Delhi, but interaction on substantive matters may start only after the completion of the changeover.

The time-table for meetings of most of the joint working groups will also not be affected. As a matter of fact, the one on counter-terrorism met recently for the second time after its inception. Meant to be an "effective mechanism for the two countries to share information and intensify their cooperation in combating terrorism", it re-emphasised the shared interest in strengthening a regime to counter international terrorism. Though long on rhetoric — unequivocal condemnation of all acts and practices of violence, irrespective of political, ideological and other considerations — and short on specifics, it did serve to underscore the joint concerns. The latest spurt in anti-U.S. violence in the Yemen area is certain to add to Washington's urgency in dealing with the source of the problem, Talibanised Afghanistan, also a supplier of militants for the jehad in Jammu and Kashmir.

The course of the on-going dialogue on security and non-proliferation — conducted by the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh, and the U.S. Deputy Secretary, Mr. Strobe Talbott, over the years — may, however, not be that smooth. With its rhythm disturbed by the U.S. reaction to the release of the nuclear doctrine by India last year, it has not been possible to address the core issue as was done in the initial stages. The differences over the "description" of the minimum credible nuclear deterrent were not the only cause for the deadlock, India's programme for missile development and its ideas on stoppage of fissile material production being the other two. All this, of

India in the wake of Pokhran-II. True military cooperation is not involved in the dealings of most other countries with India but continued hardness on the part of Washington, as against relaxations by the others, stands out. Germany, for instance, has resumed development assistance, discontinued in May 1998 with a stunning abruptness. The U.S., too, softened its line on credits by commercial banks and multilateral financial institutions, but the sting of the sanctions remains.

The U.S. stand contrasts sharply with the policy of France which made known, from the beginning, that it would have no problem coming to terms with a nuclear India. It was keen on deals for highly sophisticated defence items. It would very much like to instal nuclear power reactors but is deterred by the norms of the London Club of nuclear suppliers group. Russia is at ease in its dealings with India, despite its strong reservations about Pokhran-II. Apart from supply of military hardware, it has offered cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, for installing power plants. In taking this conscious decision, it could not but have reckoned with the probability of Western pressure. Obviously, it decided to resist arm-twisting.

Whether and if so to what extent the new U.S. administration will re-appraise the situation in the light of the relaxations by the others is to be seen.

The pause in Washington means a slowdown in the type of exhortations which emanated from there in the past in relation to India-Pakistan problems and Kashmir. The U.S. has been urging the two sides to resume their dialogue. Of late, it has seemed to appreciate New Delhi's stand that a proper "climate" needs to be created and trans-border terrorism ended for this process to start. For the time being, the blunt talk to Pakistan to curb terrorist outfits, thriving in its territory on official patronage, would be halting. Likewise, there would be a respite in the gentle prodding of India to do its bit.

The delay of six months or so in the unfolding of the policy packages by the new U.S. administration would have its repercussions in other countries. India could not be an exception.

Set for a photo finish

In the next few days it will be all over, all the political rhetoric and all the shouting matches. And after a short respite, it will be time for the campaigns of 2002 and 2004. But in the immediate context, if there is one thing that the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore Jr., will agree on it is that the race to the White House has rarely been this close.

For the first time in more than four decades, constitutional experts are asking as to what procedure is to be followed if there is actually a tie in the electoral college votes — if both Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore were to win 269 votes each. Also what procedure would be followed if one of the candidates were to fall short on the popular vote and still get the requisite 270 votes needed to enter the White House.

If people are not ruling out anything, it is not without good reason. First there was the conventional wisdom that the Labour Day, in September, would give a good idea as to where the campaigns were headed. Then came the debates which, it was argued, were pointers to what was in store for November 7, and finally, the strength of the campaigns in the final and home stretch. But the ground situation is something very different, perhaps even bizarre.

Who would have imagined that both Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore would repeatedly come back to States that at one time seemed so secure? It does not make sense for the Republican nominee to be spending so much time and money in Florida, when the State is generally seen as being Republican and where the Governor is none other than his brother, Mr. Jebb Bush.

Equally bizarre is the fact of Mr. Gore getting worried about California to the point that the Democrats are asking their "big boss", the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, to help secure the State which has 54 electoral college votes. In a campaign that kept Mr. Clinton away from active politicking, the Gore team surely feels the pinch at the eleventh hour. And there is no one else in the

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If there is one thing Mr. Al Gore and Mr. George Bush Jr. will agree on, it is that the race to the White House has rarely been this close. SRIDHAR KRISHNASWAMI on the U.S. presidential elections.

party who can deliver the goods — not only to the coffers of the Democratic National Committee, but also in getting the voters out on election day. And who would have imagined that the Vice-President would feel insecure in his home state of Tennessee or in Clinton country, Arkansas?

At one time, it was thought that third party candidates would figure in the "also ran" category and would not make a serious dent in the fortunes of the major candidates. But with less than two weeks to go, pressure is mounting on Mr. Ralph Nader of the Green Party to call it quits. And of course, the heat is on from the Democrat side even though the Gore campaign is trying to

pretend as if has nothing to do with it. Mr. Nader, though, is not in a mood to oblige and is making the point that if Mr. Gore were to lose on November 7, he need look no further than at himself for the reason.

An interesting and perhaps even a striking aspect is that the polls have been posting a consistent story — a dead heat in the race with the movement of both Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush on the popularity charts being no more than temporary phenomena. This resulted in the candidates picking out what they wished to read or see in a survey and comforting themselves that they were ahead in the race for the White House. Even if the differences between the Vice-President and

the Texas Governor are striking in areas of domestic policy such as taxes, environment, education, social security and prescription drugs, the fact is that a tight race has brought out the worst of campaign strategies in both camps. With statistics beyond a common person's comprehension being thrown around, simplification appears to be the only viable alternative left.

To Mr. Gore, it is one of painting his opponent as someone who would squander away the prosperity of the last eight years and someone who could not be trusted with social security, medicare and prescription drugs. To Mr. Bush, it is painting the Vice-President as an all-time big spender and one who espouses a highly intrusive Government. The bottomline with regard to the Texas Governor is "people versus the Federal Government". And the truth, as is the case most of the time, falls somewhere in between.

There have been at least two facets to the campaign thus far — first is the reinforcement of perceptions of the candidates. The thinking all along had been that Mr. Gore was the more sound of the two — substantive and well versed in domestic and foreign policies.

Mr. Bush, on his part, was not seen as a shallow person, but as one who was comfortable with themes as opposed to specifics. In this, the Bush campaign has done a marvellous job.

Second, if opinion polls are anything to go by, there is the notion that American voters are not just looking for substantive depth on issues; they are also looking for things such as "likeability" and "trustworthiness", in which the Texas Governor comes away with high points.

And if the debates had anything at all to contribute, it is in a disdain for the aggressive manner in which Mr. Gore went about it — in Boston and St. Louis. But whether a price will be paid for this "smart Alec" performance remains to be seen.



The U.S. presidential candidates, Mr. George Bush Jr. and Mr. Al Gore... the countdown has begun.

U.S. POLL / BUSH RETAINS LEAD IN FLORIDA RECOUNT

Gore camp may file fresh suit

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 15. At the designated 5 p.m. (local time) deadline on Tuesday, the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, maintained a 300-vote lead over the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore; but State officials in Florida will not "finally" call the race until Saturday when the counting of the overseas ballots is over.

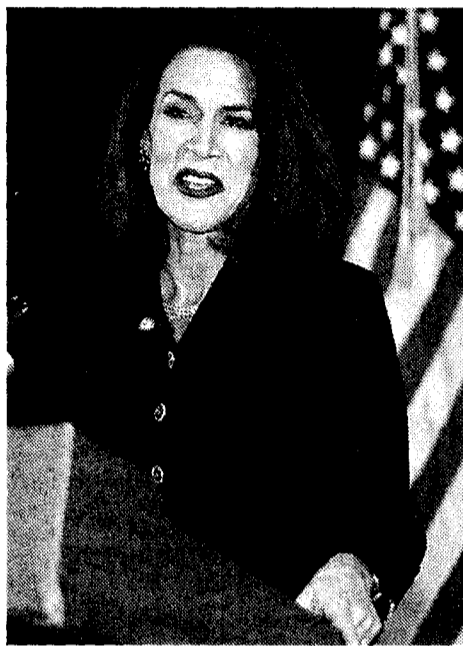
In making the announcement that the GOP nominee has a 300-vote lead out of the six million votes cast, Florida's Secretary of State, Ms Katherine Harris, also gave time until 2 p.m. on Wednesday for counties to make a case for reopening vote totals.

"I am requiring a written statement of the facts and the circumstances that would cause these counties to believe that a change should be made before the final certification of the Statewide vote", Ms Harris said. Her statement immediately drew protests from the Gore campaign which saw her imposing additional "stress and strain" on county officials who were already on a laborious process.

But the process in Florida and finality to who the 43rd President of the United States is hardly around the corner, unless of course, a decision to the contrary is made by one of the two candidates. The impression is that the Gore campaign will be waiting for Ms Harris' "final" announcement on Saturday before moving the courts if in end Mr. Gore still came up short.

It is said that some 1,400 overseas ballots have already been received but have not been figured into the present tallies. The deadline for the receipt of overseas ballots is midnight on Friday. The Bush campaign is holding on to a perception that in the past this category of votes has favoured Republicans, especially when it came to the vote of the military personnel stationed abroad.

Both campaigns on Tuesday sought to make much of a State Judge's ruling on the 5 p.m. deadline for all 67 counties. The Judge said the Secretary of State had the right to enforce the deadline for certification, but also remarked that she should use discretion in rejecting tal-



The Florida Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris, delivers a statement on the current certified results, at the Senate office building in Tallahassee, Florida, on Wednesday. — Reuters

lies and revisions submitted later.

"The Secretary of State may ignore such late filed returns, but may not do so arbitrarily, rather only by the proper exercise of discretion after consideration of all appropriate facts and circumstances", the Leon County Circuit Court Judge, Mr. Terry Lewis, wrote in his judgment.

The Democrats argued that the ruling meant that Ms Harris will have to exercise reasonable discretion; and the Gore camp has held out the possibility of seeking legal redress if it was not happy with the manner in which Ms Harris goes about dealing with tallies submitted after the deadline.

Both Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush stayed out of

the public eye, but their top aides were pointed in their observations on how things were playing out in Florida. Both campaigns are also keeping a close watch on the public mood which for now is of the view that expediency should not be the factor in deciding the outcome in Florida.

"This is not about politics. It is about determining the will of the people fully and accurately. The Bush campaign and Secretary Harris have engaged in a variety of tactics to slow or block this count", the Gore campaign Chairman, Mr. William Daley, remarked.

A top aide to Mr. Bush was equally forceful. "The votes in Florida have now been counted, and Governor Bush won. They've been recounted and Governor Bush won. The counties have now certified their votes to the Secretary of State and again Governor Bush won. Yet, it appears we now have a deadline that may not be respected as a deadline at all", the campaign communications director, Ms Karen Hughes, remarked.

Even before Florida and the rest of the country are waiting for the next slew of lawsuits, there are other developments that are attracting attention and possibly heading the way of courts as well. Palm Beach County was initially planning to ask the State's highest court to settle a dispute between Ms Harris and the State's Attorney General, Mr. Robert Butterworth, on whether the counties have a right of manual recount. But county canvassing officials have decided to proceed with the manual recount which the Secretary of State's office has already deemed "not authorised".

And the Democrats in the State and the Gore campaign are not exactly thrilled that two other counties opted out of the manual counting process after a sample recount showed Mr. Gore gaining only 10 votes. In Miami Dade County, officials decided not to review all votes after the sample netted Mr. Gore six additional votes; and in Broward County, the sample gave the Vice-President only four extra votes.

THE HINDU

16 NOV 2000

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Why the American system is unfair

One man, half vote WSN

WHEN I first went to the United States in 1988 as a graduate student at the University of California I was struck by the enormous political significance of that state. California under the influence of President Ronald Reagan was typically Republican. That year Vice President George Bush stormed California and managed to win the presidential elections. By 1992, however, the tide had turned. In the presidential race that year, Democratic candidate Bill Clinton accomplished what at that time seemed impossible: wresting Republican California from President George Bush. Clinton, with his indomitable energy, courted California like no other national office-seeker had before. After he played the saxophone in Arsenio Hall's popular late night comedy show California was in love with him. He was able to use his win in this, what many consider as the bell-wether state, to grab the presidency despite the fact that he had won only 43 per cent of the popular vote in the country.

In 1996, although President Clinton was a popular incumbent but nonetheless he heaped undue attention on California again. Campaigner par excellence that he is, he canvassed there almost 30 times. Again, he won the state and the presidency with only 49 per cent of the popular vote in the country. This August when I visited Los Angeles during the Democratic national convention I noticed how vigorously vice president Al Gore, who until then was trailing in the opinion polls, wooed Californians. He shot up several notches in the polls soon after the intensely passionate kiss to his wife Tipper.

I gradually realised the reason for all this attention. If a candidate wins a slim majority in California and grabs its 54 electoral votes, he is one-fifth of the way to the 271 electoral votes needed to capture the presidency. Thus while California is the nation's most populous

state, accounting for 11 per cent of the US population, its electoral votes are an even greater prize - 20 per cent of the necessary votes. Going by the classical theory of representation this appears unfair. It violates the fundamental principle of 'one man, one vote'. Clearly, this struck me as an anomaly of the American political system.

In contrast, undivided UP with its 85 seats in the Lok Sabha (almost one-sixth of the 542 seats) has one-seventh the population of the country. Since we do not follow the winner-take-all (WTA) system of voting as practised in the American Electoral College, even a slim majority for a party in UP will in no way fetch all the 85 seats for it. India fits the textbook model of represen-



AJIT KUMAR JHA

Political instability is the name of the game in the presidential system much more than in parliamentary systems

tation — proportionate to population — better. The 'one man, one vote' principle makes the system fairer.

Since each state's electoral votes in the US are awarded on a WTA basis it makes it extremely difficult for third-party or independent candidates to win any votes in the Electoral College. Other than the highly publicised TV debates that do not include third party candidates such as Ralph Nader, the American system of representation itself is heavily biased against minority candidates. The Indian representational system does not suffer from any such inbuilt bias. No doubt candidates from smaller parties, be it Gujral or Gowda, Chandra Shekhar or Morarji Desai, end up becoming prime ministers at least in a coalitional arrangement.

In the US, there are altogether 538 electors, with each state getting one elector for each representative and one for each senator. Washington in the District of Columbia gets three more electors. To sum up, the prevalent electoral rule favours the larger states. In fact, going by the 1990 census, a strategic candidate only needs to win 11 of the most heavily populated of the 50 states (i.e., a little over one-fifth) in order to

win the presidency: California, Texas, New York, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Ohio, Michigan, New Jersey, North Carolina, either Virginia or Georgia and Florida. In fact, it is precisely the 25 electoral college votes of Florida that have become the big battleground in Election 2000 for Gore and Bush.

patriarchy. It needs to adapt itself to the realities of the 21st century. At one time it even tolerated a judicial clause by which three white men's evidence was considered equal to that of five black men. Similarly women did not have the right to vote for a long time. In the Federalist Papers both Hamilton and Madison go at length to defend elitist principles of Republicanism which is based on the fears of populism.

The equal representation of all states in the unique American upper house, the Senate (another violation of the one man, one vote principle) is not a feature practised in India. Faced with our tremendous cultural diversity we carried out a rare innovation (like Canada) of combining a parliamentary system with federalism.

Unfair representation is highlighted these days by the presidential impasse in the US. Among other problems, bipartisan bickering in the Congress often leads to passing of no legislation for months. A split vote, in other words a Democratic presidency and a Republican Congress, can lead to a gridlock. Despite a whole gamut of checks and balances, the US model is prone to deadlocks and logjams. It is a similar situation in the states. In California, for instance, it is not uncommon to have the budget delayed by a few months with a bipartisan standoff resulting in no salaries. The clones of the American presidential system in the various Latin American polities have proved a worse disaster.

Political instability is the name of the game in the presidential system much more than in parliamentary systems. Yet, whenever we are faced with a typical problem of political instability, a bogey of interests emerge to argue the virtues of the presidential system. The US elections this year should put an end to all such naive speculation. It is high time that the Americans learnt at least the lessons of fairness in representation from us.

INDIAN EXPRESS

16 NOV 2000

WSO

Battle of wits HD-1 continues in U.S.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 16. The United States Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, and the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, have taken their battle for the Presidency to the public front and each has tried to seize the advantage and with it the high ground.

"We need a resolution that is fair and final. We need to move expeditiously to the most complete and accurate count that is possible," Mr. Gore said going on to offer handcounting of votes in the entire Florida as opposed to a few counties which are deemed overwhelmingly Democratic. He would also drop lawsuits, if his plan is agreed to.

However, Mr. Bush has rejected the plan. "The outcome of this election will not be the result of deals or efforts to mould public opinion," Handcounting introduces "human error and politics"

into the vote counting process.

The Vice-President also proposed the two meet before State officials certify the results, "not to negotiate, but to improve the tone of our dialogue in America." There should be another meeting after a winner is declared, "to close ranks as Americans". Mr. Bush agreed to meet the Vice-President, but after the election process reached a finality.

Last night, the Texas Governor repeated what his campaign had been saying all along about manual counting, — that there was no uniformity to the process. "This means every vote in Florida would be evaluated differently, by different individuals using different judgment and perhaps different local standards. This would be neither fair nor accurate. It would be arbitrary and chaotic," Mr. Bush said from Austin, Texas.

Florida Secretary ups
the ante: Page 13

THE HINDU

17 NOV 2000

U.S. POLL / BUSH REJECTS GORE'S PROPOSALS

Legal squabbles persist

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 16. In what promises to be yet another day of litigation, the U.S. 11th Circuit Court of Appeals in Atlanta is studying written arguments of the Bush campaign on why the hand counting of votes in selective counties in Florida is unconstitutional and therefore must be stopped. All 12 Judges — not a routine three-judge panel — are involved in this case. But the Federal Court of Appeals has not said when it is going to meet — if at all it is going to — and the time frame for a judgment. No hearing has been set.

At the State level, the Gore campaign is moving the Circuit Court to challenge the decision of the Florida Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris, on not tabulating the late hand count returns presented by four counties after the deadline had passed. It is also possible that the Democrats and the Gore campaign may proceed directly to the Florida Supreme Court asking for an opinion.

Ms. Harris' legal advisors contend that she is well within the parameters of the law, including recent legal rulings, in coming to her Wednesday night's decision. She has pointedly said that the full election will be "finally" certified on Saturday — the votes thus far along with the absentee ballots. As things stand, Mr. Bush holds on to a 300 vote lead over his Democratic rival.

It was high drama on Wednesday at the legal and the political levels. The Florida Supreme Court refused, without explanation, to stop the hand counts and consolidate the raft of lawsuits into one state court as requested by Ms. Harris. The Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, came up with a surprise proposal of a statewide counting of Florida votes and seeking a



ENDLESS WAIT: An idle election worker yawns as he waits for the manual recounting of the ballots cast in the national election to resume in West Palm Beach, Florida, on Wednesday. — AP

meeting with his opponent, Mr. George Bush. The Texas Governor for his part rejected the ideas and said he was for a meeting but after a finality to the process currently under way.

But a determined Ms. Harris — increasingly painted as partisan by the Gore campaign — raised the stakes on Wednesday night by saying that the explanations offered by some counties for late turning in of the vote count was

not sufficient and hence would not be factored into the final tally.

Analysts maintain that both Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush are jockeying for an upper hand in the public relations front; and there is the realisation of the two campaigns that the public opinion could change. One assessment is that both Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore are positioning themselves for this Saturday and what may be in store legally after that.

THE HINDU

17 NOV 2000

Florida official sets stage to declare Bush the winner

S Rajagopalan
Washington, November 16

FLORIDA'S REPUBLICAN Secretary of State Katherine Harris has more or less set the stage to declare Mr George W. Bush the winner on Saturday by announcing that she will not take cognizance of the ongoing manual recount in three pro-Democrat counties. Vice-President Al Gore's aides quickly moved in to challenge her "rash and precipitous action".

Ms Harris's announcement on Thursday night came within an hour of Mr Gore making an offer to Mr Bush to end the current stalemate. Mr Bush himself promptly rejected the proposal to drop all legal challenges and accept the results if only the manual recount in the three counties was allowed to be completed.

A day ahead of the deemed final act in the Florida drama, namely disposal of the overseas votes, it became clear on Friday that Mr Gore's hopes of staying in contention rested wholly and solely with the judicial system. His legal brigade's immediate quest was for an injunction against Ms Harris's guillotine.

The Gore camp was not entirely surprised when Ms Harris announced her rejection of the plea of the Palm Beach, Miami Dade and Broward counties for more time to complete the recount. Yet, it had come to believe that Ms Harris would not act in such a summary fashion as only hours earlier, a court had rejected her plea to stop the manual recounts.

Florida's courts are besieged with a host of cases related to the

Presidential election. Two of these are of immediate and critical importance. Apart from the Gore camp's application for injunction, the other significant matter is the hearing of the Appeals Court on a Bush petition for stopping the manual recount.

Ahead of Ms Harris's announcement, Mr Gore made a largely PR move by getting onto the TV networks with his offer to Mr Bush. "We need a resolution that is fair and final," he said and expressed his willingness for a manual recount in all of Florida's 67 counties if Mr Bush so desired. Mr Gore's bottomline was that the ongoing recount in three counties should be taken into account.

But Mr Bush, holding a clear advantage, rejected the offer quickly and contemptuously. "The outcome of this election will not be the result of deals or efforts to mould public opinion... the outcome of this election will be determined by the votes and by the law." Mr Bush had dashed from his country ranch to the Governor's mansion in Austin to air his counter on the major TV networks.

If the courts fail to intervene in Mr Gore's favour, announcement of a Bush victory on Saturday appears certain. This is based on the predominant belief that the overseas votes will largely go in Mr Bush's favour. Florida's past elections have seen Republican candidates triumph in the overseas segment.

However, the Democrats expect the Jewish stock of Mr Gore's running mate, Senator Joseph Lieberman, to work wonders in respect of votes from Israel.

Gore team wins recount right

AP & AFP

WASHINGTON, Nov. 16. — Vice-President Al Gore yesterday won the right to count thousands of contested ballots in Florida's heavily democratic counties after a Republican legal assault failed.

Trying to capitalise on the good news, the Gore campaign made a surprise proposal for a statewide hand recount of Florida's million ballots. A proposal that Mr George W Bush plans to reject the proposal, a senior adviser said.

It was a notion the Republicans have rejected from the start as a subjective and inaccurate process open to political mischief, and Mr Gore did not expect Mr Bush to accept the latest proposal. He offered to meet the Texas Governor personally "to improve the tone of our dialogue".

The Florida Supreme Court refusal to block hand recounts, as requested by

Florida secretary of state Ms Katherine Harris, gave Democrats new vigour in their ballot-by-ballot bid to trim Mr Bush's 300-vote lead. The decision did not address the merits of whether hand counting should be allowed. "She can go to another court," said court spokesman Mr Craig Waters. "That would be up to her," he said.

Broward and Palm Beach counties hunkered down for an excruciating hand count of one million ballots. But Ms Harris, a staunch Republican, announced that she would not accept the hand-counted ballots.

Calling the counties' reasoning "insufficient", she vowed to certify the results on Saturday without manual recount totals.

The political and legal quagmire expanded beyond Florida when a federal appeals court in Atlanta agreed to consider Mr Bush's bid to stop recounts. Mr Bush had lost a round on this in federal court earlier.

Outside courtrooms, both sides fought a

fierce public relations campaign, each portraying their President-in-waiting as the guardian of the people's will.

Mr Gore's proposal comes a day after the Bush team suggested its deal to end the stalemate: accept the results of overseas ballots and those votes already certified, but drop lawsuits over manual recounts.

Neither side expected the other to jump at the proposals, but both camps wanted to convince Americans they were doing everything they could to end the gridlock.

In the latest public relations salvo, Mr Gore said he would accept the results of votes certified by the state, plus overseas absentee ballots due by tomorrow and votes that may still be recounted in three Democrat counties. He also said he would not object if Mr Bush demanded recounts in all 67 of Florida's counties.

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THE STATESMAN

NOV 17 1992

Debate on electoral college heats up

ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9. — That Mr George W Bush could join John Quincy Adams, Rutherford B Hayes and Benjamin Harrison as White House winners who lost the nation's popular vote is fuelling new calls to abolish the state-by-state electoral college.

"The people will decide. A majority will rule," said Senator Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat. "The point we're trying to make is that this is no way to run a country."

Mr Durbin is co-sponsor of a proposed amendment to the constitution that would require direct election of Presidents, ending the two-centuries-old system of state-based electors. More than 700 attempts to overhaul the system have failed.

With Florida's recount scheduled to be completed today, Mr Bush trailed Mr Al Gore in the popular vote but will get the required 270 electoral votes if he wins the Sunshine State, where his lead was too small to avoid a recount. Many voters and lawmakers say such a result should not be possible.

"The awkwardness comes in that the principle of one-man-one-vote is not precisely reflected," said Mr Jim Leach, an Iowa Republican.

Apart from the inherent difficulty of amending the constitution, turning to a nationwide popular vote to pick a President has long faced



Orange County Supervisor of Elections workers in Orlando, Florida, seal the recounted absentee ballots in a bin, during a recount of over 39,000 absentee ballots from Orange County on Wednesday. — AP/PTI

extreme difficulties. People from smaller states, already struggling for attention in most presidential races, fear being ignored by candidates who choose to campaign exclusively in the populous regions.

"I think it may help the smaller states," Mr Tom Daschle, a South Dakota Democrat, said about the electoral college. "South Dakota isn't the biggest state in the country, and we're going to look at those three electoral votes with some degree of con-

cern if we lose it."

The founding fathers created the electoral college in 1787 as a buffer between citizens and the election of the President. It was to protect the nation from mob rule and ensure power for less-populous states.

In a presidential election, voters cast ballots for 538 electors, not directly for the President and his vice-presidential candidate. The electors, distributed according to each state's number of House and Senate members, meet in

Minnesota sends Indian American to Senate

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9. — Democratic Minnesota State Representative, Mr Satveer Chaudhary on 7 November became the first Indian American to be elected a state Senator when he beat his Republican opponent, Mr Dan Coughlin for the open Minnesota Senate seat.

Mr Chaudhary, 31, a two-term Minnesota state legislator, won the Senate seat that was vacated by Senator Steve Novak, a Democrat who has represented New Brighton for the past 20 years. Mr Chaudhary also became the first Asian American to be a state Senator, winning the election by securing 9,424 votes. — IANS

December officially to complete the state-by-state electoral process. Large states get more electoral votes because House seats are based on population.

"The electoral college is meant to require that a candidate has a broad geographic reach," said Mr Michael Malbin, political science professor at the State University of New York at Albany. "It requires people to have different kinds of constituencies."

Sen. Mitch McConnell, a

Kentucky Republican, says: "If we did away with the electoral college, an awful lot of states would never get a visit from a presidential candidate."

But Mr Durbin and his supporters argue that the electoral college also dictates where candidates campaign by focusing attention on a few battleground states with large numbers of electoral votes. This year, Michigan, Florida, Illinois, Ohio and Missouri were visited time and again. "If a state is not in play, it doesn't make any difference," Mr Durbin said.

This year's tight race put several smaller states in play during the campaign's final days, including New Mexico, West Virginia and New Hampshire.

Sen. Robert Torricelli, a Democrat from populous New Jersey, said the constitution's framers meant to make the presidential election a vote of the people in each state, not a vote of the country as a whole.

"This is not the federal republic of America," Mr Torricelli said. "It is the United States of America. Our sense of union, and everyone's inclusion, has now been based on this electoral college." There may be hearings and debate in the coming months on Capitol Hill on the proposed amendment, but backers realise the difficulty of pushing it through.

To amend the constitution, both the House and Senate must pass the amendment with two-thirds majorities. Then legislatures in at least 38 of the 50 states must ratify it.

THE STATESMAN

10 NOV 2000

AN UNPRESIDENTED ELECTION

Grounded! By a banana republic

BY MAUREEN DOWD

Oh, heck, let's just keep Clinton. You know he wants it. You know the poor bloke is not going to have any fun as a Senate spouse. Hillary was so icy to him on stage at her victory party as he wiped away the tears, ducking his hugs, that there's no chance she's going to return the two-for-the-price-of-one favour and allow him to be co-senator.

Or let's just keep recounting. The irresolution is so much more spine-tingling than the resolution. The most banal race in history has produced the most electrifying election in history, with the presidency dancing on the head of a pin for mere handfuls of votes, precisely because the matched set of dauphins were so inadequate and indistinct that they were preordained to collide on the runway. Nobody was getting off the ground in this one. The yo-yos were doomed to yo-yo.

So we can have Al Gore, a pol who can't even carry his own home state, on a TKO — finally getting that controlling legal authority, shoehorned in by a bunch of lawyers eager to smush Bush, who vowed to be the "president of tort reform."

Or we can go back to that wacky Bush dynasty, with the

lackadaisical W. unable to win the popular vote against a Democrat referred to in his own party as "Eat Your Spinach," or even properly steal the election in a state run by his brother.

The Gore campaign, run by a Chicago Daley, has now declared war over banana republic voting oddities.

And the WASP Corleones have gone to the mattresses. The surest sign that the Family means business is that Poppy has recalled his old consigliere, James Baker, to duel against Warren Christopher in a legal battle of the \$1,500 suits.

("The day has come, Jimmy," Don Georgio surely said, "when I must call upon you to do a service for me.")

Mr Baker was the only one from the old Bush crowd ostracised from Bush II, because W. blamed Mr Baker's uninspired performance as campaign chief for his dad's '92 loss.

To bring the tough Texan, dubbed "the velvet hammer" by *Time*, back in for a second chance at dragging a flighty Bush across the finish line, shows that the Bushes intend for Al Gore to summer with the fishes.

The 2000 election devolved to Aaron Spelling melodrama because it had Clinton poisoning. Everyone was obsessed

with Bill Clinton, and when that happens, mayhem ensues.

W. ran to avenge his father's loss to the louche Clinton. Al spent the entire campaign running away from the louche Clinton. Hillary was catapulted into the Senate race by the betrayal of the louche Clinton.

And all these psychodramas boiled over on Election Night.

Bill, watching returns in a suite at the Hyatt as he waited to go downstairs with Hillary, was furious all over again at Al for not deploying him better and bragging on their record more. Al, in Nashville, was just as mad at Bill, because exit polls confirmed that the president was a big drag on the Democratic ticket.

Hillary was sore at Bill for some reason, or all reasons, and made no attempt to hide her chilliness Tuesday. Which must have made Bill sore at her, given all that great advice he gave her that helped her get, at long last, a perch of her own.

The Bushes were so driven by Clinton poisoning, they had poor Jeb under incredible pressure to deliver.

When Mr Gore called the governor at 3:30 am to retract his concession, W. said he knew he had won the election because Jeb had told him so.

"Let me explain something," Mr Gore acidly lectured W., "Your younger brother is not the ultimate authority on this."

Mr Gore seemed more intent on boasting that he had gotten more votes than Bill Clinton in '92 and '96 than in touting his popular-vote lead over Mr Bush.

The night was so wild, trussed up in such a mesmerising cat's cradle of sibling rivalries and scalding feuds, that Tom Brokaw and Tim Russert actually fell into dead silence for several moments at 3:17 am, as they absorbed the fact that the man they had just declared president-elect was winning by only 568 votes in his brother's state. "It was as though we had crossed wires with *Saturday Night Live*," Mr Brokaw recalls.

The Smithsonian called NBC to see if it could get the little slate on which Mr Russert was doing electoral math, on which he had finally scrawled "Florida, Florida, Florida." Not just yet, Mr Russert demurred. "We may have to use it again," he explains.

By arrangement with the New York Times



Fast-backward to 1787

BY AKHIL REED AMAR

New Haven: As we await results from the Florida recount, two things should be clear. First, if George W. Bush, having apparently lost the popular vote, does indeed win at least 270 electoral votes when the Electoral College meets, he is the lawful winner, who played by the Constitution's rules and won.

Second, we must realise that the Electoral College is a hopelessly outdated system and that we must abolish it. Direct election would resonate far better with the American value of one person, one vote. Indeed, the college was designed at the founding of the country to help one group — white Southern males — and this year, it has apparently done just that.

In 1787, as the Constitution was being drafted in Philadelphia, James Wilson of Pennsylvania proposed direct election of the president. But James Madison of Virginia worried that such a system would hurt the South, which would have been outnumbered by the North in a direct election system. The creation of the Electoral College got around that: it was part of the deal that Southern states, in computing their share of electoral votes, could count slaves (albeit with a two-fifths discount), who of course were given none of the privileges of citizenship. Virginia emerged as the big winner, with more than a quarter of the electors needed to elect a president. A free state like Pennsylvania got fewer electoral votes even though it had approximately the same free population.

The Constitution's pro-Southern bias quickly became obvious. For 32 of the Constitution's first 36 years, a white slaveholding Virginian occupied the presidency. Thomas Jefferson, for example, won the election of

1800 against John Adams from Massachusetts in a race where the slavery skew of the Electoral College was the decisive margin of victory.

The system's gender bias was also obvious. In a direct presidential election, any state that chose to enfranchise its women would have automatically doubled its clout. Under the Electoral College, however, a state had no special incentive to

women.

The Electoral College began as an unfair system, and remains so. So why keep it?

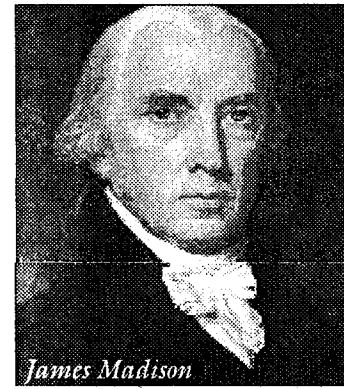
Advocates of the system sloganeer about "federalism," meaning that presidential candidates are forced to take into account individual state interests and regional variations in their national campaigns.

But in the current system, candidates don't appeal so much to state interests (what are those, anyway?) as to demographic groups (elderly voters, soccer moms) within states. And direct popular elections would still encourage candidates to take into account regional differences, like those between voters in the Midwest and the East. After all, one cannot win a national majority without getting lots of votes in lots of places.

Direct election could give state governments some incentives to increase voter turnout, because the more voters a state turned out, the bigger its role in national elections and the bigger its overall share in the national tally. Presidential candidates would begin to pay more attention to the needs of individual states that had higher turnouts.

The nation's founders sought to harness governmental competition and rivalry in healthy ways, using checks and balances within the federal government and preserving roles for state governments. Direct presidential elections would be true to their best concepts — democracy and healthy competition — rather than to their worst compromises.

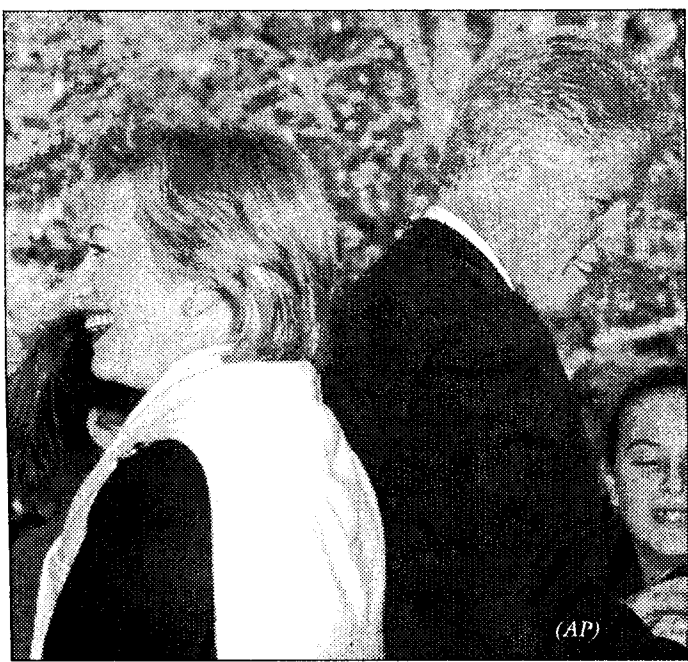
AKHIL REED AMAR, a law professor at Yale, is author of *The Bill of Rights: Creation and Reconstruction*. By arrangement with the New York Times



The electoral college was designed at the founding of the United States to help one group, white Southern males, and this year, it has done just that

expand suffrage — each got a fixed number of electoral votes, regardless of how many citizens were allowed to vote.

Now fast-forward to Election Night 2000. Al Gore appears to have received the most popular votes nationwide but may well lose the contest for electoral votes. Once again, the system has tilted toward white Southern males. Exit polls indicate that Mr. Bush won big among this group and that Mr Gore won decisively among blacks and



More States likely to be challenged

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 9. By now a lot of things should have happened, the first of which being that there must have been a President-elect in the U.S.; and this person would have already started planning his moves for an administration that is going to be officially functioning from January 20, 2001.

While media outlets may be asking the question of the kind of "message" that is being sent overseas, the focus for all practical purposes is within. And there are no easy answers. For all the talk of ending bitterness and divisiveness in Washington D.C., the fact remains that there is going to be more of it in the capital city, irrespective of whether the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, or the Texas Governor, Mr. George W Bush, makes it to the White House.

The markets do not like uncertainty, they say. But in this election, a point has been made with a clear message coming out that is beyond the realm of Presidential politics. Looking at the composition of Capitol Hill, the consensus is one of continuing gridlock. The scenario that after several decades the possibility of a Republican in the White House and a Republican "controlled" Congress could be hardly of any cheer for Mr. Bush. Traditionally and historically, a President and a Congress controlled by the same party have hardly had an easy going.

The aftermath of the elections is supposed to bring people together — that is people close ranks behind the person chosen as the President. Both Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore have said that should the other be chosen, support would be automatically forthcoming. Politically these are all nice things to say. The reality could be just the opposite if what is unravelling in Florida is anything to go by.

And Florida may not be the only State in play for media reports have it that other close races in such States as Iowa and Wisconsin could also be challenged. The bottomline is that even as many pre-



The Florida Governor, Mr. Jeb Bush (right), addressing newsmen in Tallahassee, Florida, on Wednesday. Mr. Bush, discussing the Florida vote recount, said he would recuse himself from making any voter certification since his older brother, Mr. George W. Bush, was a potential winner. At left is the Florida Attorney-General, Mr. Bob Butterworth. — AP

dicted a tight race, no one had an inkling of what was in store. Analysts were talking about one candidate winning the popular vote and losing the Electoral College vote. The last time a Presidential candidate lost the popular vote but won the Electoral College was in 1888.

This election also nearly came down to a tie on the Electoral College vote which would have then pushed the whole thing on the doorsteps of the House of Representatives and the Senate. With this came all kinds of scenarios including a Republican-Democratic combination at the White House and vice versa. Whether this would have been a "better" scenario than the one which is being played out is too hypothetical to answer.

The outcome of the election has brought out the expected anger and frustrations on many fronts. One of course is the Democrat's anger at the Green Party candidate, Mr. Ralph Nader. Nationally and regionally, Mr. Nader hardly

made a dent in the fortunes of Mr. Gore, but he sure did hurt him in Florida taking some 95,000 votes. Mr. Nader, who has long made the argument that Mr. Gore needed to go no further than look at himself for his defeat, does not seem to be bothered. And the harder the Democrats lean on him, the more determined he and his supporters are going to get.

The other focus of attention is the Electoral College system which many believe is arcane. But the point to be remembered is that it is easy to talk about changing a part of the system. The realities of changing this constitutionally is so difficult that whether any serious attempt will be made in the next four years remains to be seen. For one thing, given the present composition of the House and the Senate, law makers from small States will throw enough roadblocks; and for another, two thirds of the States will have to approve any changes to the Constitution.

THE HINDU

10 NOV 2001

Republican 'hegemony' over America?

By C. Raja Mohan

IF YOU thought American "hegemony" over the world was bad enough, think again. Consider the prospect that the Republican party may soon exercise a rare and total dominance over Washington. And then you begin to wonder what that might mean for the world in the coming years.

Who in the world could have assessed that these closely fought general elections in the United States might produce a total sweep for the Grand Old Party. If the recount of votes in Florida leads to Mr. George W. Bush becoming the next U.S. President, the Republican party will have wrested the White House from the Democrats. The Party looks like retaining control over the American Senate. It has already established a majority in the House of Representatives. For the first time in nearly 50 years, one party will now control the White House, the Senate and the House of Representatives. What will be the nature of America's external relations at a time of Republican and conservative hegemony over Washington?

But first a word of caution. One party domination of the American political system is indeed rare. The last time it happened was in 1952, when Republicans took control of both the Congress and the White House. But it lasted just two years. Keeping the Government divided is at the heart of the American democratic vision and it is entirely possible that one House could change hands again in the next Congressional elections two years from now.

Further, Mr. Bush has not won the popular vote but might become the President on the basis of a razor-thin majority in the electoral college. This fact alone might persuade Mr. Bush not to govern on a partisan basis. The Democratic party is down, thanks to an extremely inept campaign by Mr. Al Gore. But it is not out, and Mr. Bush will have to carry at least sections of the Opposition with him on various issues, including foreign policy and national security.

Having put these caveats in place, let us now turn to the kind of foreign policy we can expect from Mr. Bush and his fellow

Change of direction on many issues of interest to India and the world are likely if Mr. Bush is declared the winner.

Principal weaknesses of Mr. Bush's candidacy has been the lack of experience in Washington and in national security affairs. But his campaign had pointed to Mr. Bush's experience as Governor of Texas in dealing with Mexico across the border, his ability to speak Spanish and his commitment to enhancing the U.S. engagement with Latin America. Mr. Bush will certainly not have the kind of grip on foreign policy detail that Mr. Clinton has demonstrated in the last eight years. Ignorance of the world has never been a handicap in the U.S. Mr. Ronald Reagan had famously delegated policy making downwards while setting broad objectives for his Administration. Mr. Bush is expected to do much the same. He has put together an accomplished team of foreign policy advisers, who are ready to run a competent show.

WORLD VIEW

The return of the Democrats to the White House after the end of the Cold War saw the dominance of the liberal internationalist vision over American foreign policy. The collapse of the Soviet Union saw an end to the American crusade against communism and a new organising principle had to be found for American foreign policy. But there was no real consensus on what America's post-Cold War policy should be. Mr. Clinton sought to supplant anti-communism with a global interventionism focussed on promoting human rights and democracy, ending regional conflict, saving failed states and rebuilding nations around the world. If Mr. Gore becomes President, there is bound to be a broad continuation of this foreign policy. Mr. Gore's approach to the world is likely to be "Clinton plus", given his penchant for "globalism" and a forward engagement of the world.

The vision of Mr. Bush and his advisers is rooted in a more cautious and conser-

The Republican attitudes towards the CTBT and missile defences have created deep anxieties among the European allies as well as China. Would the Republican approach to nuclear weapons be more muscular? Surprisingly the answer may be no. Mr. Bush has criticised the Cold War inertia in American nuclear policy, and has suggested he might be ready for more radical cuts in atomic arsenals than the Democrats. The Republicans are demanding a paradigm shift in the way nuclear deterrence has been managed ever since atomic weapons came into being — from an offence-dominated environment to one that is more focussed on defences. Mr. Bush shares the non-proliferation concerns of the Democrats, but is likely to be more pragmatic and less doctrinaire about the spread of weapons of mass destruction.

The biggest changes in a Republican foreign policy could be reserved for Asia. Mr. Bush has sharply attacked the Clinton-Gore policy for neglecting the traditional allies in Asia such as Japan and emphasising instead a "strategic partnership" with China. The Republicans are determined to alter this "China-first" policy of the last decade. There is a deep anxiety in the Republican Party about the long-term direction of China's evolution, and Mr. Bush himself has said he will treat China as a "strategic competitor" than a partner. But there are also strong divisions within the Republican party on how to deal with China and some of these are likely to be sharpened once they control the making of policy. But there is no question that under a Bush Administration, there will be considerable uncertainty in Sino-U.S. relations, and as a consequence greater fluidity in the Asian security environment.

If the Republicans are indeed appointed to take charge of Washington, America's allies and adversaries alike will have to prepare themselves to deal with the prospect of a new Republican hegemon in Washington. A great power like the U.S. does not make wild foreign policy turns in peace time. But change of direction on many issues of interest to India and the world are likely if Mr. Bush is declared the

winner

Charges of foul play tar election

FROM K.P. NAYAR

Washington, Nov. 9: Florida is turning out to be the Bihar of the United States in this presidential election with a barrage of allegations of irregularities throwing the outcome into a well of uncertainty.

Attorney-general Janet Reno said she would consider a request for investigation into the alleged voting irregularities as America and the two candidates, Al Gore and George W. Bush, went into a second day of nerve-numbing wait for the result.

Both sides need the 25 electoral votes of Florida, the sunshine state famous for Miami, to make the majority mark of 270.

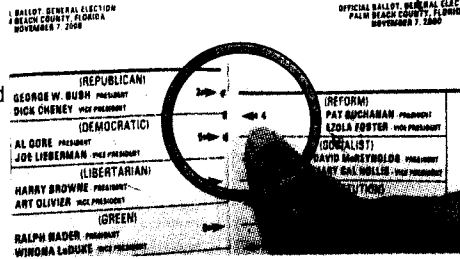
The victory arches and banners outside the Governor's Mansion in Austin, Texas, and in front of the Gore campaign headquarters in Nashville, Tennessee, have been taken down.

Although Florida Governor Jeb Bush, younger brother of the Republican candidate, George W. Bush, said results of the recount in the state were expected by 5 pm Eastern Time on Thursday (3.30 am IST on Friday), the strange saga of the US presidential poll is unlikely to reach a final conclusion immediately.

Groups of voters in Florida's Palm Beach County filed lawsuits demanding a repoll on the ground that ballot papers used in the county were confusing, and, therefore, violated election laws. Florida Democrats said ballot papers listed candidates on two facing pages of the ballot booklet in such a way that a vote meant for one candidate could actually go for the unintended one.

Their complaint stemmed from 3,400 votes polled in this Jewish stronghold for Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan, whose tally nationwide is less than one per cent. Jews have en masse supported the Democrats in this election since Joe Lieberman, the

Punch mix-up: Democrats said an "incredibly horrific" ballot paper (right) design forced many voters to punch against Pat Buchanan's name, mistaking it for Al Gore's slot. Realising the error, some people punched again, leaving their votes invalid



Black rage: A powerful minority organisation said several Black voters were turned away at one Florida polling place because of an alleged ballot shortage.



Boxes abandoned: The Gore camp said several ballot boxes were left behind at polling stations



Florida's skeleton: Miami's 1997 mayoral election was overturned because of absentee ballot fraud -- at least one vote was cast by a dead man. Other elections were tarnished by vote-buying allegations

vice-presidential running mate of Gore is a Jew.

Buchanan himself said he believed most of the 3,407 votes he got in the county belonged to Gore and that people have voted for him by mistake. Buchanan also disputed 19,000 ballot papers that were nullified because people voted for both him and Gore. There were also allegations of ballot boxes missing or left behind in polling stations and black voters having been prevented from voting.

The National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP) urged the attorney-general to investigate three types of complaints:

That black voters were turned away by election officials pleading ballot paper shortage; That they were given incorrect ballots; and That some voters were disenfranchised because their identity papers did not match poll records.

Some voters also complained that election officials distributed a voting guide published by a Christian coalition inside polling

booths and told voters that "God wants you to vote for Bush".

The allegations did not come as a surprise because Florida has a history of charges of election malpractices. Only three years ago, the mayor's election in Miami was invalidated by charges of vote fraud.

Gore sent President Bill Clinton's former secretary of state Warren Christopher to oversee the recount while Bush despatched his father's secretary of state James Baker as his representative.

Even the recount was not going too well in at least one Florida county. In Pinellas County, a second round of recount had to be started because the first produced a 400-vote swing for Gore. The large swing was caused partly by the failure of election officials to count 400 ballots on poll night.

If the Pinellas recount holds in the second round, Bush's lead over Gore would be reduced to 500 votes. Bush's election might lead of 1,784 has already shrunk to 941 with about half of 67 Florida cou-

nties reporting recount results.

Both sides are now marshalling a battery of eminent lawyers to argue their respective cases, should the election battle go to court.

A Gore camp official told CNN the campaign had received information that "tens of thousands" of intended Gore votes had not been counted.

In a dramatic development, Governor Jeb Bush withdrew from the panel which has to clear the recount and formally declare the winner from Florida. Bush said his resignation was to ensure that there was no conflict of interest with his brother, the presidential aspirant.

But even without these controversies, which may be taken up, the final result may not be known until November 17, the deadline for counting absentee ballots from Florida voters. These will be counted only if the margin between Gore and Bush after the recount is less than the total number of absentee votes polled in the state.

Gore appeared briefly before reporters in Nashville and said: "We still do not know the outcome of yesterday's vote and I realise that this is an extraordinary moment for our democracy. What is at issue here is the fundamental fairness of the process as a whole. Because of what is at stake, this matter must be resolved expeditiously, but deliberately and without any rush to judgement."

Although Gore is now the clear winner of the popular vote across the US, he set at rest fears that the Democrats may challenge the electoral college where Bush may eventually secure the presidency.

"Under our constitution, it is the winner of the electoral college that will be the next President," Gore said.

Bush said: "If the result is confirmed in an automatic recount, as we expect it will be, then we have won the election."

■ See Page 4

THE TELEGRAPH

10 NOV 2000

Americans left hanging, world holds breath

Bushwhacked in Florida, US election verdict will have to wait another 24 hours

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, November 8

IN A bizarre twist, the US presidential election was today thrown into turmoil after reports of a George W. Bush victory turned out to be premature and votes in the crucial state of Florida were taken up for recount as the first count was "too close to call". The recount is to be completed by tomorrow.

The twist came about after TV networks and wire services announced the "Bush victory" and Democrat Al Gore promptly called his Republican opponent to congratulate him. However, within an hour, word came that the result was not final and Mr Gore hastily called back Mr Bush to retract his earlier message, conceding defeat.

In the Florida cliffhanger, the vote difference between the two contestants was a mere 1,785 votes. Mr Bush had polled 2,909,136 votes and Mr Gore 2,907,351 votes.

The Florida rules provide for an automatic recount when the vote difference is less than 0.5 per cent of the total votes.

On the basis of the prematurely-settled Florida decision, Mr Bush was deemed to have crossed the magic figure of 270 in the 538-member Electoral College. However, after election officials announced that the counting process was incomplete, the tally was revised: 249 for Mr Gore and 246 for Mr Bush. Mr Gore's tally subsequently rose to 260, while Mr Bush's remained at 246.

The final result will still be determined by Florida. Whosoever wins the popular vote in this sunshine state will also take its 25 votes in the Electoral College and win the Presidency. For, there are only seven other votes up for grabs in the college. These votes from Oregon will not suffice for either candidate to reach the 270 mark.

Mr Gore, defying all predictions, overtook Mr Bush towards the end of the night-long counting to garner more popular votes. His tally, as of last count, stood at 48.57 mil-

lion as against Mr Bush's 48.34 million in the heart-stopper of an election in which both have run neck and neck for days on end. However, it is the electoral votes and not the popular votes that will settle the Presidency issue in the final analysis. Thus, without winning the Florida lap, Mr Gore cannot hope to move into the White House. The same applies to Mr Bush, who would appear to have an advantage in Florida.

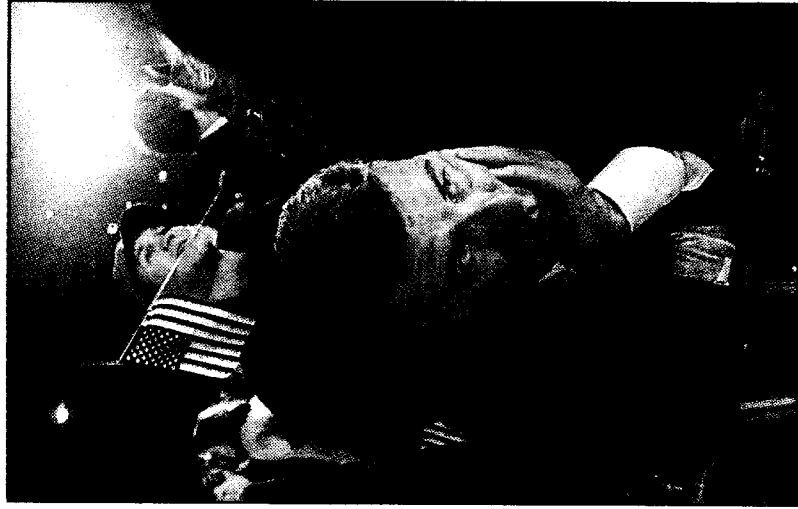
The outcome so far has turned the widespread pre-poll belief on its head: That it is Mr Bush who will win the popular vote, while Mr Gore may win the electoral votes and thus walk away the victor.

The close race on Tuesday has not been confined to the presidential election. The Congressional polls, too, have thrown up a similar scenario, even though the Republicans have in the end managed to retain a tenuous hold in the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Apart from the smooth sailing for First Lady Hillary Clinton in New York, the Senate contests have also seen a "dead man" triumph: Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan, who died in a plane crash last month. His widow, Jean Carnahan, will take his position in the Senate.

The tight Presidential race, which lived up to its reputation of being the closest in 40 years, remained suspense-filled all through Tuesday night as the results started pouring in from the 50 States. The two contenders ran agonisingly neck and neck, both in the popular vote and electoral vote segments.

It was at 2-30 am on Wednesday (1 pm IST) that TV networks jumped the gun as it were by announcing Mr Bush's victory after he seemed to have won the popular vote count in Florida, the battleground State which had indeed come to emerge as the decider in this election. With both Mr Gore and Mr Bush needing 21 and 24 votes respectively in the electoral college, Florida with 25 votes holds the key.



THE AGONY AND THE ECSTASY: Democrat Al Gore's supporters (above) cheer on being told that the race was still on pending confirmed results in Florida. (Left) The Republican camp descends into gloom after hearing the news. Photos: AP

Clinton card could have been Gore's Florida ace

Pramit Pal Chaudhuri
New Delhi, November 8

EVEN BEFORE the Florida rerun, Democratic strategists were berating Al Gore for locking Bill Clinton in a political cage. Mr Clinton himself said his role, or the lack of it, was "overrated."

One wonders. The last bunch of Florida votes came from Broward and Dade Counties, Democratic strongholds with plenty of minority votes. Inexplicably, the ballots were evenly split. One Democratic leader grumbled that Mr Clinton should have been allowed to campaign in Florida for three days. Mr Gore gave him one.

Mr Clinton is wildly popular among minorities. Partly because Mr Gore distanced himself from Mr Clinton, his support among groups like blacks was soft.

Could Clinton have made the difference? Here's some indicators. He was all over his wife's senate campaign. She blew away her rival. Mr Clinton swore to avenge himself against Mr James Rogan, Republican representative from California who had led the impeachment crusade. Republicans did well in congressional battles. Not Mr Rogan.

Why did Mr Gore discard the president? True, Mr George W. Bush's challenge was built around projecting himself as a scandal-free saint. But Mr Clinton could have been targeted at select voters.

It is known the moralistic Mr Gore was personally offended by Mr Clinton's sexual escapades. Also, when the two shared a podium, cameramen had eyes only for one of them.

"I've got another 10 weeks to quack," Mr Clinton said after voting day. If he had been allowed to quack earlier, Mr Gore might not have been biting nails in Nashville.

How the world reacted to George W. Bush's 'victory'

You are a good friend of our country and our people are happy about the continuance of the close friendship between our people during your term. German President Rau.

China extends its congratulations to Bush. Official statement issued through news agency Xinhua.

I hope Bush will keep up US support for the Korean peace process. S. Korean president Kim Dae-Jung.

I am looking forward to working with Bush towards boosting Franco-American ties. French President Jacques Chirac.

I congratulate George Bush if it is confirmed that he has won and we look forward to working with him. British Foreign Secretary Robin Cook.

Bush's victory is sad. Gore is someone who stands for a modern left-oriented policy. Sweden's PM Goeran Persson.

● THE Spanish daily *Diario 16* put out a preliminary edition early on Wednesday handing the election to Al Gore, with a picture of him with his fists raised in the air on the front page. The afternoon edition of the Johannesburg daily *The Star* carried a banner headline: "Bush is president" as US TV networks were still reporting the race was too close to call.

THE DAY-LONG SEESAW

6.15 am (IST): Bush takes the lead after winning in five states and 54 electoral votes. Gore has one state under his belt and three electoral votes and set to take Florida.

7.20 am: Gore wins Pennsylvania for overall lead.

8.28 am: In a dramatic reversal, CNN says Florida may not go to Gore after all.

9.08 am: All major US television networks revise their Florida projections.

9.36 am: Gore takes California.

10.45 am: Bush ahead with victories in Arizona, Nevada and Arkansas.

11.48 am: TV networks struggle to explain their mistake in giving Florida to Gore.

12.48 pm: Networks declare Bush the winner in Florida, giving him the 25 electoral votes that would put him over the top.

1 pm to 1.45 pm: Gore calls Bush to concede the election and boards a motorcade for a 10-minute journey to War Memorial Plaza in Nashville, Tennessee, to deliver a concession speech to his supporters.

1.55 pm: Two blocks away from the plaza, Gore staff tell him that official Florida tally now shows Bush up by just 6,000 votes, with many ballots left to be counted. By the time the Gore motorcade reaches the plaza, the Democrat is down by just under 1,000 votes.

2 pm: Gore makes a short telephone call to Bush to say he is not giving up until all the results from Florida are declared.

2.05 pm: Two television networks retract their reports that Florida had gone to Bush. A Florida election official announces a recount.

3.40 pm: Gore wins Wisconsin but Florida is still up for grabs.

8.25 pm: CNN reports Florida counting supervisors "have until end of business hours on Thursday" (early Friday in India) to complete the recount. US yet to get a President-elect.

By George, Bush loses bird in hand

Recount gives Gore a chance

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE & AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, Nov. 8. — US voters' nerve-wracking wait for the presidential poll results was stretched by at least another day tonight, hours after major TV channels and newspapers had jumped the gun and declared Mr George W Bush the winner.

That apparent victory was snatched away when poll officials ordered a recount in Florida, after Mr Bush's lead of 50,000 votes in the key state dwindled to some 600 within minutes.

Adding a touch of the farcical to the fiasco, Mr Al Gore rang up Mr Bush to retract an earlier concession of defeat — something never witnessed before in US history.

Early in the morning, however, some TV channels had declared Mr Gore the winner in Florida, only to change the verdict quickly in favour of his rival.

Mr Gore had then made his first call to Mr Bush, congratulating him. But minutes before he was to follow it up with a public concession of defeat, the Vice-President learnt he was now behind only by 600 votes — less than 0.5 per cent of the ballots cast in the state, which meant an automatic recount. He immediately grabbed the lifeline — and the telephone receiver.

An aide who said he overheard only Mr Gore's side of

Austin American-Statesman

BUSH!

Florida seals it: Texan elected 43rd president



The third edition of Wednesday's issue of the *Austin American-Statesman* in Austin, Texas, declared Mr George W Bush the winner. It later printed another edition correcting the error. — AP/PTI

the conversation, quoted the Vice-President as telling Mr Bush "the circumstances have changed", and something like "do what you have to do".

Mr Gore, rather surprisingly, led the nationwide popular vote. Of the more important electoral college votes, he had 260 to Mr Bush's 246. The first brings 25 — wins the election.

Florida's election officials tonight began the recount of nearly 6 million votes, a process that should end by Thursday night (Friday morning IST), said Mr Clay Roberts, expressed "surprise" at the

director of the state Division of Elections. But with the law allowing 10 days to count overseas absentee ballots, which now could be crucial, there may be a long period of cliff-hanging ahead.

Gill's barb

Electoral 'irregularities'... a recount. When this happens in the motherland of democracy, it's time for Indians to lecture the Americans.

The Chief Election Commissioner, Mr MS Gill, today expressed "surprise" at the

"confusion" over the declaration of the US poll results, saying the system needs to be "improved and changed", adds PTI from New Delhi.

"I think part of the blame lies with the competitive press of America with each TV channel wanting to be the first to break the news," Mr Gill said. "It is like declaring results in South Delhi without knowing the figures in Greater Kailash."

So, what's the solution? "Barkis is willing... (to help)," the CEC said with a twinkle in his eye, recalling a character in *David Copperfield*.

THE BIG BOTCH-UP

6.30 a.m. (IST): Major US television networks announce Gore has won Florida.

8.30 a.m.: ABC, CNN, CBS issue retractions. MSNBC follows suit.

Mid-morning: TV stations declare Bush the winner in Florida and the 43rd President of the USA.

1 p.m.: Gore calls Bush and accepts defeat. The margin in Florida, Gore thinks, is 50,000 votes

2 p.m.: Gore learns the margin is just about 600 — less than five per cent of votes cast, which automatically allows a recount. Gore calls Bush again and retracts the concession of defeat.



Rep double in Congress

REUTERS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 8.

Republicans scored a double-barrelled win in a tense fight for the Congress today, holding off a strong Democratic challenge to narrowly retain control of the Senate and the House of Representatives.

Democrats however scored a high-profile victory in New York as Mrs Hillary Rodham Clinton won a hard-fought Senate race to become the only First Lady to win a political office.

In the year's most unusual race, voters in Missouri elected the late Democratic Governor, Mel Carnahan, whose name remained on the ballot though he died in a plane crash in

October, over the Republican Senator, Mr John Ashcroft. His widow, Mrs Jean, will be appointed by the state's new Democratic Governor to fill his seat.

All 435 House seats and 34 of the 100 Senate seats were at stake in yesterday's voting, and Democrats had needed to pick up seven House seats and five Senate seats to reclaim congressional majorities for the first time since 1994.

They fell short in both chambers though the wafer-thin Republican majorities appeared likely to shrink, particularly in the Senate where, by early today, Democrats had sliced the Republicans' 54-46 majority by three seats.

It is the first time since the 1920s that Republicans held power in the House and Senate for four consecutive congressional sessions, and will be the first time since 1953-55 that Republicans controlled the White House, Senate and House.

In the Senate, several Republican incumbents fell in addition to Mr Ashcroft. **India caucus:** India caucus in the Congress will be virtually intact though there are some casualties, adds PTI. A prominent casualty is Democrat Mr Sam Gejdenson from Connecticut. Democrat Mr Gary Ackerman won handily.

More photographs reports on page 3

American elections careen to wildest fin

Recount on in Florida; whoever wins gets to the White House

By Ramesh Chandran
The Times of India News Service

WASHINGTON: In one of the most sensational and bizarre days in American political history, George W. Bush was declared by television networks as the 43rd President of the U.S. and was congratulated by his rival, Al Gore, who promptly retracted his concession as the margin of victory in the key state of Florida turned out to be less than 1,200 votes.

A recount is now in progress in Florida as spellbound Americans wait to hear who would be their next president in what has been one of the closest races in recent memory.

For almost 12 hours of rivetting drama—a head-spinning roller coaster ride which no Hollywood script writer would have dared to conjure up—state by state, the fortunes of Messrs Gore and Bush swung like a pendulum as they inched towards the magic figure of 270 electoral college votes. And each state was won by wafer thin margins as both candidates were separated by the slenderest of leads in the popular vote.

On a night when all the leading networks—ABC, CBS, NBC, CNN, Fox News and MSNBC—did not exactly involve themselves with reporting or forecasting glory, they initially announced on the basis of exit polls that Florida had been won by Mr Gore. Within the hour, all the networks were compelled to change that prediction by declaring that Florida, with its 25 delegates, was now being slotted alongside several other states listed as “too close to call”.

With both Mr Gore and Mr Bush having chalked about 240 candidates, only four states finally remained, with the “sunshine” state Florida being the ultimate prize. As Mr Bush led in the final stage in the state with less than 10,000 votes (96 per cent of the votes in Florida had been counted) one network after another declared with celebratory pomp and dazzling graphics, George W. Bush as the next president of the U.S. Mr Gore rang Mr Bush to congratulate him and to “concede” the election. It prompted some late city editions—notably tabloids like the *New York Post*—to announce Mr Bush as the victor.

As though the excitement of this excruciatingly close contest was not enough, Mr Gore suddenly inched harrowingly close to Mr Bush, cutting his lead to approximately 1,210 votes in Florida, where close to six million had voted. Under local law, less than 0.5 per cent in a victory margin meant an automatic recount. The rainsoaked crowd which had assembled in front of a war memorial museum in Nashville and had been numbed by Mr Gore's apparent defeat suddenly became ecstatic when it came to know that Mr Gore had called up his rival to retract his earlier concession of defeat.

A recount is now under way in all of the 67 counties in Florida. Several thousand absentee ballots are also being scrutinised. And as Mr Gore inched further ahead of his rival in the popular votes 49 per cent to 48 per cent, their electoral college vote tally was also revised. The candidate who wins the prized tally of Florida's 25 electoral college votes will assume the mantle of the leader of the Free World. The recount could become mired in disputes and legal wrangles. For Republicans, who narrowly retained control of the House as well as the Senate (by a single vote), the glorious opportunity of a trifecta—controlling the House, the Senate as well as the White House and turning Washington DC into a Republican town—has momentarily eluded them.

Should Mr Bush ultimately win this strange election but lose the popular vote, there would once again be a spirited debate over the relevance of an electoral college. As for the role of the networks in the controversial exit polls, in which none of the main players distinguished itself, an even more explosive debate is bound to be sparked off.



TOP BILLING: First Lady Hillary Clinton, along with her daughter Chelsea and supporters, exults after winning the New York Senate seat on Wednesday. She is the first U.S. presidential wife to be elected to Congress.

Hillary wins Senate seat, creates history

WASHINGTON: First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton scored a historic victory on Tuesday by winning the U.S. Senate seat from New York and becoming the first wife of a President ever elected to public office. She played off her star power as the partner of popular President Bill Clinton to win over voters in New York, where she moved last year from the White House.

She defeated Long Island representative Rick Lazio, who had picked up the Republican torch after New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani dropped out of the race. Mr Lazio conceded defeat with Mr Giuliani and New York Governor George Pataki by his side.

Ms Clinton held a 56-44 per cent advantage in voting with two-thirds of the popular vote counted. “Wow, this is amazing!” she said in accepting victory. “Thank you, New York. I am profoundly grateful for giving me the chance to serve you. Thank you for opening up your minds and hearts for accepting what we could do together,” she said. “I offer you my undying gratitude.”

President Clinton, who was in suburban Westchester county with Hillary on Tuesday and joined her on the podium at the New York City rally, lobbied hard for his wife in an effort to keep his legacy alive in Washington. President Clinton declared himself “elated” with his wife's victory as he took a back seat on election day. Taking over the role his wife has played for more than a quarter century, Mr Clinton stood at the back of the stage alongside daughter Chelsea and looked on with pride as his wife gave her acceptance speech.

“I'm just elated. I'm so proud of her,” Mr Clinton told reporters as he greeted supporters after his wife's speech. “I'm so happy and so grateful. I don't know what else to say,” he said, wiping a tear from his eye. Ms Clinton said, “I know I would not be here without my family, and I want to thank my mother and my brothers, and I want to thank my husband and my daughter.” She will enter the Senate for a six-year term that just 18 months ago held an impeachment trial on her husband over the Monica Lewinsky affair. (Agencies)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

9 NOV 2000

Crowing TV eats crow

BY PETER MARKS

Dean Rather offered viewers of CBS last night the equivalent of a money-back guarantee. "If we say somebody's carried the state, you can take that to the bank. Book it!" he asserted.

But there was a faulty deposit. In an embarrassment of major proportions, the networks were forced to retract a projection that had given Vice-President Al Gore the state of Florida early in the evening. Given the vast resources that both campaigns had invested in the state — the fourth richest, in terms of electoral votes, and pivotal to both candidates' fortunes — it was perhaps the most important call of the evening.

The Florida projection had been made by the networks at shortly before 8 pm eastern time (1 am GMT). It was withdrawn by CNN at 9.54 pm and all other major broadcast and cable news networks followed shortly afterward. As of 1:30 am the state remained too close to call, and neither campaign had yet garnered a projected electoral vote majority.

"Oh, waiter," Jeff Greenfield, the CNN analyst said. "One order of crow."

Spokesmen for several of the networks attributed the mix-up to "problems" in the data supplied by the Voter News Service, the polling organisation run by a consortium of networks and the Associated Press. But there was also some criticism that the networks had jumped the gun way

before the information from Florida was conclusive.

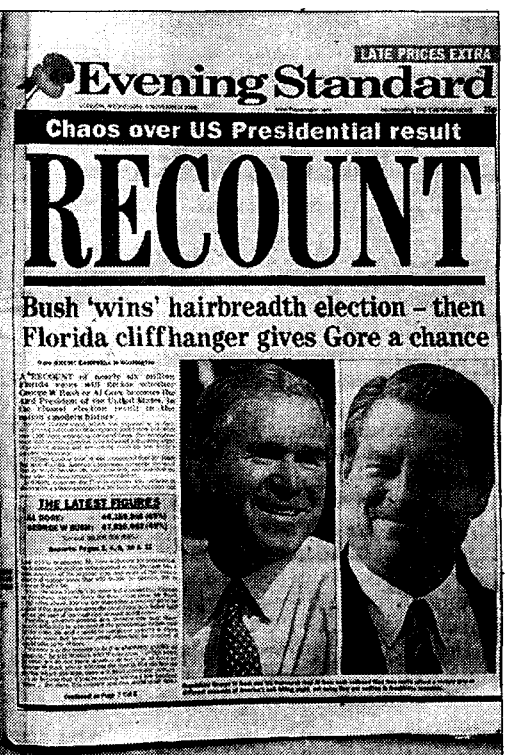
Appearing on CNN, Karl Rove, Bush's chief strategist, took the networks to task for the error. He pointed out that part of the Florida Panhandle was in a different time zone from the rest of the state. "You all called Florida before the polls were closed," he said. William J. Bennett, the former secretary of education, was even angrier.

Shaw explained that races are not called in a state until "75 percent of the precincts had closed." Rove replied: "That's one criteria you might think about changing."

Christa Robinson, a CNN spokeswoman, said the network had found that some of the surveys of voters leaving the polls in a Florida county that normally voted Republican had "skewed heavily for Gore, and so it seemed off." The network, she said, withdrew the call for Gore after alerting the Voter News Service. The other networks soon followed.

The Florida flap had the anchors doing flip-flops. On NBC, Tim Russert had said to Tom Brokaw, before the state was withdrawn, that Gov. George W. Bush had to "run the table" of remaining states if he were to win. A few minutes after Florida was back in the tossup column, Rather was now saying on CBS that it was Gore who had to run the table.

It was all part of an extraordinary night of political television. The anchors knew it right off the bat: unlike some deadly dull election nights of the past, this one was truly ready for prime time.



SORRY!: The London *Evening Standard* prematurely declared (left) George W. Bush the winner of the US presidential election and changed (right) it in the following edition. (AFP)

"The presidential race looks jar-lid tight!" Rather exclaimed breathlessly on CBS. "It doesn't happen like this in any other country in the world," Peter Jennings intoned on ABC. "Stay with us, we're about to take you on an exciting and bumpy ride," Brokaw promised on NBC.

The networks' electoral maps were flashing in three colours all through the early hours of their wall-to-wall election coverage, and it was that dramatic third colour — for states that remained too close to call — that was getting all the famous faces at the election desks all worked up.

Rather, especially, could hardly contain his pumped-up locutions. The presidential race in Florida, he said, was "hot enough to peel house paint." The Senate

contest in Virginia was "nasty enough to gag a buzzard." Gov. George W. Bush has "run through Dixie like a big wheel through a cotton field."

It was clear that hearts were beating a little faster in television newsrooms. Analysts like Russert, Greenfield and George Stephanopoulos on ABC looked as blissful as 7-year-olds who had just been told they could stay up until Santa came down the chimney.

The broadcast and an expanded array of all-news cable networks were locked in an intense competition of their own, to assess the results from voter surveys as polls closed in each new wave of states. Each network also offered its own gizmos and gimmicks. On CBS, the cameras shot close-ups of

hands passing, as if fortune-telling, over a United States map: the hands belonged to Rather, presiding over the glowing screen embedded in his desk.

On CNN, the anchors Shaw and Judy Woodruff occasionally handed the programme over to Wolf Blitzer, who announced Congressional results from the christened "Balance of Power" desk. And NBC placed Katie Couric in the elements, by the Rockefeller Centre skating rink, with the NBC logo painted in the ice. Across the dial, commentators and reporters identified Florida, Michigan and Pennsylvania, in the words of Brit Hume of the Fox News Channel as "the iron triangle", as the states to watch

NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

THE TELEGRAPH

9 NOV 2000

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2000

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A HISTORIC POLL DRAMA w31

THE POLITICAL RACE for the U.S. presidency in the millennial year has surpassed the grand imagination of the pundits across the world and the American citizens alike. The much-anticipated photo-finish has surely happened — amazingly, though, as an unprecedented phenomenon of a 'suspended' electoral verdict about who will succeed the outgoing U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, despite a transparent 'win' by the Republican candidate, Mr. George W. Bush. At the macro-level, this simply is the stuff of pristine democratic history, however ephemeral or transient in scope may be the deferral of the final reckoning. By the small hours of November 8, the night after the completion of polling, a recount or at least a complete compilation of all the votes including those cast overseas in respect of a key U.S. State, Florida, was considered necessary for even a non-official assessment with an absolute certainty about the real winner there. Florida accounts for 25 seats in the 538-member Electoral College now being constituted to choose the next U.S. president on the basis of the people's will as expressed on November 7 in each of the U.S.' 50 States and the District of Columbia. This is a matter of some archaic but cherished American political tradition, and it may now be called into question with an unusual sense of urgency. But neither of the two main contestants for the White House at this time — Mr. Bush and Mr. Al Gore, the Vice-President and the Democratic candidate — was able to command a majority in the Electoral College in the absence of the tally in Florida beyond the shadow of a legal requirement for a recount. Not surprisingly, the overhang of such an enormous political suspense induced the beleaguered Vice-President to traverse an extraordinary extra mile in pursuit of political power. Deliberatively, Mr. Gore retracted a message of congratulations that he had graciously conveyed to Mr. Bush over the phone on the basis of the initial assumption that the Republican had indeed triumphed in an archetypal American 'cliff-

hanger' in Florida and thereby crossed the magical majority mark in the Electoral College.

The high electoral drama apart, the latest U.S. presidential poll is really a question of some arithmetical combinations and much political permutations. If Mr. Gore found himself gasping at the finish line, he may have himself to blame. A prime strategy of his campaign was to share the credit with Mr. Clinton for all the successes of his presidency on the domestic economic front and in regard to major foreign policy issues. In the process, however, the Vice-President, who decided that he should run on the strength of his own credentials and made a political fetish of that pledge, deprived himself of the undoubted campaigning skills of the outgoing President. In a sense, there was nothing radically wrong with such a tactical move, given the compelling negative images of Mr. Clinton's presidency (even if only a few by any count) such as his impeachment over a personal scandal in the Oval Office. However, even as Mr. Clinton now helped his wife, Ms. Hillary Clinton with a mind of her own, win a prestigious Senate seat from the New York State, what came into focus was the incongruity of Mr. Gore's efforts at having insulated himself from the 'Midas touch' of his one-time ally. The 'spoilsport' potential of the marginal candidates may have also been a factor in Mr. Gore's difficulties. Mr. Bush, in contrast, grew in political stature as the campaign unfolded. His world view may still be clouded in mystery if not by misty theories, but he demonstrably struck a rapport with the ordinary Americans even if that did not adequately advance his political cause in the huge electoral States such as California and New York. He seems to have popularised the idea of 'compassionate conservatism' in American political folklore. However, given the absence of any sparks of foreign policy creativity on the campaign trails of both the major candidates, the international community may have to wait beyond the certainty of the winner.

THE HINDU

- 9 NOV 2000

RESULTS ON HOLD, RECOUNT ORDERED

Gore or Bush, suspense

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 8. Suspense continues over who the next President of the United States will be. All eyes are on Florida, where it is literally down to about 1,785 votes. After making a concession call to the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, retracted it.

Suddenly everything is in play in Florida all over again, with both the candidates scrambling for its 25 Electoral College votes. With Florida put on hold and Oregon results yet to come in, Mr. Gore holds a 260 to 246 lead in the Electoral College vote.

According to the Florida election law, there will be an automatic recount if the margin of victory/defeat is less than 0.5 per cent. The recount is under way.

Election officials in the State say it could take 7 to 10 days to arrive at the final tally. About 2,300 ballots are cast by Floridians living overseas. The Texas Governor is expected to do well among this group.

The Democrats have also dispatched a high-level legal team led by the former Secretary of State, Mr. Warren Christopher, to Florida to oversee the recount and to check on complaints by the Democrats of certain irregularities.

It was the night of the unbelievable — not just in the Vice-President making the retraction, something that did not happen before. On Tuesday night, the networks called Florida in the Gore column, only to take it back and place it in the “too close to

call” category. That switch came after the Bush campaign complained that the networks making the projections were quick on the



Mr. Al Gore... concedes defeat but retracts.

draw. The act was repeated in the early hours of Wednesday after officials in Florida and field directors called the Gore camp urging caution in conceding the election in the State.

Neither Mr. Gore nor Mr. Bush appeared before his supporters in Nashville, Tennessee, and Austin, Texas. But the campaign managers did make their appearances with Mr. William Daley of the Gore team saying the “campaign will continue” and Mr. Don Evans of the Bush campaign saying “We hope and believe we have elected the next President”.

If there was an impression that the Green candidate, Mr. Ralph Nader, could hurt Mr. Gore in sensitive States in the Mid-West and the Pacific Northwest, no such thing happened for, the Vice-President held on including in Michigan. Mr. Nader is polling about 3 per cent nationally and where he has hurt the Vice-President is in Florida, polling close to 95,000 votes.

The major party candidates did

along expected lines in the regions and in critical battleground States. Mr. Gore won the large and populous California and New York; and much of the Northeast.

The Texas Governor took a total of 31 States including making a strong showing in the South. Mr.

Bush beat his opponent in his home State of Tennessee; and won Arkansas, considered the Clinton country.

The race for the White House turned out to be quite historic, both in the popular vote and Electoral College votes. With some 98

Hillary makes history

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 8. It was a sweet moment for Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton — for the first time in American history a First Lady was elected to public office. The victory over the Republican Congressman, Mr. Rick Lazio, for the New York Senate seat saw Ms. Clinton open a political career of her own that many think will not stop at Capitol Hill. “I just wanted to say from the bottom of my heart: Thank you, New York,” Ms. Clinton said.

The First Lady's nearly 18-month campaign was one of determination and a keen sense of wanting to know what the political turf was all about. For someone accused of being a carpetbagger, Ms. Clinton travelled the extra distance, especially in the conservative up State to get to where she ended on Tuesday evening.

An experienced politician knowing the politics of Washington D.C., Mr. Lazio was at times considered a much more formidable candidate than Ms. Clinton's first

opponent, Mr. Rudy Giuliani, Mayor of New York who quit the race last May. But the Lazio campaign did not get the kind of momentum it had been looking for and critical mistakes and questionable judgment calls took their toll.

Ms. Clinton, unlike the Gore campaign, did lean on the President, even if there might have been an initial reluctance. The President had made it clear that he very much wanted his wife to win. And he played his role — campaigning, advising and, most importantly, raising money.



THE HINDU

9 NOV 2000

Bush, Gore count on Florida S.C.

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 15. Both the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, are looking to the Supreme Court of Florida for coming to terms with the presidential election especially as it pertains to the demand for manual counting of votes.

The Bush campaign requested permission for intervening in a lawsuit filed by Florida's Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris, who had asked the State Supreme Court to delay the handcount and consolidate all lawsuits that had been filed in the last several days.

The Gore campaign also joined the fray, asking the court to assume jurisdiction over a number of election-related lawsuits. Papers being filed with the Supreme Court will also ask for a determination whether handcounts are appropriate under the Florida law, and if so, the deadline for the completion. The Gore campaign has made it clear that it is not going to stop with what the Florida Supreme Court may say. The court has seven judges, all appointed by Democrat Governors.

It is a shot in the arm for the Democrats, thanks to a circuit court judge ruling that the Canvassing Board of the Palm Beach county could not arbitrarily throw out a ballot paper just because it was not fully punched, or what has now come to be known as a "dimpled chad". The judge, Mr. Jorge La Barga, said, "No vote is to be declared invalid or void if there was a clear intention of the voter."

The Gore campaign got further good news when Broward — a predominantly Democratic county — reversed its decision and decided to go ahead with a full handcount.

Ms. Katherine Harris took legal recourse after some counties, particularly Palm Beach, were defiant in their position that the handcount will start in spite of the deadline for certification having already expired at 5 p.m., Tuesday.

In a verdict which both the Republicans and the Democrats have claimed as victory, a State judge ruled on Tuesday that the deadline issued for certification by the Secretary of State for all counties was valid; but Ms. Harris would have also to factor in filing of returns later. A deadline of 2 p.m., Wednesday, was given by Ms. Harris to justify why counties should be allowed to continue after the deadline expired.

Official returns from the State show Mr. Bush leading Mr. Gore by exactly 300 votes. Overseas ballots have not been counted and will be tallied by Friday midnight.

"Without question this court (Supreme Court of Florida) must make it clear that the election of the President and the Vice-President is not a matter of local pleasure. It is, at the least, a statewide matter of concern. This court must assume control over this litigation to preserve its ability to establish standards and to protect the voters of this State," Ms. Harris said in her emergency petition.

Earlier report on Page 16

THE HINDU

Gore down but not out in Florida?

S Rajagopalan
Washington, November 15

REPUBLICAN GEORGE
W. Bush may appear to be just one step away from being declared the next US President, but a fresh set of legal imponderables in Florida threatens a further delay in the resolution of the stalemate.

After a judge rejected Democrat Al Gore's plea to defer certification of votes till the completion of manual recount in four counties, Florida's Republican Secretary of State Katherine Harris announced on Tuesday night that Mr Bush led the tally by exactly 300 votes.

However, judge Terry Lewis's "mixed verdict" kept the door a little open for the Democrat. In his rather woolly ruling, the judge said the counties still in the midst of the manual recount could complete their job, but the Secretary of State was free to ignore them. Such a rejection should not be done in an arbitrary manner, he held.

The wording of the order prompted the Gore camp to contemplate fresh legal action in case Ms Harris chose to ignore the recount in the Palm Beach county

while issuing the final notification on Florida results after disposing of the overseas votes on November 17.

Ms Harris, safeguarding herself from the legal standpoint, gave the counties in question time till 2 p.m. today to submit a written statement as to why a change should be made before the final certification of the Florida vote.

Observers believe she will take the stand that she has rejected their statement after giving due consideration.

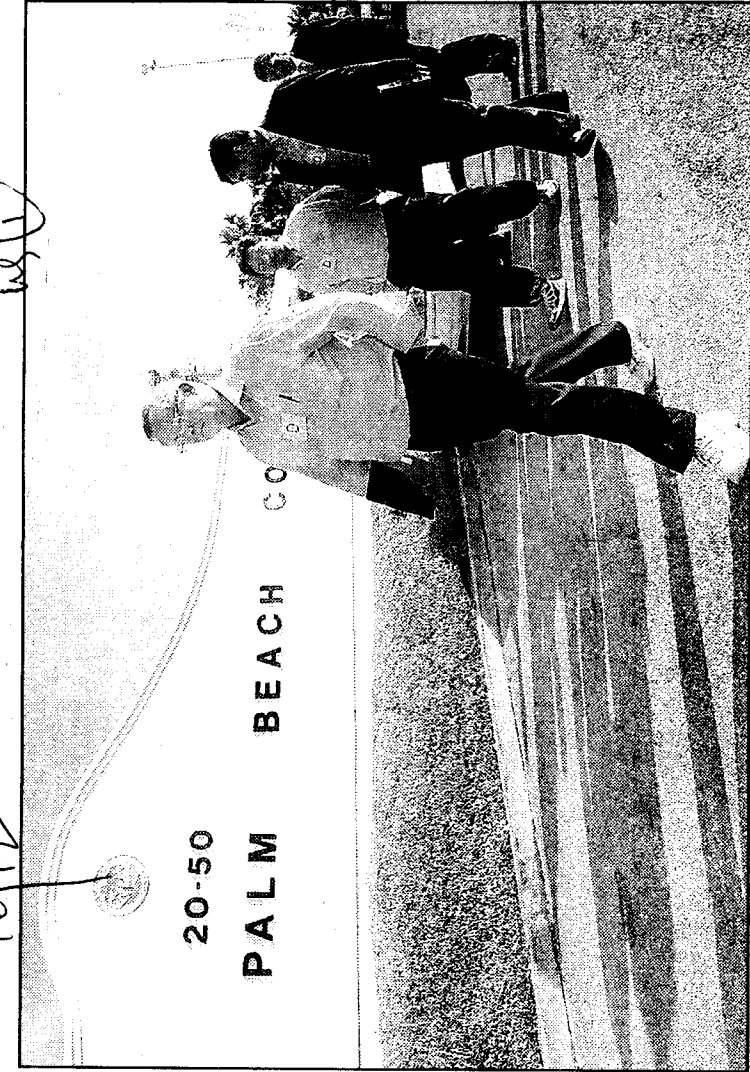
The Al Gore camp has let it be known that it would challenge any rejection of the outcome of the manual recount, thus signalling that the end game in the presidential row is still nowhere in sight.

The aides of the Vice-President believe that the hand count, notably in Palm Beach, will throw up Mr Gore as the winner.

The Bush camp, in another preemptive bid, is slated to move a higher court today for an injunction against the "selective and unconsistional" manual recount. Its first bid in a federal court had ended up in failure on Monday.

Mr Gore's hopes right now hinge essentially on the Palm Beach county, which is due to begin today

16/11



Observers leaving the Palm Beach County Emergency Centre in West Palm Beach, Fla., after the county canvassing board suspended the manual count of ballots. Photo: AP

its full-scale manual recount of 460,000 votes, an exercise that could take a week.

The county decided on the full recount on the basis of a sample check of one per cent of the votes, which had resulted in a net gain of 19 votes for Mr Gore.

In contrast to Palm Beach, the other predominantly-Democratic county of Miami Dade deflated the Gore camp's hopes by deciding not to undertake a manual recount

since a sample check did not reveal much variation from the original mechanical count. The Democrats are trying to get the decision reversed.

Meanwhile, a question mark hangs on the outcome of the overseas votes, which will be taken up for counting on November 17.

The Republicans have traditionally had the upper hand in this segment. But the disproportionate two candidates, Bush Jr or Gore, will reap the benefit.

The American way of elections

By Harold A. Gould

The gravitation of both major American parties toward the ideological and programmatic centre is the main reason for the present political stalemate.

HD-12

IT IS still unclear who will be the next President of the United States, so close is this election. What is certain is that in the end it will either be Mr. George W. Bush Jr., the Republican, or Mr. Al Gore, the Democrat. After casting more than 100 million votes in America's latest presidential sweepstakes, the voters have spoken. But their message is ambiguous, to say the least. Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush each received 48 per cent of the vote and the electoral college (that uniquely arcane American institution) is so close to deadlock that 25 electoral votes from the single State of Florida (and ultimately the certified votes from a single county within the State) will determine which of them will be the country's 43rd President.

The question that everyone is asking, particularly overseas where familiarity with the American way of election politics is neither entirely understood nor appreciated, is why was this election a veritable deadlock? Political analysts and media talking-heads have offered a variety of more or less predictable explanations. The most common one is that in an electoral system where the publically-displayed personality of the candidate greatly affects voters' choices, neither Mr. Gore nor Mr. Bush came across as particularly appealing. Mr. Bush wore a perennial smirk on his face and appeared to be about as intellectually prepared to be President of the world's only superpower as one's next-door neighbour. Mr. Gore came across as a wooden, unspontaneous bore whose speeches sounded like lectures by a local schoolmaster. To use a quip coined by a well-known American comedian, both candidates were "hard to like".

Although there were real and important differences in public policy between the two men, these never emerged as vital concerns of the electorate. Some feel that this was an aspect of the image problem that dogged each of them. Neither candidate seemed able to effectively articulate what the differences were, and most importantly how their translation into legislation would make a significant difference in the lives of ordinary citizens. It is felt in some quarters that the high order of economic prosperity currently being enjoyed by the average citizen fed into this complacency. It made it difficult for people to believe that either party's platform, if implemented, posed any serious danger to

16/12 WSD

a continuation of the good life, especially when the differences and the dangers were being adumbrated by such charismatically deficient spokesmen.

The issues that would matter most in the long run would not have been easy for the average voter to grasp in any case, even if the protagonists had possessed clearer minds and better rhetorical gifts. They involved complex matters such as how to make the best use of a large budget surplus, whether or not it would be wise to invest a portion of the Social Security programme's reserve funds in the stock market, whether the quality of public education would be helped or hindered by diverting a portion of its funding into an elitist track, and whether the cost of prescription medicines for the elderly should be directly subsidised by the Federal Government or indirectly through some kind of partnership between Government and private health insurance companies.

Both sides poured out a maelstrom of partisan rhetoric on these subjects, and the more strident they became, the more confused the voters became. The three public debates conducted by the presidential candidates and the one by the vice-presidential candidates did little to clarify things either. Neither side delivered anything approaching a knock-out blow. The most important effect probably was to help Mr. Bush, a comparatively unknown quantity, to acquire status parity with Mr. Gore, a much better known quantity.

When all is said and done, however, the most crucial determinant of how this election turned out is the unseen hand of the President. Mr. Bill Clinton. Although conspicuously absent from the public stage throughout the election campaign, he was never irrelevant to the manner in which the election campaign unfolded. There are, of course, the obvious respects in which this is true. An intangible element of "Clinton fatigue" pervaded the political arena. While they did not want him impeached, the public never quite got over Clinton's moral failings either. He was endured for pragmatic political reasons, but

never forgiven for his private misconduct. Almost everyone agrees that minus the moral turpitude which besmirched an otherwise remarkable eight-year-long run of economic prosperity and successful public policies, his Democratic successor would probably have won this election in a walk. The only qualification one might attach here, however, is that although Mr. Gore's personal morality was beyond reproach, there were nevertheless enough questions about his truthfulness on public policy issues for the Republicans by innuendo to impugn his integrity and in this manner link him to the questionable moral atmosphere of the Clinton administration.

The most important and profound impact which the Clinton factor had on this election, however, stems from the changes he wrought in the terms of political discourse. He profoundly altered the country's ideological equilibrium. Mr. Clinton was the first Democrat to win outright two successive terms in the White House since Franklin D. Roosevelt (1932-1944). Mr. Clinton accomplished this feat by moving his party decisively from left of centre to dead centre (or perhaps even slightly to the right of centre) and in the process coopt many of the programmatic and ideological positions which had been the virtual monopoly of the Republican opposition. While retaining many of the traditional Democratic planks (such as health-care reform, increasing the minimum wage, abortion rights, maternity leave, etc.), Mr. Clinton simultaneously moved in on several standard Republican sacred cows (a balanced budget, welfare reform, free trade, downsizing Government, etc.). Typical was the NAFTA. This was a Republicanesque concept which he brought to fruition.

The fact that Mr. Clinton systematically robbed his Republican opponents of most of their bread-and-butter issues, and proceeded to inflict two devastating electoral defeats on them as a result, is the primary unspoken reason why they so savagely endeavoured to remove him from office by impeachment. When all else failed to dis-

lodge the Democrats from their newly-acquired political perch in the mainstream, the Republicans realised that their only chance for a reversal of fortune was to reverse the cooption process itself. Mr. Bush, a fresh face in the Republican firmament, became the anointed knight in shining armour for accomplishing this end. The faction that crystallised around the Texas Governor (consisting of a lot of his father's old cronies who suffered political embarrassment through the Clinton years) effectively pushed the stridently conservative elements, which had for so long disastrously dominated the party's political agenda, off centre stage and drove home the centrist platform (so-called "compassionate conservatism") on which he ran.

The gravitation of both major American political parties toward the ideological and programmatic centre is the main reason for the abject political stalemate that the present national election has wrought. Even though, as noted earlier, important differences really do exist between the two parties on the details of basic public issues (such as the future composition of the Supreme Court, approaches to patients' rights in the health care system, prescription drugs, education reform, fiscal responsibility, foreign policy), these were lost on an electorate bombarded with media-driven campaign rhetoric which both by design and default systematically blurred the distinctions that ought to have been made between the two candidates.

Since Mr. Bush is probably going to be eventually declared the winner of this election, there is an ironical sense in which it is destined to be a reverse image of the 1960 election which Democrat John F. Kennedy Jr. won over Republican Richard M. Nixon. It may be remembered that Kennedy's victory was solidified by a handful of probably fraudulent votes from Chicago that enabled him to win the key state of Illinois. Forty years later, it appears likely that Mr. Bush is destined to obtain Florida's 25 electoral votes and thus the presidency of the U.S. on the basis of a handful of equally questionable votes from Palm Beach county!

Once this election finally is decided, the country and the world will watch with interest to see whether an American President who gained office possibly without even garnering a majority of the popular vote will be able to govern effectively.

THE HINDU

15 NOV 2000

IT'S NOT PERFECT!

But it is reasonably fair

IS there, all said and done, anything such as an "absolutely" fair election? Going by the fact that Bush's lead was slashed down to 300 from about 1700 in the first count, the answer would be no. A significant margin of error has been discovered in Florida and the Gore campaign will obviously go all out to exploit it to its full troublemaking potential. We have already heard about the butterfly ballots in Palm Beach county in which names were placed on either side with the holes to be punched in the middle aligned in such a way that people wanting to vote Gore-Lieberman are said to have ended up voting for Pat Buchanan instead. The Gore campaign also said ten thousand ballots had been rejected because people, unsure of the procedure, had punched two holes instead of one. A hand count is going on in four Florida counties, including Palm Beach, because of dimple ballots in which the holes were punched too feebly to have punctured the paper. This could go on and on, especially if Bush and his lawyers decide, in the unlikely event of a Gore victory at final count, to initiate a similar manoeuvre in states like Iowa where Gore has won with a thin margin.

What it tells us is that the election process is handled by human beings and that there is always going to be a margin of error somewhere. After all, nobody in Florida or in the Gore campaign for that matter, is complaining about vote tampering or other fraudulent practices, even though a question mark was bound to be raised about the discretionary power accorded to Florida's secretary of state Kathreen Harris to decide when to stop handcounts and declare statewide results. It is clear that this has been a normal occurrence in presidential elections and nobody has paid any attention to it so far. Indeed, one wonders whether either Gore or Bush would have raised the question if Florida had finished counting earlier and some other state giving a better margin had been counted last. Obviously too, the Americans, once having identified a problem, are very good at finding solutions and they will be found for this problem too. They will put better counting devices and procedures in place the next time round and that will have been the biggest contribution this election will have made to American politics. It is unlikely, however, that there can be such a thing as a perfect election, there are always going to be gaps between the intentions of some voters and the ballot that they actually cast, unless everybody evolves into a robot.

THE STATESMAN

16 NOV 2000

Bush happy with court decision

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 17. The Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, is "understandably pleased" by the decision of a Florida circuit court judge to reject an attempt by the Gore Campaign to have manually counted votes included in the final tally of the presidential campaign.

"I have just spoken with Mr. Bush and (his running mate) Mr. Dick Cheney. They are understandably pleased," Mr. James Baker, former Secretary of State and now Mr. Bush's top observer in Florida, said after the verdict in Tallahassee.

"We now look forward to the prompt counting and reporting of the limited number of uncounted overseas absentee ballots so that the process of achieving a final result to the election in Florida is not subject to further delays," Mr. Baker said in a brief statement.

On Friday, the Leon County circuit court dealt a major blow to the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, when the judge cleared the way for Florida to declare the presidential election without any tallying of the manual re-count,

presently under way in at least two counties. "It appears that the Secretary of State (Ms. Katherine Harris) has exercised reasoned judgment to determine what relevant factors and criteria should be considered... My order requires nothing more. Accordingly, it is ordered and adjudged that the plaintiffs' motion is denied," the judge, Mr. Terry Lewis, a Democrat, said.

The Gore campaign is moving the Florida Supreme Court and hopes to have a hearing on Saturday. It was expected that the Circuit Court judge would rule that Ms. Harris acted improperly, perhaps even in contempt, by deciding that only those votes submitted by Tuesday will matter in her final certification.

It will be the second time in as many days that the Florida Supreme Court is getting into the election litigation. On Thursday, the seven-judge court — all Democrats — ruled that the manual counting can proceed, but stopped short of saying whether any changed tallies would have to be factored into Ms. Harris' final certification. The Gore campaign

was quick to claim a major victory in this ruling, something countered by the Bush campaign.

Taking into account overseas absentee ballots from four out of 67 counties (as reported by the Associated Press), Mr. Bush now leads by 305 votes. The counting of these ballots will have to be completed by midnight on Friday (10.30 am IST Saturday). Ms. Harris will be make a final certification for Florida's 25 electoral college votes on Saturday.

At a time when both campaigns are anxiously looking at opinion polls to gauge the mood of the people, an ABC News/Washington Post poll showed that 57 per cent of those surveyed favoured an expeditious conclusion to be more important than any in-depth review, which was favoured by 40 per cent. A majority of the respondents said they would accept the verdict irrespective of whether it was based on manual or machine recounting.

The disapproval rating of the main candidates for the happenings of the last 10 days has been as close as the election.

Another report on Page 13

THE HINDU

18 NOV 2000

Another twist, Gore keeps his chances alive, again

Florida SC puts results on hold till Monday

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, November 18

300 votes to 760, with some more votes still to be counted.

IT'S NOT just 'Election 2000' that has been a roller-coaster. The extended post-election phase has been nothing less. Virtually every single day since November 7 has thrown up its own winner and loser, and Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush have kept up their neck and neck run yet again.

So was it on Friday. If Bush appeared to have clinched the presidency issue in the morning, the afternoon saw Gore bounce back with a vengeance.

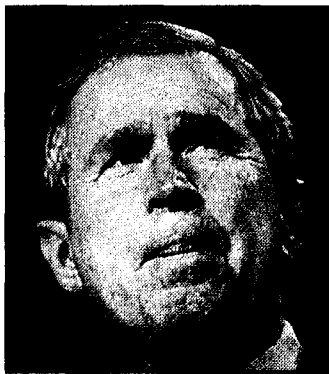
The Vice-President's own camp followers could scarcely believe the turnaround.

After Judge Terry Lewis upheld the Florida secretary of state's decision to declare the result without taking cognizance of the manual recount in three pro-Democrat counties, it seemed it was all over bar the shouting for Gore. And it was virtually celebration time in the Bush camp. By evening, however, things swung wildly all over again with the Florida Supreme Court blocking the result declaration until after it disposes of the appeal filed by the Gore camp.

As of the weekend, Gore kept his chances alive, once again.

This is regardless of Bush's steady advance in the count of overseas votes that was taken up after the Friday deadline.

The good showing in this segment has indeed helped Bush to increase his lead over Gore from



George W. Bush



Al Gore

For Gore, the hopes are pinned entirely on the manual recount in the three counties of Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade. What the Supreme Court has to decide on Monday is whether the Florida authorities are required to take into account the ongoing recount in the three counties.

If the decision is in the affirma-

tive, it could possibly be Gore in the White House.

For the Gore camp, the Florida apex court's intervention has been nothing short of dramatic. It has got much more than what it had asked for. While its plea was to seek inclusion of the manual recount results in the final tally, the Supreme Court went a step further to block the Republican secretary of state Katherine Harris's plan to declare Bush the winner today.

Interestingly, the stay is only on Ms Harris's proposed action. The court has allowed the much-delayed manual recount to continue unhindered.

It also allowed the counting of the "absentee" overseas votes, which is complete except for two of the 67 counties.

During the day, much to the delight of the Gore camp, the Miami-Dade county reversed its earlier decision and opted to go in for a full-scale manual recount, while a Florida court shot down a Republican challenge of the recount in the Broward county.

For the Bush camp, Friday evening represented another reverse when the Federal Court of Appeals decided not to act on its plea to put an end to the "selective and unconstitutional" manual recount in all the three counties.

All eyes are now on the Florida Supreme Court, which will hear arguments on Monday afternoon over the Gore petition that the manual recount is vital to determine the will of the people.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

19 NOV 2000

180-12

DETERMINING A FAIR WINNER

226/11

THE FLORIDA SUPREME Court's latest ruling in the hotly-contested U.S. presidential election is to be welcomed. It upholds the validity of a decision by some local poll officials to re-count by hand several thousands of disputed ballots. The punch-card ballots in question bear imperfect marks of voting intention that could be traced to a faulty use of the electronic polling machine. Viewed in this perspective, the court's verdict reflects a wholesome espousal of the true spirit of democracy in the present tortuous presidential poll process. It can now facilitate the fair declaration of a winner. However, the dispute may still go all the way up to the apex U.S. Supreme Court. Besides the avenues of a legal challenge open to the aggrieved Republican Party, the Florida State legislature itself may step in to correct a perceived judicial 'distortion' of its own laws on local poll procedures. This tussle over a constitutional 'separation of powers' and other issues beyond the import of the moment hang in the balance.

The pulsating 'spirit' of this election resides in the incredibly close popular-vote margin that places Mr. Al Gore, Vice-President and Democratic candidate, ahead of the Republican leader, Mr. George W. Bush, at this stage in the authentication of nationwide results. So, the court-ordained inclusion of the tallies of some manual re-counts will answer the lingering doubts of Mr. Gore on the score of political morality. This should also obviate the allegations of a 'stolen election' should Mr. Bush still manage to win Florida and by a logical corollary in the present case the U.S. presidency too. Considering the small 'net gains' that Mr. Gore has so far made in the ongoing hand re-count, his chances now seem to rest on a 'review' of the 'dimpled' ballots, not taken up in the re-counting.

If the disputed Florida ballots have assumed the proportions of a 'critical mass' for the U.S. presidency, the reality springs from the circumstances of what was turning into an 'end-game' hours after the presidential poll on November 7. Mr. Gore called Mr. Bush to concede defeat even as Florida, first said to have gone the Democratic leader's way, was later assigned to the Republican in the media-monitored counting. But, as it rapidly became clear that Florida would need to conduct a statutory re-count in view of the purported winner's lead being in the margin of possible error, Mr. Gore retracted. That turning point sparked unprecedented political hostilities because of the instant reversal of Mr. Bush's apparent acquisition of a majority in the Electoral College. Consisting of 'electors' from across the federation, this caucus has, except in the late 19th century, ushered into office the person eligible for the maximum number of College votes. These are computed on the basis of popular-vote victories in the 50 States and the District of Columbia, and this battle has brought the College into focus as a possible scene of a last-lap contention between the two sides.

It therefore redounds to the stability of the U.S. system that Mr. Gore is content with basking in the comfort of the Florida judicial pronouncement. He has ruled out any intention to ask the 'electors' to vote according to their conscience. The stated objective is to preserve the practices of the Electoral College. Yet the differing manual counting standards now being adopted in the three counties of Florida in question are seen by Mr. Bush as being flawed *ab initio*. This is the stuff of the legal battle. And who will be the next President of the United States is still not clear, a full fortnight after the election.

THE HINDU

23 NOV 2000

10-16

U.S. POLL / MOVE TO OVERTURN FLORIDA COURT RULING

Bush camp threatens legislative action

By Sridhar Krishnaswami 23/11

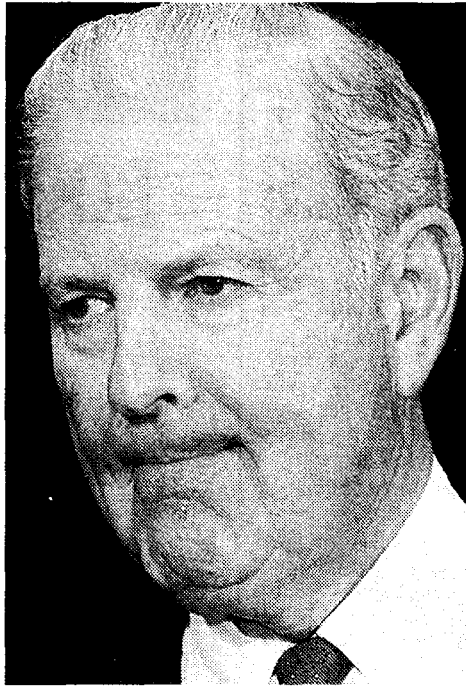
WASHINGTON, NOV. 22. The Florida Supreme Court has come out with its ruling, further stretching the presidential election race in the State to November 26 or 27 when the Secretary of State, Ms Katherine Harris, would have to make the final certification — that is, after taking into account the manual tallies from three counties. The ruling is a big shot in the arm for the Democratic candidate, Mr. Al Gore, and a major blow to his Republican counterpart, Mr. George Bush.

That even if all the 'dimples' have been counted, Mr. Gore could still fall short is a possibility not many are seriously talking about. "We think we will have enough votes by the Sunday or Monday deadline", said Mr. David Boies, Mr. Gore's top lawyer.

Mr. Gore once again made the point that this election was not about winners and losers and called for a meeting between him and Mr. Bush. But there are hardly any indications of the latter accepting the proposal.

If the comments of the former Secretary of State, Mr. James Baker, are anything to go by, the Bush campaign is threatening to go "ballistic" or "nuclear" by holding out the threat of involving the Republican-controlled State legislature to overturn the ruling of the Supreme Court. Some analysts and academics may argue that there is nothing wrong with going to the State legislature, for after all, it is another branch of Government. And all the talk of going "nuclear" may be totally misplaced.

But there are clear implications in getting the legislature to throw out the court ruling. So far, some people have been talking about a constitutional crisis against the backdrop of the continuing uncertainty over the presidential election. Legal analysts and scholars are convinced that if the legislature gets involved, that will be the start of a real constitutional crisis.



The Republican candidate, Mr. George Bush's representative, Mr. James Baker, purses his lips during a press conference in Tallahassee, Florida, on Wednesday after the State Supreme Court ruling that amended vote tallies must be included in the certified election results. — AP

"I would not be surprised to see the legislature perhaps take some action to get back to the original statutory provisions", remarked Mr. Baker in Tallahassee. The Chief Advisor to the Texas Governor charged that the rules of the game had been altered after the game was over or while it was being played. Influential Republicans in Florida agreed.

"Our power has been challenged, not just

for this election. If they (meaning the Florida Supreme Court) can make this arbitrary ruling on this statute, they can make it for anything. They have clearly gone beyond their power and by doing that, have jeopardised all laws", said the former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives, Mr. Daniel Webster, now a member of the Florida Senate.

But Florida Democrats see it differently. "It would be a travesty. It would be a smack in the face to Florida's citizens. If the Republican leadership has a problem, there is an appeals process and that process should be adhered to." The Democrats are not only wary of the Grand Old Party challenging the Supreme Court ruling, but apprehensive of the legislature getting involved to arbitrarily choose the State's 25 electors in favour of Mr. Bush even if Mr. Gore has won the election.

After convening on Tuesday morning for the swearing-in ceremonies, the Florida legislature has adjourned. But it can be called back to session either by a joint call by the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House — both Republicans — or by the Governor of the State, Mr. Jeb Bush, who is the brother of the Texas Governor. The Republicans have a 77-43 majority in the House and a 25-15 advantage in the Senate. The active involvement of the Florida legislature to throw out Mr. Gore's slate of electors in case he wins the election in the State is seen as a distant possibility, but something that is not ruled out. In fact, there are those hardline Republican law makers on Capitol Hill who are inclined to challenge electoral votes when Congress will have to certify the Electoral College vote on Jan. 6, 2001.

If there is one consensus doing the rounds in this country it is that a early end has to be found to the stalemate. At the same time, there is also the feeling that if there is one thing common between Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush, it is the absence of leadership. Politically, whoever comes out on top will find the going difficult for the next four years.

THE HINDU

23 NOV 2000

Florida Supreme Court smiles on Gore

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 22. In a major victory for the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, the Florida Supreme Court has unanimously ruled that manual recounts now under way in predominantly Democratic counties be added to the final tally of the votes polled in the November 7 U.S. presidential election.

In a 43-page ruling, the judges rejected the Florida Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris' argument that a deadline fixed by the State law prevented her from accepting returns after November 14. She has been ordered to accept amended returns till Sunday, if her office is open that day, or by 9 a.m. the next morning.

The court argued said it could not allow Ms. Harris "to summarily disenfranchise innocent electors in an effort to punish dilatory (election) board members... The Constitution eschews punishment by proxy," the court ruled. "Twentyfive years ago, this court commented that the will of



The Democratic presidential nominee, Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, and his running mate, U.S. Senator, Mr. Joseph Lieberman, after hearing the verdict in Washington.

— Reuters

the people, not a hyper-technical reliance upon statutory provisions, should be our guiding principle in election cases."

The ruling could pave the way for indented or "dimpled" ballots being factored in the final tally; but this is subject to contest in court by the Bush campaign. "These voters should not be disenfranchised where their intent

may be ascertained with reasonable clarity," the Court said.

The Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, holds on to the official 930-vote lead; and one unofficial tally has it that Mr. Gore has picked up some 266 votes in manual counting in the three Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties. The Gore campaign is also counting on the hundreds — perhaps thousands — of the "dimpled" ballots. It is confident that the Vice-President will have enough votes to prevail by Monday. Mr. Gore hailed the ruling which in all probability would make him the 43rd President. "I don't know whether Governor Bush or I will prevail, but we do know that our democracy is the winner tonight."

The Bush campaign barely concealed its outrage at the ruling. The Texas Governor's top man in Tallahassee and former Secretary of State, Mr. James Baker, accused the court of re-writing election laws and holding out the prospect of a continued fight in higher courts. He also

hinted at the Florida Legislature — both the House and the Senate controlled by the Republicans — seeking to reverse the ruling.

Analysts say the only card the Bush camp is left with to play is in ensuring that the so-called dimpled ballots are not allowed to be counted. The Florida Supreme Court has left the field wide open — it ruled that the voter intent could be ascertained with reasonable certainty but did not say whether in the immediate context the dimpled ballots might be counted.

Cheney hospitalised

In another development, the Republican vice-presidential candidate, Mr. Richard Cheney, who was admitted to a hospital here early on Wednesday following chest pain, was reported to be comfortable. The 59-year-old running mate of the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, has a history of heart problems. He underwent quadruple bypass surgery in 1988.

Bush's charge: Page 13

THE HINDU

23 NOV 2000

HO-1
20/11

Slanging match as Bush, Gore await verdict

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 19. With the Florida Supreme Court scheduled to hear oral arguments tomorrow, the Bush and Gore campaign rhetoric has risen to new levels and the two sides are bracing for the next stage of the U.S. Presidential election counting process.

In their public relations exercise, they allege that the "other" side is trying to steal the election.

The Bush campaign, which had all along objected to the manual recounting in select Democratic counties, turned its focus on the overseas ballots and alleged that absentee ballots from military personnel were being indiscriminately tossed out, a charge dismissed by the Democrats.

The Bush campaign says that at the urging of the lawyers representing Mr. Gore, county officials are refusing to tally one half of the absentee ballots received. For example, in the Broward county, officials rejected 304 overseas ballots and accepted only 92.

Why are the overseas ballots being rejected? One of the chief reasons is the absence of a postmark. But the Bush campaign alleges that the military personnel have been unfairly targeted, whereas other overseas voters have been spared the stringent

regulations. Further, "the Democrats have allowed felons vote while denying men and women in uniform the same privilege."

But, the Democrats say the Republican comments on overseas ballots is "hypocritical" and that the ratcheting up of the rhetoric is done for political reasons. The Republicans are trying to question the process of counting overseas ballots even while trying desperately to hold up the manual recounting, charges the Gore campaign.

The Republicans are miffed at local canvassing boards having mostly Democrats. "They (Democrats) have gone from counting votes, to looking for votes, to now they're going to manufacturing votes," said the Republican Congressman, Mr. John Swee-ney.

The Texas Governor has a 930-vote lead over the Vice- President. After two days of counting in the Broward county, Mr. Gore is said to have picked up only 79 votes; and no firm word has come from Palm Beach where much of the Democrats' attention is on. The Miami-Dade county has decided to begin recounting an estimated 654,000 ballots on Monday. One view is that the entire handcounting will continue into the first week of December.

THE HINDU

20 NOV 2000

Whoever wins now, USA is the loser

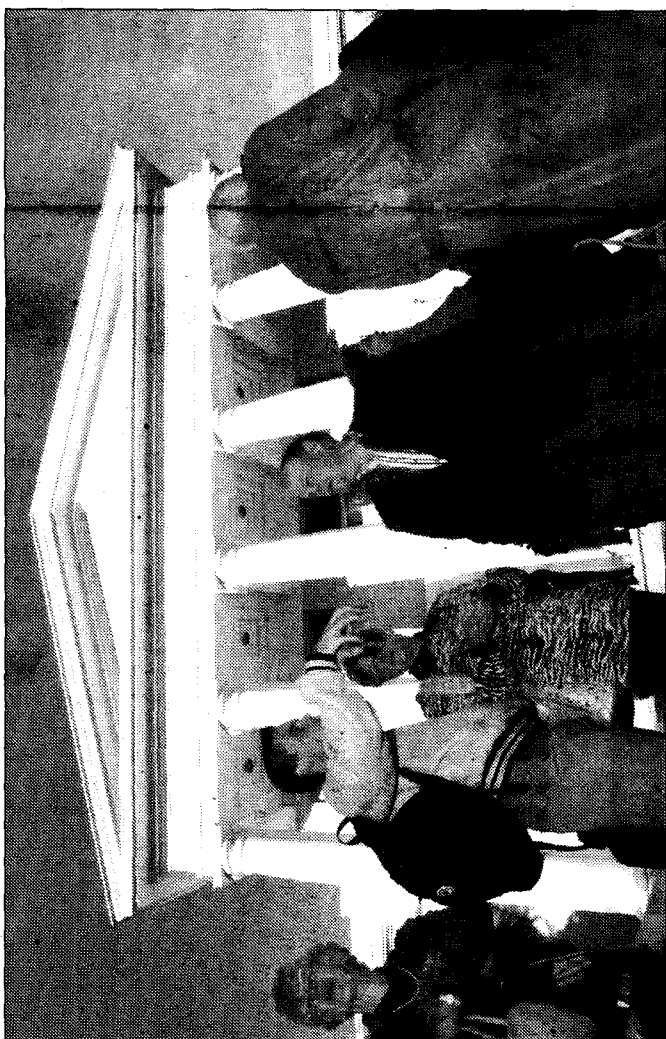
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THE American presidential election is supposed to be decided by the Supreme Court of Florida. On Friday it decided to suspend the declaration of the result, but permit continued hand recounts until it could hear argument on their merits. The court has to endorse or reverse the decision of Terry Lewis, a circuit court judge, that Katherine Harris, Florida secretary of state, used her discretion properly when she ruled that hand-recounted votes could not be accepted. If it upholds the circuit court's decision, George W Bush will be the winner, because he has the majority of machine-counted and recounted votes, including the overseas ballots. If it overturns the judge's ruling, hand-recounted votes in a few strongly Democratic counties could but might not give the majority to Al Gore.

There are three questions before the Supreme Court. Should Katherine Harris's discretion be respected? Should hand recounts be treated as better than machine recounts? Should the votes of three counties which happen to have strong Democratic majorities be counted in a different way from those of the rest of the state? The Republicans will win if the court accepts their submissions on any of these legal issues; the Democrats have to satisfy the court on all three.

The Democrats may have difficulty in satisfying the court on any of the issues. It is true that Ms Harris is a Republican partisan but most of the people involved in the counts and the legal process have party affiliations. To overrule her discretion, the court would have to decide that she acted unreasonably. On the face of it, the arguments against hand recounts, and particularly against partial hand recounts, are debatable but not unreasonable. Even if the court were to conclude that

Machine counting was introduced in America to prevent election fraud and there have been allegations of no less serious a nature in Florida. The Supreme Court would be reversing the trend of modern practice if it preferred hand recounts as the final arbiter. If it did, it would have to consider ordering a statewide hand recount, for which the time would be very tight, says WILLIAM REES-MOGG



People line up outside the Florida Supreme Court on Monday at Tallahassee to gain one of the few seats available to view the ongoing hearing on the presidential vote. — AP/PTI.

equal." If Ms Harris felt that separate voting recounts were inherently unequal, that can hardly be unreasonable. Whichever way the Supreme Court of Florida does decide seems likely to prevail. There could be a further appeal to the US Supreme Court; the election of a President is obviously a constitutional matter. But the US Constitution states that the law governing the choice of the Electoral College is a matter for the individual states. "Each state shall appoint, in such manner as the legislature

when the USA is at war, he is responsible for international relations and is Commander-in-Chief.

The summit of presidential power in the 20th century occurred nearly 60 years ago under Franklin Roosevelt during World War II. The end of the Cold War made the President a less powerful figure; Congress has increasingly reclaimed its share of authority. The classic discussion of this change of relationship in the 19th century is Woodrow Wilson's brilliant book *Congressional Government*; it was published in 1885, when he was still a young Fellow in history at John Hopkins University, 27 years before he became President.

He wrote: "I am disposed to think, however, that the decline in the character of the Presidents is not the cause, but only the accompanying manifestation, of the declining prestige of the presidential office."

"That high office has fallen from its first state of dignity because its power has waned; and its power has waned because the power of Congress has become predominant. The early Presidents were men of such a stamp that they would under any circumstances have made their influence felt; but their opportunities were exceptional."

"What with quarrelling and fighting with England, buying Louisiana and Florida, building dykes to keep out the flood of the French Revolution, and exciting the country from ceaseless broils with the South American republics, the Government was... constantly busy, during the first quarter-century of its existence, with the adjustment of foreign relations; and with foreign relations, of course, the President had everything to do..."

arguments over his election. Mr Gore might be even worse damaged than Mr Bush, because Mr Bush, if finally elected, would have been ahead from the time of Mr Gore's original concession.

He would therefore enjoy greater apparent legitimacy. But either man would face charges of having "stolen the election", either would face a restless Congress and possibly a severe defeat in the mid-term elections for Congress in 2002.

It is only too likely that the next Congress but one will have a partisan majority keen to avenge their presidential defeat.

There are also reasons to expect the US economy to turn down. The oil price seems to have settled above \$30 a barrel; the Nasdaq is hovering around the 3,000 mark, apparently headed south; the balance of payments deficit next year may reach close to \$500 billion.

Leaders sometimes prove unexpectedly good, but neither candidate now looks big enough to overcome the three challenges of a bitterly disputed election, a hostile Congress and the downturn of the economic cycle.

Indeed, the USA seems to be facing the choice between a rather lazy man who knows he is not big enough for the job and a rather hyperactive man who mistakenly thinks that he is big enough for the job.

The case for Mr Bush is that he will not attempt to restore the imperial presidency, whose age has passed. The danger of Mr Gore is that he may not recognise his own limitations or those of his office. Mr Bush may well therefore be the less bad outcome, because he is the more modest in his ambitions. Nevertheless, a Republican partisan might prefer Mr Gore, to strengthen the Republican majority in Congress in 2002 and keep Hillary Clinton out of the White House in 2004.



threshold of visibility, already at work.

What one sees in America today is a nation riven by partisanship. Bush adherents want an immediate end to the election, since their man is ahead. Gore-backers want a recount of the Florida votes, since this may push their man ahead. Both candidates strive to appear presidential, while their senior counsellors make stridently political statements to the press. This is known as spinning the unfolding events to the populace, and doing so in a manner that guarantees the future President deniable responsibility for partisanship.

The fact is that the next President will be caught in the grip of circumstances which insist he eschew partisanship and move further towards the centre than either candidate had intended when announcing his candidacy. For there is, and will be, nothing less than a crisis of legitimacy for the new regime.

Whether Mr Bush or Mr Gore wins, the supporters of either candidate — and they are legion — will believe the election was stolen from their man. Mr Bush's supporters have seen the narrowest of margins support their man: in a democracy, every vote counts, and their man had more votes in Florida. Mr Gore's supporters have seen their man fall behind because it appears that every vote is not counted in a state governed by Mr Bush's brother, Jeb.

The new President will have to deal with intense suspicion that the election was won by fraud and deceit: that he does not deserve to be President because he lost the election in Florida and only won by manipulating the electoral process.

The new President will have two

Caught in the grip of circumstances

Whoever wins, the supporters of either candidate will believe the election was stolen from their man. The new President will have to convince doubters he is legitimate, says HUCK GUTMAN

years to convince the tens of millions of angry doubters — convince them not of the rightness of his policies, but that he is a legitimate President.

What this will mean, of course, is that gaining acceptance and legitimacy, not policy, will drive the next President in his first two years when he establishes the shape of his administration, and in his second two years when he runs for re-election in a divided country.

There is only one way to gain such legitimacy: to assure voters who did not vote for him that they have not been ill-served by his election.

The first thing either Mr Bush or Mr Gore will do is appoint to his Cabinet a substantial number of members of the opposing party. Mr Clinton did this in smaller measure when he appointed Republican senator William Cohen as defence secretary, assuring thereby that there would be bipartisan support for the military policies of the first President in modern times who did not serve in the military.

The second and more important initiative by the new President will be to move even more towards the centre than presidential candidates usually do and America's two-party system usually guarantees that each candidate has moved towards the centre even in the

campaigning process.

One of the great fears regarding a President Bush is that he will appoint Supreme Court judges who will curtail civil liberties, especially the right to an abortion. Mr Bush, who had made secret promises to his right-wing supporters that he would apply a litmus test on opposing abortion rights to all Supreme Court nominees, will not be able to do this.

He will appoint centrists, not conservatives, to the Supreme Court. He will not oversee the dismantling of abortion rights or, for that matter, environmental regulations. He will not oppose attempts to raise the minimum wage. He may still press for a tax cut benefiting the wealthy, but that is the only campaign pledge he will be able to support.

One of the great fears regarding a President Gore is that he will continue to win out, as Bill Clinton has, in battles with a Republican Congress. Despite the fact that the new Congress is only barely Republican, it does have a narrow Republican majority. Mr Gore promised in his campaign to fight for working people.

As President, despite his hopes, he will not be a fighter: he will have to compromise, conciliate, mollify. One can look forward to a Gore presidency which avoids every showdown with Congress by meeting many of the demands of the Republican congressional

What will the move to the centre mean to India? In economics, both candidates, and the centre of both parties, are committed to easing all barriers to international trade and dismantling all obstacles to multinational development.

The fringes of both parties, right and left, will be even more powerless to oppose this new internationalism than before. Mr Gore, in particular, will find it harder to provide international aid and forgive the debts of developing nations.

In foreign affairs, Mr Gore will be more cautious in committing American troops to international peacekeeping, and Mr Bush will be more open to peacekeeping than previously. Both will be more likely to honour existing alliances than they would have

possible when half of the nation believes their leader is illegitimate. Finally, one can see a new role for Indian-Americans in the political process. Whoever is finally elected President by a nation so closely divided and so suspicious of the results of that division will pay greater attention to the crucial Indian-American constituency than has ever been paid before.

been had they won a mandate to govern. Still, it is likely that there will be more isolationism in American foreign policy than there has been for 60 years: when the legitimacy of an administration is in doubt, taking care of things at home is the most sensible policy. Making war — sometimes a rallying point for an unpopular leader — is not

(The author is Professor of English at the University of Vermont and is presently teaching the history of American poetry at Vermont, an independent who was recently elected to a sixth term in the House of Representatives. He is also co-author with Sanders of a book on progressive politics in the USA, Outsider in the House.)

THE STATESMAN

22 NOV 2000

Florida court begins hearing

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 20. The Florida State Supreme Court has begun to hear oral arguments from the Bush and the Gore campaign lawyers. The Court is "certainly aware of the historic nature of this session," the Chief Justice, Mr. Charles Wells, said in his opening remarks. The Florida Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris, has also filed an independent brief. The Bush and the Gore lawyers have two hours for their presentation. The full bench of the Florida Supreme Court — seven judges and all Democrats — is hearing the case and is expected to come out with a ruling on Tuesday or Wednesday.

Earlier during the day, a Circuit Court judge rejected a plea for a re-vote in the Palm Beach County. The Judge ruled that he did not have the constitutional authority to call for fresh elec-

tions in the county which was confused by the "butterfly ballot." Counting is continuing in Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade counties, all predominantly Democratic.

Mr. Bush and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, are being advised by party leaders and elders to stop the endless litigation and take the Supreme Court ruling as the last word.

In their written brief, lawyers for the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, have argued that it would be unjust to put the nation "on hold"; the Secretary of State had the right to certify the election results minus the manual count. Recounts in select counties would violate the constitutional rights of voters elsewhere. "The selective manual recounts authorise county boards to engage in arbitrary and unequal counting of votes and would result in a disparate treatment of Florida voters based solely on

where within the State they happen to reside," says Mr. Bush.

Lawyers for Mr. Gore have asked the court to set generous standards for officials to "ascertain the electorate's will"; the local election officials can determine the voter's intent by examining a ballot closely, they say. It is generally assumed that if a manual recount is deemed official, the selective handcount in three predominantly Democratic counties in Florida will give Mr. Gore an edge. The Bush campaign has, in the last two days, been ratcheting up the rhetoric on the manual count, saying the Gore camp is trying to change ballot-checking rules to add to its totals.

Hand tallying of votes in the Palm Beach and Broward counties is continuing at a slow pace. Media reports say the Gore camp is concerned that the rules set by local canvassing boards for manual recount are too strict

and is calling on authorities to relax some of the stipulations. "The Gore campaign now wants to lower the bar because it needs more votes," said a Republican county official.

Unofficial estimates have it that as of midnight last night, the Vice-President has picked up 96 votes. If this is finally accepted, it would mean Mr. Bush's lead has now been cut down to 834 from the official 930.

In the meantime the battle for overseas ballots continues to rage with the Democrats taken aback at the stinging attacks by the Republicans. The Bush camp is making much of the fact that some 40 per cent of the overseas ballots has been tossed out and that military personnel who traditionally vote Republican account for a high percentage of this. Of the overseas ballots counted, Mr. Bush received 1380 as opposed to 750 for the Vice-President.

THE HINDU

21 NOV 2000

H/D 16 Bush, Gore camps still unyielding

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 20. Both the Bush and the Gore campaigns are confident of the Florida Supreme Court ruling — that the court will see the merits of their respective arguments. At the same time, neither campaign has said that the end of the road would be reached when the highest court in Florida has had its say. The option is always there to move the highest court of the land — the United States Supreme Court.

The waiting game has its problems, something that analysts and pollsters have already started reminding the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore. They are told that in the next few days a continuing stalemate will start taking a toll on either one of the candidates on the public opinion front. The flip side to this has all along been that whoever dropped out will be "rewarded" in 2004.

The stance of both Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush would seem to suggest that the "investments" made far outweighs any gracious exit. In fact, top law-makers on both sides are a bit apprehensive of a long-drawn-out battle that will have an impact not just on the Executive-Legislature relations but on the political fortunes for 2002, the off year Congressional elections.

More than the legal tussle in Tallahassee, Florida, between the two armies of lawyers and political operatives, the Gore and the Bush campaigns have already started the "win your hearts game", targetting the people. One impression is that the candidates' goose — or turkey, given that Thanksgiving is only four days away — will be cooked if no finality is on the cards. The campaigns have gone into overdrive saying how it is the "other" side that is trying to steal this election. But the American people are not going to be convinced with the logic of the arguments. They want to see light at the end of the tunnel.

If there is growing wariness about the Florida counting, it is on account of a lot of scenarios — and some of them really difficult to imagine, but not totally whacky — that are being drawn up. There is one assessment that with the focus on three predominantly Democratic counties, handcounting is expected to stretch into De-

7/1/11
cember — well into December considering the fact that the Miami-Dade county is going to start the manual process only on Monday. And the on-off counting in Broward and Palm Beach counties is hardly any close to a conclusion.

What if the Florida Supreme Court rules that the Secretary of State should wait until the manual recounts are fully finished before giving a final certification to the election in the State? If at the end of this process, Mr. Gore comes out on top, as is widely believed, would the Bush campaign take it in stride? Much here will depend on the weight of public opinion at that point of time.

But there is one scenario which speaks of this election left without a President-elect until January 2001 and with some luck to have a person on Inauguration Day on January 20, 2001. Apparently, there is a 19th Century law that says a single member of the House of Representatives or the Senate can start a process to invalidate Florida's 25 electoral college votes. A move in this direction will pave the way for the entire Congress to vote and nullify or sustain on a simple majority basis. Sounds difficult? Well not exactly. Word is that "research" teams from the Republican and Democratic parties are already working.

Each State's electors will meet in the respective State Capitals on Dec. 18 to cast their votes for the President. This will be followed by an important event on Jan. 6, 2001, when Congress will meet to officially count these ballots. And this is where some hardline GOP law makers may try and force an annulment of the Florida electoral college vote in case Mr. Gore is declared the winner; and drag the Presidential election into the House of Representatives and the Senate.

One of the arguments of the House Republican hardliners will be that with Florida taken off Gore's electoral map, he does not have the requisite 270 Electoral College votes needed. The Presidential election will have to be decided in the House where each State, irrespective of the size of its representation, will get only one vote and tied delegations get no vote at all. The Republicans have a 28-18 lead in State delegations.

THE HINDU

21 NOV 2000

DEADLOCK 2000: American voters get their wish

Ambushed and gored

AA-7 2/111
BY FRANK RICH

New York: The Gods of Bloviation have spoken. It's the Florida Fiasco. It's this close to a Constitutional Crisis. Maybe, declared ABC's Cokie Roberts, it's "the most partisan time that we have seen in our lives." Or, as the Dean of DC, David Broder, sermonised, "This nation has rarely appeared more divided than it does right now."

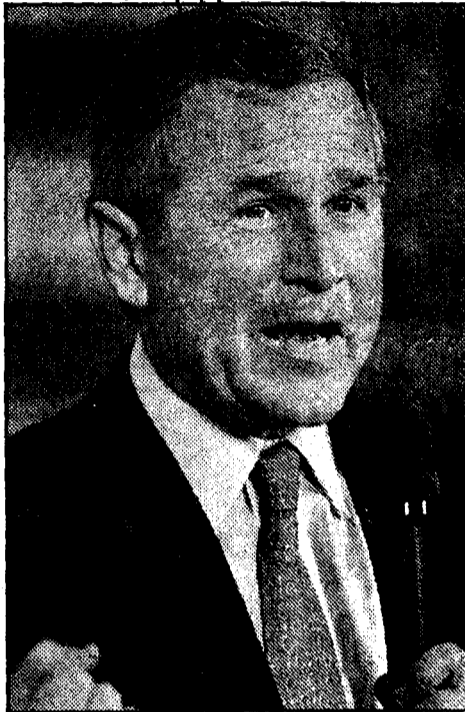
Oh, please. A more partisan time than the impeachment of less than two years ago? A more divided America than that of Vietnam or even the Anita Hill-Clarence Thomas hearings? Then why has just about everybody except Al Gore, George W. Bush and their fiercest partisans had so much fun?

Whatever else may be the legacy of the Clinton years, one thing is certain: the disconnect lives on. The apocalyptic shrillness generated by the Washington establishment and amplified by television's latest mediathon is utterly askew from the mood in the country. As the talking heads were shocked by polls revealing that Americans didn't want Bill Clinton sent packing at the height of Monicagate, so they were taken aback by polls revealing that the benighted citizenry has the patience to wait out a deadlocked election.

The reason for this national equanimity is obvious. Collectively Mr Gore and Mr Bush have succeeded in uniting the country in exactly one bipartisan belief: that neither of them deserves to be president. The election result, a tie, was the perfect, indeed patriotic outcome to the cynical, scripted campaign they both ran: Let them both lose. And now, thanks to the political, legal and media histrionics of the post-election campaign, our unspoken wish has come true. Both will lose — no matter who is the nominal "winner."

Even were the entire country able to conduct a "re-vote" of the election, it's hard to imagine vastly different results. Since Nov. 7, both candidates have only ratified the voters' judgment that neither man is deserving of a mandate or capable of rising above his considerable limitations.

Mr Gore's public protestation that what he is "focused on" is "not the contest, but our democracy" offers yet further confirmation of his unctuous disingenuousness. (And who but Gore would ostentatiously pay a visit to



the movie *Men of Honor* when trying to prove he is one?) Mr Bush, who chose to start a transition while ballots were still being counted and then hid for days behind the heavily pomaded visage of Daddy's old consigliere James Baker, is still the entitled rich kid who relies on family retainers and old-boy connections to carry him through a crisis. These guys are interim leaders for an interim age, and all the recounts in the world are not going to alter either's DNA.

The post-election is not a fierce partisan civil war so much as a nearly substance-free battle over the single, non-ideological issue of who will win and who will lose. What else is at stake here? Not a civil rights debate, or the prosecution of a war, or the prosecution of a president, or even the ascendancy of liberalism or conservatism. In the gridlocked, divided Congress at hand, Mr Bush isn't going to be able to bring off a mammoth tax cut or appoint a new Justice Thomas; Mr Gore won't be able to bloat entitlements. If this is a partisan fight deeply dividing a nation, as our pundits purport, it's all form and no content. Instead of the Blue versus the Gray, we have a scorched-earth war between two prescription-drug plans.

The post-election is not a fierce partisan civil war so much as a nearly substance-free battle over the single, non-ideological issue of who will win and who will lose

Another cliché of the moment has it that, whatever else is happening, we are at least witnessing a fine civics lesson that will benefit the nation's callow youth. Well, everyone now knows what the Electoral College is, but beyond that lies public relations and legal wrangling more redolent of a class-action lawsuit than the Continental Congress.

Whatever the election's outcome, the result is likely to be the same anyway. If Mr Bush wins, especially without taking the popular vote, the Democrats will delegitimise the election in any way they can. Should Mr Gore win, that old band of Vincent Foster conspiracy theorists will reunite to investigate what the *Wall Street Journal* has already labelled an attempted Democratic *coup d'état*. In 2002 the party that controls the White House is likely to lose untold seats in Congress. If an economic downturn is thrown into the mix, the president may find himself and his party consigned to long-term political oblivion.

This is one year when it is probably better to be a sore loser than a sore winner. But such is the narrow vision of both contenders that they may be the last people in America to figure that out.

By arrangement with the *New York Times*

THE ASIAN AGE

21 NOV 2000

Bush's lead is up, but aides are jittery over manual recount

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, November 19

MR GEORGE Bush may have increased his lead over Mr Al Gore from 300 votes to 930 after the counting of overseas votes, but his supporters are far from reassured on the Republican's prospects of finally making it to the White House.



If anything, the Bush camp is increasingly jittery about the ongoing manual recount in three predominantly Democrat counties, involving as it does 1.7 million votes. Which is why it has launched a full-scale offensive against the very tenability of this recount, an issue that will be taken up by the Florida Supreme Court on Monday.

But the Supreme Court's very constitution appears to have exacerbated the Bush camp's undercurrent of tension: Six of its seven judges have been appointed by Democratic Governors, while the seventh is a joint Democratic-Republican appointee.

A peep into the Republican apprehension on this score is provided by the remarks of Mr Tom Cole, chief of staff of the Republican National Committee. A news report quoted Mr Cole as saying: "We've got a court that is totally Democratic. That doesn't mean they won't render a fair decision. But it does raise the bar in terms of convincing Republicans that this is, indeed, equitable."

The Bush camp's misgivings have only increased with this court's intervention on Friday, blocking Florida's Republican secretary of state from going ahead with the certification of results without waiting for completion of the manual recount. It has also allowed the recount to proceed for the time

being. Although the recount thus far has added very few votes to Mr Gore's tally, the Bush supporters do not wish to take any chances as a swing even in a few precincts can upset the Texas Governor's applecart. Their contention is the recount is selective and unconstitutional and, hence, should be rejected.

According to CNN indications on the manual recount, Mr Gore has gained a mere 79 votes at the end of the recount in 259 of the 609 precincts in Broward County. In Palm Beach, recount is still in its early stages. After its completion in four of the 531 precincts, Mr Bush had an extra four votes to show. Ahead of Monday's courtroom showdown, the Republicans and the Democrats traded invectives, with each accusing the other of trying to "steal" the election by overturning the will of the people.

Mr Bush's spokesperson Karen Hughes said the Democrats were out to distort and sabotage the outcome through the manual recount device. "We now have clear and compelling evidence from eyewitnesses that this manual recount process is fundamentally flawed and is...distorting, reinventing and miscounting the true intentions of the voters of Florida."

Mr Gore's spokesman Chris Lehane promptly countered it, saying the Republican effort now was "to inject raw, crass, partisan politics" into the process. "The Gore campaign wants the will of the people to be reflected accurately and completely, which will be guaranteed by a manual recount, while the Bush campaign is trying to do everything possible to stop that from happening."

The lawyers of Mr Gore have in the meantime filed their brief with the Supreme Court, ahead of tomorrow's arguments. The 62-page brief damns Republican secretary of state Katherine Harris's 'Kafkaesque' actions and builds up a strong case on recounts. The Bush team and Ms Harris herself are expected to file their counters today.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

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Battle goes to the U.S. Supreme Court 24/11

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 23. The Bush campaign has appealed to the United States Supreme Court to bar the use of manually counted votes in the U.S. presidential election in Florida. The lawyers for the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, filed appeals seeking an urgent review.

"This is a case of utmost national importance involving the Constitution's most fundamental rights as exercised in the nation's most important election. The outcome of the election for the presidency of the United States may hang in the balance."

Criticising the Florida Supreme Court order to include handcounted ballots in the final tally for certification, the Bush campaign called the vote-counting process "selective, capricious and standardless". The court ruling violated the equal protection clause, the due process clause and the first Amendment, it said. Earlier, Mr. Bush slammed the ruling saying, "make no mistake, the court rewrote the law. It changed the rules, and it did so after the election was over."

But the appeal to the U.S. Supreme Court by the Bush camp asking the judges to hear the case and give a ruling by December 18 when States, on an individual basis, would have to tally the Electoral College votes, was not the main event on Wednesday.

The Republicans moved a State Circuit Court ask-

ing 13 counties with heavy military populations to recount the overseas ballots. According to one estimate, the 13 counties rejected some 650 ballots and the Bush campaign believes it was at the receiving end.

Mixed fortunes for Gore

For the Gore camp, it was a day of mixed fortunes. On the one hand was the ruling in Palm Beach county that ordered election officials to consider the "dimpled" ballots in the manual recount. On the other hand, the Miami-Dade county said it was stopping manual counting as it could not meet the new deadline. The Gore campaign was "counting" on the Miami-Dade county — largest in the State — especially in the 10,000 or so ballots that had been in clear dispute.

On Wednesday night, a State Appeals Court upheld the Miami-Dade county's decision to suspend the vote recount. The Gore campaign, which was expected to get hundreds of votes after the disputed ballots were checked, said it would move the Florida Supreme Court. When the counting was stopped, the U.S. Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, had gained 157 votes. The ruling of the Florida Supreme Court has formally threatened to bring the State's Legislature into the act and angry Republican lawmakers said the court had over-reached itself and, in the process, cut into the functioning of the Government's legislative branch.

THE SLIP IS NOT SHOWING

As Bush would say, whether he has a twisted tongue or not, is irreverent

BY FRANK JOHNSON

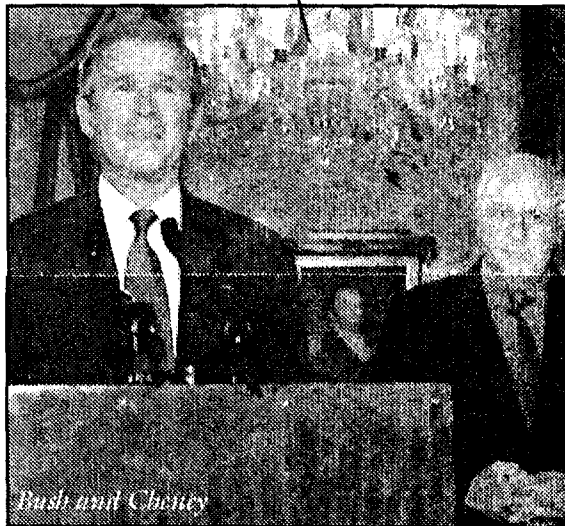
Governor Bush said, amid the uncertainty last week, "It's an interesting period, where we're all in limbo." This was disappointing for collectors of those Bushisms that so enlivened and confused his speeches during the campaign. True to them, what he should have said was something like "we're all in libido."

If he becomes president, Bushisms could be an important part of his presidency. If Mr Bush is exceptionally unlucky, they — like the misfortunes associated with vice president Quayle — will become that with which he is most associated. Unless his presidency has compensating qualities, it would doom him, as it doomed Mr Quayle. But what should we truly think about them? In a way, what we truly think will be irrelevant. As with most things about politics and government, what we think about a Bush presidency will be decided by partisanship; that is, by partisans convincing the non-partisan majority among voters in the United States and the citizenry of other countries, including our own.

All candidates and office-holders have failings. Those failings are then described as unimportant by their partisans. Vice president Gore was generally assumed to be charmless, dull, a know-all and overbearing. None of that matters, said his partisans; what matter are a candidate's beliefs and abilities. Mr Gore had the correct beliefs and was abler than Mr Bush.

Mr Bush was generally assumed to be an amiable slacker, who would never have become governor of Texas had it not been for "name recognition" derived from his father, and who was none too bright. None of that matters, said his partisans; what matters is his ability to pick good people. In picking Mr Cheney for vice-president, and Mr Powell for secretary of state, he has already shown that ability. His very lack of detail is an asset. Mr Gore is full of detail and will thus try to run everything: be his own national security adviser, his own secretary of state.

Had the Democrat been the slacker and the Republican the industrious bore, we can be certain that Democrat and Republican partisans would have argued the other way round. That is politics. More particularly, that is partisanship. Partisanship seems to be in the natures of those of us who are gripped by politics; a minority in any Anglo-Saxon polity, admittedly,



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but an important one, since even apolitical Anglo-Saxon polities have to be governed by something or someone.

Thus we Conservatives had to explain away President Reagan's idleness and cavalier way with a detail. They did not matter, we said. What mattered was whether he was right about the big things; and he was, by which we meant that we agreed with him about the big things. Likewise, President Clinton's partisans had to argue that it did not matter what a president got up to in the Oval Office when he was not using the premises for governance. What mattered was what he got up to there when government was on his mind rather than Miss Lewinsky on his ... but I will abandon that subject there, the requisite imagery being best left to my able colleague in such matters, Mr Mark Steyn.

I have rather departed from my original purpose in mentioning Mr Bush's difficulties with words. That purpose was to argue that it would be best if mentioning them were soon regarded, as Americans

say, as off-limits. This is not necessarily out of partisanship or because I have a soft spot for Mr Bush, though I do. (I think that he is more like Mr Reagan than he is like his father, in that he has charm and gives off an air of not knowing most of what is going on, but of knowing whether what is going on is at all important.) It is because it may soon become too easy to discuss a president solely, or mainly, in terms of Bushisms, just as it soon became too easy to discuss Mr Reagan solely in terms of his long hours abed.

It is a question of the ethics of journalism or, better still, of war. It is also because I am haunted by my conscience in this matter. In writing from the Labour conference for the *Daily Telegraph* this autumn, I mocked Mr Prescott's syntax. Or rather, I tried to. Whether I succeeded is a matter for others to decide. I can imagine many people thinking that it was an unsuccessful mock, and that the only person deserving of mockery in the matter was myself.

I now realise that Mr Prescott's syntax is a soft target. Mockery of it requires no

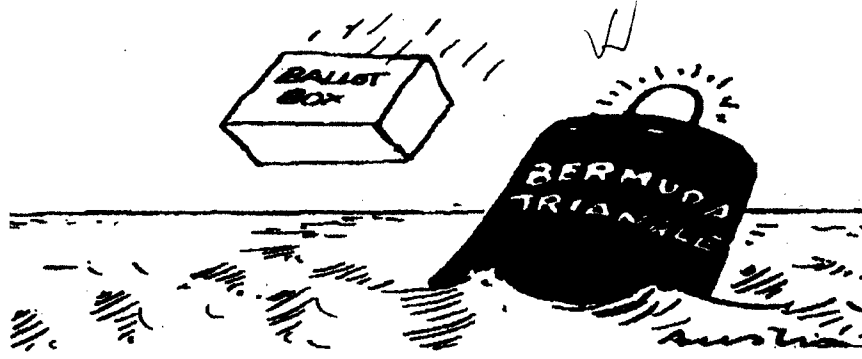
bravery or personal risk. At the Labour conference in Bournemouth, it was the equivalent of Nato's bombing during the Kosovo hostilities of the Chinese embassy in Belgrade, or of a school or hospital. Mr Prescott's conference speech was a civilian target. Within the speech's range of sentences, there were — so to speak — women and children; or perhaps innocent diplomats, or at least an innocent security guard or nightwatchman.

When conscience struck me, I confess that I considered claiming that Mr Prescott's speech was bombed in error. I was using an out-of-date street map. Or I could have claimed that, within those sentences, Mr Prescott was concealing weapons to use against Tories and the middle classes, particularly those with access to unearned income. He is, after all, a class warrior. But no; the court at The Hague would undoubtedly rule that the syntax was harmless.

But I regret that, later this autumn, I was party to another incident. My forces participated in a mass parliamentary sketchwriters' raid on the Scottish accent of the new speaker, Mr Michael Martin. In mitigation, I could argue that I was not the worst. In fact, I was the least aggressive. In this operation I was, so to speak, the Italian. Mr Hoggart, in the *Guardian*, carpet-bombed that accent. Mr Parris, in the *Times*, was quite aggressive. Mr Carr, in the *Independent*, was ferocious. Mr Lettis, in the *Mail*, called the new speaker "Gorbals Mick", an undoubted war crime which could justify his extradition to face a Scottish court sitting on neutral soil. I tried to be affectionate about it, for I strongly believe in the Union. I would do nothing to encourage Scottish separatism; I dislike English nationalism. I would support the Union, even if it meant a permanent Labour majority at Westminster.

Nonetheless, however half-heartedly, I took part in the raid. All I can say is that journalism is hell; terrible things happen in it. What I intended to hit was the means by which the speaker was elected. Mr Martin's accent was collateral damage. The most important point, however, is that to dwell on Mr Bush's slips of the tongue, Mr Prescott's grammar and Mr Martin's command of Glaswegian is simply to join the mob. Everybody else is doing it. None of it is relevant to their fitness to hold office. Indeed, as Mr Bush would say, they are completely irreverent to it.

By arrangement with *The Spectator*



THE ASIAN AGE

24 NOV 2000

Court rejects Gore's new recount plea

ASSOCIATED PRESS

TALLAHASSEE (Florida), Nov. 23. — The Florida Supreme Court today refused to order Miami-Dade county officials to resume a hand count of presidential election ballots, dealing a blow to Mr Al Gore's efforts to cut into Mr George W Bush's lead in the state.

Mr Gore had asked the court in an emergency on today's holiday of Thanksgiving to restart ballot counting in the county which, the Democrats said, was "being frustrated by a deliberate campaign of delay and intimidation of local officials."

"The writ is denied without prejudice. No motion for rehearing is allowed," the court said in a statement read by spokesman Craig Waters.

The court's action means the

lawyers can refile on different legal grounds or can take their case to another court.

Miami-Dade, the largest county in Florida, suspended a full manual recount after the Florida court set a Sunday deadline for counties to report adjusted vote totals.

Requesting court action, Gore's campaign said in its filing: "Determining the will of the voters cannot be frustrated by the whim of local officials."

The Bush campaign spokeswoman, Ms Indy Tucker, brushed off the Gore appeal. "The court has already extended the statutory deadline for an additional 12 days, and now Al Gore wants them to extend it yet again. It seems Al Gore wants the court to keep extending the deadline until he can count the votes enough

times to change the result."

The Gore filing came the morning after lawyers for Mr Bush moved on another legal front, asking the US Supreme Court to overturn the Florida SC and bar the use of hand counted ballots.

"The outcome of the election for the presidency of the USA may hang in the balance," the Bush lawyers said in urging the court to take up what it said is essentially a state issue.

Mr Bush also filed suit in a Florida court asking 13 counties with heavy military populations to count overseas ballots.

Hundreds of ballots, many from military outposts, were rejected last week when Democratic lawyers urged county boards to scrutinise them. Both sides believe Mr Bush lost more votes than Mr

Gore when the ballots were rejected.

A Palm Beach County judge said officials must consider "dimpled chad" punchcard ballots — those that show an indentation but no perforation.

But Judge Jorge Labarga said elections officials can reject the questionable ballots if the voters' intent can't be determined.

Congress position: Democrats have improved their position in the Congress in late returns though a majority in either House has eluded them.

In New Jersey, the House seat was won by Democrat Rush Holt, who defeated Republican Dick Zimmer by 672 votes. In the Senate race, Democrat Maria Cantwell edged out incumbent three-term Republican Senator Slade Gorton by 1,953 votes.

THE STATESMAN

24 NOV 2000

SC boost, county blow for Gore

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
& Agencies

WASHINGTON, Nov. 22. — Mr Al Gore today suffered a setback in a Florida county after the state's Supreme Court last night boosted his chances of becoming US President by ruling that hand recounts be included in the official results.

As a furious Mr George W Bush was today preparing to challenge that verdict in the US Supreme Court, Miami-Dade county struck his rival a blow. Its elections officials voted to end the hand recount of more than 650,000 ballots, saying there wouldn't be enough time to complete it.

The Democrats said they would appeal against the county decision in court, thus hurling the tangled election into deeper legal quagmire.

The Miami-Dade decision means votes logged so far in the hand recount there would be thrown out. Mr Gore had a net gain of 157 votes in the county with 135 of 614 precincts counted by last night. Mr Bush currently leads in Florida by 930 votes.

The Miami-Dade election supervisor said it would take 96 hours with no breaks to

finish a full countywide hand recount, even if they could find more counters which they have been unable to do. "Most people had plans for the (Thanksgiving) weekend... We could not do it by the deadline imposed by the court."

The Florida Supreme Court had last night set a deadline of 5 p.m. on Sunday — if the Florida secretary of state's office is open — or 9 a.m. Monday if it is closed on Sunday, for the manual recount totals to be accepted. The court said it wanted to give each side enough time to contest the outcome before the Electoral College convenes.

Florida's electors must be formally selected on 12 December. Under the US Constitution, the Electoral College will have to elect a new President on 18 December.

Meanwhile, CNN said: "Bush is authorising his lawyers to file an appeal with the US Supreme Court in an effort to shut down all hand recounts of Florida ballots."

Florida's Republican-controlled legislature too has emerged as a potential avenue of appeal, with Republican leader Mr James Baker expressing hope the House will

"affirm the original rules".

Earlier, Mr Bush accused the Florida SC of overstepping its authority and changing the rules, and Democrats of trying to steal the election.

The Florida court in a unanimous 7-judge decision had said: "In dealing with similar conflicts in the past, the court has consistently held that the right of the people to cast their vote is the paramount concern overriding all others."

"Although error cannot be completely eliminated in any tabulation of the ballots, our society has not yet gone so far as to place blind faith in machines. In almost all endeavours, including elections, humans routinely correct the errors of machines."

About the "dimpled" ballots that are not fully punched, the court cited the Democratic argument that the voter's intent was more important than the manner in which the ballot had been punched. Thousands of dimpled ballots are in dispute in the three counties.

Cheney in hospital: The Republican vice-presidential candidate, Mr Dick Cheney, was admitted to a Washington hospital today after he complained of chest pains.

THE STATESMAN

23 NOV 2000

U.S. paper covers rights movement finally

JACKSON (TENNESSEE), NOV. 3. During the 1960s, *The Jackson Sun* all but ignored one of the biggest upheavals in U.S. history — the civil rights movement.

The people of Jackson got little if any news from their hometown paper on the sit-ins, the boycotts and the mass arrests that were shaking their town to its core. A generation later, though, the 40,000-circulation daily newspaper is trying to make amends, running a 21-page series of articles and photos on the civil rights movement, which sought to bring equal rights to black Americans. The series began on October 15 and ran for seven days, dominating the front page and taking up two inside pages in each issue.

"It was about time somebody put this on the historical record," the *Sun* managing editor, Mr. David Risser said. Many newspapers in the 1950s and '60s, particularly in small Southern towns, played down or ignored coverage of the civil rights movement. But few, if any, have gone to such lengths to set the record straight.

Mr. Risser said his newspaper "didn't apologise per se. We just decided this history needed to be told and we told it." The decision to ignore the civil rights movement wasn't because it was bypassing Jackson. There were bus boycotts, lunch counter sit-ins and demonstrations, including a November 8, 1960, protest at the courthouse that resulted in 144 arrests. The *Sun* ran a brief article on those arrests the next day that was published inside the paper without a photo, even though a photographer was at the scene.

The newspaper said its then-owner, Sally Pigford, was aligned with the city's white power structure and had a policy of not reporting on events in the black community. Now owned by the Gannett Co., the newspaper three months ago named Mr. Edward Graves its first black publisher. But



Clockwise from top left: Ms. Kimmie Davis, Mr. Wesley McClure, Mr. Ernest Brooks and Mr. Shirlene Mercer pose for a photo on Oct. 11, 2000, in Jackson, Tennessee. The four, who were involved in the Civil Rights struggle in the 1960's were interviewed by the *Jackson Sun* about their experiences. During the 1960's the newspaper all but ignored the civil rights movement in its coverage. A generation later, the newspaper is trying to make amends, running a 21-page series of articles and photos on the civil rights movement. — AP

reporting for the series began in January before Mr. Graves took office.

Mr. Risser said the *Sun* decided to retrace history after its reporters kept running into trouble trying to research events of the civil rights era. "We also were impressed that very few people in town, even people who lived through this, were aware that we had pretty much every element of the civil rights movement happen here," Mr. Risser said.

Reaction to the series has been largely favourable, Mr. Risser said, though 10 readers

have cancelled subscriptions and several phoned or wrote to complain that the newspaper was opening old wounds. "One thing we can count on is *The Jackson Sun* continuously keeping racial tension stirred up," one reader wrote.

But Mr. Robert Merriweather, a black preacher and longtime resident of Jackson, welcomed the special report.

"They just let people know what happened in the history of the town, because we have come a long way. And if you don't know your past, you don't have a future," he said. A

number of Southern newspapers did report vigorously on the civil rights movement, often despite protests from readers.

Mr. Ralph McGill, editor of *The Atlanta Constitution*, received threats but became known as the "conscience of the South" and won a Pulitzer Prize for his commentaries on the issue.

Two other small-town editors who received Pultizers for courageous writing were Ira B. Harkey Jr. in Pascagoula, Mississippi, and Hazel Brannon Smith in Lexington, Mississippi. — AP

Clinton attacks Bush on size of government

By Sue Fleming

HEMPSTEAD (New York): As he swept through New York state to raise money for his wife's senate bid, President Bill Clinton attacked Republican George W. Bush's claim that vice-president Al Gore is for big government.

"If you are for smaller government, then our candidate (Gore) is for you," Mr Clinton told about 1,000 supporters on Sunday at a rally in Johnson city in upstate New York at the first of four "New York senate 2000" campaign events of the day.

As Hillary Rodham Clinton's chief fund-raiser, Mr Clinton was expected to raise about \$490,000 on Sunday for her senate campaign against Republican representative Rick Lazio.

Mr Clinton was trying to rebut Mr Bush's charge, made daily on the campaign trail,

that if elected Mr Gore would increase the size and influence of the federal government. "It was this democratic administration that has reduced the size of federal government to its smallest since 1960," he said. "We are for better government and smaller government."

The Democratic vice-president is trailing slightly in the polls with little more than two weeks left before the November 7 election.

Mr Clinton, whose role in the Gore campaign has been limited because of the baggage he carries from his impeachment drama, is on a two-day tour of New York state.

The big event was on Sunday night at the Hudson theatre in New York city featuring a performance by rock star Elton John, which Mr Clinton was set to attend with his wife after addressing a fund-raiser at Hofstra university in Hempstead, New York.

At a fund-raiser in picturesque Alexandria bay in upstate New York, Mr Clinton told the crowd the presidential election would be tight and people should convince their friends to vote for Mr Gore

and his running mate Sen. Joseph Lieberman.

"Everything is on the line here," Mr Clinton said. "I want you to use every day between now and the election, to get people to understand why it is so important not only for Hillary to win but also for Al Gore and Joe Lieberman."

While heralding the success of his own administration, Mr Clinton said he believed Mr Gore when he promised voters "you ain't seen nothing yet."

"Of course the person running for office says that and it sounds like a campaign slogan, but I'm not running for anything and I believe that, I believe we can bring economic opportunity to people who have been left behind," he said.

Mr Clinton strongly urged the Democratic loyalists to convince their friends and family there are

huge differences between the parties on a broad range of issues.

"You have to decide what you believe, but make no mistake about it, there are big differences between us," said Mr Clinton.

Republicans have been successful in clouding the differences, he said. "If we can make it clear (the differences), we'll win. They want cloudy, we want clear," Mr Clinton said.

The President also took aim at Mr Bush's \$1.3 trillion, 10-year tax cut plan. "If you want to keep the prosperity going and extend it to people left behind, you have to have a budget that keeps paying its debt. Their numbers don't add up."

"We brought arithmetic back to Washington and we ought to keep arithmetic in the classroom of the Congress and the White House."

He strongly disagreed with his opponents who said it was an election where people were either voting for change or to keep the status quo. "The issue is not whether we are going to change but how we are going to change." (Reuters)

Bush leads by 9 points over Gore

NEW YORK: With barely over two weeks to go for the U.S. presidential elections, Republican candidate George W. Bush has established a lead of nine points over his Democratic opponent and vice-president Al Gore, according to just released CNN/USA Gallup tracking poll.

If the election were held now 50 per cent of voters would choose Mr Bush and 41 per cent would favour Mr Gore, the poll suggested. The margin of error is plus or minus four percentage points, it said. Minor party candidates Ralph Nader of the Green Party and Reform Party nominee Pat Buchanan were at three per cent and one per cent respectively.

Mr Gore's support is low partly because he is on the unfavourable side of a historically high gender gap with just 33 per cent of men currently favouring Mr Gore compared to 56 per cent for Mr Bush.

While Mr Gore wins among women, he does so with only two percentage points to spare, 48 per cent to 46 per cent. That works out to a 15-percentage point gender gap.

The gender gap is higher than in any previous election since exit poll started in 1972, and an indication that men may determine the outcome of this election. (PTI)

Central Asian move to contain Islamic fundamentalism

MOSCOW: Russian federation, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Armenia and Belarus have joined hands in setting up a rapid reaction force to contain the rising menace of Islamic fundamentalism.

The move has been taken at the request of Kyrgyzstan, which perceived increased threat to its territorial integrity from the Taliban, the Voice of Russia disclosed on Sunday. The country had repulsed an attack by a band of Afghan militants in summer this year.

The Taliban have already amassed their troops close to the border regions after having crossed the river Pandz dividing Afghanistan from Central Asian states. (UNI)

SIZE MATTERS

- Clinton wants Hillary and Gore to win
- Democrats also want smaller government

Celebrities join in to shore up Gore as campaign heads into final week

By Ramesh Chandran
The Times of India News Service

WASHINGTON: Apart from the two leading contenders to the American presidency — Al Gore and George W. Bush who are locked in a virtual statistical dead-heat as the campaign winds down to the last five days — the busiest group in the electoral process have been pollsters.

News organisations who employ them have been releasing their tracking polls, and networks like the CNN, ABC, MSNBC, Fox News, CBS and from the print media the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, the *Wall Street Journal* and the *Los Angeles Times* have pooled in their resources to evaluate the closest presidential election in 40 years.

The latest polls released on Thursday show the Texas governor ahead by about five to two points, but given the substantial number of undecided voters it is not a significant lead, leading to forelock-tugging discussions by political pundits to ponder if Mr Gore might lose the popular vote but win the crucial electoral college votes.

In the highly cantankerous world of American political punditry, one factor that emerges fairly lucid is that the average voter has a problem with the chameleon-like persona of Mr Gore. Given the fact that the American economy is enjoying unprecedented prosperity, the vice-president ought to have been ahead by double digits over a candidate not exactly known for his charisma or his incandescent oratory. Instead, Mr Gore is struggling, and should he win he will do so only by the slenderest of margins.

Mr Gore's campaign has not been helped by him "running away" from President Bill Clinton who refuses to concede the media headlines to his designated successor. Mr Clinton has evoked a lot of controversy with his succession of "exit interviews", notably in the *New Yorker* and the *Esquire*.

The cover photo of the President in *Esquire* magazine has been taken from what has been described as "Monica angle" and it has evoked as much controversy as its contents. It provoked the *Washington Times* — an unrelenting critic of the Clinton presidency — to editorially comment: "This quintessential portrait of the President of the United States may render readers speechless, as the lurid history of the Clinton-Gore ad-

ministration returns in an off-kiltering rush. But this splayed-legged portrait of the Big He isn't only about the past — imagine the impact it would have as a campaign poster for these final days of the presidential race. It just needs a slogan...something catchy...like "Win one for the Groper."

As Mr Gore ponders the "Clinton factor", he must also wrestle with another iconic figure of American politics from the past — former consumer crusader Ralph Nader who has captured the minds of young voters again with his apocalyptic themes of fighting "special interests and American corporations" who "run Washington". Mr Nader, with his three to five point cache of votes, could also hurt Mr Gore, especially in key battleground states.

Given the fact that states like Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, Washington state and others have become such key factors, every electoral college vote is significant, and Mr Gore has roped in every ally he can lay his hands on. And helping him out are a huge phalanx of celebrities from Hollywood and the music industry. For a man who claims with disarming frankness that he is not the "most exciting of politicians", his campaign caravan now resembles a star-studded revue.

"The headliners" — those who appear on stage before the vice-president makes his appearance in campaign rallies — change daily and include some of the most recognisable names from the entertainment industry.

On Wednesday, in the key state of Michigan, there was rock singer Jon Bon Jovi who told cheering crowds that he is there to "lend support to the voice of experience" and proceeded to entertain the crowds not only with his own songs but also Bob Dylan's *Chimes of Freedom*. At West Virginia, comedian Bill Cosby warmed crowds and told the audience, "The voting machine is better than the slot machine — you don't lose when you pull." At other rallies, singer and lesbian activist Mellissa Etheridge serenaded Gore supporters and popular crooner Tony Bennett headlined a Gore-Lieberman fund raiser that raked in more than \$2 million. The Gore celebrity entourage includes super models like Christie Brinkley and Kim Alexis and marquee names such as Carlos Santana and Stevie Wonder are expected to help the his cause during the last days of the campaign.



Al Gore



George W. Bush

THE TIMES OF INDIA

4 NOV 2000

Bush admits to night of drunken driving

ENCE FRANCE PRESSE
SHINGTON, NOV 3

THE tight US Presidential campaign took a new turn as Governor George W Bush was forced to confirm a report that he was arrested for drunk driving 24 years ago, when he was 30.

The Texas Governor confirmed on Thursday a television news report that he was arrested on September 4, 1976, for driving under the influence of alcohol. "I occasionally drank too much and I did that one night," he told reporters outside a packed rally here. "I've learned my lesson."

Bush said he had not told people about the arrest because it was a "mistake" that set a bad example. "I made the decision, that as a dad, I didn't want my girls doing the kind of things I did and I told them not to drink and drive," he said.

Bush was arrested in Kennebunkport, Maine, just blocks from his family's summer estate and charged with driving under the influence of alcohol.

Thirty at the time, he pleaded guilty, paid a \$150 fine and had his license suspended for a short period in the state of Maine.

His driving privileges were later reinstated. "I'm not proud



George W Bush: I confess

of that," Bush said. "Years ago, I made some mistakes. I regret that it happened, but it did. I learned my lessons. I quit drinking in 1986. I haven't had

a drink in 14 years."

"It was wrong. I've corrected that," he added. "People of America will understand that." Bush, however, said he thought it was "interesting" that the report came out just five days before US voters head to the polls. Bush leads in the opinion polls are slim enough to remain within the margin of error, leaving the race a toss-up.

Vice-President Al Gore's campaign, however, said it had "nothing to do with this. We just don't think it's appropriate for us to comment on," said Gore spokesman Chris Lehane. "That's not something

that the Gore campaign would engage in." Gore struggled to re-ignite his campaign earlier Thursday with his toughest assault yet on Bush, but increasingly buoyant Republicans dismissed the attacks as "desperation" tactics.

The latest Gore television ad hammered on the leadership theme, hitting on Bush's record in six years as Texas Governor.

"Texas now ranks 50th in family health care ... (and) ranks last in air quality", while Bush "Let polluters police themselves," says the commercial, set to run in key battleground states.

INDIAN EXPRESS

NOV 2 2000

NOV 2 2000

Bush-Gore margin narrows, results hang by a whisker

Threats of legal wrangles cloud Bush's narrow lead *'Overseas absentee voters are an eclectic mix'*

By Ramesh Chandran
The Times of India News Service

WASHINGTON: According to the latest unofficial figures available from *Voter News Service* (VNS), George W. Bush is leading over his Democratic rival Al Gore by a whisker (331 votes) after all the votes had been recounted in Florida's 67 counties. But the prospect of a protracted legal wrangle means that the selection of the next U.S. President will take some time.

While VNS, which feeds the main networks here, put Governor Bush's lead at 331, the Associated Press, which monitored the recount in all the counties, reported the final lead as a wispy 327 votes. A third recount in at least four of the precincts in the controversy-hit Palm Beach county is also about to unfold with the Democrats seeking a "manual" recount rather than the swifter machine recount.

For a final announcement, the absentee ballots from overseas—many of them from the U.S. military personnel based abroad—will have to be counted and the deadline for that is set on November 17. Traditionally, American servicemen tend to vote for Republican candidates and Governor Bush's advisors seem confident that his margin of victory would be boosted further after the final vote-tally.

But no immediate end is in sight as the final chapters of this fascinating electoral drama looks poised to dissolve into murky legal dispute.

While Mr Bush's team in Florida, led by former secretary of state James Baker III, seemed to suggest that the Texas governor had not only won the first official count and now the recount (still unofficial), Al Gore's advisors, led by another former secretary of state Warren Christopher and the combative Gore campaign manager William Daley, have threatened to file lawsuits taking this country into uncharted territory—no presidential election in the U.S. has ever been decided by the federal or state court action.

The Gore team has argued that they have a number of grievances—the disenfranchised 19,000 voters in Palm Beach county, the 3,400 votes Reform Party's Pat Buchanan received allegedly due to a perplexing ballot paper amongst them. They have also made plans to take the issue to the streets, led by activists like Rev. Jesse Jackson who has vowed to organise nation-wide protest marches. But these moves to drag the election verdict to court and for a legal process to announce the next President is being seen as dangerous by an increasing number of analysts.

By Paul Richter and Judy Pasternak

WASHINGTON: The tight recount in Florida may give the last word on the presidential election to a relative handful of overseas voters who are eclectic, often conservative—and usually an electoral afterthought.

Several thousand ballots are expected from overseas absentee voters, who include a large concentration of military personnel, globe-trotting business people and a smaller number of dual citizens living in Israel. They must have their ballots postmarked by November 7 and received for counting by Nov. 17.

These voters historically have favored Florida Republicans, state officials said, and in 1996 gave GOP presidential nominee Bob Dole 54 per cent of their vote, compared to the 43 per cent he received statewide. Republican officials have cited these trends when they have predicted that Texas governor George W. Bush will take most of the overseas absentee ballots. Yet Democratic campaign officials and some other analysts noted some other facts that could make the outcome less certain.

About 1,000 ballots, or more, may be received from Floridians living in Israel, a group that consists mostly of dual citizens and votes disproportionately Democratic. And the military vote could turn out to be less pro-Bush than expected, since enlisted personnel—who outnumber officers, 6 to 1—are more liberal than heavily Republican officers.

"Israel could help decide it," said Gideon Remez, foreign affairs editor of Israel Radio, to his listeners as they woke up Wednesday to one of the tightest presidential races in U.S. history.

Florida has a heavy concentration of military personnel and installations, including seven major navy and five large air force bases. But Florida is also frequently chosen as a legal residence by military personnel who live in other states because it lacks a state income-tax. The air force includes 5,200 personnel from Florida assigned in Europe and another 4,300 in the Pacific theatre.

The Clinton administration has had a rocky relationship with the military, in part because of President Clinton's avoidance of military service. Surveys show that many career military personnel believe that the administration has starved armed service budgets. Yet some analysts contended that the troops may be more sympathetic to Democrats than it appears. (LA Times-Washington Post)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

11 NOV 2000

Florida push to Bush ho!

AGENCIES

TALLAHASSEE (Florida) Nov. 10. — Mr George Bush led Vice-President Al Gore in Florida by 960 votes with ballots in 65 of 67 counties recounted, the state's elections department said today. But the final outcome may not be declared before 17 November with a few thousand absentee ballots still awaited.

An earlier unofficial estimate by AP, which took into account all 67 counties, had pegged the Republican candidate's lead at 327. Mr Bush claimed victory after AP put out its tally but his Democrat rival refused to concede defeat.

Florida's latest official tally

did not include recounts in Hernando and Palm Beach Counties, state officials said. Palm Beach County agreed to hand-count ballots in three precincts, after Mr Gore asked for a follow-up manual recount in several disputed Florida localities.

The total vote count has Mr Bush with 2,910,074 and Mr Gore with 2,909,114 in Florida's 67 counties, adjusted to include recounted figures from 65 counties so far, the elections department said in a statement.

It could be a court of law that finally decides the result, with the Democrats saying they might go to court to prove that the Vice-President won the

election.

The Palm Beach Post today reported that a judge in West Palm Beach has issued an injunction freezing the vote recount process in the county. The daily said county circuit judge, Ms Kathleen Kroll,

■ **Editorial: Playing first fiddle, page 6**
 ■ **More reports, photograph on page 9**

issued a temporary injunction late yesterday preventing the county's elections canvassing board from releasing the ballots before a court hearing next week.

Florida's Secretary of State, Ms Katherine Harris, told

reporters it could be as late as next Tuesday — a week after the election — before the state has certified ballot results from all counties. She also said it would take even longer — at least until 17 November — to tabulate ballots cast by Floridians overseas and post-marked by Election Day. Whoever wins in Florida will take the state's 25 Electoral College votes which will decide the US presidency.

"The recount showed Bush won Florida," Mr George Bush's communication director, Mr Karen Hughes, claimed in a statement in Austin, Texas, asking Mr Gore to concede defeat. The Gore camp hit back, saying "this election is

not over". The Vice-President's campaign chairman, Mr William Daley, said in a statement: "Again we want the true and accurate will of the people to prevail and that means the legal system to run its course. If at the end of that process, George Bush is the victor, we will respect that result."

Eight lawsuits challenging the results have already been filed in state and Federal courts, including six in Palm Beach County and two in Tallahassee, where race discrimination was alleged. Allegations of voting irregularities range from missing and confusing ballots to problems with tabulations and voter intimidation.

8/11 The other candidate 10

IF IT had not been for a constitutional bar, the present US election would have been a foregone conclusion. The next Oval Office occupant would again have been Bill Clinton. Mr Clinton may have spent the US presidential campaign twiddling his thumbs, but he was the ghost at every campaign banquet hosted by Al Gore and George W. Bush. There are three reasons for this influence. First, Mr Clinton's election formula was used as a template by both candidates. Mr Clinton always positioned himself as the middle-of-the-road candidate, between a far Left and a far Right. Mr Gore has been marginally less successful in positioning himself in that position. He moved Left to secure his party's nomination and subsequently struggled to recapture the political centre. Each movement Rightward led to far Left defections to Green party candidate Ralph Nader. Mr Bush dubbed himself a "compassionate conservationist" to secure the middle ground. WSU

Second, Mr Clinton's sexual and financial scandals gave Mr Bush his main election theme. The Republican has projected himself as the man to restore moral character and integrity to the White House. This is why Mr Gore, himself under investigation for financial irregularities, distanced himself from Mr Clinton throughout the campaign. Third, Mr Clinton set extraordinarily high standards when it came to personal charisma and intelligence. Mr Gore is seen as wooden and Mr Bush as foolish because they are compared to Slick Willie.

Mr Clinton moved the political debate in the US markedly towards the Right. But he also showed how sheer lobbying skill can bridge the social divides this has created. Mr Clinton scaled back welfare entitlements: something few Republicans have dared. Yet, he has been the most popular US President in the past quarter of a century with black Americans. So popular that Mr Gore's placing Mr Clinton in cold storage undermined the former's support among his party's most loyal constituency. Mr Clinton's has been the unspoken influence during the campaign. So much so that his successor, irrespective of party, is sure to be seen as his legatee. //

410-1 Americans still clueless 11/11

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 10. Four days after voting for the highest office of the land Americans still have no clue to who the winner is.

All indications are it will take several more days before a winner surfaces in Florida; and it could take several more weeks if the election is contested in court, State and federal. On Saturday, State authorities will start a handcount of the tallies in four counties — close to two million votes — as demanded by the Gore campaign.

With the recount process under way in Florida, final unofficial estimates for all counties have it that the Texas Governor, Mr. George W Bush, has a 327 vote lead over his Democratic rival and Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore. However, State officials maintain that after tallying some 53 of the 67 counties, Mr. Bush continues to post a lead of 1,784 votes. Then there are also absentee ballots.

Propaganda war

The Gore campaign has gone on the offensive, saying that a number of things went wrong with the voting process in Florida right from the design of the ballot paper. At rallies across the Palm Beach County and elsewhere, the accusation was that election workers failed to give proper directions; also, there were instances African Americans being turned away and intimidated. The wrong design of

the ballot has resulted in Gore votes going to Mr. Patrick Buchanan of the Reform Party, say the supporters of the Vice-President.

Florida officials have to certify the election in their State next Tuesday but, it is pointed out, the process could take at least till November 17 for completing tabulation of the ballots of overseas voters. A circuit court judge has barred the Canvassing Commission in the Palm Beach County

**Heightened rhetoric: Page 13
Waiting game: Page 16**

from certifying the final results until after a hearing on Tuesday.

Politically, the rhetoric seems to be heating up even as the main candidates stayed away letting their surrogates do the "job". The Gore campaign manager, Mr. William Daley, has argued that the courts may find the Florida result "an injustice unparalleled in our history". The Bush campaign chairman, Mr. Don Evans, counters with: "The Democrats who are politicising and distorting these events risk doing so at the expense of our democracy".

The outward civility maintained by both sides conceals seething anger. For instance, the Gore team is outraged at the Texas Governor "going about" as though he is the

President-elect — the announcement of the transition team and in conducting "interviews" with potential Cabinet Members, including with Ms. Condoleezza Rice, a possible candidate for National Security Adviser. The Bush camp is miffed at the Vice-President and his top advisers trying to judicialise the voting process and, in the process, further damaging the institution of President. Officially the Gore campaign may have little to do with the filing of cases in Florida courts but there is disdain that the floodgates are being opened without considering the implications.

There is the real possibility of other States being "opened" up for judicial scrutiny leading to a big mess. There has been an open suggestion from the Bush team that it might want to question the vote in Iowa and Wisconsin, where the Vice-President won only by a few thousand votes. Republican activists demand that California be taken off the Gore electoral map as over one million absentee ballots are yet to be accounted for. The Gore campaign says Florida is not the only State where it could contest — New Hampshire, for instance, is another.

Meanwhile, the uncertainty over the election outcome takes its toll on Wall Street and analysts say the Gore campaign's decision to take it to the bitter end is rattling the markets.

THE HINDU

11 NOV 2000

NSD
11-8

U.S. electoral college model is more than a century old

By Jai Taraporevala

MUMBAI: The drama in the United States surrounding the electoral battle between George Bush and Al Gore has, among other things, demonstrated the anachronistic nature of the method of determining the outcome of presidential races. The provision requiring a candidate to secure a majority in the electoral college (which need not necessarily correspond to a majority of the popular votes cast nationwide) was enshrined in the constitution in the 19th century by the 12th amendment.

This system of having electors was devised at a time when the institution of political parties had not really taken off. It was designed to provide a safety net between candidates and voters, reward contestants who had secured broad-based support across the states and guarantee the voice of the smaller states.

However, whenever there is a discrepancy between the nationwide electoral vote and the popular vote, the system is clearly seen to be unfair and capable of creating unnecessary political bickering. If the U.S. had a nationwide first-past-the-post system of electing its President instead of the electoral college model, the wrangling over the Florida result would have been irrelevant to the final outcome of the race between Mr Bush and Mr Gore.

Besides, the present system can be abused by unprincipled electors. It is not widely known that the American President will be formally elected on December 18 by the 538 members of the electoral col-

lege who have been elected on November 7.

It is almost always the case that the electors vote for the candidates to whom they have been pledged. But there have been cases, as recently as in 1980 and 1988, where a couple of electors has voted differently. Although presidential candidates only choose those electors in whom they have complete trust, 34 of the 50 states do not legally bind electors to vote for the candidates to whom they are pledged.

Increasing calls will now be made for replacing the existing electoral college system with a more suitable arrangement. It is, however, debatable whether any switchover will ultimately be effected. A great deal will hinge on the extent of pressure that is brought to bear on the political establishment from the grassroots sections of society.

In addition, it will not be easy to find a commonly agreed alternative for replacing the current arrangement. Among the options that have been mentioned in the past are doing away with the electoral college system altogether, adopting the model followed by Maine and Nebraska of congressional districtwide distribution of electoral votes, or distributing the electoral votes between the candidates in each state in proportion to the popular ballots polled by them.

More important, any process to amend the American constitution is bound to be a long and cumbersome exercise which, in addition, to the requirement of a two-thirds majority in both chambers of Congress has to be approved by three-fourths of the state legislatures.

NEWS ANALYSIS

THE TIMES OF INDIA

12 NOV 2001

New U.S. leader will have a handful in Korea

By F.J. Khergamvala
TOKYO, Nov. 9. The as of now incomplete U.S. Presidential election process has focussed attention momentarily on Florida, but soon the winner must look across the Pacific where a transition of leadership is occurring incrementally and which will impact on U.S. policy.

Over the past week, there have been quite a few analytical pieces speculating on how various East Asian nations would react to an administration led by Mr. George W. Bush or one by Mr. Al Gore in the White House. Most reach a superficial conclusion that Mr. Bush will be tougher on China and reinforce the alliance with Japan, while Mr. Gore would continue the protectionist, trade unions appeasement position.

One prominent Western news agency went so far as to simplify the impact further by suggesting that any change really boils down to the U.S. policy on national missile defence. This is not untrue but before tackling the East Asian part of missile defence, the U.S.

will have to work through its Korea policy. Mr. Bush has been the source of some mirth on account of his not possessing the same facility for recalling foreign names as his more experienced Democratic rival. This may be a short-term shortcoming, primarily because across the Pacific he, or Mr. Gore for that matter, will be dealing with new Presidents or Prime Ministers who will put their own stamp on how they view the U.S.

Mr. Yoshiro Mori of Japan may not be around at the helm much longer, but on ties with the U.S. it really does not matter too much who the successor will be. Mr. Joseph Estrada is facing the same predicament on impeachment in Manila, as did Mr. Bill Clinton a couple of years back. Taiwan's Mr. Chen Shui-bian's fate is not known, but he is just too weak at the moment to attempt any provocative moves on China in order to attract the attention of the new U.S. administration. Mr. Mahathir Mohamad will almost certainly give way during the term of the new U.S. President, but the most important changes that will

take place in terms of policy impact with the U.S. will be in Beijing and in South Korea.

Mr. Mahathir has already gone on record as saying that a Gore victory will not be good for Malaysia. Substituting for Mr. Bill Clinton in 1998 at an Asia-Pacific event held in Kuala Lumpur, Mr. Gore asked Malaysians to rise against their Government's injustice in incarcerating Mr. Anwar Ibrahim. Not every leader in East Asia is quite as outspoken but quite a few of them do share a sense of bewilderment about the inconsistency and confusion that greets U.S. foreign policy making that is so heavily influenced by domestic events.

Mr. Gore, in the first Presidential debate in early October in Boston, said his main foreign policy instrument would be "American values." In doing deals with North Korea, but ostracising Cuba, the Clinton-Gore combination is not exactly a beacon for American "values." Mr. Bush, on the other hand, may have been seen as far more welcome when he said that American power

would not only be respected but welcome if the U.S. behaved more humbly.

The Japanese have traditionally felt comfortable with a Republican at the helm but that was on the assumption that during the Cold War, a strong U.S. President like Mr. Ronald Reagan could keep trade disputes from becoming politicised.

In the post-Cold War period, the experience with the Clinton-Gore partnership has been quite unpleasant, but not necessarily because of the end of the Cold War.

The eight Clinton years have also coincided with a post-Tiananmen China opening its economic and trade borders to allow American corporations and trading interests to become a driving influence on U.S. policy towards China, which has certainly con-

tributed to the drop in U.S. unemployment.

There is, however, much more to analyse on the U.S.-China-Japan triangle but the main area where a new U.S. President will need to look at immediately is the Korean peninsula.

There is no denying that one of the factors driving Mr. Kim Dae-jung of the South to make peace with the North is that he will retire in 2003. Consequently, Mr. Kim Jong Il of the North must use a short window to optimise a relationship with the U.S., before competing interests interrupt. These include a strong conservative party within Seoul which is doubtful about the thaw with the North, as well as a South Korean economy that is now in danger of regressing. Korea will therefore present a first and a moving target for the new U.S. administration.

Charges of irregularities in Florida

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE & AGENCIES

WASHINGTON, Nov. 9. — Governor George W Bush's margin over Vice-President Al Gore in make-or-break Florida dwindled to fewer than 1,000 votes today in a continuing recount that held Americans and the presidential rivals in agonising suspense.

Democrats said they would demand a follow-up recount by hand in a few counties and support unspecified "legal actions". Mr Gore's campaign chairman, Mr William Daley, said Democrats may seek a new election in Palm Beach County where many voters said they may have voted for the Reform Party's Mr Pat Buchanan whereas they wanted to vote for the Vice-President.

"We've come to believe that there are serious and substantial irregularities resulting from the ballot used only in one county," added former Secretary of State, Mr Warren Christopher, dispatched to Florida to protect the Gore campaign's interests, referring to Palm Beach County.

THE STATESMAN

NOV 9 2000

Hillary between Senate and history

Chappaqua (New York), Nov. 7 (Reuters): First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton voted for herself today in the historic, closely watched US Senate race pitting her against Republican Representative Rick Lazio.

Hillary voted early in the morning with her husband, Bill Clinton, and their daughter Chelsea at Douglas Grafflin Elementary School in Chappaqua, New York, the Clintons' home town in the state.

Chelsea voted first, followed by Hillary, who emerged from the booth beaming, and then the President — who officially becomes a "lame duck" tomorrow.

"You can't put me down as undecided. I'm there," said the President.

Lazio was expected to vote in suburban Bay Shore, Long Island, near his home in Brightwaters.

After a near-record spending campaign that dragged on for almost 18 months, by tonight Hillary will either be the first First Lady to win elected office or will be relegated to a historical footnote as the first President's wife ever to run for office.

Yesterday, both candidates spent a frantic day crisscrossing the state to shore up support at rallies and other events.

It's now a matter of waiting for

the results of their hard-fought contest, which is crucial to each party's attempts to control the Senate. Polls in New York state opened at 6 am and close at 9 pm, local time.

Hillary and Lazio were expected to spend election night at their respective campaign headquarters in Manhattan, where each planned a victory celebration.

Yesterday, a poll by the Marist Institute for Public Opinion had Clinton with 49 per cent of likely voters and Lazio with 45 per cent, well inside the margin of error. A Quinnipiac University survey showed Hillary with a much larger lead, 51 per cent to 39 per cent.

Analysts say much will come down to turnout. With no suspense in the presidential stakes — Democrat Al Gore is poised to win New York state by a large margin — it will be especially important for Hillary's campaign to get supporters to the polls.

Between them, the candidates were expected to have spent over \$50 million.

Hillary's bid to enter the Senate's hallowed halls, described by some as the nation's most exclusive men's club, formally began in July 1997, when she announced she would embark on a "listening tour" of the state to familiarise herself with issues of importance

to New Yorkers.

Appearing beside Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan — whose seat she and Lazio are battling to fill — at the veteran Senator's upstate farm, the First Lady hoped spending months in the spotlight travelling the state as she considered a Senate run would mitigate criticism that she was a carpetbagger.

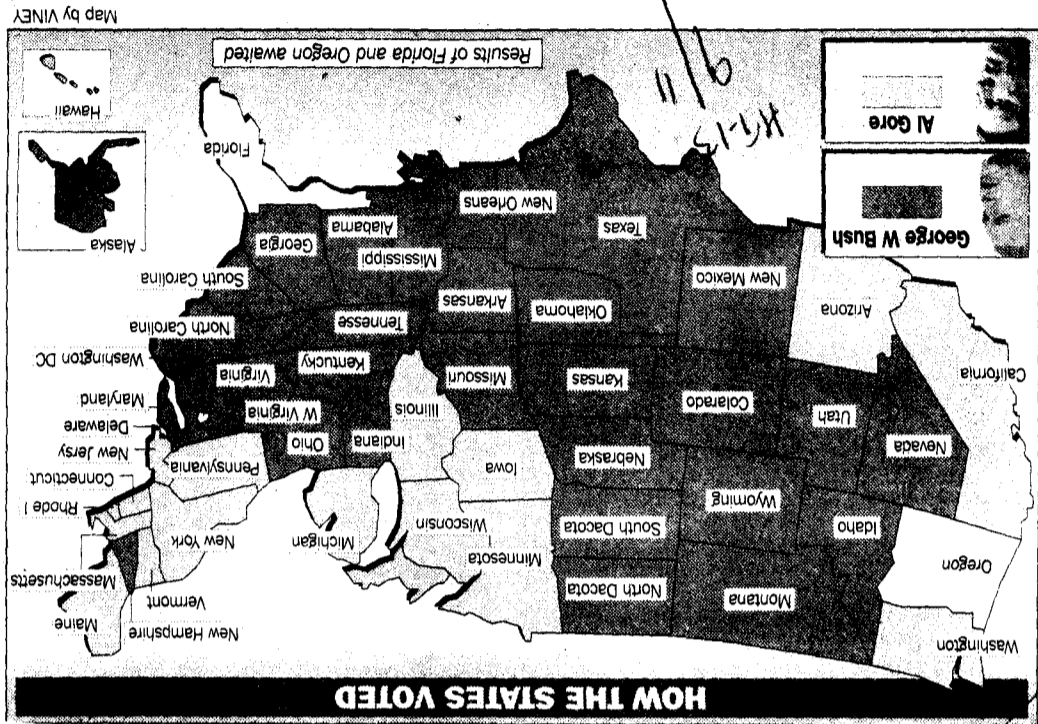
She first established the required New York residency by purchasing with the President a \$1.7 million home in Chappaqua, a prosperous suburb of New York City.

Along the way she faced two Republican opponents and was beset by controversies over White House sleepovers and kissing the wife of Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, who had just accused Israel of poisoning Palestinians. She has never managed to overcome the carpetbagger issues completely.

Hillary, one of the nation's most polarising political figures, faced no opposition in her bid to secure the Democratic nomination and was expected to run against New York's combative mayor, Republican moderate Rudolph Giuliani. But Giuliani, who analysts speculated never really wanted to run, bowed out after a prostate cancer diagnosis in April.

THE TELEGRAPH

8 NOV 2000



THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

11 NOV 2000

Bush a few leagues 'ahead'

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

NEW YORK, NOV. 1. In a week's time from now, it will all be over and there is no telling what the next several days have in store for the Republican and Democratic nominees for the Presidency.

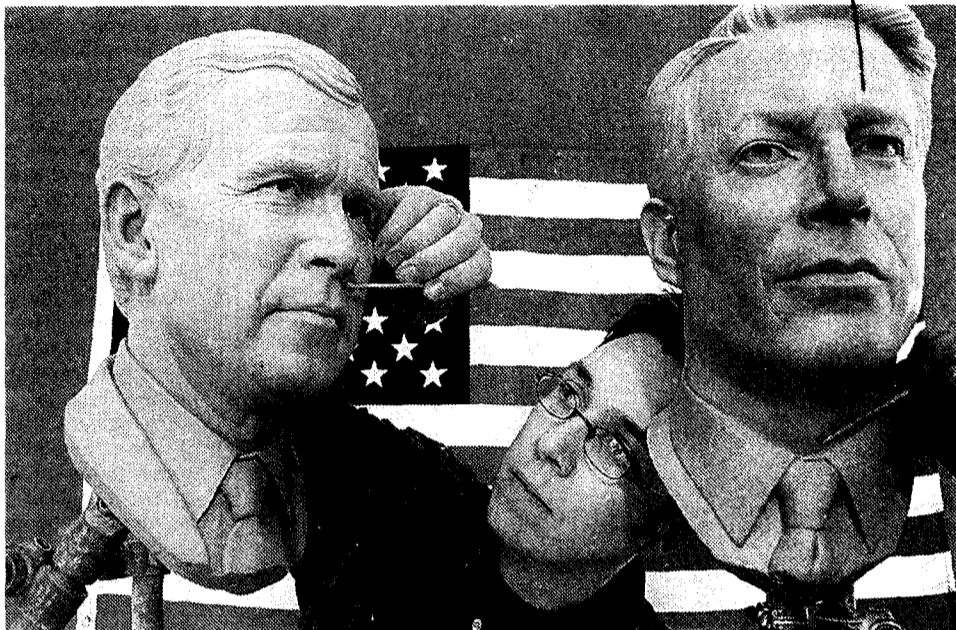
The Texas Governor, Mr. George W Bush, is leading in most of the national polls, but not in any convincing fashion. And in the midst of all the heightened rhetoric, there is also the intense interest on how the races to the House of Representatives and the Senate are going to turn out.

The Democrats need five seats to pick up the majority in the Senate and at least eight races are very close, including the one featuring the First Lady, Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton, and her Republican opponent, Mr. Rick Lazio, here. And overall the Democrats need seven seats to get control of the House of Representatives. But as with the case with the Presidential race no one is prepared to say with a degree of firmness on what will happen in the Congressional races.

The last few days of the campaign trail for the Presidency have shown some interesting developments. In the first place, the nominee of the Grand Old Party, Mr. Bush, has taken a bold but costly gamble by trying for the state of California. In the last eight years, neither his father, the elder Mr. Bush in 1992 nor Mr. Robert Dole in 1996 really thought that California could be won; and hence just about conceded it and its 54 electoral college votes to the Democrats.

Mr. Bush is saying with a certain amount of conviction that he is going to carry the State. "There is going to be a lot of shocked people on November 7 starting with my opponent and all the pundits who don't understand what is happening in California," Mr. Bush remarked. The Bush campaign has pumped at least \$3 millions in advertisements and the Republican nominee has been accompanied in his tour by Mr. John McCain, Senator.

What has to be borne in mind is that Mr. Bush does not need California to win a majority of the Electoral College votes. But at the same time the Republicans cannot afford to lose Florida with 25 electoral college votes and still hope to put their candidate in the White



Sculptors at London's Madame Tussaud's wax museum put the finishing touches to models of the American Presidential candidates, Mr. George W. Bush (left), and Mr. Al Gore, on Wednesday. Both candidates are being prepared ahead of the inauguration of the new President. — AP

House. It is for this reason that the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore, is repeatedly coming back to this Southern state which at one time was thought as Republican. Now Mr. Gore leads Mr. Bush there.

Secondly, the "big man" — the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, is back on the campaign trail, but not in the profile he would like to be in. On Tuesday, Mr. Clinton travelled to Kentucky lashing out at the Republicans of reneging on a budget deal; and reminding voters how important it was for Democrats to get control of Congress. From Kentucky, Mr. Clinton travelled to New York to do some campaigning and fund raising for his wife. The meeting with the African American Ministers was to discuss on how to get the blacks out on election day to the polling booths.

The Gore campaign was hardly enthusiastic about Mr. Clinton but had to stomach it on account of ground realities. The lukewarm en-

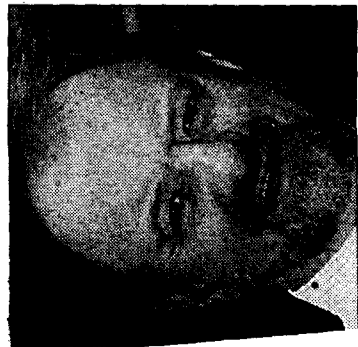
thusiasm had to do with much more than the "shadow" phenomenon. The Gore camp is truly worried about the independent and women voters in swing states and hence want Mr. Clinton to stay clear of these areas. For instance, after a campaign swing around California, Mr. Clinton is thinking of swinging by his own state of Arkansas and Michigan. Apparently, the Gore campaign wants Mr. Clinton stay away from Michigan.

In the last minute change of tactics and schedules, it has become rather difficult to guess where it is that candidates will be on a given day and time. Mr. Gore has found himself spending time and money in California and in the Pacific Northwestern state of Oregon fighting for the environmental vote which is being threatened by Mr. Ralph Nader of the Green Party. And Mr. Bush is seeing himself back repeatedly in Michigan, Wisconsin and Florida.

THE HINDU

2 NOV 2000

Politicians worldwide red-faced after rushing to congratulate Bush



Robin Cook

London, Nov. 8 (Reuters): Politicians around the world were left with diplomatic egg on their faces today, after rushing to be among the first to congratulate Republican George W. Bush for his apparent win in the US presidential election.

Bush appeared to win yesterday's presidential election but Democrat Al Gore, who had called the Texas governor to congratulate him, later retracted his concession — throwing the election outcome into confusion.

Russia, China, Germany,

Britain, France, the Netherlands, the European Union, Turkey and Indonesia had all swiftly issued congratulatory statements in the minutes after US television networks broadcast reports of a Bush win.

"We are looking forward to working with Bush," European Commission President Romano Prodi told reporters in Brussels.

German President Johannes Rau said: "We know you (Bush) as a good friend of our country and look forward to the continu-

ation of close friendship of our people during your time in office."

Russia's RIA news agency quoted a government official as saying: "We believe that Russia is not a new theme for Bush Jr at least in terms of his family history with Russia."

British foreign secretary Robin Cook said relations with the US would remain strong under Bush.

"I am confident that we can build the same relationship with the new President," Cook told

BBC.

The Dutch government moved just as swiftly to issue a retraction: "Given the fact that at this moment uncertainty exists about the outcome of the American presidential elections, the earlier statement... has been retracted."

A German spokeswoman for Rau said after asking news agencies not to publish a statement welcoming a Bush win: "What can we do? It is complicated. One wants to be among the first sending congratulations and warm

wishes."

Indian foreign minister Jaswant Singh today congratulated George W. Bush on his victory in the US presidential election.

"Of course we are delighted and would wish to congratulate governor George Bush, President-elect, but I would much rather wait until the formal announcement is made," Singh told a news conference during a visit to Hanoi.

Singh, who spoke just before CNN reported that Democrat Al

Gore had telephoned Bush to congratulate him on his win, said India's relations with the US would not change.

"It doesn't change at all India's relationship with the US of America, to borrow a phrase from US political slang, has bipartisan support," he said.

"India's approach, India's policies towards India's relationship with the US of America will continue in the friendliest of terms and the most cooperative of terms as they have up to now."



Jaswant Singh

THE TELEGRAPH

NOV 2000

A photo-finish likely for White House

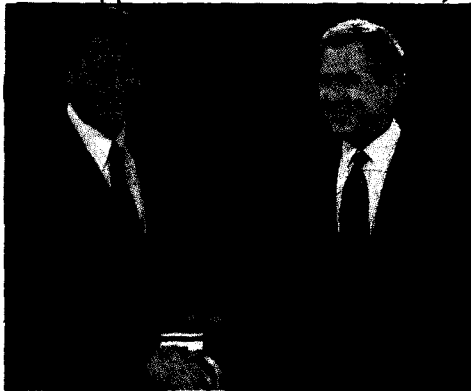
By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 6. Americans head to the polling booths tomorrow as the nation gears itself to watch one of the most closely contested elections, not just for the presidency, but for the Congress too. If there has been one thing consistent in the last several weeks, it is an assessment that the race for the White House is going to be too close to call. There is talk of a candidate winning the 270 Electoral College votes and still losing the popular vote; many are looking at this possibility in case there is a tie in the Electoral College.

The races to the House of Representatives and the Senate are going to be close as well. All members of the House of Representatives and 34 Senators are contesting elections; and Democrats need seven seats in the House and five in the Senate to get a majority in Congress. The impression is that they stand a better chance of wresting control of the House than the Senate. Again, no one is sure.

Things are not too clear even in the high-profile Congressional race for the New York Senate seat between the First Lady, Ms. Hillary Rodham Clinton, and her Republican opponent, Mr. Rick Lazio, though Ms. Clinton appears to have a slight advantage.

Most opinion polls of the last two weeks have been indicating an edge for the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, but not by any large margin. The final *New York Times/CBS News* poll published on Monday showed Mr. Bush getting 46 per cent as opposed to 41 per cent for the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore. But a Reuters/MSNBC tracking poll had Mr. Bush dropping



A file picture of Mr. Al Gore (left) and Mr. George W. Bush at a debate last month. — Reuters

by two points and holding on to a slender one percentage-point lead.

Regionally, the battlelines have been drawn with both candidates coming to the conclusion that the key states in the Mid West are going to make a difference.

There are critical issues at stake in an election that has focussed predominantly on domestic issues. Mr. Bush and the Mr. Gore have been keen to focus on such topics as medicare, social security, prescription drugs, education and to some extent on issues such as environment, drugs and crime.

The political knocks that Mr. Bush received from Senator John McCain has meant that the Republican nominee has found the going tough among independent voters, and that too,

in crucial swing States. It has been a different story with the Vice-President who had a relatively easy time with the former Senator from New Jersey, Mr. Bill Bradley, during the primaries.

The elimination of the left-of-centre candidate in the primaries did not mean that issues close to this group of political activists subsided. Rather, in the very last stages of the campaign, Mr. Gore has had to contend with the candidacy of Mr. Ralph Nader of the Green Party. Posting a consistent five per cent in national polls, Mr. Nader shows the prospect of hurting the Democratic nominee badly in areas such as the Mid West and the Pacific Northwest.

On the contrary, the Grand Old Party is quite happy that Mr. Patrick Buchanan of the Reform Party is not hurting Mr. Bush. In fact, many are happy that Mr. Buchanan with his baggage of anti-trade and anti-immigration ideas bolted from the GOP.

While there is the talk of this election being the closest one in the last sixty years — or perhaps even in the last century — there is also a feeling that voter turnout is not going to be any different than in 1996, which, at 49 per cent, was a 72-year-old low. One assessment is that close to 100 million Americans may sit out the electoral process. With voter turnout being a keen factor, both Republican and Democratic candidates are spending a lot of time rallying the troops. The edge here is for Mr. Bush, as polls have repeatedly shown that his backers are more "enthusiastic".

Details on Page 16
Gore for intervention: Page 13

THE HINDU

7 NOV 2000

Clinton rallies minority votes ahead of polls

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NEW YORK, Nov. 5. — The US President, Mr Bill Clinton, today continued efforts to energise minority voters ahead on Tuesday's election as he addressed a campaign rally in the Bronx, one of the five New York city boroughs.

"(Mr) Al Gore has done more for the American people as Vice-President than any other in American history," the President said.

Mr Gore, is locked in a neck-and-neck race against the Texas Governor, Mr George W Bush, with the latest polls showing he is trailing his Republican rival by several percentage points.

"(Mr) Al Gore has more experience. He has more ability to make decisions. He understands the world. He understands the future," Mr Clinton stressed.

"He is a good man who will make good decisions and who will be a great President," he added.

According to Bronx borough president, Mr Fernando Ferrer, the Bronx is already "the most Democrat" region in the nation where 85 per cent of the population vote for the Democrats.

Mr Clinton's decision to stump for Mr Gore there reflected the need for the Democrats to mobilise their own political base as they head for the 7 november vote.

Swing states: Dashing across



Democrat presidential candidate and Vice-President, Mr Al Gore, greets supporters at a rally at Tristate airport in Huntington on Saturday. — AP/PTI

battleground states in the final weekend of the presidential campaign, Mr Gore wooed Black voters while Mr Bush pointed to the endorsement of a Teamsters union official and a sign signifying democratic support, adds Reuters.

With just three days until the election, Mr Bush's lead against Mr Gore fell by two percentage points from 46 to 44 in the latest Reuters-MSNBC poll yesterday. With a three per cent margin of error, the two candidates are in a statistical dead heat.

Separate polls in each of nine key battleground states showed a totally unpredictable election. (Mr Bush made a charge in the crucial state of

Florida, cutting Mr Gore's lead to a single point, and overtook Mr Gore in Wisconsin.)

But Mr Gore drew level with Mr Bush in his home state of Tennessee and stretched his small advantage in Washington.

Both candidates campaigned across key swing states in a final sprint before the election, taking swings at each other in the hope of picking up undecided voters.

At rallies in Michigan, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Mr Bush rallied the troops and appealed for new recruits as he worked to win their combined 56 electoral votes in the closest presidential race in 40 years.

Spotting a sign in the crowd

in Pittsburgh reading "Democrats for Bush", Mr Bush said: "You're not alone, brother.

There are democrats all around the land who understand there can be a better day in Washington, DC."

Mr Bush appealed to disaffected Democrats to choose him rather than the "old, tired, stale politics" of his opponent.

"We're in for a tough race. This is going to be a close contest. Here's my message to all the elected officials — in three short days help is on the way. Three days, help is on the way," he shouted to the crowd in Pittsburgh.

In Dearborn, Mr Bush received the endorsement of a local Teamsters union president, Mr Larry Brennan, which he said would send a "chilling signal" to Mr Gore that working people in the Democratic Party supported the Republican ticket.

Mr Bush promised a new brand of leadership in Washington DC. "America's ready for a fresh start after a season of cynicism," he said to roars from the crowd.

Seeking to boost voter turnout and to overtake Mr Bush's slight lead, Mr Gore began the final weekend of the campaign in his home state of Tennessee with a prayer breakfast attended by many Blacks, including Martin Luther King III, the son of the slain civil rights leader.

THE STATESMAN

NOV 2 000

Gore's economics will rub India wrong way

Pramit Pal Chaudhuri
New Delhi, November 4

ORGANISED LABOUR in the United States provides half the Democratic Party's funds. Sixty per cent of US business contributions go to the Republicans. George W. Bush and Al Gore play this down. But the dos and don'ts of these two lobbies pop up in the candidates' platforms. Thanks to a global economy, these issues directly impinge on India's interests in four broad economic areas.

For Gore, labour cannot be ignored. And US unions are most interested in blocking foreign competition for jobs.



Unions are why Washington demands a labour and environmental linkage with trade at the WTO. India is dead against. It rightly fears the West will use this to block imports on the grounds India has weak labour and green laws. US labour wants to use this to stop imports and stop US industry moving overseas.

Either way, jobs get saved at home. Gore endorses such a linkage. Bush echoes US business: social issues at the WTO would hinder US competitiveness.

Many Indian officials believe social linkages with trade constitute a far more intractable trade issue than patents and agriculture. Under Gore, it will cause fireworks.

Gore walks a tightrope on immigration. US unions are unenthusiastic about foreign workers, temporary or otherwise. Gore has supported H-1B visa increases. But he offers sops to the unions: higher visa fees, work restrictions on visa holders and taxes on employers of



Life-size heads of US presidential candidates Republican George Bush (L) and Democrat Al Gore sculpted in clay by artists at Madame Tussaud's Wax Museum in London. The clay head of the winner will be used as a mould to make his wax figure by January 2000, which otherwise takes about six months. The clay head of the loser will be consigned to the studio's 'recycling bin'. Photo: AP

Gore is a sanctions true-believer. He sees them as useful instruments of US foreign policy. He has even argued Yugoslavia's democratic revolt was a fallout of US sanctions.

Bush and Gore are also far apart on India and the Kyoto protocol. Green-friendly Gore says the developed world should reduce carbon emissions unilaterally. The Third World can follow later. Bush says he won't sign unless India and China also agree to carbon cuts. This could mean an Indo-US smokestack war under President Bush. Unless Bush is merely using India as an excuse to shelve the protocol. On the economic front, overall, Bush is India's candidate hands down.

Peace efforts in Lanka run into rough weather

PK Balachandran
Colombo, November 4

THE NORWEGIAN effort to get the Sri Lankan Government and the LTTE to talk peace has run into rough weather with both sides putting spanner in the works. Even as the Norwegian special envoy for Sri Lanka, Erik Solheim, was briefing the Sri Lankan President, Chandrika Kumaratunga, on his talks with the LTTE supremo, Velupillai Prabhakaran, Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar was in London asking the UK to ban the LTTE under its new Anti-Terrorism Act.

A Foreign Ministry Press release said on Friday that Kadirgamar had met the British Home Secretary Jack Straw, earlier in the day and requested that the LTTE be banned in the UK for collecting millions of Pounds Sterling there for its war chest. Straw explained the provisions of the new Act and said that he would "consider" Colombo's request. The two also discussed the twin questions of human smuggling and asylum seeking, both issues of vital importance to the LTTE. It survives financially on the contributions made by expatriate Tamils. The two agreed to cooperate "closely"

in tackling these two problems. Britain's new anti-terrorism law, which came into being in July this year, bans the use of front organisations to collect funds for terrorist actions in other countries.

Political observers here say that the LTTE is very much aware that UK may tighten its screws on it and force it to begin peace talks with the Sri Lankan Government, even if it does not ban the LTTE. This is why Prabhakaran intimated Solheim for talks and insisted that they take place at any early date. In fact, he insisted that the talks must take place on November 1.

But observers here also point out that Mr Prabhakaran had set certain impossible pre-conditions for the complete withdrawal of Sri Lankan troops from the "Tam Homeland". Not to be outdone the Sri Lankan Government too put out a statement saying that it had not sent any message to Prabhakaran through the Norwegian facilitator, thereby scaling down the importance of Mr Solheim's shuttling between Colombo and Wanni.

However, on Friday, Solheim briefed Kumaratunga on his talks with the Tiger chief. Norwegian officials refused to disclose details of the meeting, but said it was "cordial and constructive."

US opponents build legal warchest

FROM K.P. NAYAR
AND AGENCIES

Washington, Nov. 13 (Reuters): Democrats yesterday urged a federal court to throw out a Republican suit seeking to block the manual recounting of US presidential election votes in Florida, a legal adviser for Democratic nominee Al Gore said.

The adviser, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said the Democratic court action argues that the Florida hand count is not unconstitutional as Republican presidential candidate George W. Bush and others claim.

Bush's argument to halt manual recounts will be heard by a federal judge in Miami later. Notwithstanding his ruling, the losing side will take the battle to a higher court. There are fears that the legal battle may not be settled except by the US Supreme Court.

Anticipating protracted courtroom battles, the Republicans and the Democrats have started collecting funds to hire teams of phenomenally expensive lawyers to fight their cases. Gore has set a target of \$3 million in donations to be raised for legal costs. The Republicans appealed to their supporters to contribute up to \$5,000 per person to the legal fund.

Neither side had budgeted for post-election costs such as legal fees and in America's transparent campaign finance system, they had made provisions for spending only up to election day. In the manual recount, poll officials will have to decide, for instance, whether

partially punched holes on the ballots should be counted as voting for a particular candidate.

These are issues which may finally be settled in court, not by election officials who will be accused by the losing side of being partisan. Former secretary of state James Baker, the Republican observer in Florida, described the recounting dispute in the state as "a black mark on our democracy".

His Democratic counterpart, Warren Christopher, said predictably: "If at the end of the day, George Bush has more votes in Florida than we do, certainly the vice-president will concede". At the same time, Christopher did not rule out a court battle if the recount still left Bush in the lead.

Under court orders in New Mexico, the police have impounded absentee ballots in six counties in the state where unofficial results now show Bush with a meagre 17-vote lead. Republican officials, who secured the court order, said they merely wanted these ballots to be safe from tampering by rivals. The Republicans are hoping for impoundment orders in other New Mexico counties.

In Oregon, where Gore has a lead of 5,756 votes in unofficial results, counting of 40,000 postal votes will begin today. Representatives from the Republican high command in Texas arrived in Iowa and Wisconsin to finalise their strategies.

There were also signs during the weekend that dissent was growing within both parties over the continuing stand-off.

THE TELEGRAPH

14 NOV 2000

U.S. electoral battle moves to court

By Ramesh Chandran
The Times of India News Service

WASHINGTON: Amidst inflamed passions and a painstakingly slow hand count in four precincts of Florida's Palm Beach county, a federal court judge began hearings on Monday to weigh a Republican injunction seeking to halt the manual count in four heavily Democratic counties.

While Florida's secretary of state Katherine Harris who has gained national prominence thanks to the presence of the world media in Tallahassee, the state capital, has decided to stick with the Tuesday 5 p.m. deadline for all counties in the state to declare their returns in the second machine recount.

All that remains would be the ratification of several thousand absentee ballots.

The Democratic party, whose political and legal manoeuvres are headed by Warren Christopher, former secretary of state, reacted angrily to Ms Harris' decision, insisting that it would not provide enough time for the pro-Democrat-

ic Palm Beach county to send in its tally after a manual count of all its precincts.

Mr Christopher has vowed that the party would challenge the decision in court. So with both parties getting involved in making this overwrought and chaotic U.S. presidential process into a web of endless litigation, the sense of national impatience for a speedy resolution, is bound to turn into exasperation.

As if this was not enough, Rev Jesse Jackson, always quick to sense a photo-op, is organising a big rally in the state on behalf of the Democratic party and the "disgruntled Florida voter". Rev Jackson is not the only one latching onto this bandwagon which seems poised to careen out of control.

A familiar figure from the infamous O.J. Simpson case, lawyer Alan Dershowitz, arrived in Palm Beach clamouring to join in the hearing to consider the Republican injunction on behalf of the Florida voter and join the Democratic bench.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

14 NOV 2000

Crucial Florida county votes to be recounted

Federal court will hear Republican plea today

WASHINGTON: In what may further slowdown the U.S. presidential election outcome, crucial Florida's Palm Beach county officials on Sunday decided to undertake a manual recount of over four lakh votes after a sample recount gave Democrat Al Gore a slight edge over Republican George W. Bush by 19 votes.

Interestingly, a Federal court in Florida will hear on Monday a Republican lawsuit seeking to halt a manual recount of ballots machine-counted twice before in four counties of the state whose 25 electoral votes will decide the next president — Mr Gore or Mr Bush.

The decision on recount of all the votes of Palm Beach county was taken after a hand count of one per cent of 4.31 lakh votes

in selected precincts of the county gave Mr Gore an edge of 19 votes over Mr Bush.

Election officials considered this discrepancy enough to doubt the result for Palm Beach county.

With Mr Gore holding 262 electoral votes and Mr Bush 246, Florida's 25 votes hold the key to either of the candidates attaining the magic figure of 270 of the 538 electoral college votes needed to become president.

County election officials will meet again on Monday to discuss further action. It was not clear when the labourious examination of ballots in all 531 precincts of the Palm Beach would begin.

Democratic party officials, applauding the Palm Beach deci-

sion, said "A full, complete and accurate count of votes is the best way to ensure the will of the people is upheld."

They said in the light of this the Bush campaign would reconsider its efforts to prevent hand recounts. In his petition before the Florida Federal court, Mr Bush, who holds a narrow lead after an unofficial Florida recount with an unknown number of overseas ballots yet to be counted, has said the election results show him to be the clear winner in the state.

"We are all in limbo," Mr Bush said in an apparent reference to Democratic efforts seeking a manual recount.

If they lose the case in Florida, the Republicans will try the Democrats' tactics in states where Mr

Gore won narrowly. Media reports from California said when all the postal ballots due in California are counted by early December, Mr Gore could lose the lead he now enjoys in the popular vote though it is the electoral college vote which counts.

As of now, whoever wins in Florida wins the presidency. To help Mr Gore, Jesse Jackson is mobilising the minorities for a rally while Kwami Mfume, president of the Black civil rights organisation, the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People (NAACP), who, like Mr Jackson, is keen that Mr Gore should win the presidency, has set himself up as a commis-

THE FLORIDA TANGLE

- Republicans will try Democrats' tactics if they lose in Florida
- Hand count gives Gore an edge of 19 votes in Palm Beach
- Country is in political limbo: Bush

Waiting for a President

By K.K. Katyal

WFO 11/12
18/11

AT TIMES a cliché conveys a point powerfully. This, for instance — in international dealings there are no permanent friends, no permanent enemies, only permanent interests. Its relevance needs to be grasped, now that the suspense over the U.S. presidency gives our foreign office and non-official experts time and opportunity to reflect on the evolving relationship with the most powerful nation. Mr. George W. Bush or Mr. Al Gore — Mr. Bush, most probably — America's foreign policy will be fashioned to best serve its interests. To say the pursuit of this objective will be the administration's main concern is to stress the obvious. Had this central point been kept in mind all the while, our official comments and reactions would not have been marked by wishfulness and the scope for disillusionment would have been reduced.

Wishfulness at the non-official level was evident last week when, for a brief while, reports from Washington conveyed a finality about the election of Mr. Bush. Suddenly, there was talk of a new phase in Indo-U.S. ties — of a better understanding of India's concerns. Underlying this was an assumption of inadequate appreciation of New Delhi's standpoint on major issues so far. Suddenly, hopes were sought to be pinned on a positive change in the U.S. stand on, say, matters arising out of India's nuclear tests and India-Pakistan relations. Not long ago, these very sections had spoken of a breakthrough in Indo-U.S. dealings, of Washington's tilt in our favour (and against Pakistan). And a virtual joint front against international terrorism — in other words, according to New Delhi, against Pakistan's role in instigating and organising violence in Jammu and Kashmir.

Recent statements from the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, downward spoke of the U.S. disappointment with the Indian stand on nuclear matters and on resumption of dialogue with Pakistan. Last week-end, he regretted India's position on non-proliferation, saying, in a letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives, that bilateral relations could not reach their full potential "without progress on our

non-proliferation and regional concerns". True, this point was not glossed over in the joint documents, summing up the outcome of the recent discussions at the top. But it got an added emphasis now, because of the manner in which it was highlighted. As a matter of fact, the U.S. never underplayed its concerns on nuclear issues or the gap in the positions of the two sides. We, in our naivete, believed that the gap had narrowed. That was evident from the optimistic projection of the External Affairs Minister, Mr. Jaswant Singh's dialogue with the U.S. Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Strobe Talbott. We allowed ourselves to believe that the Americans had virtually reconciled themselves to India's nuclear status. This meaning was given to the exchanges on New Delhi's plans for maintaining a credible minimum deterrent and Mr. Talbott's plea for a "description" of the deterrent, to be precise. New Delhi seized upon this straw and sketched highly rosy pictures.

On its part, the U.S. allowed itself to believe earlier this year that India's adherence to the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty was imminent. Its diplomats in New Delhi seemed confident that the decision to sign the CTBT would be announced during or on the eve of Mr. Clinton's visit to India. They did not take into account the complexities of Indian politics. True, the Government adopted a positive line on the treaty (after the nuclear tests) and, thus, moved away from the stand taken in 1997, when India prevented the entry into force of the CTBT. True, foreign policy issues, by and large, did not figure in inter-party wrangles (and hardly figured in the elections in the past). But it also meant that the Governments of the day took the Opposition into confidence — or consulted it — while planning important policy decisions or soon after embarking upon a major step (which, in the interest of confidentiality, could not be divulged earlier). The consensus was not automatic, it was

Bush or Gore, America's foreign policy will be fashioned to best serve its interests.

the result of consultations, of interaction in the post-Nehru era (the Nehru period being different for obvious reasons). Outsiders arrived at wrong conclusions because they did not co-relate the thinking in the Government with the overall political context, in particular with the role of the Opposition.

In a Bush administration, the CTBT may not be a pressing issue for, had not the Republican Party, in its election platform, rejected it out of hand? But there was nothing to suggest that it would be soft on non-proliferation. Indian diplomacy, as such, will need to avoid any simplistic view that Washington's downgrading of the CTBT could render easy its problems.

As regards sanctions, the publicly-stated view here of the American stand was odd. New Delhi bent over backwards to stress that it did not want to appear a supplicant which would be the case if it were to urge the U.S. to do away with the embargoes. Instead, it felt that the futility of the sanctions would lead Washington to have second thoughts. Also, India sought to minimise the impact of the restrictions most of which, it was pointed out, had lost the sting with the passage of time. Was it correct on the part of New Delhi not to convey to Washington a strong disapproval of the punitive approach? How will a Bush administration handle the sanctions issue? On the one hand, we had public indications from the Bush camp of its opposition to punitive measures and, on the other, were the requirements of the domestic legislation.

On regional matters too, Mr. Clinton's letter to the House Speaker noted with regret the absence of encouraging signs for resumption of talks between India and Pakistan. At a lower level, Mr. Karl Inderfurth, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs, spoke in the same vein. "Our greatest concern right now is that the two sides are not talking." These sentiments did not quite square up with the explanation, pro-

vided by U.S. officials during the Prime Minister, Mr. A. B. Vajpayee's U.S. visit, linking the resumption of dialogue, one of the main elements of Mr. Clinton's 4-R formulation, with "the appropriate time when the atmosphere is correct". The Indian side hailed it as vindication of its stand, but this interpretation was only partly correct. The U.S., it was clear then and clearer now, put the onus of creating the "right" atmosphere on both India and Pakistan, even though Islamabad's responsibility might have been considered greater.

For all its tough talk to Pakistan, the U.S. clearly was not prepared to adopt an approach which could reduce its leverage in Islamabad. The U.S., no doubt, had expressed concern over the military takeover and called for an early, credible timetable for restoration of democracy but it, was not prepared to dump the ruler, Gen. Pervez Musharraf, on the plea that his exit would mean the ascendancy of fundamentalist generals. Those in New Delhi who called upon the U.S. to declare Pakistan a terrorist state were completely out of touch with the reality in Washington. Even the proposal for designating the Lakshar-e-Taiba, the deadliest of the terrorist outfits based in Pakistan but active in Jammu and Kashmir, did not materialise.

There was nothing to suggest a departure from this. Then there is the permanent bureaucracy which provides continuity at the middle level — in its role in processing all manner of cases for political bosses. On the nuclear issue, they would remain fundamentalist as before and on Kashmir and related matters, the dialogue-resumption thesis may continue to hold good.

It does not mean that attitudes and approaches will remain unchanged. The priorities could change. Given the acrimony and bitterness accompanying the change of tenancy in the White House, domestic political and semi-political subjects may keep the new administration preoccupied, pushing foreign policy matters lower down the list, except in cases of grave crisis. A mixed fare for Indian diplomacy.

GORE VS BUSH

15/10 Battle is over, stop the war 45-6

SHOULD Al Gore let go? Five days, two media snafus, eight potential lawsuits and 20,000 cancelled ballots after the 7 November elections this is the question America and the world keep asking. Of course, as things stand, the Gore campaign has at least till next weekend — when Florida postal ballots are counted — before it decides. There is also the possibility that the postal ballots and/or the recount of the recount may change the Florida result in Gore's favour. If that happens, it is likely that the Bush team will challenge voting in some other states where Gore won narrowly. But that doesn't change the question, merely expands it: shouldn't Gore or Bush, as the circumstances demand, be prepared to concede some time next week? Needless to say it is easier for commentators to extol the virtues of statesmanship than for the two rivals to act it out. For Gore or Bush, this may well be the first and last shot at presidency. Conceding when legal and other challenges keep the option of a victory open is agonisingly difficult.

So, it is likely that Gore or Bush may opt for the letter of the law over the spirit of democracy, arguing also that the American Constitution allows till 20 January for the next president to assume office, perhaps also citing the precedent of 1886, when the new man was not chosen till early March 1887. History and lawyers can however be marshalled to argue almost anything under the sun. More important are the enormous costs of a messy, protracted resolution. Not so much in terms of America's international standing — the most vigorous democracy in the world need not really apologise to anyone. The focus should rather be on the damage to US polity and governance. More complicated the closure of the 7 November election, the less will be the goodwill between America's two main political parties, who are almost equally positioned in Congress. In the US system, the President needs Congress to get anything substantive done. A White House occupant who carries the mark of a nitpicking legal victory and, therefore, makes legislators aggressively partisan, will probably face a four-year-long gridlock. What happens then if the US economy dives, along with and because of the stock market, something many discerning experts expect sometime in the near future? Will an American recession, with its additional, massive effects on the world economy, be left unattended because of a beginning-of-term lame duck president? No responsible politician can wish that upon his country, however great his personal loss. Perhaps, Libyan or Italian leaders, who, among others, have chosen to laugh at America, can do that. But surely not American presidential candidates. True there has been Richard Watergate Nixon and Bill Monica Clinton in the White House. But, whatever their failings, they governed. The next US president may not be able to, unless the two men who fought the battle decide they do not want a war.

THE STATESMAN

13 NOV 2000

Gore gains ^{2k} in manual count

REUTERS

WEST PALM BEACH, Nov. 12. — Mr Al Gore got a net gain of 19 votes for President in a manual count of one per cent of the votes cast in Palm Beach county, an election official said today.

The Vice-President gained 33 votes and Mr George W Bush 14 in the manual recount, said Judge Charles Burton, chairman of the Palm Beach Canvassing Board.

In a machine recount, announced at the same time, Mr Gore got a net gain of 33 votes.

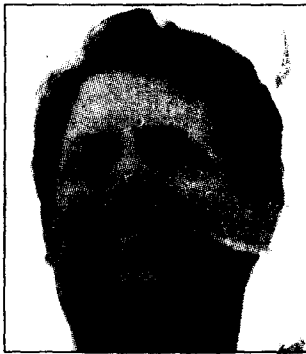
The board recounted manually more than 4,500 ballots on Saturday that were cast during the presidential election on Tuesday. The three members of the board reviewed questionable ballots, overseen by representatives of Democratic and Republican parties.

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The Democratic Party-controlled Palm Beach County Canvassing Board has ordered the manual counting of the 425,000 votes. The campaign of Mr Bush issued a strong protest.

Hearing today: The campaign of Mr Gore has called on Mr Bush to withdraw a lawsuit that seeks to block a hand recount of votes in Florida, AFP adds from Washington. A federal court in Florida will take up tomorrow the lawsuit.

"We call upon the Bush campaign to withdraw the litigation they have filed," said the former secretary of state and



Mr Al Gore

Gore's legal adviser, Mr Warren Christopher. Mr Bush said he would be willing to withdraw the lawsuit, "depending upon Gore campaign's decisions."

Florida carries 25 electoral votes in the electoral college, enough to give Mr Bush or Mr Gore the 270

electors needed to win the presidency. Mr Bush currently holds 246 electoral votes and Mr Gore 262.

Mr Christopher indicated that the Gore campaign had yet to determine what they would do if the recount gave the state to Mr Bush.

In any event, the winner —

whether it is Mr Bush or Mr Gore — cannot be declared until Florida received all the postal ballots by 17 November.

The state of California has said all its postal ballots will be counted only by December, though that may not affect the result, adds PTI. If they lose the case in Florida, the Republicans will try the Democratic tactics in states where Mr Gore won narrowly.

To help Mr Gore, Black orator Mr Jese Jackson is mobilising the minorities for a rally. Mr Kwami Mfume, president of the Black Civil Rights Organisation, will take "testimony" from blacks and other minorities, showing that a wide spectrum of people did not understand the ballot and hence only a manual count can determine "intent."

THE STATESMAN

NOV 20 1992

Court rejects Gore appeal for deadline extension

5/11 11/12
PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, Nov. 14. — A Florida court today dealt Mr Al Gore a hard blow, rejecting his appeal for extension of the deadline for the completion of hand count of votes, and a deal between him and Mr George W Bush to end the stalemate fell through.

The second judiciary court judge Mr Terry Lewis said the county board "must certify and file what elections returns they have by the statutory deadline of 5 p.m."

Mr Lewis, however, said if any certified returns are filed after the deadline, Florida secretary of state Ms Katherine Harris may accept them "in the proper exercise of her discretion".

Ms Harris, citing state law, has already announced that she would not accept any county vote totals after the deadline.

The court ruling is seen as a victory for Mr Bush who leads by 435 votes.

Mr Gore's lawyers are likely to appeal against the court ruling. But no details were available on the timing or what court might be involved. Both state and federal appeals were possible.

Earlier, Republicans floated a compromise plan saying they would accept the manual recount results if Democrats agreed to the 5 p.m. deadline. But the Gore campaign chairman, Mr William Daley, swiftly brushed it aside.

Mr Bush's top legal adviser in the battle over Florida's decisive 25 electoral college votes, Mr James Baker, said: "We offered to accept the manual recount up to the time of the statutory deadline if the Gore campaign will accept that deadline."

But, within an hour, Mr Daley spurned the offer saying "it truly was not a proposal. It was strictly, in my opinion, an inaccurate description of the laws of Florida." "I think we have got to try not to usurp the courts of Florida," he said at the Capitol.

THE STATESMAN

15 NOV 2000

■ More reports on page 9

US ELECTIONS

WFO
SFB
Some doth protest too much 14/11

FOREIGNERS are watching with bemusement the spectacle of Americans tying themselves up in knots over election results. Nigerians have speculated on the scoldings they might have received had such confusion been theirs, while MS Gill, India's Chief Election Commissioner, has said in jest that it is time now for America to invite international observers. Contrary to the impression of the US being one of the world's most advanced countries, the present confusion is the outcome of an archaic form of democracy, whereby some votes are more equal than others. The electoral college system means that even though Gore has a larger share of the popular vote, Bush could still win. The system was designed to act as a buffer between the masses and the president, since at the time the American Constitution was written, the masses were not thought capable of choosing well.

America's imbroglio appears cause for good cheer in certain quarters of the world, not too keen on the idea of universal franchise. The *Beijing Daily* quoted a Pakistani diplomat pouring scorn on the American electoral process. Other Chinese newspapers commented on the corrupting influence of money in elections. The other side of the coin, though, is that democracy gives the ordinary citizen an opportunity of airing, and even following through on, corruption charges against the high and mighty. Indeed, Chinese newspapers have dwelt at length on the logistics of US elections, which has been seen as a veiled criticism of the fact that there isn't anything remotely similar in their country. There must be more than a degree of wistfulness in an ordinary Beijing housewife's response to the controversies swirling around American elections: "at least there are elections". In stating the unstatable, she has been cautious enough to just give her surname, "Li", rendering her indistinguishable from thousands of other Lis in Beijing. But placing the spotlight on the American electoral process, even if only to point out its flaws, may prove counter-productive for the Chinese authorities.

THE STATESMAN

14 NOV 2000

14 NOV 2000

Judge won't stop handcount

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 13. In a major setback to the Bush campaign a federal judge in Florida today refused to issue an injunction stopping handcount of votes in four counties, saying this was a matter for State courts and not federal courts to decide.

"While I share a desire for finality, I do not believe it is served," the district judge, Mr. Donald Middlebrooks, said. While the Republican argument that a handcount in select counties would dilute the vote of the people elsewhere in the State was a serious one, it was insufficient to warrant intervention, he said. The ruling opens the way for the Bush campaign to appeal.

Earlier in the morning, in a rapid escalation in the recounting process, the Gore campaign said it would move court to prevent

Florida's Secretary of State formally announcing the result of the election by the 5 p.m. deadline on Tuesday. After a meeting with Mr. William Daley and Mr. Warren Christopher, top aides of the Vice-President, Florida's Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris, said she would not budge from meeting the deadline even if the recount by hand was not over and the results of Palm Beach County had not been fully tabulated. Thus far, 64 out of the 67 counties have accounted for the vote either by mail or fax.

The latest unofficial tally including in the handcount process under way has given the Texas Governor a temporary boost of about 100 votes, bringing his lead over the Vice-President to 388. The winner of Florida's 25 Electoral College votes will determine who the 43rd U. S. President is.

Advantage Gore: Page 13

THE HINDU

10 NOV 2000

10 NOV 2000

Recount deadline will stand: judge

100-1 By Sridhar Krishnaswami 15/12

WASHINGTON, NOV. 14. A Florida judge today ruled that the Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris' decision fixing a 5 p.m. vote recount deadline certification (IST 3.30 a.m. Wednesday) in the U.S. presidential election in some counties will stand. The judge said counties might file supplementaries or corrected totals after the deadline and that Ms. Harris might consider them if she employed a "proper exercise of discretion".

The ruling is a victory for the Bush campaign, which only on Monday lost out in a federal court while seeking an injunction against a manual count in four predominantly Democratic counties. The Gore campaign will move the Florida Supreme Court after going through a shortened appeals process.

Without taking into account overseas ballots, which will be finally tallied by Friday, the unofficial lead for the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, over his Democratic rival, Mr. Al Gore, is 388 votes. But officially the State of Florida maintains that with

votes in 66 out of the 67 counties tallied, Mr. Bush posts a 1,065-vote lead.

Earlier, the former Secretary of State, Mr. James Baker, proposed that the Republicans would accept the results of any handcount till 5 p.m. on Tuesday; in return, the Democrats would have to drop their insistence on handcount. The two sides would also drop all legal cases.

But the Gore campaign brushed aside what it considered a non-proposal. "It was truly not a proposal. It was strictly, in my opinion, an inaccurate description of the laws of Florida," the campaign chairman, Mr. William Daley, said.

The day began with the Palm Beach County Canvassing Board stopping the recount of votes, going by the opinion of the Secretary of State. The process was to have begun this morning.

The vote was by a 2-1 margin after Ms. Harris had given her opinion that there was nothing wrong with the tabulating equipment and that the local election board could not go through a manual recount.

THE HINDU

15 NOV 2000

Banana republic or vibrant democracy?

What was once dismissed as a Gush vs Bore election has ended up as the political thriller of all time, says Swaminathan S Anklesaria Aiyar

Drama, pathos, bathos, amazing twists and turns. The US presidential election has become a sensational non-election. It is stranger than fiction, more thrilling than a Tom Clancy thriller, more suspenseful than an Alfred Hitchcock movie.

Some critics are having a field day laughing at the antics of the self-proclaimed leader of the free world. Others say the US has proved it is a truly vibrant democracy where every vote counts. There is something to be said for both sides of the argument, but I lean towards the latter.

The bizarre twists of the election have produced a spate of jokes about the whole system and its participants. Possibly the most bizarre outcome of the election season relates to the presidential race but the Senate election in Missouri, where a dead man was elected. Senator Carnahan died in an accident shortly before polling day, but the election continued regardless, he won, and his wife is taking his place in the Senate, with the full approval of the losing candidate! If dead people can contest elections, why not elect George Washington? Or Jesus Christ? Nobody knows who has the best claim to represent George Washington in absentia, but the Pope and many others of the religious right would doubtless lay claim to representing Jesus.

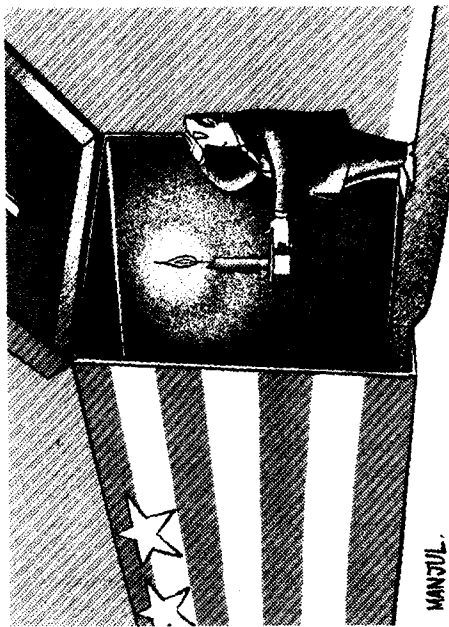
Hollywood came out with a film called 'Dead Man Walking' some years ago. Dead man voting is now going to be part and parcel of the US Senate. One of the jokes going round drawing rooms in Washington is about Hillary Clinton's reaction: "Gee, if I knew it was that simple, I'd have

bumped off Bill long ago." Fidel Castro, who has long claimed that American democracy is a fraud, is now able to quote the US press and top politicians to say there are irregularities, fraud, deception and what not in US elections. Cuban newspapers have gone to town about the shenanigans in Florida. Even in India, the biggest newspaper, *The Times of India*, has said the standard looks more like an election in Bodh Gaya, Bihar than in Bahia Beach, Florida. More bizarre twists are still possible. Consider the following mind-boggling scenarios.

* Lawsuits in Florida prevent any decision from being taken by December 18, when the Electoral College meets. In the absence of any electors from Florida, Gore is elected President.

* Bush's supporters demand an electronic recount in states like Oregon, Wisconsin and Iowa, where Gore won with slim majorities. After that he demands a hand count. Lawsuits produce further delays. Once again no electors from these states are in position by December 18, and so Bush wins the vote of the Electoral College and becomes President.

* Bush wins the lawsuits and is elected President, but a later appeal to the Supreme Court reverses the verdict and Gore takes over half-way



through Bush's Presidency. So many uncertainties abound that you can come out with endless permutations and combinations of scenarios. Nobody knows how the US institutional framework will tackle the unprecedented situation. Yet it seems to me that Americans can rejoice in the fact that democracy and the rule of law will triumph, regardless of which candidate loses.

For all the talk of irregularities and deception, there is no resemblance whatsoever between Florida and Bihar. Nobody in Florida has captured any polling booths or stuffed any ballot boxes. No voter went to the polling station to find somebody had already voted in his or her place. Nobody voted several times by using chemicals to remove the election stain on their fingerprints. Nobody intimidated voters of any community into staying away from the polls. It was

the hand count. Lawsuits have been filed in Palm Beach county demanding a re-poll in view of the misleading ballot paper in this county, which did not conform to legal specifications. But representatives of both parties at the county level had approved the ballot design. Maybe the courts will decide there has been an irregularity, but nobody is alleging fraudulent intent. No election is perfect. Indeed, democracy itself is highly imperfect. Winston Churchill said, famously, that democracy is the worst of all political systems except all the other that have been tried so far. The USA is discovering that its system is replete with flaws. Giving each state the right to determine its own election procedures creates problems. So does the indirect Electoral College system. Even the punching of ballot papers is an anachronism in a high-tech country at the leading edge of technology, and needs to be replaced by computerised voting with encryption to safeguard the identity of each voter, a system that can tally the election result within minutes of the close of voting.

Yet the US can afford to be relaxed, find its own way through these issues. The delay in announcing the election result may be embarrassing for some and unbearably suspenseful for others, but does that really matter? The US is unique in having an enormous time gap between election day (November 7) and the date of swearing in (January 20). No country is better placed to take in its stride all the post-election twists and turns. A final irony: what was once dismissed derisively as a Gush vs Bore election has ended up as the political thriller of all time.

election where the rule of law prevailed, where people were able to campaign and exercise their franchise without hindrance. It is another matter that many human and mechanical errors created serious problems. Human beings are fallible, and make mistakes. So do the machines they operate. That means technical irregularities of all sorts will occur in a large-scale election. This should not be confused with willful subversion or manipulation of elections. The ballot paper in Palm Beach County had a faulty design, which misled some supporters of Gore into voting for Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan. But even the most vociferous critics concede there was no attempt to steal the election for either side.

The Bush camp says that human counters have biases, and so it is best to rely on unbiased machines for counting. But machines have biases too. In Florida, electronic machines reject any crumpled ballots, or ballots where a clean hole has not been punched through by voters. Manual inspection makes it possible to make out ballots that are partially punched through, and thus indicate every individual voter's preference. The process takes a long time, yet the end result is a fairer one. That is why the courts have rejected Bush's attempt to stop

In the US, a 'chad' state of affairs

CHIDANAND RAJGHATTA
WASHINGTON, NOV 14

WHEN Vice-President Al Gore stepped out this weekend with his family for a movie outing (*Men of Honour*), he had a palm pilot clipped to his belt, a Blackberry (an instant two-way messaging system) sticking out of his back pocket, and an aide lugged his IBM ThinkPad.

Earlier in the week, it was the urgent buzzing of another aide's Skytel pager that had stopped him from making a speech conceding defeat ("Never surrender. It's not over yet" read the message).

In recent days, Gore has also bought Handspring Visors for his four children and presented an e-mail machine to his mother. Pretty ironic for a candidate whose fortunes now depend on the age-old process of counting ballots - by hand.

Amid cacophonous wrangling about counting process and procedures, the United States, the fount of modern technology and a gizmo-crazed society, is discovering with dismay that its democracy is not so high-tech after all.

Thanks to decentralised local election laws, almost every county in the country is free to design its own ballots, and designate its own voting process.

So Oregonians have passed a law converting the whole voting process to postal ballots, Californians have ballots that list a whole lot of local initiatives from legalising marijuana to controlling flow of immigrants, and Floridians have passed into electoral infamy with the most controversial ballot design in history.

Result: a mess that is discovered only when elections are

96-7 15712

DEVELOPMENTS

■ Florida's top election official (a Republican) on Monday declared she would enforce a Tuesday deadline to certify last week's disputed presidential election in the state. That would put an end to manual recounts - expected to go beyond Tuesday - that could favor Democratic nominee Al Gore. Democrats plan to challenge the ruling.

■ Both the Bush and Gore camps opened new funds to finance the recount campaign, making an already costliest US election costlier. Donors were urged to contribute as much as \$5,000 per head for the Bush-Cheney Recount Fund; The Gore-Lieberman Recount Committee has already secured \$3 million worth of pledges from its constituents.

■ For all the Republican ranting against manual recounting, it transpires that Texas Governor George Bush himself signed a hand recount measure into law in his home state, a fact Gorbists have seized on with great relish.

■ The Florida flip-flop is seeing its own version of the Centre Vs State battle that characterises Indian democracy. Gore is banking on state election laws to push ahead with the manual recount. Bush is seeking federal legal intervention to block it.

■ The judge who will hear the Bushies' lawsuit

seeking to block hand-counting of ballots is a lifelong Democrat who has long been active in liberal causes, ranging from protecting the rights of children to finding lawyers to represent death row inmates and indigents in civil cases.

■ If the court foils them, the Bushies have readied a scorched earth policy. They will challenge the counting in other states where Gore has won narrowly.

A Miami federal judge today turned down a request by Texas Governor George W Bush's campaign to halt a manual recount of ballots in the Florida counties for the presidential election. US District Judge Donald Middlebrooks said Florida's vote-counting process appeared to be neutral and that he saw no reason for a federal court to intervene.

Republicans had sought the injunction, saying the manual recount in four heavily Democratic counties was unconstitutional.

Democrats argued the recount was necessary because thousands of votes may have been missed by computers during a machine recount.

— Agencies

close, like now.

Some states like New York vote on antiquated contraptions that resemble 19th century cotton gins while others use the more common punch card machines.

The wide-ranging disparity in laws and technological inconsistency is now forcing US lawmakers to examine steps to clean up the system.

It could start with holding the election on a weekend holiday, instead of the first Tuesday after the first Monday of November, a working day.

Charles Schumer, the senior Senator from New York, is already pressing for a \$10-million study by the Federal Election

Commission to evaluate alternatives, including voting by mail, over the Internet, or using computerized voting machines.

America's education may come from Brazil, and not from India, the self-professed world's largest democracy that has struggled to introduce homemade electronic voting machines. Last month, Brazil conducted its entire municipal elections electronically.

Like India, Brazil too is a huge country with a large electorate. Many of its 323,000 voting booths are inaccessible.

But in an epic feat, Procomp Industria Eletronica, a local electronics company that is also the country's largest ATM-maker,

wired the whole system for \$100 million.

The new voting machine, which is like an ATM, makes allowance for the country's large illiterate population. Punching a number on the screen will throw up a picture of the candidate. The vote can be registered against the candidate's mug.

American's may not quite like it so in-the-face, but the technology has already come to its backyard. Procomp was bought last October for \$225 million by Diebold Inc. of North Canton, Ohio, the largest A.T.M. provider in the United States.

And no, the machine does not spit out money when you vote for someone.

INDIAN EXPRESS

15 NOV 2000

The US constitution ensures electoral deadlocks do not affect the system

The US political machine

It has become fashionable, almost overnight, to criticize the United States's electoral system following the deadlock in the election of a new president last week. From Moscow to Manila, from Srinagar to Sierra Leone, there are chuckles from those who have been at the receiving end of American self-righteousness over Uncle Sam's sudden discomfiture in being unable to swagger any more on the world's democratic stage as its conscience-keeper.

But chuckle as they may over the self-inflicted embarrassment of the world's only remaining superpower, it would be a mistake to assume that the US or its political system is facing any crisis on account of the rivetting domestic developments in the last eight days. On the contrary, there is a lot that a country like India, the world's most populous federated democracy, could learn from the US's latest predicament.

It is a magnificent tribute to the US's founding fathers that 211 years after the US constitution went into effect, the inability to choose an executive president has not brought the US to a standstill: even in the White House, which is at the centre of the dispute between the rival candidates, it is business as usual. The US's constitution was drafted — and carefully and sparingly amended since — precisely to avoid political instability of the kind that a political and legal dispute like the present one would have created in most other countries. And that constitution, it must be stressed, has withstood the test of time.

The US statute mandates that the president shall be elected on the Tuesday following the first Monday of November every four years — that the election takes place two and a half months before the new head of state takes office ensures that there is ample time to resolve any deadlock well before an incumbent president ceases to rule.

Contrary to public perception world wide, the president and the vice-president are not elected by the people directly. Americans vote in November only to choose 538 members of an electoral college. It is the members of the electoral college who meet either in the capitals of their respective states or in any place designated by state legislatures on the first Monday after the second Wednesday in December to choose a new president and a vice-president. This still gives a month to resolve any residual crisis because the new president does not have to assume office until January 20.

Assuming the electoral college is also deadlocked and unable to choose a new head of state, the choice will be made by the house of representatives from among the top three candidates for whom members of the electoral college have voted. This has already happened twice in US history.

If the electoral college is tied on the choice of a president, it does not follow that the election of a vice-president is similarly deadlocked. The electoral college need not pick a president and a vice-president who are on the same ticket as a team. Technically, on December 18 this year, the electors could choose Democrat Al Gore as president and the Republican vice-presi-

dential candidate, Dick Cheney, as vice-president.

In 1836, Richard M. Johnson was picked for the vice-presidency by the senate because the electoral college could not agree on one name. Although the electors vote for a new president and vice-president in December, their votes are sealed and sent to the president of the senate by each state: these votes are

DIPLOMACY K.P. NAYAR

essence of democracy even though it may often mean a lacklustre campaign as in the US. But it ensures that candidates cannot get away with wild allegations, demagoguery or sensationalism.

Much has been said and written about the election of a dead man to the US senate from Missouri. On the face of it, the mocking comments on this bizarre state poll in Missouri are justi-



opened in January at a joint session of members of the senate and the house of representatives.

It could be argued that a deadlock which extends till January leaves little time for transition and could affect the presidency in the early months as the new president tries to get on top of the situation. This is taken care of by a convention of briefing the two presidential candidates during the campaign itself on key sensitive and classified issues of state.

Not only the candidates, but also key aides of both the contenders for the White House who are security cleared by the intelligence agencies are briefed in detail on the state of the nation by the heads of executive departments. Thus, not only a president-elect, but his as yet unannounced choice for secretaries of state, defence, treasury and so on go into their jobs with intimate and detailed knowledge of their departments even if a deadlock of the current kind delays a decision on their assumption of office until the eleventh hour.

Indeed, this unique system of briefing candidates and their key aides ensures that the contenders for the presidency actually campaign with considerable knowledge of the state of the nation. An informed campaign is the

‘ The world soon overlooked the non-elected status of Ford and Rockefeller ’

fied. But there is a method in this madness too.

It should come as an eyeopener to Indians who have seen three elections in as many years recently that the US's founding fathers wanted to avoid precisely such wasteful expenditure and frittering away of national energy in their democracy. The American statutes, therefore, guarantee that no byelections — unlike in India — are routinely held in the US. If a president dies in office, the vice-president automatically succeeds him for the rest of the term. If a senator dies, the governor of the state to which he belongs nominates a successor, for two years in most states. Only after the two years does an election take place. More often than not, this special election is combined with the poll for the house of representatives, whose term, in any case, is two years. There are several positive elements to the vote in Missouri, which must be seen in this context.

First, the vote for Mel Carnahan, the state's Democratic governor who died in a plane crash in the middle of his senate race, is actually a vote against his Republican rival, John Ashcroft. As legal luminaries have explained in this case, what the voters in Missouri did last week was to ensure that Ashcroft got less votes than any other candidate on the ballot, thus preventing the reelection of the Republican to the senate.

Second, the late Carnahan's election was the result of a politically expedient decision by the Democrats to exploit sentiment in Missouri. With the Republicans and the Democrats fighting hard for every single seat to ensure a majority in the senate, the latter recognized that they could bag the otherwise difficult Missouri seat if they played their cards right.

Sensing a wave of sympathy for the late governor, the party made the new governor — also a Democrat, who was lieutenant governor and succeeded Carnahan after the plane crash — declare that if Ashcroft came second in the election, he would nominate Carnahan's widow, Jean, to fill the seat. It was a clever strategy to wrest the seat from the Republicans.

So when the people of Missouri voted out Ashcroft on November 7, they were not really voting for the dead governor. They knew that their future senator, in the event of Ashcroft getting less votes than anyone else, would be Jean. They were actually voting for Carnahan's widow even if her name was not on the ballot.

The prohibition on byelections in the US has, no doubt, led to unusual situations. In October 1973, Spiro Agnew, vice-president to Richard Nixon, resigned after he was fined for evading income tax when he was governor of Maryland. Since byelections are not held to fill the vice-president's post under the 25th amendment to the US constitution, Nixon nominated Gerald Ford as Agnew's successor. Both the senate and the house of representatives confirmed the choice of Ford as required by the constitution.

But in August 1974, Nixon himself quit office, a victim of his Watergate shenanigans. Ford, the first non-elected vice-president in US history, also became the first non-elected president. Nelson Rockefeller, who succeeded Ford, became the second non-elected vice-president of the US. To diehard democrats it may seem incredible that for two and a half years, the world's most powerful democracy had a president and a vice-president who were not elected to office.

But did the US suffer in any way on account of that? Was there political instability? The answer to both these questions is in the negative. The Americans believe there is a strong case for avoiding byelections at huge expense in a country where barely half the voters bother to cast their ballots in the first place. But in the more immediate context, just as the world soon overlooked the non-elected status of Ford and Rockefeller, it will soon forget how Bush — or Gore — came to power in 2001 and it will be business as usual.

America's bifurcation challenges its political system but can hardly dent its overbearing power

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 NOV 2000

Split democracy

HF-10 15/12
BY BRAHMA CHELLANEY

POLITICAL SCIENTIST Samuel Huntington has aptly described the United States as the "sole State with pre-eminence in every domain of power — economic, military, diplomatic, ideological, technological and cultural — and with the reach capabilities to promote its interests in virtually every part of the world". America's unrivalled power has long been rooted in Franklin D. Roosevelt's principles of 'righteous might' and 'absolute victory'. These precepts, while alien to the timorous and sanctimonious Indian State, are central to US debate and policy.

America's power has continued to grow unabated. It is enjoying its longest economic boom in history even as the Information Age continually increases its global political and cultural reach and the 'revolution in military affairs' (RMA) makes it militarily supreme. These are heady times for the US, and have prompted Secretary of State Madeleine Albright to call America "the indispensable nation ... because we stand tall and hence see further than other nations".

The current spectacle of the presidential race of 2000 politically bifurcating the most powerful democracy not only mystifies the world but also shows that the sole superpower hardly stands tall. The political logjam must be particularly embarrassing for a country that sees itself as a role model and whose foreign policy is based on self-righteous proselytising about democracy. With the demise of Soviet communism and the Chinese Communist Party's embrace of market capitalism, the only power still wedded to a distinct ideology is the US.

The bifurcation of the US is most evident not only from the division of the Senate and House down the middle, but also the way cities went Democratic, the countryside Republican and the suburbs split evenly between the two parties. There also are important divides along gender, class and racial lines. America appears politically Balkanised, with Gore taking the coasts and Great Lake area and Bush the South, Rocky Mountain states and plains region.

After the closest and most disputed presidential election in more than a century, the US shows itself as flawed, unsure and lacking in answers as the nations that Washington circles poke fun at. If

either Al Gore or George W. Bush acted rashly at this stage to grab power by means fair or foul, US democracy could suffer grievously.

That the political mess is rooted in an anachronistic system of indirect voting that blocks majority rule is poor advertisement to the US' credentials as a champion of democracy in the modern world. If Bush becomes President by collecting more electoral college votes despite losing the popular vote, the world will ask how that conforms to the democratic principles of majority rule. If Gore makes it to the White House, the long and controversial route to the Presidency will compromise his legitimacy.

Despite its rhetoric, the US political system is less than egalitarian. The process to register as a voter, for example, weighs heavily against the poor and disadvantaged. The electoral college system, although founded on federalist principles to protect the political relevance of small states, has turned into a guardian of special interests. The 'winner-takes-all' rule, followed by 48 of the 50 US states, also raises questions about the democratic character of this system, with the victor of popular vote in a state taking all its electors.

The electoral college was designed by the framers of the US Constitution as the middle ground between election by popular vote and an Indian presidential poll-style vote by national and state legislators. If Bush scrapes through, he will not be the first to become US President by winning the electoral college vote but losing the popular vote. That happened twice before, first in 1876 when Rutherford B. Hayes won over Samuel Tilden, and then in 1888 when Republican Benjamin Harrison edged out an incumbent President, Grover Cleveland. The victory in such cases is tainted, as seen in the subsequent references to 'Rutherford' Hayes.

In an election as close as it could possibly be, fur-

ther surprises can hardly be ruled out. First is the possibility of the election outcome getting caught in endless litigation. In a society where the majority of citizens are acutely aware of their rights and litigation is the archetypal way to seek justice, lawsuits and countersuits are not a surprise. However, a long and ugly court process would exact heavy US political costs internally and overseas.

Second, with the election too close to call, horse-trading by either side in the electoral college could play havoc with the system. Although the electors are committed to one candidate or the other, there is nothing definite in law to prevent them from defecting. Stray cases of defection have occurred in the past but none to affect the outcome of any election. But when the newest electors meet in state capitals on December 18 to vote, they could rewrite history. Three electors switching sides would seal Bush's fate even if he carries Florida.

Clearly, the US political system is on trial today. How it salvages the situation will have an important bearing on America's international image and ability to continue to propagate certain values and norms. Although America's power has grown enormously, its influence has declined. This is partly because many other nations have prospered, and it is no longer easy for the US to influence the behaviour of others through dictates. Equality and mutual respect are now central principles in inter-state relations.

Nothing better illustrates America's growing power but waning influence than the foreign-policy failures of the President who oversaw tremendous accretion to US strength, Bill Clinton. In none of the trouble spots where he intervened can Clinton claim to have brought peace, be it Kosovo, Bosnia, Northern Ireland, West Asia, Somalia, Haiti or Rwanda. In fact, with bloody Israeli-Palestinian clashes still raging, his effort to establish a peace-making legacy lies in tatters, with the President

forced to turn to newer pastures, such as Vietnam and North Korea.

Most empires in history have collapsed under the weight of domestic fissures and contradictions. This was true of Pax Romana as it was of the Ottoman Empire. America's faceless enemies are looking at its political crisis as a gift from heaven that would sow the seeds of internal discord to eventually destroy Pax Americana. They are misjudging.

Although the US has rarely appeared more bifurcated than today, nationalism runs deep in American society. What distinguishes a successful state from a not-so-successful state is the manner it identifies and advances national interests. What has made the US the greatest power is its national pride and assertive promotion of vital interests. In contrast, nationalism is a dirty term in India, not only because of the constant sniping from the Left, but also because self-proclaimed nationalists have shown themselves in power to be the biggest purveyors of national interest.

The US political divide could either help build political consensus at home or make consensual politics more difficult. Since no great ideological chasm separates the two candidates, the winner will have to reach out to the other side, especially since the fractured verdict will work against his effectiveness. On foreign policy, differences between the two are in any case narrow, as a broad consensus exists of the core US interests and their advancement.

In the absence of any significant conflict of interests, Indo-US relations will continue to grow irrespective of which candidate enters the White House. Indians for long have nurtured the myth that Democrats are India-friendly. On balance, the more pragmatic Bush, with his clearer strategic outlook on Asia, appears somewhat better for India than Gore who holds fanatical views on nuclear non-proliferation, environment, trade and human rights.

The US, as a country with a universal mission, can hardly afford this political crisis. But it is premature to believe that the bifurcation will dent America's overbearing international power. The key question is whether it will dent its political system, whose credibility is of vital importance to America's international standing. The system is on test to redeem itself from the crisis.



US presidential outcome hinges on judge's ruling

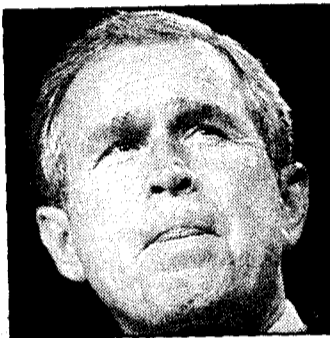
S. Rajagopalan
Washington, November 14

A TURNING point of sorts has been reached in the US presidential face-off with a Florida judge slated to decide whether or not to extend this evening's deadline for certifying the post-recount results. The judge's ruling could have a bearing on the central issue as to who would be the next occupant of the White House: Democrat Al Gore or Republican George W. Bush?

If the judge goes along with the decision of Florida's Republican Secretary of State Katherine Harris to enforce this evening's deadline, it could possibly ensure Mr Bush's victory as he clings to a 300-plus vote lead over Mr Gore.

But if the judge accepts the Democrats' rationale for extending the deadline, it might well be advantage Mr Gore. For an extension will enable the Palm Beach county to complete its manual recount of more than four lakh votes by the weekend. Being a predominantly-Democratic county, Mr Gore is thought to be well-placed to clinch the acrimonious presidential race.

Ms Harris had yesterday surprised the Democrats by announcing that she would stick to this evening's deadline, a move that prompted the Gore camp to challenge the "arbitrary and unreasonable" decision. As the election will not be over till Friday, when the overseas ballots are disposed of, the Democrats saw no justification for enforcing the Tuesday deadline.



George W. Bush



Al Gore

In the circumstances, the decision of Leon county circuit judge Terry Lewis later today has assumed critical importance on which way the controversy-ridden presidential race will proceed from now on. It is another matter that either party could go in appeal against his ruling vis-a-vis the proposed certification of results this evening.

Another Florida court will simultaneously begin hearing later today

on a bunch of petitions filed by voters of the Palm Beach county, seeking a repoll. Their contention is that the November 7 poll in the county was vitiated by the flawed ballot design that led to the invalidation of 19,000 votes that were "meant for Mr Gore".

The surprise announcement by Ms Harris on Monday prompted Mr Gore, who has kept himself out of media focus for the last one week, to come out with a reaction. As he put it: "What is at stake is more important than who wins the presidency. What is at stake is the integrity of our democracy-making sure that the will of the American people is expressed and accurately received."

By way of a loaded comment, he added: "Look, I would not want to win the presidency by a few votes cast in error or misinterpreted or not counted, and I don't think Governor Bush wants that, either."

There was no immediate word from Mr Bush, but his campaign aides kept up their offensive against the Democrats. Mr Bush's spokesperson, Karen Hughes, went on to accuse Mr Gore of seeking to ignore the laws of Florida in a bid to "overturn" the results.

Returning the fire, Gore spokesman Mark Fabiani charged Mr Bush with going all out to "steal the election". The Gore camp was vocal in its condemnation of Ms Harris's decision to go ahead with the certification of the results without waiting for completion of the manual recount in three counties, saying she was anxious to produce a result that suited Mr Bush.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

15 NOV 2000



The end game

Israeli analysts predict West Asia is one-third of the way towards Armageddon. SAM KILEY reports



DEEP in the bowels of Ha Kiryah, headquarters of the Israeli defence ministry whose bristling antennae dominate Tel-Aviv's skyline, a small and elite team of computer wizards, military analysts and political experts are playing a war game. It could be called Doom or Armageddon. But the simulations are no fun. They're playing out the worst case scenarios of a West Asian meltdown in which everyone is a loser.

The conclusions of the geeks who live in a virtual world are based on reality. About a third of the End Game scenario has already been played out. The analysts are not alone in fearing that what began as a semi-popular, semi-spontaneous uprising of Palestinians against continued Israeli occupation has already mutated into a mini-war of growing intensity which now threatens to spin out of control and suck the whole of West Asia into its vortex.

United Nations diplomats, US defence secretary William Cohen, moderate and immoderate Arab leaders, members of the Israeli cabinet and Yasser Arafat's senior advisers can agree on little. But they are unanimous in the fear that the region is teetering on the brink of an unthinkable horrible abyss.

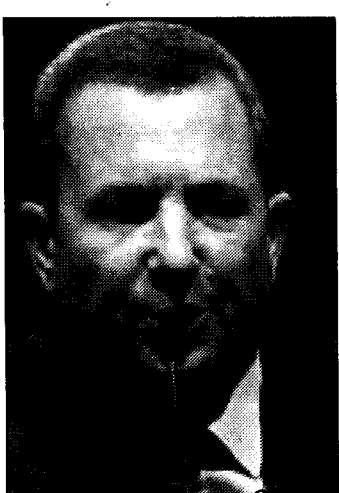
What has brought West Asia to the edge? What parts of the doomsday scenario have been fulfilled, and what is to come? Strap on your 3-D goggles and peer into the future. But brace yourself for the worst because by the end of the "game" you could be waddling to work wearing a chemical and biological warfare suit.

This is what the cyber-warriors have already punched into their computer model: "History is made by men with swords, not bureaucrats clutching the UN Charter on Human Rights." A bit of a sweeping statement but difficult to disagree with, especially if you take a quick dip into the recent history of West Asia and the foundation of Israel.

For seven years the conquered people have watched their leaders blast hot air around the negotiating table while what is left of the land they lost in 1967 has been steadily stolen by Jewish settlements. Disappointed and distrusting of their own leadership, the final insult came in July at Camp David, the US presidential retreat. Palestinians believe that what they were offered at the Camp David summit was nothing short of an insult — they would have been left with a bastard mutant state in five different bits still subjected to Israeli fiat.

Their own leadership, and Arafat in particular, they consider weak, corrupt, venal and incompetent. Two months ago they turned their anger on the Israelis, who still occupy more than 80 per cent of the West Bank and Gaza. The Israeli army used live ammunition and snipers to control rioting teens. More than 70 children were killed, many of them in full view of TV cameras. Another 180 Palestinian adults, some of them innocent, some of them gunmen, were also "taken out". Meanwhile, sensing he could either surf the popular wave or drown, Arafat slyly slipped open the doors of his jails and released scores of some of the Islamic world's most dangerous bomb-makers and urban guerrilla experts from Hamas and Islamic Jihad. Then he forged an alliance with the extremist groups and gave them seats in his decision-making bodies.

After a decade of internecine squabbling and outright fighting, the Palestinians now stand together. Their stated goal: an independent state. Their policy: to drive the Jews out of the illegal West Bank and Gaza settlements, to kill Israeli soldiers in the Occupied Territories and force Israel to recognise past UN resolutions which, in their view, demand a complete withdrawal of Israel to behind the



1967 Green Line.

Their real aim, many Israelis believe, is to drive the Jews into the Mediterranean Sea. To rid West Asia of the "cancer" of Zionism, scrub Israel from the map and return the land to its original Palestinian owners.

The clumsy and callous Israeli response to the "al Aqsa Intifada" has fanned the violence into a furnace. The Palestinians have shifted their tactics from riots and demonstrations to guerrilla warfare. And if Arafat doesn't have the mettle for this final fight, then the Palestinians will ignore his cease-fire orders.

By their standards, the Israelis have reacted with "restraint". Using helicopter gunships and guided missiles, they have "carefully" rocketed buildings used by Arafat's Fatah movement, his Preventive Security Service (secret police) and the Voice of Palestine.

Meanwhile, leaders in the Muslim world are under increasing pressure to support the Palestinians. Yemen has called on Arabs to send arms, men and ammunition. Egypt has withdrawn its ambassador to Tel-Aviv. King Abdullah of Jordan, whose wife and 60 per cent of his subjects are Palestinian, is vulnerable. His police have already had to drive thousands of Palestinians away from his borders with Israel using water cannon and tear-gas. Lebanon, which hosts 250,000 Palestinian refugees and is under Syrian occupation, also hosts Hizbollah, the Party of God which is backed by Iran and Iraq.

The radical Islamic organisation has already kidnapped three Israeli soldiers and an alleged spy. This week, senior members of Prime Minister Barak's staff said they had intelligence that Hizbollah, which drove Israel out of Lebanon in May, was "planning something big on our side of the border".

Five different ceasefires have failed. Diplomatic initiatives keep being sabotaged by Palestinian guerrilla organisations bitterly opposed to any negotiations with the "Zionist entity". Support for Hamas, Islamic Jihad and other Hizbollah-like movements is growing by the day.

This feeds a deep existential terror among Israelis. If they give the Palestinians all of the West Bank and Gaza, they ask, would that be enough? Or would a Palestinian state be a Trojan horse in the vanguard of massed Arab armies bent on the destruction of the Jewish state? So what next? A likely scenario is: in the dying days of his

presidency Bill Clinton manages to call a summit with Barak and Arafat. A lull in the fighting lasts until Arafat arrives in Washington. Then Islamic guerrillas detonate three bus bombs inside Israel, killing close to 100 people, including many children, and deliberately blowing away any hope of a ceasefire, much less a permanent peace.

The Israelis see red. Barak orders his jets and gunships to pound Arafat's home and offices to dust. Most of the buildings used by the Palestinian National Authority are wrecked. And a stray missile kills a dozen Palestinians recovering in hospital from wounds inflicted in earlier confrontations with the Israelis.

Hizbollah hits back. Within 24 hours of the bus bombs and before Arafat can fly home, the Party of God is raining Katyusha rockets on northern Israel. Huge Islamist demonstrations of support for the Palestinians and of Hizbollah's tactics sweep across the Arab world. Hosni Mubarak of Egypt is reluctant to upset his American backers and Saudi Arabia's royals try to keep their heads down. But Iraq and Iran send military supplies to Hizbollah via Damascus and Beirut.

Syria, meanwhile, sends a brigade of troops to south Lebanon as Israelis mass on their side of the border, preparing to recreate a south Lebanese "security zone" to protect the north of the country from the Islamist artillery.

US spy satellites also pick up Iraqi troop movements towards Jordan and Syria and note that Damascus has deployed its mobile Scud missile launchers.

Israel bombs Beirut after another round of Hizbollah missile attacks and hits Syrian army bases in Lebanon while commandos begin reconnaissance for the new security zone. Syrian artillery pieces open up on the Golan Heights and Israel's early warning base on the top of Mount Hermon. Israeli jets criss-cross Arab skies hunting down the artillery and Scud batteries. Israel annexes all major roads and settler towns on the West Bank, and abandons Gaza entirely.

Enraged and emboldened, 40,000 of Jordan's Palestinians decide to return and march towards the Allenby Bridge. Jordanian police cannot hold them back and are overrun. The Palestinians, some of them armed, charge the Israeli border post at Allenby, killing soldiers and security personnel, many of them women. By the time an amateur video of the rape and torture of the Israeli women is aired, Israel has shelled the Palestinians and driven them back with infantry. Hundreds are killed. The Jordanian army then charges across the river and takes up "defensive positions" in the Jordan valley. Faced with the choice of fighting Israel or being deposed, King Abdullah allows Iraq to use Jordanian airbases.

Two Iraqi jets manage to get through Israeli air defences and fly themselves into Tel-Aviv apartment blocks. Hundreds of Israelis are killed and right-wing groups march throughout Israel shouting "We Want War" and "Death to all the Arabs".



Israel invades south Lebanon and attacks Jordan's airfields, knocking out most of the kingdom's air force. Saudi Arabia and Egypt can stay out of the conflict no longer. The Saudis send tanks to protect Jordan's borders. Egypt sends a brigade of armour to "secure Gaza". Both columns are attacked from the air but get through despite heavy casualties.

Then the CIA sends Israel an alarming message. Two Iranian submarines have been spotted off Haifa. To rub it in, a unit of 20 unknown Islamist commandos lands at a deserted north Israeli beach at night. The next morning they massacre a group of Western tourists visiting Caesarea before vanishing.

Sensing that the murders will have driven the West firmly into Israel's camp, the Jewish state appeals to America and its Nato partners to come to its aid. Iran, Iraq and Saudi Arabia cut off oil to the West. The price of a barrel surges beyond \$100, stock exchanges start to wobble and crash as investors get out of paper and into gold and aerospace.

Syrian Scuds hit west Jerusalem. Israel responds by bombing the presidential palaces in Latakia and Damascus, hitting the Syrian ministry of defence and arming its long-range Jericho missiles with nuclear warheads. Unaware of the threat, Saddam Hussein cannot resist

temptation. He fills the tip of a Scud with nerve gas and a cocktail of his favourite plagues, and sends it on its way to Israel. It is shot down over Syria and Israel is blamed for unleashing chemical and biological weapons against innocent Arab civilians. Meanwhile British and US warplanes attack Saddam's network of "palaces" which have doubled as bomb factories and rocket launching pads.

A cell of young British Islamic militants run by Osama bin Laden is set up by the global terrorist. He orders them to deliver a car to Birmingham which is to be used in a bank robbery. It explodes, killing its three young idealists. Its boot has been filled with Sarin gas which kills half a dozen shoppers. Two days later, the city's hospital is overwhelmed by an outbreak of botulism and a flesh-eating incurable e-coli infection. Rumours spread that Saddam and his mad doctors have perfected an airborne variant of Ebola. Army surplus stores are flooded.

The USA and Europe can no longer tolerate the wave of Arab terrorism so... Baghdad gets nuked.

Of course, there is no real need for this awful scenario to come true. After all, it's the vision of the nutty End Timers who camp on the Mount of Olives waiting for the Messiah and have been predicting Armageddon since the turn of the millennium. But one has to admit that the giant bomb that is West Asia has been primed. Disposing of it means solving some tricky riddles, including how to persuade Israel that the Palestinians would end all their territorial claims at the 1967 Green Line — they refused at Camp David.

And how can Israel be persuaded to give back all of the West Bank and Gaza, evacuate the settlements or swap them for more land and give Arafat a country that looks like a country and not a blobby patchwork Bantustan, when Israel refuses to contemplate a Palestinian state that is beyond its control?

— The Times, London.

Gore in no mood to concede defeat

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 24. The Gore campaign says the last word on the Florida recount of votes in the U.S. presidential polls has not been said and that the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, will not concede the election even if Florida's Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris, certifies the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, winner of the State's 25 electoral college votes on Sunday.

It took the defiant stance in response to a unanimous Florida Supreme Court ruling on the Thanksgiving Day yesterday refusing to order the Miami-Dade county to continue the handcount of ballots. "The writ is denied without prejudice... No motion for hearing will be allowed," said all seven judges.

The Gore campaign told the court that counting in the county was being frustrated by a campaign of intimidation by Repub-

licans. Separately, lawyers for Mr. Gore have filed papers in the U.S. Supreme Court asking it not to intervene in the Florida recount as is being demanded by Mr. Bush. In a 29-page brief filed on Thursday, it has been argued that the petitions of the Texas Governor are "partisan" and "intemperate" and that any intervention will be contrary to the court's earlier decisions preserving the rights and sovereignty of the States.

In the aftermath of the Florida Supreme Court verdict, the Gore campaign has made it known that it will move court in Tallahassee to contest the Miami-Dade election results after the votes have been certified. The county is the largest in the State, with a chunk of Democratic supporters, where some 10,000 ballots have been disputed. Earlier this week, county officials changed their mind — for the fourth time — and said they were not going to continue the handcount as the Sunday

deadline could not be met.

The decision to still pursue the legal route after Sunday's certification should not be surprising, senior Gore legal advisers say. "We have been saying all along that we wanted a full and fair count and that's what we intend to see happen," said a senior adviser, Mr. Ron Klain.

The handcount in Broward, Palm Beach and Miami-Dade counties has trimmed the Texas Governor's lead to 713 votes. But the official tally still shows a 930-vote difference between Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore. In the Broward county, with all precincts and absentee ballots available, Mr. Gore has a net gain of 225 votes. Mr. Bush has also moved a State court to force 13 counties with a heavy military personnel concentration to reopen their overseas ballots.

The legal manoeuvrings of rival campaigns take place at a time when the Republican-dominated Legislature is threatening to enter

the fray and have its way. Senior Republicans have openly said if the December 12 deadline is not met, the Legislature may be convened for an extraordinary session to choose its own slate of electors. "... the responsibility falls on the Legislature to decide who those electors are going to be," says the House Speaker, Mr Tom Feeny.

Yesterday, the President, Mr Bill Clinton, said, "there is a process under way. The courts will do what they're going to do and that's the way it ought to be," urging patience.

Meanwhile, the Republican vice-presidential candidate, Mr. Richard Cheney, is said to be recovering from a "slight" heart attack he suffered on Wednesday. According to a Bush campaign spokesman, the Texas Governor and Mr. Cheney had a good conversation and both were "upbeat".

THE HINDU

25 NOV 2000

HERE WE GO AGAIN

5/10 The pandora's box of voting intent 2/5/11

WHAT the Florida Supreme Court's ruling, allowing the manual recount results in the three counties of Palm Beach, Broward and Miami-Dade to be included in the final tally, does is to prolong the legal battle. James Baker, heading Bush's legal team, has said they will appeal against a decision, probably to Florida's Republican legislature, in order to obtain a reaffirmation of the original rules. Another possibility is the manual recount of all votes in Florida, since the ruling seems to invalidate any process, device or mechanism which corrupts voting intent prevalent throughout Florida. Also, if the recount were to give the White House to Gore, then the Republicans may repeat the manoeuvre in states like Iowa and New Mexico where Gore won by an equally thin margin. Voting systems may be attended by some degree of imperfection that may collude with unintentional errors. Voting intent is a potential pandora's box, and the logic behind having a deadline for counting is to keep the lid firmly on. For instance, in the recounts, Gore seems to have improved his position only marginally in one county, while it is Bush who has got a supplement in the other. It is conceivable that a margin of human error is not going to operate, no matter how many times the ballots are counted or recounted. The Republicans have already got into the game of ballot questioning. They are appealing to Secretary of Defence William Cohen, former Republican Senator, to allow postal ballots without postmarks, cast by the military and, therefore, likely to be in Bush's favour. That may be a strategic error which will lead them into a quagmire of recounts. So far they were insisting that the election is a finite process and the result be declared according to the rules which, until the Florida Supreme Court's ruling, said that the state's secretary of state had the final say. Now, it is anybody's game.

Of course, the big difficulty facing the Florida Supreme Court was whether to simply ignore an electoral distortion that had been detected, or to abide by the letter of the law which, with regard to the secretary of state's discretion in the matter, uses the words "shall" (permit recounting to go on beyond the deadline) in one place and "may" in another. The question has arisen, it is difficult, it hasn't been dealt with, there had to be an answer, one way or the other. Problem is, with six out of seven judges being Democrat appointees, this particular answer was going to smack of bias. A smack that will persist, up or down the judicial ladder, whichever way the Republicans or Democrats wish to take it. All judges in the US are political appointees and on this extraordinary issue, in this extraordinary atmosphere, it is going to be difficult to produce a decision that satisfies all parties.

THE STATESMAN

25 NOV 2000

Bush takes ballot battle to SC

Fresh setback for Gore as Florida county abandons recount

S. Rajagopalan

Washington, November 23

DAY after Florida's apex court warned the cockles of Democrat Al Gore, Republican George W. Bush has taken the battle for the White House right up to the US Supreme Court, seeking reversal of the ruling upholding manual recounts in three counties.

Mr Bush's counter-offensive came on a day of further twists and turns that saw Mr Gore in the throes of a fresh crisis. That came about when the Miami-Dade county abandoned the manual recount that is so vital for Mr Gore to remain in contention.

The fluctuating fortunes of the two presidential hopefuls brought about more legal suits even as the Broward and Palm Beach counties moved at frenzied speed to meet the Sunday deadline for completing the recount. Mr Gore's lawyers, after drawing a blank in an appeals court, were planning to move the Florida Supreme Court to make Miami-Dade fall in line.

Mr Bush, true to expectation, moved the US Supreme Court, urging it to speedily take up a case of such public importance that is seen "only once in a generation". Unless the highest court of the land intervened, the consequences could include "ascension of a president of questionable legitimacy" and "a constitutional crisis".

Two petitions, filed by Mr Bush's lawyers, pleaded for a decision before December 18, when the Electoral College meets to complete the presidential election process. The ongoing manual recounts, the petitions contend, are 'unconstitutional' and should be stopped "before further irreparable harm is done to the integrity of this election".

Mr Bush came down heavily on the Florida Supreme Court, saying it had 'overreached'. The judges have "used the bench to change Florida's election laws and usurp the authority of Florida's election officials. Writing laws is the duty of the Legislature. Administering laws is the duty of the executive

branch," he said in a strongly worded statement.

It was not immediately known whether, and if so when, the US Supreme Court's nine judges would hear the case. Some legal experts pointed out that federal courts tended to examine very closely before getting involved in state matters. In a day of dramatic developments that also saw the hospitalisation of Mr Bush's running mate Dick Cheney after he suffered a mild heart attack, it was Mr Gore's fortunes that unexpectedly plunged. None in the Democrats' camp had dreamt in their wildest dreams that the Miami-Dade election officials would pull the plug on Mr Gore.

Miami-Dade is the most populous of the counties to undertake the recount and Mr Gore was expecting to make most of his advances here. The spotlight in recent days used to be on the 10,750 'undervotes' that had not been counted for they did not bear clear marks. It was for the fourth time that the Miami-Dade election officials had reversed their decision. First they had decided not to conduct a manual recount, then they decided to go ahead with it. Yesterday morning, in the face of the tight Sunday deadline, they first decided to confine themselves to counting the 10,750 votes. By afternoon, they chose to abandon the recount and stick to the pre-recount tally of November 8.

The immediate upshot of this move was to bring down Mr Gore's tally by 157 votes that he had garnered after completion of the recount in 135 of Miami-Dade's 614 precincts. Although Mr Gore's lawyers challenged the county's decision in an appeals court, they did not get any relief. Their lost hope is the Florida Supreme Court.

The sole consolation for the Vice-President on Wednesday seemed to be another court ruling that cleared the decks for counting some 10,000-odd 'dimpled votes' in the Palm Beach county. The Democrats believe that disposal of these improperly punched votes by 'determining the voter's intent' could significantly add to Mr Gore's tally. In Broward county, too, their attention is focused on 2,000 disputed ballots.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

24 NOV 2000

Presidential Philosophy 11-10

"Most US presidents become philosophical while in office", said Bill Clinton in an interview to Harold Evans, the veteran editor and author. Plato, we know, felt the ideal leader is a philosopher-king, combining the best elements of both. Clinton attributed his becoming philosophical in the White House, to the "pummelling which I deservedly received from the people" and to the steady, quiet advice he received throughout his ordeal by fire from the then South African president, Nelson Mandela, "to keep working, regardless". Clinton did not quote Plato, or attribute his becoming philosophical in the Oval Office, to Platonic love, sometimes defined as 'play for one' and 'tonic for the other'. In fact, looking to the US post-poll happenings, the candidate pipped at the post may feel more philosophical (over his not entering White House) than the one who scrapes through. Wags say that even the running down of each other by rival camps during the long uncertainty proved more newsy than the run-up to the polls. In the interview, Clinton philosophised that for every US generation, the president has to "redefine what the nation means" to the people, and that now, it is the "fifth redefinition" which holds. Essayist Logan P Smith said, "Denunciation of the young is a necessary part of the hygiene of the older generation and it is good for the circulation of their blood". Abraham Lincoln, said Clinton, redefined the nation for his generation "by re-interpreting the 1776 Constitution and giving meaning to its words "we the people ...". At the turn of the century, president Theodore Roosevelt, helped redefine the nation, as it changed from a predominantly agricultural economy to an industrial one while preserving the environment. President Woodrow Wilson redefined democracy and the nation for his generation by relating the US to the world with his idealism and 14 points. Finally, presidents Franklin Delano Roosevelt and Harry Truman led the people from the nightmare of the depression and redefined the nation as belonging to its toiling labour and middle classes and giving them a stake in its growth. More important, by expounding his Four Freedoms and converting the US into "an arsenal for democracy" and giving shape to the United Nations, the nation was redefined as a superpower. At the turn of the 20th century, wags say the danger is that US democracy might be 'am-Bushed' or 'Gored' by contestants in the prolonged clash of the evenly-matched parties which provides a curious theatre of the absurd.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

27 NOV 2000

ND-16 U.S. ELECTION / PUBLIC SENTIMENT A MAJOR FACTOR

Legal, political jousting goes on

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 27. From now on and for at least another week or so, it is a three-way battle for the White House — the political, the legal and the public relations front. And it is left to both the Bush and the Gore campaigns to craft a set of strategies that pays off both in the short and long terms. Amid all this, there is also the hope that the U.S. Supreme Court comes up with something definitive when it has finished hearing the two sides this Friday.

But the question that remains is after all the hoopla over the last three weeks, has the environment been so poisoned that whoever emerges as the 43rd President will just be limping along for the next four years? And in the meantime the Republicans and the Democrats brace themselves for the off year Congressional elections of 2002.

The answers to these questions will be as partisan as Washington D.C. is, or for that

matter what Tallahassee, Florida has been in the last few days. Both the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, and the Texas Governor, Mr. Bush, have been talking about "uniting" the country but the rancour and the pot shots of the last few weeks clearly raises larger questions.

The first poll of post-election certification by the Florida Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris, is quite revealing. A Washington Post/ABC News Poll taken on Sunday night is showing that 60 per cent of those surveyed said that Mr. Gore should concede the election now that Mr. Bush had been certified. And 56 per cent opined that they were confident that the Florida vote count was accurate.

That is precisely one of the challenges of both the campaigns — to the Gore team it is one of moulding public opinion making the point that he "really" won the national election and also Florida, if only the votes here were counted properly. And this is why the legal battles have to continue. In fact, Mr. Gore

himself is expected to talk on this sometime on Monday. Both campaigns are trying to address the issue of who 'stole' this election from whom.

The Bush campaign has already set its public relations exercise going. One of the first things that the former Secretary of State, Mr. James Baker, said in Florida was that the lawyers "must go home". This is clearly tapping into a sensitive area of public thinking that trial lawyers — at the bidding of the Democrats — are running amok; and are keen on stretching this out. And Mr. Bush made his point when in his nationally televised address argued that Mr. Gore's persistence on the legal front was not "the best route for America". And the impression of getting ready with the transition team headed by Mr. Richard Cheney is also for public relations.

The legal maze in Florida is all too well known and it gets off with a bang in Leon County this morning. The Gore campaign is set to challenge not just the stopping of counting in Miami-Dade which it says was because of intimidation from Republicans but also the fashion in which votes were counted in Palm Beach and Nassau. The Bush camp says that while this is not the preferred way, it will meet it aggressively.

A lot of attention is going to be on the political front as well — that is in how effectively Republican and Democratic law-makers are going to rally behind the major candidates. And to a large extent the focus is on top Democratic law-makers and their support to Mr. Gore. As it is, the Senate Minority Leader, Mr. Tom Daschle, and the House Minority Leader, Mr. Richard Gephardt, are travelling to Florida today on behalf of Mr. Gore.

The political momentum will, to a large extent, be determined by what Americans feel. If the perception persists that Mr. Bush has come out on top after several counts and that Mr. Gore should concede, Democratic law-makers will be less inclined to go against popular sentiment. Or at least this is what the Bush campaign hopes. As it is, an argument has been made repeatedly that politically it would be better for Mr. Gore to move aside and position himself better for 2004. In the process, Democrats may also stand to gain in 2002.

THE HINDU

24 NOV 2002

Bush lead down to 400

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

WASHINGTON, Nov. 26. — Mr George W Bush's lead over Mr Al Gore in the US presidential poll came down to just over 400, hours before the deadline for Florida's Palm Beach county ballot counting was to end today.

As Broward county poll officials completed their hand count of ballots well ahead of the court deadline, Republican Bush's 930-vote lead had been cut to below 500. CNN TV and CBS Radio put Mr Bush's lead at 448 but another report said the figure was 408.

A clear picture of the USA's closest presidential polls would have to wait till 5 p.m. Florida time — 4.30 a.m. IST on 27

November — or an hour or two later when the Florida secretary of state and Republican supporter, Ms Katherine Harris, announces the result.

The hopes of Mr Bush and Mr Al Gore (Democrat) hinged on only one Palm Beach county where ballot counters raced against time to finish their job so that votes could be included in the tally to be certified by Ms Harris.

Initially, Mr Bush picked up 102 votes from servicemen in Palm Beach, a Democratic county with a majority of Democrats in the vote-supervising board.

The outcome of Florida, which will clinch the issue, however, depends on the US Federal Supreme Court that will decide whether Florida

Officials on Sunday night asked the Florida secretary of state to extend the deadline on hand recount of ballots to 9 a.m. on Monday. If the plea is granted a clear picture won't emerge by Sunday night. Florida law says a complete figure must be provided in case of a recount. — PTI

supreme court usurped the powers of the legislature in ordering a continuation of the hand recount and requiring Ms Harris to take note of the result five days later than the time fixed for returns by the legislature.

Broward county Democrats interpreted the incompletely punched ballots to the satisfaction of Mr Gore. But Vice-President's camp complain-

ed that Palm Beach Democrats are not interpreting the ballots broad enough to suit Mr Gore.

Florida officials said it should not be assumed that Ms Harris would declare the result of the election immediately after the returns are handed in. Her examination, they said, could take an hour or two or several hours or even much longer.

THE STATESMAN

27 NOV 2000

BUSH UNOFFICIAL LEAD DIPS FURTHER

Issue may drag on despite Florida certification ^{ms (1)}

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 26. With the clock ticking away in Florida towards the 5 p.m. deadline today, after which the Secretary of State, Ms. Katherine Harris, is expected to make a final certification of the results as directed by the State Supreme Court, the two campaigns are digging in for the next phase.

The disputed ballots that were counted through the night in Palm Beach county and earlier in Broward have definitely gone to the advantage of the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore. As of early Sunday morning, the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, is seeing that his official lead of 930 votes has been trimmed considerably. He now posts an unofficial lead of a mere 437 votes.

The Vice-President's campaign is hoping that when the final hour approaches, Mr. Gore would have edged past the Texas Governor. By the same token, the Bush campaign is also hopeful that the Secretary of State will be able to say that its candidate has stayed on the top. Whatever the legal ramifications of today's announcement, the certification of a winner will have a political angle to it.

The Gore campaign has made it known that the certification of



Judge Robert W. Lee holds up the last ballot to be manually counted at the Broward County courthouse in Fort Lauderdale in Florida on Sunday which went for the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore. — AP

Ms. Harris would not be the last word. Rather, on Monday morning it will move State courts on Miami Dade county's decision to stop manual counting. Mr. Gore is expecting to pick up several hundred votes here, especially from the disputed bunch of about

10,000 ballots. The campaign is also going to dispute some of the ballots in Palm Beach county.

The Bush campaign is still trying to make as much noise as it can on the overseas military ballots and is trying to move as many county courts as possible. At least five counties are facing legal action forcing reviews. "Ultimately they were not counting votes, but casting votes. It was not a process that is credible, trustworthy or fair," said the Governor of Montana, Mr. Marc Racicot.

Today's certification of the Florida vote will come after the Supreme Court stipulated deadline passes, provided there are no last-minute court orders to the contrary. The Bush campaign, in an effort to put pressure on the Vice President, as also in an attempt to sway public opinion to its side, would be having a victory party of sorts, if not a major celebration. But the intended pressure on the Vice-President to concede will depend on the margin of "win" that the Texas Governor likely to post.

Media reports say that aside from moving the Florida courts, Mr. Gore is expected to address the nation on Monday to explain why he was still pursuing the legal option.

THE HINDU

27 NOV 2000

Bush wins Florida, Gore moves court

DESKAN THIRUNARAYANAPURAM
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, Nov. 27. — Florida yesterday declared Mr George W Bush the winner of the presidential election in the state by a margin of 537 votes, giving him all the 25 electoral votes from the state needed to win the presidency.

But the fight over the election appeared nowhere near an end as his Democrat rival, Mr Al Gore, filed lawsuits today contesting the official presidential election result in Florida.

Mr Gore's attorney, Mr Dexter Douglass, filed the suits with the Leon county circuit court here shortly after 10.45 p.m. (IST).

The lawsuits contested the count in three Florida counties: Miami-Dade, Nassau and Palm Beach.

Yesterday, the Florida secretary of state, Ms Katherine Harris, announced that Mr Bush had 2,912,790 votes to Mr Gore's 2,912,253, a margin of 537 votes out of more than 6 million cast.

(But the Florida election officials rejected last-minute updated returns from the Palm Beach county, submitted after the deadline set by the state's Supreme Court expired. Mr Gore had secured around 180 additional votes which could have brought down Mr Bush's lead to around 350 votes, adds UNI from Tallahassee, Florida.)

The Florida supreme court last Tuesday allowed the hand-

counted votes to be included in the final tally, and set a deadline of 5 p.m. yesterday to certify the final result. The next day, the predominantly Democratic Miami-Dade county decided to suspend manual recount over doubts of meeting the deadline, causing a setback for Mr Gore.

(Mr Gore's legal counsel, Mr David Boies, said the Miami-Dade county had completed counting of 388 votes before calling off the exercise. But

standard is an incomplete and inaccurate count".

Mr Gore, meanwhile, asked for television time from the networks to address the nation at noon on Monday. He plans to make the case for what one aide called "a full and fair counting" of the vote.

Other Democrats too plan to show their solidarity through a series of planned moves.

Shortly before the 5 p.m. deadline yesterday, Mr Gore's

recount, Secretary Cheney and I are honoured and humbled to have won the State of Florida, which gives us the needed electoral votes to win the election. We will therefore undertake the responsibility of preparing to serve as America's next President and Vice-President," he said.

Mr Bush also asked Mr Gore to reconsider his decision to further contest the election outcome.

"If the Vice-President chooses to go forward, he is filing a contest to the outcome of the election and that is not the best route for America," he said.

He then announced that he would immediately begin planning for the transition to show that he and Mr Cheney were "preparing to serve as America's next President and Vice-President". He formally designated Mr Cheney head of his transition team.

The legal wrangling, meanwhile, will continue. The US Supreme Court will hear oral arguments on Friday on whether Florida's mostly Democratic high court overstepped in its decision last week ordering the manual recounts to continue.

Members of the Republican-controlled Florida legislature will also consider their options for intervening, possibly to name electors if the election remains in dispute at the time of the 12 December deadline for selection of those electors.

ADMINISTRATION'S BLOW TO BUSH

WASHINGTON, Nov. 27. — Even as Mr Bush today went ahead with the presidential transition process, the Clinton administration gave the Republican candidate a thumbs down saying he should refrain till things became clear.

Dealing a severe blow to the hopes of Mr Bush, a spokesperson of the Clinton administration said things were still unclear and the Republicans should exercise restraint.

"There is no way federal funds could be released for running the office or provide accommodation till things are settled in a court of law."

"There is no apparent winner and the outcome is still unclear," the spokesperson said. — UNI

these votes were not taken into reckoning by the secretary of state during the final certification of results, adds UNI. As many as 10,000 disputed ballots in the county were not subjected to manual recount and it was a blatant violation of the Florida law, Mr Boies said.)

Moments after Ms Harris's announcement, Mr Gore's vice-presidential running mate, Mr Joseph I Lieberman, denounced "what by any reasonable

legal advisers held a news conference to announce that he would contest the results in Miami-Dade, Palm Beach and Nassau counties.

In Austin, Texas, Mr Bush made a nationally televised appearance to declare himself and running mate, Mr Dick Cheney, the winners of the presidential election.

"The election was close, but tonight, after a count, a recount and yet another manual

THE STATESMAN

28 NOV 2001

twang's the thing

There is a direct correlation between the degree of populist elite-bashing in this election and the level of regionalism in the accents of presidential candidates George W Bush and Al Gore,

says **BEN MACINTYRE**

THE US presidential election may be a battle between two Ivy League-educated scions of powerful political families, but to hear them on the stump these days they might be a pair of old-fashioned southern orators fighting it out for the red-neck vote.

As the race has become more populist in emphasis, so has the rhetoric. The speeches of George W Bush of Texas have dropped what little polish they had in favour of an "aw-shucks", back-slapping, straight-from-the-belt-buckle tone of old-style rural politics.

"Hey, lemme tell y'all what's on mah mind," he drawled at a recent rally in Pittsburgh. "Are y'all gonna let your healthcare choices be made by bee-yew-row-crats?"

If you closed your eyes, the Republican candidate might have been in his shirtsleeves and declaiming from an upturned box in the boondocks rather than wearing a suit and tie and standing in a neatly converted urban church.

The same sort of rhetorical style is often adopted by Al Gore. Put the Democrat in a

pair of cowboy boots and place him somewhere below the Mason-Dixon line and he starts twanging like a Tennessee banjo. Mr Gore, born in Washington and raised in a hotel before going to Yale, can switch his southern accent on and off at will.

In Maryland last week, when he urged the release of oil from the Strategic Petroleum Reserve, the Vice-President was the image of precise pronunciation.

Just a few weeks earlier, surrounded by the hometown crowd in Carthage, Tennessee, he was a lot closer to hillbilly than Capitol Hill. "I wanna thank all a' you good folks for comin' out an' meetin' mah good fren' Joe Lieberman," he burbled, thumbs in belt. Even his running mate appeared a little surprised at the sudden appearance of Hayseed Al, who looked as if he might spit tobacco juice at any moment.

The Connecticut-born Mr Bush (Andover, Yale and Harvard) has a Texas accent that is more deeply embedded but he too can adapt its tuning to the audience. There is a direct correlation between the degree of pop-

ulist elite-bashing in this election and the level of regionalism in the accents of the two candidates.

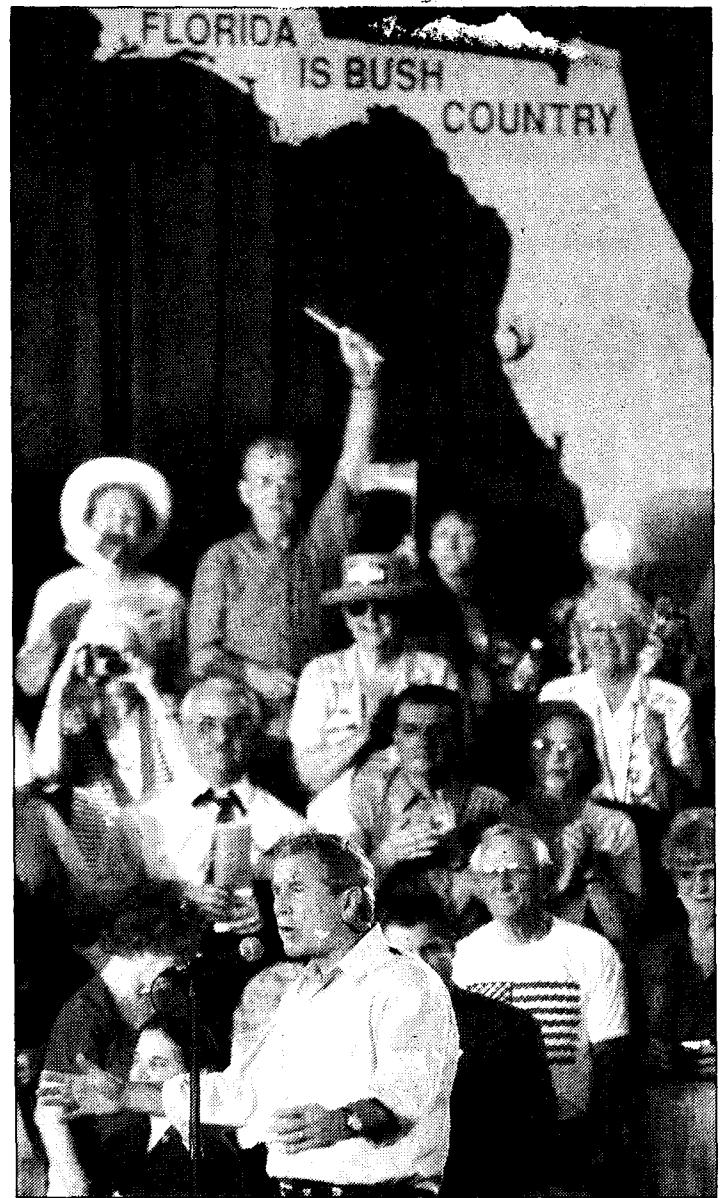
When Mr Gore is excoriating the pharmaceutical companies and oil corporations, or addressing union members or farmers, his accent immediately thickens and ripens, suggestive of working-class solidarity.

A similar effect is seen when Mr Bush attacks the ruling class, or rather, as *The Washington Post* recently reported his words, the "phil-AW-sophers of big gummint out of Washington Dee Cee".

The Bush drawl has the disadvantage that it helps to compound the bizarre locutions to which the candidate is prone. Mr Bush's style is to emphasise, reverberatingly, every syllable of selected key words. This is fine when the target is "bee-yew-row-crats", but harder when the words do not trip off the tongue, but merely trip.

Hence, such pearls as "We will not stand for the subsidiation of failure" and "I was just inebriating what Midland was all about."

Some have speculated that Mr Bush suffers from dyslexia but after prolonged obser-



'LEMME TELL Y'ALL WHAT'S ON MAH MIND': Republican presidential candidate, Texas Governor George W Bush, speaking at a rally at Orlando International Airport recently. — AP/PTI.

vation I suggest that what ails him is actually lexophobia, or word-fear, exacerbated by his Texas inflection: Mr Bush sees a long word looming, swerves to avoid it, then tries to break it up into bits and finds himself in a linguistic pile-up.

A recent study by Dianne Markley of the University of North Texas found that employers respond negatively to job candidates with southern accents.

The same is no longer true of politics. President Clinton managed to parlay the speech patterns of rural Arkansas into an election

asset, and eight years later some voters have come to associate a southern intonation with the power of the presidency.

On the other hand, the free-style good-old-boy patter has its limits, and can baffle unattuned listeners more than it inspires them.

As Mr Bush once said: "This may sound a little West Texan to you, but Ah like it, when Ah'm talkin' 'bout, when Ah'm talkin' 'bout myself, and when he's talkin' 'bout myself, all of us are talkin' 'bout me."

— *The Times, London.*

Clinton team holds transition meeting

WSO
SF-9
11
REUTERS

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29. — The White House convened a meeting today of top US officials to plan a smooth transition to the eventual winner of the presidential election.

"Given the unusual situation we're in, we're doing everything we can to ensure that the transition is a smooth one," White House spokesman, Mr Jake Siewert, said.

With the outcome of the election still in doubt between Republican George W Bush and Democrat Al Gore, President Bill Clinton was anxiously waiting to find out who would be moving in.

Presiding over the transition meeting was White House chief of staff, Mr John Podesta. Included were key White House officials as well as FBI representatives, the general services administration and the internal revenue service.

The general services administration, caretaker



Mr Bush seems to be making a point as he passes a group gathered to welcome him and his wife on the way to their ranch near Crawford, Texas, on Tuesday night. — AP/PTI

agency for government buildings, has refused to turn over transition office space and transition money to the Bush team as requested since the outcome of the election is still in doubt.

Mr Siewert said the FBI

would not yet be able to begin background investigations on would-be Bush appointees, as will be required, because it is not clear if Mr Bush won the election due to Mr Gore's court challenges to Mr Bush's certified victory in Florida.

"They're in the same place the rest of the administration is, in that they may be able to provide some preliminary information about what the process entails, but they can't begin the full transition process until there's a clear victor," Mr Siewert said of the FBI.

Court drama

In an extraordinary plea, Mr Bush's lawyers asked the US Supreme Court to bring a "legal finality" to the election by overturning the Florida courts and ending any further recount. The Gore team countered that the Supreme Court should not interfere in Florida's recount dispute as it is not a matter of the federal court.

THE STATESMAN

30 NOV 2000

Florida court rejects Gore demand

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, NOV. 29. The battle for the U.S. presidency entered the fourth week with both the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, filing briefs before the U.S. Supreme Court. Mr. Gore tuned up his public relations pitch for the second day and called for the full tabulation of votes in Florida under a new seven-day timetable, but, a Circuit Court judge in Tallahassee refused to oblige.

The Vice-President reiterated his demand that all votes in Florida be counted and criticised the Bush team for running the clock out. Opinion polls taken since the State certification have not been good news for the Vice-President, who, however, said the surveys did not matter.

In his brief filed in the U.S. Supreme Court, Mr. Bush urged a stamp of finality — "lawful, final and conclusive" — saying failure to do so would risk a major constitutional crisis. "Perhaps the most significant consequence of the court's ruling for the petitioner would be to clarify the governing federal law standards and thereby forestall an impending constitutional crisis," Mr. Bush's lawyers argued.

The Gore team, apart from saying that the opposition's charges are groundless or "insubstantial", has pointed out that the U.S. Su-

preme Court should not even be involved. "Principles of federalism counsel strongly against interference by this court," lawyers for Mr. Gore have said. The Gore campaign also feels that the U.S. Supreme Court may decide on its own to stop the case.

The apex court, scheduled to hear oral arguments from both sides on Friday, is to rule on whether the Florida Supreme Court improperly extended the November 14 State deadline for manual counts and in the process violated the Constitution and the federal law. The Bush team has said that the groundrules for counting changed after November 14 by taking into account the so-called dimpled ballots in one county.

Both at the federal and at State levels, the courts are being reminded that Florida's legislators are getting ready to intervene. Analysts say that if the courts hand the Vice-President a victory and the State legislature favours the Texas Governor, it will be upto Congress to sort out who gets the 25 electoral college votes on January 6 next year.

Meanwhile, Judicial Watch, a conservative law firm involved in litigation against the Clinton administration, has won access to the thousands of contested presidential ballots in the Palm Beach county, creating an additional complication for the Gore campaign. The Democrats objected saying the ballots in

question were evidence in their case. But, Judicial Watch threatened legal action and managed to have its way.

Pointing out that it was time to "wrap this up" and that "common sense" did not allow for another recount, the Bush camp made it clear on Tuesday that it was ready to defend itself in State courts. A team of lawyers quickly went to work in Florida thwarting attempts by the Democrats to speed up the court process. A Circuit Court judge scheduled a hearing on Saturday to determine whether some 13,000 ballots in two Democratic counties should be re-counted and ordered the ballots to be transported to Tallahassee.

Both the Bush and Gore campaigns are keeping an eye on the opinion polls. The Democrats, particularly the lawmakers who have thrown their weight behind Mr. Gore, are worried that if the legal battle stretches on the American public's patience will not hold. Already there are signs of this. But the pressure is not just on the Vice-President — a good many Americans also believe that Mr. Bush "jumped the gun" in proclaiming victory and starting the transition process.

That has not stopped the Texas Governor from going ahead with his plans. For, this is one of the strategies drawn up by his advisers to put additional pressure on the Vice-President.

THE HINDU

30 NOV 2000

US Election

'Demublicans' and Lani Guinier

By SHASTRI RAMACHANDARAN

JUST over a year ago had someone suggested that the US election could end up as a resultless ritual, it would have been dismissed as the ranting of a lunatic. Yet this is what Lani Guinier had forecast. "The winner-takes-all (WTA) system could blow up in our face sooner than you expect", was the point she made during a conversation in Salzburg.

Guinier was there for a seminar on 'Race and Ethnicity'. I first ran into her when she stopped me on the street to ask the way into town. I didn't know who she was, and we went our separate ways in the same direction. Minutes later my companion said, "Didn't you hear her? She said she is Lani Guinier". The dime dropped. It came back in a rush. This was the woman whom Bill Clinton, in the first euphoric weeks after becoming president in April 1993, had nominated for assistant attorney general to head the civil rights division in the US justice department.

It unleashed one of the vilest campaigns. Guinier was grotesquely demonised as a virago out to destroy American democracy, driven by wanting more for blacks and less for whites. She was pasted with outrageous labels — 'Quota Queen', 'Loony Lani', 'Czarina of Czeperatism', 'Real America's Madwoman', 'Princess of Proportionality', among others. After communism, this was the most fearful spectre haunting the US, or so the drumbeats went. McCarthyism was a tame affair to the "low-tech lynching" of Guinier. That Bill and Hillary were long-time friends and her home the first they visited for a 'normal, human' dinner after moving into the White House didn't matter much when the heat was turned on.

Eventually, Clinton capitulated to the Republican barrage and withdrew her nomination. The same Clinton, as Arkansas governor in the late '80s, had declared, "I am in love with Lani Guinier". This was after a difficult voting rights case in which Clinton had been the lead defendant. Guinier, one of America's foremost voices on civil and voting rights, committed to enlisting and empowering those marginalised by the electoral system, went on to become professor of law at Harvard. She was the first woman of colour to join the tenured faculty at Harvard Law School.

So what has that got to do with the US election fiasco? Everything — about making every vote count. After Florida's secretary of state declared George Bush the winner, Al Gore vowed to contest the ruling if only to establish that "every vote counts". How can every vote count if some of them are not counted and some others are discarded? he contended, to convey that he was motivated by the principle and not ambition.

This principle — of making every vote count — is exactly what Guinier has been vigorously campaigning for, before and throughout the Democratic presidency. She stands for a new electoral frame where voter choice would be better represented. While the details and nuances of this can be confusing, in simple terms what Guinier has been pushing for is a system of proportional representation (PR) on the lines prevalent in several democracies such as South Africa and Germany. She contends that

IN BRIEF

- Civil rights champion Lani Guinier had foreseen US elections facing such a crisis
- She has fought for a new electoral frame, not dominated by 'Demublicans' — Democrats & Republicans
- This would have truly made every vote count

the WTA model is not only unrepresentative but discourages participation. More and more people, mainly the poor — mostly people of colour but significant sections of whites too — don't vote, or are prevented from doing so, because they feel that their votes do not count.

The WTA system limits the players to two parties, awards all the power to those with the most votes, encourages centrism instead of consensus and disempowers a diversity of sections that might well add up to a bigger majority. The loser is kept out and his voters are left without representation or voice in the legislative process of, say, the US Congress. She attributes this to the tyranny of the electoral college. The unfairness of excluding the 'minority' from participation is at the core of her advocacy for a shift from a system that discourages the majority of Americans from voting. Clinton's 1996 election bears out

her case. Less than 49 per cent of the voters cast their ballot in what was the lowest turn-out in 62 years. This meant that 76 per cent of the voters did not support his re-election — either they did not vote, or did not vote for him. Guinier's concern is, for example, how to get this 76 per cent to be more active participants: by motivating them to vote and giving the motivated voter a voice worth his ballot. Had there been a PR system, a president or governor may still get elected directly. But representation in the Senate or Congress would reflect more accurately the diversity of participation and, therefore, make more people value their vote and exercise it. Much of Guinier's passionate engagement is driven by an urge for greater racial equality, a deeper and wider integration of the process which has breached the barricades of discrimination in defence service, employment, education and public transport.

The most clinching argument she advances is that it is the PR system, of the kind she favours, that has enabled the white minority in South Africa to be represented in Nelson Mandela's democracy. The PR system assures seats to political parties and diverse groups in proportion to the votes received. The WTA system makes America a "partial democracy" evolved from a monarchy and inherited from Great Britain.

Had the New Democrats led by Clinton stuck to what they sought to accomplish with Guinier's nomination instead of surrendering to a Republican agenda, Al Gore would have had millions of votes more than George Bush, and they could have been counted more easily. The Democrats had the chance of make every vote in America count. Instead they are stuck with making every vote count in a few counties of Florida.

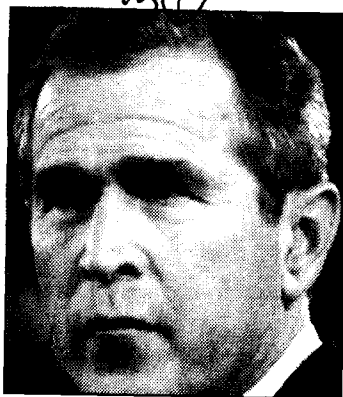
When the New Democrats dumped 'Loony Lani' to save some powerful necks on the on the political line, they thought the setback to civil rights was of little consequence. The challenge now is as much for the civil rights movement as for all those with a stake in the system to recoup a deficit of democracy which was glossed over. Americans have always been open to new ideas in business. It's time they got used to new ideas in politics too.

lead, Bush sharpens attack

Gore ge



Mr Al Gore



Mr George W Bush

in creating the Internet." The derisive voice-over adds: "Yeah, and I invented the remote control."

The female voice says: "There's Al Gore, reinventing himself on television. Like I'm not going to notice. Who's he going to be today?"

Are viewers "seeing the Al Gore who raises money in a

Buddhist temple" or "the one who now promises campaign finance reform?" the advertisement asks. Approximately \$65,000 was illegally raised at the temple event, and subsequently returned.

The makers of the advertisement, which is being shown in 17 key states, denied that it marked a sharp escalation in

rhetoric. "We're showing Al Gore on a television screen speaking in his own voice. That's not an attack," Mr Clifford May, a spokesman for the Republican Party, said.

Democrats claimed that the sharp-edged advertisement was a sign that the Bush campaign was rattled at the progress being made by the Clinton-Lieberman ticket after the Democratic convention.

Mr Gore planned to release his own advertisements yesterday criticising anew Mr Bush's record as Governor of Texas, but held back in the hope that the harsher tone of his opponent's attacks would backfire.

Mr Joseph Lieberman, Mr Gore's running mate, immediately went on the offensive observing: "I'm sorry to say that Governor Bush's promise to change the tone of American politics has run into the reality of a troubled Bush-Cheney campaign."

BEN MACINTYRE
THE TIMES, LONDON

WASHINGTON, Sept. 2. - Newsweek poll has given Vice President Al Gore his widest lead yet, by 49 per cent to 47 per cent, provoking from George W Bush his fiercest attack of the election campaign.

A new Republican television advertisement, questioning Al Gore's integrity and mentioning the most embarrassing moments of his career as Vice President, coincided with a Newsweek poll. The Democratic candidate's supporters immediately claim that Mr Bush is lashing out because his campaign is faltering.

The 30-second spot includes footage of Mr Gore at the infamous Buddhist temple fundraising event in 1996, while another segment shows him declaring: "I took the initiative

Gore, Bush agree on debate formats

Washington, September 17 1899

REPRESENTATIVES FOR US Presidential candidates Democrat Al Gore and Republican George W. Bush yesterday agreed to three distinct formats for their upcoming debates, with the same moderator presiding over each face-off.

In the first debate, to be held on October 3 at the University of Massachusetts in Boston, the candidates will stand at podiums in the conventional style, the Bipartisan Commission on Presidential Debates said in a statement.

The moderator for this and the other two presidential debates will be public television's Jim Lehrer, anchor of PBS's "Newshour with Jim Lehrer" show.

But in a break with tradition, in the October 11 and October 17 sessions, Gore and Bush will be seated at a table with Lehrer in talk-show style. In the final debate, the format will be a town hall, with the audience allowed to ask the candidates questions, the commission said. Each debate will be 90 minutes long, and each will start at 9 pm. Eastern Time.

The decision on the format followed three days of formal negotiations and several weeks of public squabbling between the two sides over whether to have traditional formal debates sponsored by the Bipartisan Commission or looser, informal meetings on television shows.

A spokesman for the commission

on presidential debates said the organisation was not disclosing any other details regarding the presidential debates for now.

The commission hailed as "historic" the agreement on the new format for the two latter debates, which will be held at Wake Forest University in Winston-Salem, north Carolina, and at Washington University in St Louis.

"The agreement reached today, concerning more open formats which will afford the American people an opportunity to see the candidates discussing in depth the issues of importance to our nation's future, is truly historic," it said. The Commission said the formats would lead to a "more open and free-flowing exchange of views than in years past."

The two sides announced on Thursday they agreed on three presidential debates and one vice presidential debate as proposed by the Commission. The decision was a victory for vice president Gore, who had backed the three-plus-one formula.

Bush originally had sought less restrictive formats than the Commission debates that have marked presidential campaigns in the past. He had proposed appearing with Gore on two television interview shows and holding only one Commission-sponsored debate. He abandoned that proposal last week when it became clear voters did not support it.

(Reuters)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 SEP 2000

US Senate votes in favour of China trade Bill

S. Rajagopalan

Washington, September 20

DISREGARDING OBJECTIONS from labour and human rights groups, the US Senate on Tuesday decisively voted to accord permanent normal trade relations (PNTR) status to China. The passage, in a way, sets the stage for the Asian giant's entry into the World Trade Organisation (WTO) by the year-end.

The overwhelming Senate vote (83-15) represents another feather in the cap for President Bill Clinton, who has aggressively campaigned for the trade normalisation which, in his view, will promote prosperity in America and democracy in China.

Under the new regime, Chinese products will get on a permanent basis the same low

tariff access to the American market that products from about every other country have been getting. It will also end the 20-year practice of subjecting the trade relations to a review by the US Congress on a year to year basis.

In return, China will slash tariffs on US industrial and agricultural products and generally open the doors to American business and investors. US firms will be able to invest directly in key areas like telecommunications and life insurance. They will, however, not be allowed majority stake.

For India, the granting of PNTR to China will pose an additional challenge in terms of penetrating the US market. Even without the PNTR prop, Chinese consumer products have flooded the American market, outpricing most of their peers.

The US corporates, seeing visions of a major boom, have been engaged in hectic lobbying for the trade legislation, which now goes to the White House for the President's assent. In contrast to the big business manoeuvres, pro-democracy groups have been waging a bitter campaign for the past several months to prevail upon the US authorities not to lose an effective lever to see that Beijing did not resort to further human rights excesses.

President Clinton, while hailing the Senate's passage, responded to the criticism from human rights activists by remarking that the US would have more influence in China "with an outstretched hand than with a clenched fist".

"This landmark agreement will extend economic prosperity at home and promote eco-

nomic freedom in China, increasing the prospects for openness in China and a more peaceful future for all of us," he said.

From an American standpoint, Mr Clinton noted that in return for normal trade relations, China would open its markets to American products from wheat to cars to consulting services. The US's high-tech companies would help to speed the information revolution there.

As he put it, "Outside competition will speed the demise of China's huge state industries and spur the enterprise of private sector involvement. They will diminish the role of government in people's daily lives."

The critics of PNTR, on the other hand, feel that the US would now be in no position to prevail upon China to adhere to core labour standards.

THE HINDUSTAN

21 SEP 2000

Clintons escape criminal charges in Whitewater probe ^{22/9} ^{WSD}

By David Osborne ^{1/14}

NEW YORK: A giant shadow across the U.S. Senate campaign of Hillary Rodham Clinton lifted on Wednesday when the independent counsel, Robert Ray, formally wound up the six-year Whitewater investigation and declared he had insufficient evidence to recommend criminal charges against President Bill Clinton or the First Lady.

By sending his sealed report to a panel of appellate judges, Mr Ray formally shut down an investigation that began in 1994 and has haunted the first family ever since. The probe, which went into a web of allegations of financial fraud and obstruction of justice, led to 14 convictions and cost \$50 million.

The independent counsel, who succeeded Kenneth Starr, issued a statement summarising his findings. "The office determined that evidence was insufficient to prove to a jury beyond a reasonable doubt that either the President or Ms Clinton knowingly participated in any criminal conduct," it said.

Aides to Ms Clinton had been quietly braced for Mr Ray's determination. Had he concluded otherwise and recommended pursuing charges against the First Lady, the impact on her race in New York could have been devastating. She remains in a very tight race with the Republican Congressman, Rick Lazio.

The shelving of the inquiry will also give great relief to President Clinton. His legal troubles are not over, however. Mr Ray has already served notice that he intends ruling after Mr Clinton leaves office next January on whether he should face obstruction of justice charges in the Monica Lewinsky case.

At its inception, the investigati-

was focused on the failure in the mid-Eighties of an Arkansas savings and loan bank, the Madison Guaranty, that was owned by Jim McDougal, a close friend of the then Governor Bill Clinton. Mr McDougal and his wife, Susan McDougal, were at the same time partners with the Clintons in a property

ed to Whitewater Development Co. and conclude that there are no grounds for legal action," said press secretary Joe Lockhart.

The statement was hailed also by Susan McDougal. Her husband died while in jail while she was incarcerated for 18 months for refusing to assist prosecutors pursue President Clinton. "It was a real estate deal that went wrong and there never was anything criminal about it," she said.

Among the 14 convicted in the course of the investigation were Webster Hubbell, a close friend of the Clintons, and the former Governor of Arkansas, Guy Tucker. Mr Ray said his office had looked into whether the President gave false testimony in the Tucker trial when he denied knowing about a fraudulent loan. His office, he said, concluded it could not prove President Clinton "knew of the loan or that his testimony regarding the loan was knowingly false". (The Independent)



Bill Clinton

Hillary Clinton

development project in northern Arkansas that went sour.

Over the years, however, the inquiry broadened considerably, eventually even absorbing the Lewinsky debacle. It also looked into the activities of Ms Clinton while at the Rose Law Firm in Little Rock, both in the Whitewater deal and another development involving McDougal called Castle Grande. Billing records for that project had vanished and then turned up mysteriously in the White House in 1996.

About the billing records, Mr Ray said the report...

THE TIMES OF INDIA

22 SEP 2000

Gore, Bush disagree on debates

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

NEW YORK, SEPT. 5. Both the Democrats and the Republicans launched the last leg of the campaign for the Presidential and Congressional elections on Labour Day.

The major party Presidential nominees, Mr. Al Gore and Mr. George W Bush focussed on the working class in rallies in the mid west and in the south but found time to exchange some sharp words on the Presidential debate format.

Mr. Gore and his running mate, Mr. Joseph Lieberman had a round-the-clock engagement that saw them meeting workers on shifts and hospital employees in Michigan and Florida while Mr. Bush and his running mate, Mr. Richard Cheney were at a rally in Illinois charging that the Vice-President was an interesting example of "Washington doublespeak".

Mr. Gore and Mr. Lieberman stressed that working people was what the campaign was all about.

10-16 89
We are spending Labour Day with working people because you are what this campaign is about," the Vice-President said at a rally with firefighters in Florida.

"We want to honour you, we want to listen carefully to you and we want to tell you what we believe is the right thing to do," Mr. Gore said.

Anxious or perhaps even desperate to find an "opening" in the campaign that is going the way of his opponent, Mr. Bush made a big issue of Mr. Gore's refusal to go along with his format for the Presidential debate.

Disagreeing with a Bipartisan Commission's recommendations that the major candidates should go in for three nationally televised debates, Mr. Bush suggested a different format that would have seen only two major television networks involved. Mr. Gore refused to go along with this idea.

"My opponent said he would debate me any place, any time, anywhere, I said 'Fine, why don't we just show up...and discuss differences.' But, no, all of a sudden, words about any time, anywhere

don't mean anything," the Texas Governor said.

At a time when there is an impression that Mr. Bush wants to duck the debates, the Texas Governor is trying to turn the tables on Mr. Gore accusing him of "Washington doublespeak".

Mr. Bush has also questioned the credibility of the Vice-President.

The Gore campaign responded saying that the Vice-President had been calling for debates for the last nine months and that Mr. Bush was trying to dictate the format.

"That seems to be pretty arrogant," a spokesman for the Gore campaign said.

Mr. Gore is quite happy with his campaign as polls show him in a 10 percentage point lead over Mr. Bush.

"I am loving it because it is finally starting to focus on specifics. You get to Labour Day and people start tuning in to see what is going on. They want to hear specifics. They don't want to hear personal attacks," the Vice-President remarked.

THE TIMES

16 SEP 2001

Gore, Bush slug it out over format of presidential debate

S. Rajagopalan
Washington, September 4

TO DEBATE or not to debate? That itself has become a subject for furious debate between the two presidential hopefuls, George W. Bush and Al Gore, who are currently running neck and neck in popularity ratings.

With the presidential race entering the crucial phase of the last 60 days later this week, the two are slugging it out on what the format of the customary presidential debate should be. Both seem to be out to score pre-heat points.

Mr Bush, projected by the Democrats as one shying away from a debate, sought to turn the tables on Sunday by announcing his own schedule of three debates and challenged Mr Gore to accept it.

Mr Gore, who had earlier taunted the Republican by saying he was ready for any debate anywhere and at anytime, cried foul and rejected the Bush proposal, saying the format has to be the one proposed by the Independent Commission on

Presidential Debates.

The Commission had proposed three debates of 90 minutes' duration each and telecast by all networks. Mr Bush, coming up with his own variant, is ready to accept only one of that debate. He wants the other two to be of 60 minutes' duration each and on a single TV network.

Calling a Press conference at short notice, he said, "Labour Day (September 4) is the traditional kickoff of the fall campaign and today I have a simple message: Let the debates begin."

But Mr Gore was quick to reject the offer. "What is needed is to respect the rights of the American people, to see the debates on all the networks in prime time," he countered.

His campaign head William Daley went a step further, commenting, "No candidate should arrogantly insist on debating where and when it best suits him."

The Commission, which has conducted the presidential debates from 1988 onwards, has proposed the debates at the universities of

Massachusetts, Wake Forest and Washington on October 3, 11 and 17 respectively.

Mr Bush's proposal is over NBC's Meet the Press on September 12, on CNN's Larry King Live on October 3 and at Washington University on October 17.

Political analysts saw the Bush googly as essentially a counter-offensive, aimed at catching Mr Gore on the wrong foot. Since Mr Gore had made a blanket offer, Mr Bush could now expose him for rejecting his proposal on the debates.

"It's important for the American people to be able to trust the next president to keep his commitments and therefore I take Al Gore at his word that he will be there," he commented.

Gore supporters saw the Bush move as one more attempt to duck the prime-time debate on the major networks, insisting that he can't take on Mr Gore.

They also accused Mr Bush of trying to deprive the people of a chance to assess the two contenders in a face-to-face interaction.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

SEP 2000

110-12
2/8

U.S. must not shift focus from S. Asia, says GOP

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

PHILADELPHIA, AUG. 1. The attention to the fate of East Asia should not obscure the United States' attention from the future of South Asia where India is emerging as one of the great democracies of the 21st century, the Republican Party has said in its Platform (election manifesto).

The Grand Old Party pointed out that in engaging India, the U.S. must be mindful of its "long standing" relationship with Pakistan and that Washington's priority must be on the stable development of this "volatile region" where adversaries faced each other with nuclear weapons.

"The U.S. should engage India, respecting its great multicultural achievements and encouraging Indian choices for a more open world. Mindful of its long standing relationship with Pakistan, the U.S. must place a priority on the secure, stable development of this volatile region where adversaries now face each other with nuclear arsenals," the GOP Platform said in the section on foreign policy.

The November 7 election will be decided on domestic issues and directions; but both the Republican and the Democratic Parties will focus on foreign policy. And the Republicans have begun the formal debate by lashing out at the general direction of the Clinton administration's foreign policies in the last seven and a half years.

Among the issues the GOP has singled out for attack are the "failure" to guard nuclear secrets, the U.S' inability to counter the "rampant" proliferation of nuclear, biological and chemical weapons and missile delivery systems around the world and the general failure to proceed with the National Missile Defence system. It also attacked the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty calling it "another anachronism of obsolete strategic thinking".

The platform essentially espouses what the top leadership, including the Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, has been saying on the existing threats and future direction of American foreign policy. Against the backdrop of what has been taking place

in the nuclear labs, the GOP has particularly criticised the People's Republic of China. "The theft of vital nuclear secrets by China represents one of the greatest security defeats in the history of the United States," it said.

"The new Republican President will deploy a national missile defence for reasons of national security; but he will also do so because there is a moral imperative involved: The American people deserve to be protected. It is the President's constitutional obligation."

A Republican administration, the Platform said, would give the intelligence community the leadership, resources and operational latitude. It was said that a weak leadership and neglect by the present administration had allowed intelligence capabilities, including space based systems, to atrophy resulting in "repeated proliferation surprises such as Iraq's renewed chemical and biological weapons programmes, India's nuclear weapons test and North Korea's test of a three-stage ballistic missile".

On the topic of international economics, the Republicans pointed out that under a new conservative administration in collaboration with Congress, there would be an engagement with Latin America and the Asia Pacific, "including a new dialogue with India" about political economy and free trade. "Under the policies of the present administration, many markets remain closed and U.S. trade deficits keep rising. New economic structures are needed to combine regional agreements with development of global rules for opening the world economy."

Criticising the present administration for "wavering" and "ambivalence", the Republicans talked of a "Principled American Leadership" and that they had a strategy to go about. "It is a strategy that recalls traditional truths about power and ideals and applies them to networked marketplaces, modern diplomacy and high-tech battlefield. A Republican administration will use power wisely, set priorities, craft needed institutions or openness and freedom and invest in the future," the GOP said.

THE HINDU

- 2 AUG 2000

Reach out to minorities: Powell

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

PHILADELPHIA, AUG. 1. The Grand Old Party wrapped up the opening day of its National Convention by bringing two ace speakers to the podium — Ms Laura Bush, wife of the presidential candidate, Mr. George W. Bush, and the former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Colin Powell. While Mrs. Bush chose to confine her comments to education and the kind of passion her husband feels about the issue, Gen. Powell told the Republicans, bluntly and forcefully, that the party must reach out to the minority groups every day, not just in an election year.

Thousands of delegates and guests packed the First Union Centre to hear Mrs Bush who argued that the core principles of Mr. Bush would not change "with the winds of politics or fame or fortune or misfortune".

A former school teacher and a librarian, Mrs Bush argued that her husband knew more about education than anybody else. "And one of the major reasons George is running for President is to make sure every child in America has that same opportunity." And for her part, she would make early child development as one of her priorities.

Neither Mrs Bush nor Gen. Powell referred to the present administration or the Democrats by name, but the First Lady of Texas receive a standing ovation



The Republican presidential candidate, Mr. George Bush, talks about when he will take the oath of office, as Mrs. Laura Bush watches, during a rally at the University of Dayton, in Dayton, Ohio, on Monday. — AP

when she said America wanted a President who reflects its heart, values and leadership in the world. "They will be looking for someone to uphold that honour and that trust", Mrs Bush remarked, a clear reference to the troubled months of the Clinton presidency.

Gen. Powell, one of the main stars of Monday's event, delivered a compelling speech. On the one hand, he maintained that he was convinced of Mr. Bush's attitude

and policy of inclusion but on the other hand, made a pointed reminder to the GOP that the party should make the efforts to reach out to the minorities; drop its opposition to affirmative action; and work to bridge the racial divide in America.

The nation's highest priority, Gen. Powell reminded the audience, was that the future depended on building children, not jails. "Two million Americans who are paying for their crimes are not

paying taxes, are not paying for their children and are not raising families. Most of them are men and the majority of those men are minorities", the General said. The only African American to head the U.S. military, Gen. Powell was introduced by Mr. Bush via a satellite hookup from Ohio where the candidate is campaigning.

The four-day national convention in this swing State is an attempt by the GOP to showcase not just "compassionate conservatism" but also inclusiveness. In a formal sense, the Republicans placed the name of Mr. Bush in nomination for the President and ratified the platform by a voice vote. As a way of silencing the social conservatives, the party continues to oppose abortion rights even while seemingly reaching out to minorities and immigrants. "Our party is more inclusive, more diverse and more representative of America than ever before," remarked Senator Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania.

The Democrats, for their part, stepped up their criticism of Mr. Bush's record by starting to run television advertisements questioning Mr. Bush's record on environment and the issue of children's health. Polls are continuing to show Mr. Bush ahead of his opponent, Mr. Albert Gore, by 7 to 16 percentage points — a phenomenon passed off in some Democratic quarters as a "pre-convention bounce".

THE HINDU

200

Republicans nominate Bush

REUTERS
PHILADELPHIA, AUGUST 1

THE Republican National convention struck a relentlessly upbeat tone on its first day on Monday, nominating George W Bush for president and parading a succession of minority speakers to sing his praises.

At 10 am (1930 GMT IST), Republican chairman Jim Nicholson strode to the podium and declared: "We are here in the appointed place and we are here at the appointed time. So it is my privilege to proclaim the 2000 Republican National convention in session and to call it to order." Almost four hours later, Bush was formally nominated for president of the United States. No other names were offered.

The Republican love fest, that will culminate with Bush accepting the party's presidential nomination on Thursday night, began with delegates approving without dissent the party platform for the November 7 election.

The document took moderate positions on some issues but retained a hardline anti-abortion plank that would outlaw the procedure, in all circumstances, even to save the life of a pregnant woman. "Our platform that we present to you today is one that every Republican can be proud of and one which will carry Governor Bush to the



Former US president George Bush with his wife Barbara during the evening session of the 2000 Republican National Convention in Philadelphia's First Union Center on Monday — AFP

White House," said Wisconsin Governor Tommy Thompson, who chaired the committee that drafted the document. "The main attraction

brarian who intended to tell delegates her husband's top priority was to make sure every child in America had the opportunity to grow up reading and would never give up.

INDIAN EXPRESS

- 2 AUG 2000

The dauphin gets his old baby sitter

BY MAUREEN DOWD

Washington: In Bush-world, it's always Day 41 of Desert Storm, that glorious day the president's approval ratings soared toward 91.

The head-scratching choice of Dick Cheney is explained by the fact that he was in the bunker during the family's finest hour. They would have preferred Colin Powell, who was also in the bunker during their finest hour. But they let Brent Scowcroft, who was also in the bunker during their finest hour, help seal the deal for Mr Cheney.

It's impossible to work up even a solitary goosebump for a former staff member in the Ford White House. A prosperous, well-fed, balding, bland, male Republican Washington insider and former House leader who voted to the right of the NRA and Newt Gingrich.

In Congress, Mr Cheney was way, way out there, always willing to pony up money to guerrillas in Nicaragua and Angola but not to poor women whose lives were endangered by their pregnancies.

When Trent Lott starts gushing about somebody, Katie bar the door.

The Texas governor who promised to be a "different kind of Republican," the candidate who used words like "inclusive" and "compassionate" and "heart," is now running with a guy who defended cop-killer bullets and plastic guns that could slip through airport metal detectors.

Million moms will love that.

The Bush convention in Philadelphia will be gauzy, trying to appeal to women, moder-

ates and minorities, showcasing Elizabeth Dole, Condoleezza Rice (also in the bunker at the finest hour), John McCain, General Powell and Laura Bush. The opening theme is "Leave no child behind." It will be delicious to see how the Republicans deal with those Cheney votes against Head Start.

"Inclusive" loses a little punch when you are running with someone who in 1986 opposed a call to release Nelson Mandela after 23 years in prison, and often voted against the economic sanctions that helped crush apartheid.

The Cheney choice is about the past. But then, W.'s campaign has always been less about vision than vindication.

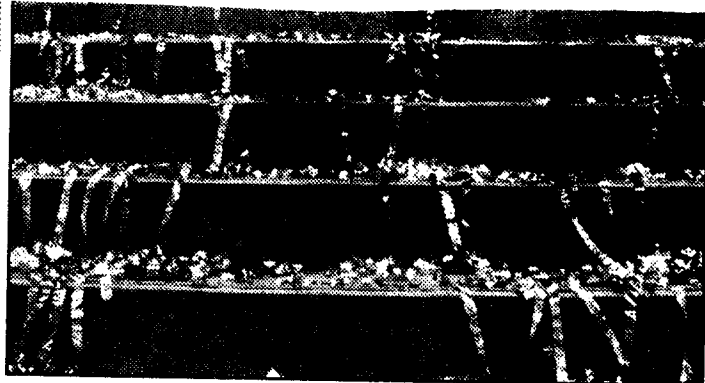
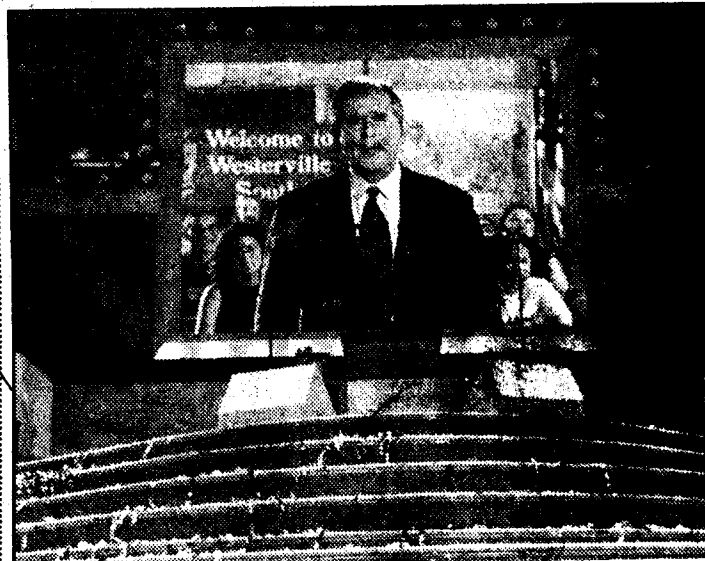
The dauphin must reclaim the throne because the Bushes must restore the halcyon days of the ruling-class court that thrived before that dissolute commoner Bill Clinton usurped it.

The family yearns to go back to the "honourable" days, the golden era of Establishment reign — before the decision not to go into Baghdad began to fester, before Bill Clinton stole credit for the thrumming economy, before first ladies went all weird on us.

Mr Cheney was picked because he is the anti-Quayle. George I was determined that George II not repeat his mistake, choosing someone young and callow. The ticket already had that covered.

Back in 1988 Mr Cheney, then a House luminary, would have been a good choice for George I. For George II, he comes across as the baby sitter.

Mr Cheney has been minding Junior all year — first coaching



Confetti lies on the podium steps as the image of George W. Bush is broadcast on the television screen during the evening session of the Republican Convention in Philadelphia, Monday (AP)

him in foreign affairs, then helping him sort through his VP picks, and now stepping in to provide a steady hand on the tiller.

The past dictated the choice in this way as well: W., who had loafed through long years when he could have been prepping for the presidency, felt he needed some heaviness on the ticket.

The Bushes hate being "psychoanalysed," as they call it. They don't like personal questions. And yet they make many crucial decisions based on personality.

The father chose Dan Quayle and the son chose Dick Cheney for the same reason: They wanted men who liked them, men with whom they had "a comfort level."

And while Mr Cheney might have voted like Tom DeLay, he has a calm and avuncular air. He vetted the other candidates, but

he himself was vetted by W. and Poppy, who, as usual, trusted their instincts.

I doubt either Bush would have felt comfortable running with a woman. Or with anyone who challenged their egos or made waves, like John McCain. They need a history of loyalty, and they have a preference for deference.

Dick Cheney is one of their guys. in the Club. And they know best.

Before the Bushes mess up any more vice-presidential picks, for Jeb or George P., they might want to stop checking their gut and start checking the voting record.

A ticket with two rich white Texas oilmen who went to Yale, avoided Vietnam and act more moderate than they are? For the Bushes, that's a perfect fit.

By arrangement with the *New York Times*

119-16
26/8

GOP themes ring hollow

WS 1

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

PHILADELPHIA, AUG. 2. The Grand Old Party is going out of its way to make this 37th National Convention something different. And the way the party is pushing to make a difference is to move away from rhetorics and into something called unity and inclusion. How all this filters down to the voter level after this four-day hoopla is over remains to be seen. But at least there is the determined effort to hear and be seen differently, certainly away from the one held four years ago in San Diego.

It is difficult to explain what "Compassionate Conservatism" is all about, if one were to sift through the Republican Platform. If it means something for everybody, it is clearly not there. There are elements thrown in for minorities and immigrants, but the social and religious conservatives have had their way — just as they did in 1996. This hardcore group refused to budge on the "sacred" issue of abortion rights; neither would it

move on the subject of gays and lesbians. In spite of the deep divisions within the moderate and the right wing of the GOP, the leadership prefers to play down the differences. Rather, the single minded objective is one of putting the nominee, Mr. George W. Bush into the White House on January 20, 2001. And this is going to be difficult if differences are going to be swept under the rug, in the name of something called "unity".

There were at least two things striking about the manner in which the retired Gen. Colin Powell went about giving his closing address on the Inaugural Day. On the one hand, the hero of Desert Storm was quite blunt in telling Republicans that their talk of "inclusion" cannot be a seasonal phenomenon, coming in handy only during election time.

Yet, on the other hand, even Gen. Powell did not want to get into the key divisive issue within the party — abortion rights. In

1996, at San Diego, while giving his famous "My Fellow Republicans" address, there was hissing and booing when Gen. Powell said that he believed in a woman's right to choose. But four years later he preferred to stay with the theme of bridging the racial divide and in urging the GOP to take a serious look at affirmative action policies.

The Democrats' response to the Republican theme of "inclusion" has been along expected lines — it rings hollow they argue even while being careful about criticising Gen. Powell. The African American Civil Rights leader, Mr. Jesse Jackson, said that there was a "tremendous gap" between the personal values and virtues of Gen. Powell and the policies of the GOP, and went on to make the point that the delegates at the GOP convention would dare not embarrass Gen. Powell.

But a lot of rhetoric is what national conventions are all about; and the party platforms are only

general statements of direction, not a manifesto for action upon winning elective office. Whether it is in the realm of domestic or foreign policies, the ground realities are much different after taking office. Moving away from set and established policies is easier said than done.

A clear example could be that of the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, who came to office on a strong anti-China plank. But some eight years later he is the top spokesman for a policy of constructive and strategic engagement with that East Asian country. Critics — both Republican and Democrat — have said that the Clinton administration has been bending over backwards to humour the leadership in Beijing.

The same could be said of candidate Bush. The Republican Platform has been highly critical of the People's Republic of China, especially in the area of "stealing" nuclear secrets and in all the negative implications of this for American security.

THE HINDU

3 AUG 2000

AMERICANS know Philadelphia as "the City of Brotherly Love". Most of the time this is an ironic notion. Race relations here are rawer than almost anywhere else in this country. That tension has not been helped by a remorseless economic decline sustained over 50 years.

The Clinton/Wall Street boom has scarcely touched these quarters. As one local wag said at the weekend, this is the first convention to be held in Philadelphia since 1948 and not much else has changed in that period either.

In one respect, though, the city's nickname is appropriate. The Republican delegates assembled here this week and temporarily altered the racial balance of the place and massively inflated average disposable income statistics. They were at peace with themselves and their country in a manner that has not been true for 10 years.

The last two Republican conventions were angry, even spiteful, affairs with endless internal divisions over abortion and a crude, if completely committed, loathing of Bill Clinton, combined with incomprehension at the idea that millions of Americans intended to vote for him.

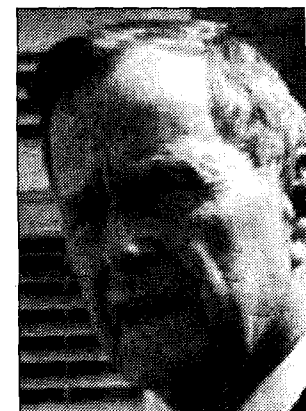
This time the atmosphere is so different that it scarcely seems like the same party. It is not merely that the odour of defeat hangs around Mr Al Gore like vultures circling a wounded wildebeest. It is that Republicans appear, at last, to be comfortable with each other and the electorate.

The crucial themes of the con-

Bush takes a leaf out of Clinton book



George Bush Sr once promised to seek a 'kinder, gentler America'. His son has delivered a kinder and gentler form of conservatism. This change in mood is the achievement of one man alone, whose influence was seen at the Republican convention in Philadelphia, says TIM HAMES



vention — unity, inclusion and compassion — have not had to be stuffed down the throats of reluctant activists, they are already aching for them. George Bush Sr once promised to seek a "kinder, gentler America," his son has already delivered a kinder and gentler form of conservatism.

This transformation of the mood is the achievement of one man alone, the political colossus whose influence can be seen in every aspect of this convention.

That man is William Jefferson Clinton.

He might as well admit it and come forward as George W Bush's campaign manager. The Clinton impact operates in two ways, linked by delicious paradox. The belief that Mr Clinton has been an ethical stain on the White House and the USA is shared universally by the Republicans. Having failed to drive him from office on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice, this party yearns for the next best thing, to ensure that his successor is one of their number.

That their candidate is the son of the man whom Mr Clinton ejected in the first place only compounds the prospective pleasure. But as the Texas Governor has rightly recognised, the only way in which a Republican can win this year is by emulating and thus legitimising the very techniques that constitute Mr Clinton's contribution to US politics.

The official slogan of this convention is, in a somewhat cumbersome phrase, "Restoring America's Purpose, Together." The secret title is "If you can't beat him, join him".

The Clinton effect in Philadelphia is all-pervasive. The most transparent feature involves the sort of people Mr Bush wants Americans to witness on their television screens this week and associate with his candidacy. In

San Diego four years ago, General Colin Powell was virtually the only black face in a sea of white male politicians. The Bush convention has already featured Mr Powell again, as well as Condeleezza Rice, the Governor's black female foreign policy specialist, a black female literacy expert, many Hispanic figures, the son of an immigrant farm worker who addressed delegates in Spanish and the sole openly homosexual Republican in Congress.

It would appear that only two heterosexual white men will have prime-time slots, although these are admittedly the nominees for President and Vice-President. If this were a matter of visual image alone, then it would not be especially significant.

But the Republican platform (or manifesto) has similarly shifted. The party which five years ago was happy to see the federal government shut down and which wanted to abolish the department of education, now argues that the "government does have a role to play in bettering people's life" and it has a candidate for the Oval Office who talks about schools more often than Tony Blair does.

The Republicans, who in 1996 condemned legal and illegal immigrants alike and who wanted to ban the children of illegal immigrants from using facilities such as schools, proclaims today that "We welcome these new Americans."

The final piece in the jigsaw is the retreat from the dark vocabulary and apocalyptic

"vision" of cultural collapse that the Republicans offered the USA for much of the 1990s. The Bush theme, like that of Mr Clinton, is hope and optimism.

In a development that would leave William Hague perplexed, the Republican contender has asked, indeed ordered, all speakers not to attack Mr Gore or the Democratic Party. They have been encouraged instead to concentrate on the positive aspects of their party's programme.

This is not exactly the approach that the Republicans adopted when Newt Gingrich served as Speaker of the House of Representatives and tried to enact his impeccably ideological Contract With America.

Mr Gingrich will have a prominence in Philadelphia this week not dissimilar to the part played by Leon Trotsky during Stalin's Russia in the 1930s. In place of the Doctrinaire Contract, Mr Bush is offering voters his Candlelit Dinner With America.

It was not so long ago that Republicans sought to appeal to the "moral majority". It is clear now that any majority will do nicely.

Frank Luntz, the pollster whose initial findings shaped the Contract With America, sums it up bluntly: "All of my friends who were part of the Gingrich Revolution have changed or moved on. They failed."

Yet in a sense this is unfair. In numerous areas the Gingrich brigade succeeded. The budget has shifted from

vast deficit to huge surplus, much of which is destined for a reduction in taxation. The federal government is smaller than it was while the 50 states have become stronger. The welfare state has been completely restructured in a conservative fashion. The Gingrich cadre's "failure" was their inability to appreciate the importance of step-by-step progress; like all revolutionaries they wanted too much and ended up sending themselves to the guillotine.

It would be wrong to conclude there is no substance, simply

slicker style, behind the Bush strategy. His proposals for education reform are fundamental by US standards and his desire partially to privatise the pension system would once have been considered recklessly radical.

The crucial difference is tone. Where the Gingrichites would have chanted "burn down the government," the "Bushies" coo "empower yourselves and your communities". The modern Republican Party fuses much of Ronald Reagan's philosophy with most of Mr Clinton's language.

All of which leads to the central oddity of this election. It might appear obvious that the

result which could truly confirm Mr Clinton's political legacy would be the elevation of his Vice-President to the Oval Office. Obvious perhaps but mistaken. In this election Mr Gore appears to resemble the Republicans of 1996 more than the Texas Governor. He is thrashing around for a central theme and in the absence of one has been reduced to relentlessly ne-



Republican presidential candidate George W Bush and wife Laura look up as confetti falls during a rally at Ohio recently. — AP/PTI

Bush takes a leaf out of Clinton book



George Bush Sr once promised to seek a 'kinder, gentler America'. His son has delivered a kinder and gentler form of conservatism. This change in mood is the achievement of one man alone, whose influence was seen at the Republican convention in Philadelphia, says TIM HAMES

San Diego four years ago, General Colin Powell was virtually the only black face in a sea of white male politicians. The Bush convention has already featured Mr Powell again, as well as Condeleezza Rice, the Governor's black female foreign policy specialist, a black female literacy expert, many Hispanic figures, the son of an immigrant farm worker who addressed delegates in Spanish and the sole openly homosexual Republican in Congress.

It would appear that only two heterosexual white men will have prime-time slots, although these are admittedly the nominees for President and Vice-President. If this were a matter of visual image alone, then it would not be especially significant.

But the Republican platform (or manifesto) has similarly shifted. The party which five years ago was happy to see the federal government shut down and which wanted to abolish the department of education, now argues that the "government does have a role to play in bettering people's life" and it has a candidate for the Oval Office who talks about schools more often than Tony Blair does.

The Republicans, who in 1996 condemned legal and illegal immigrants alike and who wanted to ban the children of illegal immigrants from using facilities such as schools, proclaims today that "We welcome these new Americans."

The final piece in the jigsaw is the retreat from the dark vocabulary and apocalyptic

"vision" of cultural collapse that the Republicans offered the USA for much of the 1990s. The Bush theme, like that of Mr Clinton, is hope and optimism.

In a development that would leave William Hague perplexed, the Republican contender has asked, indeed ordered, all speakers not to attack Mr Gore or the Democratic Party. They have been encouraged instead to concentrate on the positive aspects of their party's programme.

This is not exactly the approach that the Republicans adopted when Newt Gingrich served as Speaker of the House of Representatives and tried to enact his impeccably ideological Contract With America.

Mr Gingrich will have a prominence in Philadelphia this week not dissimilar to the part played by Leon Trotsky during Stalin's Russia in the 1930s. In place of the Doctrine Contract, Mr Bush is offering voters his Candlelit Dinner With America.

It was not so long ago that Republicans sought to appeal to the "moral majority". It is clear now that any majority will do nicely.

Frank Luntz, the pollster whose initial findings shaped the Contract With America, sums it up bluntly: "All of my friends who were part of the Gingrich Revolution have changed or moved on. They failed."

Yet in a sense this is unfair. In numerous areas the Gingrich brigade succeeded. The budget has shifted from

vast deficit to huge surplus, much of which is destined for a reduction in taxation. The federal government is smaller than it was while the 50 states have become stronger. The welfare state has been completely restructured in a conservative fashion. The Gingrich cadre's "failure" was their inability to appreciate the importance of step-by-step progress; like all revolutionaries they wanted too much and ended up sending themselves to the guillotine.

It would be wrong to conclude there is no substance, simply

slicker style, behind the Bush strategy. His proposals for education reform are fundamental by US standards and his desire partially to privatise the pension system would once have been considered recklessly radical.

The crucial difference is tone. Where the Gingrichites would have chanted "burn down the government," the "Bushies" coo "empower yourselves and your communities". The modern Republican Party fuses much of Ronald Reagan's philosophy with most of Mr Clinton's language.

All of which leads to the central oddity of this election. It might appear obvious that the



tive attacks on his opponent.

Mr Bush, on the other hand, is the Clinton clone in this contest. He is so effective that the President was reduced to protesting last week:

"That's the message, isn't it? Blur all the distinctions." Mr Clinton should concede that imitation really is the sincerest form of flattery.

Much as the creation of new Labour confirmed Margaret Thatcher's dynamic impact on British public life in the 1980s, the remodelling of the Republican Party proves that Mr Clinton has been the most significant political figure on either side of the Atlantic in the 1990s.

For those of us who have openly hated his guts, this is a bitter pill to swallow. But the unalloyed truth is that he has won, we have lost. He recognised social change, we chose to deny it or believed we could reverse it.

At the end of the day, the unofficial slogan of this convention is spot-on: if you can't beat him, join him.

— The Times, London

ation — unity, inclusion and passion — have not had to be stuffed down the throats of reluctant activists, they are ready aching for them. George Bush Sr once promised to seek a "kinder, gentler America," his son has already delivered a kinder and gentler form of conservatism.

His transformation of the mood is the achievement of one man alone, the political genius whose influence can be seen in every aspect of this convention. That man is William Jefferson Clinton.

He might as well admit it and go forward as George W. Bush's campaign manager. Clinton impact operates in two ways, linked by delusional paradox. The belief that Clinton has been an ethical stain on the White House of the USA is shared universally by the Republicans. Having failed to drive him from office on charges of perjury and obstruction of justice, the party yearns for the next thing, to ensure that his successor is one of their number.

That their candidate is the son of the man whom Mr Clinton ejected in the first place only compounds the selective pleasure. But as Texas Governor has rightly recognised, the only way in

which a Republican can win this year is by imitating and legitimising very technical aspects that constitute Mr Clinton's contribution to US politics.

The official slogan of this convention, in a somewhat cumbersome way, is "Restoring America's Purpose Together." The secret title is "You can't beat him, join him".

Clinton effect in Philadelphia is all-pervasive. The most important feature involves the fact that people Mr Bush wants Americans to witness in television news this week are associated with his candidacy. In



Republican presidential candidate George W Bush and wife Laura look up as confetti falls during a rally at Ohio recently. — AP/PTI

George Bush Jr vows to lift American pride

S Rajagopalan
Washington, August 4

REPUBLICAN NOMINEE George W. Bush on Thursday began his formal essay for Presidency with a promise to lift American pride by reversing the "steady erosion" in American power and influence under the Bill Clinton-Al Gore administration of nearly eight years.

In his acceptance speech, climaxing the Grand Old Party's Philadelphia convention, Mr Bush also held out the hope of a series of economic and welfare measures for his countrymen by cutting taxes, shoring up social security, expanding medical care and improving education.

The Texas Governor, who could be the second person in American history to follow a father to the White House, was unremitting in his criticism of the Clinton-Gore era for having "squandered" the opportunities of good governance.

"They had their chance. They have not led. We will," Mr Bush repeated those lines in staccato fashion in the course of his 50-minute speech that was lapped up by an overflowing assemblage of Republicans at the First Union Center venue.

"We have seen a steady erosion of American power and an unsteady exercise of American influence. Our military is low on parts, pay and morale," he commented and spelt out his broad approach: "Give our military the means to keep the peace... and a Commander-in-Chief who earns their respect."

Mr Bush also made it clear that should he win, his administration will at the earliest possible date "deploy missile defences to guard against attack and blackmail".

"We will confront the hard issues -

begin again. The wait has been long, but it won't be long now."

The mood in the Republican camp has been bolstered no less by the successive reports on Mr Bush's popularity ratings. One of the latest opinion polls, recording the "bounce" in the wake of the Philadelphia convention, has put Mr Bush's lead vis-a-vis Mr Al Gore's at 18 points (58 to 40 per cent).

But the Democrats, who are warming up for their own national convention at Los Angeles in 10 days' time, did not seem to be unduly alarmed.

Mr Al Gore's aides are convinced that by then, Mr Bush's reported double-digit bounce would taper off. "Our own convention is going to be optimistic and upbeat," said one of them. The Democrats also poked fun at Mr Bush's aides for taking credit for making a shorter speech when compared to Mr Bill Clinton's acceptance speeches in 1992 and 1996.

However, Mr Bush himself exulted: "We are now the party of ideas and innovation... the party of idealism and inclusion."

Watched among others by his father, former President George Bush, the Republican nominee went on to outline his economic and welfare proposals.

The promised measures include abolition of the death tax, reduction of tax rates for everyone in every bracket, expanded medicare facilities, making prescription drugs available and affordable to seniors, local autonomy for education and improved social security system.

The Republicans and the Democrats are sharply divided over most of these proposals. The latter view them as populist measures that would fritter away the hard-earned gains of budget surplus. Mr Al Gore himself has viewed these as risky.



Presidential candidate George W Bush is joined on the stage by his wife Laura (left), running mate Dick Cheney and his wife Lynne, at the conclusion of the Republican national Convention in Philadelphia. Photo: AP

threats to our national security, threats to our health and retirement security - before the challenges of our time become crises end?"

He, however, did not have any major individual comment to offer on his own opponent, Mr Al Gore.

The Republican strategy has been to collectively blame all the bitterness and broken faith we can

the "ills" of the past eight years on the Clinton-Gore team.

To partymen entertaining visions of a Republican return to power after a gap of eight years, Mr Bush said: "After all of the shouting and all of the scandal, after all of

GOP CONVENTION / DEMOCRATS CRITICISED FOR INACTION

We will lead, thunders Bush

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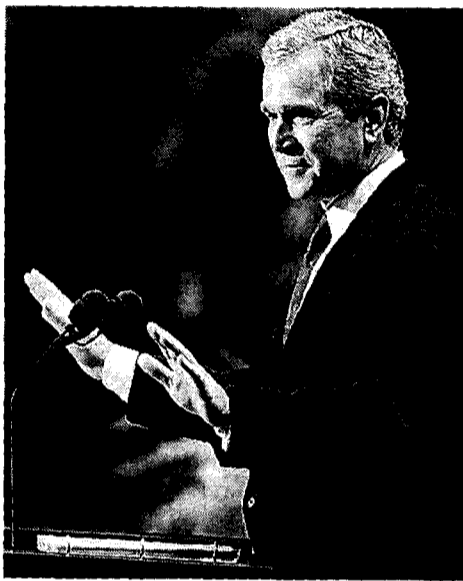
By Sridhar Krishnaswami

PHILADELPHIA, AUG 4. Vowing to bring back "civility" and "respect" to the environment in Washington, the Governor of Texas, Mr. George Bush, formally accepted the nomination of the Republican Party to be its candidate in the November 7 Presidential election.

In a forceful address that had substance as well as rhetoric, Mr. Bush said it was time for a new beginning and not for "third chances". He said the Democrats had failed on the education, military, social security-medicare and on the morality fronts. "They had their chance. They have not led. We will," Mr. Bush said to thunderous applause from the thousands in the audience. While warning the Democrats that their criticisms will not go unresponded — and not to "mess" with Texas — Mr. Bush too had several digs at the President, Mr. Bill Clinton and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore and in the process, gave an indication of the campaign war over the next two and a half months.

"Our current President embodied the potential of a generation. So many talents. So much charm. Such great skill. But, in the end, to what end? So much promise, to no great purpose," the Texas Governor said. He claimed that his Democratic opponent, Mr. Gore had only fear, the politics of roadblock and the philosophy of the "stop sign" to offer. Mr. Bush poked fun at the Vice-President for calling every one of the GOP proposals as risky. He said if Mr. Gore had been around at the time of the moon launch, that would have been a "risky rocket scheme" and if he had been at the time when Edison invented the light bulb, it would have been a "risky anti-candle scheme". The audience roared with laughter when the Texas Governor quipped, "And if he had been at the time of the invention of the Internet..." Mr. Gore has been ridiculed in the past for making claims about having invented the Internet.

Addressing the nation on prime time T.V.



The Republican presidential candidate and Texas Governor, Mr. George Bush, during his acceptance speech at the Republican National Convention on Thursday. — AP

from the First Union Centre here, Mr. Bush said, "We will confront the hard issues — threats to our national security, threats to our health and retirement security — before the challenges of our time become the crises for our children." And with this came the pledge to extend the promise of prosperity "to every forgotten corner of America". Mr. Bush minced no words when he said that he was an outsider and that he may even "lack the polish of Washington". But he also stressed, "I have no stake in the bitter arguments of the last few years. I want to change the tone of Washington to one of civility and respect".

Mr. Bush's address was directed as much to the nation as it was to the thousands of party delegates, alternates and loyalists who are hoping to bring an end to eight years of Democratic rule in the White House. Mr. Bush and the Republicans have been trying hard in the last several days to project a positive side of the Grand Old Party with the themes of diversity and inclusion dominating the four-day event in this City of Brotherly Love.

On substantive issues, Mr. Bush brought the audience to their feet when he stressed that he would shore up the social security and medicare systems, tone up education and fine-tune the tax codes of the land in a manner that was fair. In the realms of foreign and defence policies, Mr. Bush asserted that the U.S. would go through with the National Missile Defence system, not defend "outdated treaties" but defend American people against attacks and blackmail. Mr. Bush accused the Clinton-Gore administration of squandering away the gains of the end of the Cold War. "We have seen a steady erosion of American power and an unsteady exercise of American influence. Our military is low on parts, pay and morale," heremarked.

Mr. Bush did not dwell on the sensitive issue of abortion but drew a standing ovation when he remarked, "I will lead our nation towards a culture that values life — the life of the elderly and the sick, the life of the young and the life of the unborn." Unfazed by criticism from the Democrats, especially from Mr. Clinton that Mr. Bush believed he deserved to be President because he was "daddy's boy", the Texas Governor paid rich tributes to his family. Calling his father, the former President, Mr. George Bush, as the "most decent man I have ever known", the Junior Bush said he belonged to a generation of Americans who stormed beaches and liberated concentration camps and then came home to build the strong foundations of an American century.

THE HINDU

2000

Everyone's business

11-10

Treat it as Dead

Friday's acceptance speech by Republican candidate for the forthcoming US presidential election, George W Bush, was the best ever from him. His speech covered everything — from the defence of the United States and its leadership of the globe to tax reduction, improvements in school education and medicare. And, of course, restoring dignity to the Oval Office, which was a swipe at the Clinton-Lewinsky affair. For India, what is of concern is not any of this, but a major policy pronouncement he made. Mr Bush asserted that he would not be defending outdated treaties but the American people. This is a clear declaration that a Bush administration, if elected, would not ratify the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and would not even abide by the mother of all arms control treaties — the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty. In fact, Mr Bush committed himself to the deployment of National Missile Defence. His party platform calls the CTBT an "anachronism of obsolete strategic thinking." The world has to wait and watch how the Democratic party platform and candidate Al Gore react to this Republican challenge. At present Mr Bush is ten to twelve points ahead of Vice President Gore in opinion polls. Evidently the Democrats feel that the Americans would support the NMD and the killing of the CTBT. If so, then, it makes sense to join the anti-arms control bandwagon and try to eliminate these issues as contentious campaign points.

There has been no precedent of the US Senate approving a treaty after it has once been rejected. The last time the Senate rejected a treaty was in 1920, when it stopped the US joining the League of Nations. Secondly, the approval for the ratification of the CTBT requires a two-thirds majority in the Senate. In October 1999, 51 Republicans voted against the CTBT, four Republicans and 44 Democrats voted for ratification and one abstained. Whatever the results of the presidential election, the strength of the Republicans in the Senate is likely to be between 45-55, and if it is a major Republican victory, it may touch or exceed the higher figure. Even if Vice President Gore were to win, he would not be able to persuade 67 Senators to vote for ratification of the CTBT. In other words, the CTBT is dead because its primary sponsor has killed it. In these circumstances what should be India's stand? Countries like Japan and the EU nations are urging India to sign the treaty. They all signed and ratified it when the treaty was alive. India is asked to sign it when it is dead. That makes for a lot of difference since signing a dead treaty would imply that we are doing so under pressure. Some cynics might argue that there is no harm in signing a dead treaty which in any case would not come into force, provided the price for signing it is right. That argument is worth considering provided the price is attractive. That has to be negotiated. The current circumstances tell us that there is no need to sign the CTBT in a hurry.

THE TIMES OF INDIA

- 7 AUG 2000

Bush ahead of Al Gore, says opinion poll

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Washington, August 6

IN THE run-up to the US Presidential election, Republican George W Bush is 19 per cent ahead of his rival Democrat Albert Gore, an opinion poll says.

The NBC poll sees potential gains for the Republicans in congressional races: courtesy a strong Presidential candidate. First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton trails in the Senate race for New York State causing brows to furrow further in the Democrat camp as well as for President Bill Clinton.

But the democrats are hoping that this is a passing phase and come november, their inherent strength - the overwhelming support of blacks, people of Latin American origin and senior citizens - will come to their rescue.

They also hope to make a good showing at their nominating convention in Los Angeles where Gore is going to choose a running mate who will bring strength to the ticket. Democratic sources told the

media that Senator John F Kerry of Massachusetts appears to have emerged as a leading contender for Vice President. Labour is rallying behind Gore. It has traditionally been pro-Democratic and provides hundreds of campaign workers and large amounts of funds for the democratic ticket.

(A research group group has linked Dick Cheney, the Republican party's prospective vice-president, with an increase in Government-backed loans which helped his oil company do business in politically sensitive parts of the world. The report by the Centre for Public Integrity, a non-partisan research group, points out that Halliburton, the Dallas-based company headed by Mr Cheney, has benefited from Government contractworth at least \$3.8 bn during his five-year stewardship.

Knut Royce, a senior fellow at the centre and co-author of the report, linked the increase in Government support with the company's increased political contributions during that time. (AFP)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

37 AUG 2 000

7 AUG 2 000

Party sends Bush to battle

Philadelphia, July 31 (Agencies): Brimming with confidence and boasting of harmony, Republicans raised the curtain today on a political pageant to send George W. Bush into battle to break the Democrats' eight-year lease on the White House.

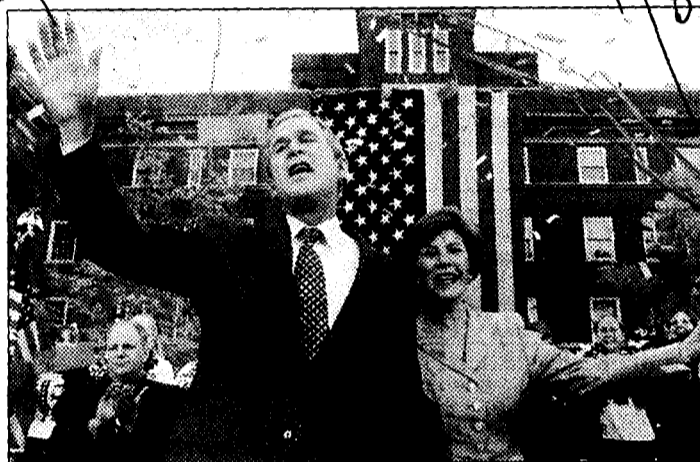
Bush's name was put into nomination, unopposed, in the opening day session.

Texas Lt. Gov. Rick Perry had the honours, nominating Bush with one quick, sure sentence: "I proudly place the name of the current governor of the great state of Texas and the next President of the United States into nomination, George W. Bush." A cheer immediately rose up in the hall.

Bush leads in polls

Republican George W. Bush is leading Democrat Al Gore in the US presidential race by only four percentage points, according to a new Reuters/Zogby poll released today.

The poll of 1,004 likely voters conducted by pollster John Zogby from July 28-30 found Bush, the



Presidential candidate George W. Bush and his wife, Laura, at a rally in Dayton, Ohio, on Monday, en route to the Republican convention in Philadelphia. (AFP)

governor of Texas, winning 42 per cent of the vote. Vice President Gore polled 38 per cent; Green Party presidential candidate Ralph Nader won 7 per cent; Reform Party hopeful Pat Buchanan gained 3 per cent and the rest favoured other candidates or were unsure.

If the field was narrowed to only Bush and Gore, the Texas governor led 47-40 per cent. The statistical margin of error was plus or minus 3.2 per cent. The poll showed a narrower Bush lead, as the Republican National Convention was about to get under way, than several other recent polls by

other organisations, some of which surveyed registered voters rather than likely voters.

"In contrast to others, we don't see much of a bounce for Bush since he selected Dick Cheney as his running mate," said Zogby.

Still, a large majority of voters approved of Bush's choice of the former defence secretary as his vice presidential partner, despite Democratic Party attacks branding Cheney as too conservative and criticising his record.

Twenty three per cent of respondents said Cheney was an excellent choice; a further 34 per cent thought he was a good choice; 20 per cent called him a fair choice and only 11 per cent thought he was a poor choice. Over two thirds said he would make no difference to their vote in the November 7 election. Respondents were given a choice of two statements with which to agree or disagree: 49 per cent agreed with a statement that Gore deserved to win the election because of the Clinton administration's success in managing the economy.

THE TELEGRAPH

- 8 AUG 200

WINNING BY DEFAULT

NS Bush looks stronger *SD 5-10*

GEORGE W. Bush will, in all probability, be the next President of the United States, because he looks the part, which is all that seems to matter when one is running against Al Gore who hasn't managed to invent a credible presidential presence yet. It doesn't impress people if you say you represent the New Economy and all the values that go along with the post-liberal society. Al Gore's strategy was basically to ride on Clinton's shoulders and add a few moral values to the list sufficient to distance himself from the more unsavoury features of the Clinton presidency; the health of the economy would provide the rest. But that is a double-edged weapon: people may come to the conclusion that no one can do serious damage, anyway, to an economy that is so robust and that being a nerd does not qualify you to keep it on course. The present incumbent wasn't one. What Al Gore has been doing is trying to come up with a carefully calibrated platform that will take care of core Democratic constituents, preserve the essence of the Clinton programme and add the necessary Conservative twist — the church, the family, the missile shield — to rake in a surplus. His choice of Joseph Lieberman as the vice-presidential nominee goes in the same direction — add a moral counterfoil to his Clintonesque credentials and get the Jewish vote-bank on the Atlantic seaboard.

One doesn't win elections that way. Bush talks with conviction and passion, even though many are sceptical about the compassionate conservatism of a Governor whose state has the highest number of executions in the country. And Al Gore's campaign has been singularly unsuccessful in taking Bush on over issues that are *prima facie* problematic. For instance, one hasn't had much of a debate on the \$1.2 trillion tax cut that Bush proposes to implement once in office and which could blow a big-sized hole into the Social Security budget. The problem is that Bush looks much more a man of the people than Gore who has been think-tanking for too long to know how to rake up enthusiasm for a cause. Gore, in fact, looks very much like the man who spent eight years in Clinton's shadow. Only, the shadow isn't running for president. We are dealing with imponderables but what seems to count is the ability to communicate presidential worth to your party and to the people who vote. Bush Jr is very good at this. He is winning practically by default.

THE STATESMAN

10 AUG 2000

Gore, Bush spar over economy

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FROM ALAN ELSNER

Los Angeles, Aug. 11 (Reuters): The Democratic presidential team of Vice-President Al Gore and Sen. Joseph Lieberman sparred with Republican George W. Bush yesterday over who deserved credit for the health of the economy as Gore tried to build momentum for next week's Democratic National Convention.

Bush, Texas' governor, and his erstwhile foe, Arizona Sen. John McCain, campaigned through California, seeking to deny Gore the lift he needs in that crucial state. The Vice-President's choice of Lieberman, a two-term Senator from Connecticut, to be his running mate injected new life into his campaign and established the groundwork for a convention bounce in the polls.

Gore said that since picking Lieberman as his running mate on Monday, "I have felt the wind at my back." But the poll evidence was still sketchy, and Gore was taking a political risk in selecting

an Orthodox Jew — the first to run on a major-party presidential ticket.

Two new polls showed Bush was close behind Gore in two Democratic strongholds. Gore was only three percentage points ahead in California and five points ahead in New York, though both surveys were influenced by last week's Republican convention.



Gore, Bush: Let the battle begin

The two Democrats were in Atlanta and later Philadelphia yesterday, touting the Clinton administration's economic successes and warning that Bush wanted to restore the policies that led to a recession under George Bush.

"I want to tell you what the core of this whole struggle is all about, and it is the economy," Gore said. Lieberman was quick to sound the same theme. "Our opponents like to say the past eight years have been squandered. If you are one of the people working in one of the 22 million jobs that have been created in this country since 1993, these haven't been squandered years," he said.

THE TELEGRAPH

12 AUG 2000

Clinton pacifies Gore, tenders fresh apology

S Rajagopalan

Washington, August 11

HT-1A 12/8

MAKING A fresh apology for the unsavoury Monica Lewinsky affair that nearly brought down his presidency two years ago, Mr Bill Clinton said on Thursday that his second-in-command Al Gore should not be blamed for this in anyway.

The renewed apology was seen, as a clear bid to ensure that Mr Gore did not end up paying the price for the Clinton indiscretions in the November presidential elections. All the more so since Republican rival George W. Bush has been going to town with it and succeeding, as evidenced by the opinion polls.

"Surely, no fair-minded person would blame Gore for the mistakes I have made," Clinton told an evangelical gathering in suburban Chicago. The Clinton rearguard action came four days ahead of the Democratic convention at Los Angeles that will formally appoint Al Gore as the presidential nominee. Clinton is slated to speak on the opening day of the four-day convention.

That Mr Gore has felt weighed down by the Clinton saga became apparent when he made a calculated bid earlier this week to distance himself from his mentor by actually naming a Clinton-baiter, senator Joseph Lieberman, as his running mate.

Bill Clinton, who has otherwise enjoyed a high job approval rating, told the evangelical ministers that his affair with the White House intern Monica Lewinsky was 'a terrible mistake' for which he has publicly apologised earlier.

"I'm in the second year of a process of trying to totally rebuild my life from a terrible mistake I made," he told the clergymen, adding: "I feel more at peace than I used to."

The President's renewed apology during a question-answer session ostensibly followed a remark by Rev. Bill Hybels, a senior cleric, that some people still thought that he never really came clean on his mistakes. Hybels is one of the clergymen with whom Clinton interacts regularly at the White House.

While tendering a fresh apology, Clinton maintained that he did give a "clear, unambiguous, brutally frank" statement apologising for the mistake two years ago at the height of the scandal.

"In a funny way, when you feel there is nothing left to hide, it sort of frees you up to do what you ought to be doing anyway. I feel this overwhelming sense of gratitude. I also learnt a lot about forgiveness," an introspective Clinton commented.

During the 75-minute session with the clergymen, he dwelt on the highs and lows of his presidency and the tough decisions that he had to take.

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

12 AUG 2000



Big boots for the understudy

Bill Clinton made the melodrama of his tenure into a virtue, and by merging the qualities of film into politics, he has changed what America expects of its candidates. When he leaves the stage in Los Angeles on Monday, Al Gore must play his part in the political cinema if he wants to make a fight of it in the presidential race, says BEN MACINTYRE

A GREAT weeping and wailing, led by Barbara Streisand, will echo around the hills of Hollywood this weekend, as President Bill Clinton puts on a valedictory presidential performance in the city that adores him.

Tinseltown has not felt so emotional since *Old Blue Eyes* finally closed his. As Whoopi Goldberg, Goldie Hawn and Cher sob on one another's shoulder-pads, Mr Clinton will ride off into the sunset, his saddlebags stuffed with another \$10 million in Hollywood cash, to go build himself a library somewhere out yonder.

The Democratic convention in Los Angeles is supposed to be the moment when presidential candidate Al Gore takes centre stage, but Mr Clinton is still the star turn.

The affair between Hollywood and Mr Clinton was not just one of those quick flings. This was love. This was Bogie and Bacall, Brad and Jennifer, a tumultuous, breathy bonding that made some reach for the hankies, and others the sick-bag.

Mr Clinton made the neurotic folk of Hollywood feel special. He went to their parties, he tucked them up in the Lincoln Bedroom and he gave them a storyline to die for: by turns mushy, uplifting and obscene.

He tugged their heartstrings and then their purse strings. The boy from Hope became more Hollywood with every passing celebrity. Even at its lowest points, his presidency was performance art, a triumph of word and image over meaning or reality.

Both the Clintons are already collecting the funds for their sequels. Tonight Mrs Hillary Clinton will raise \$4 million for her Senate race with a party for 1,400 of her closest friends. On Sunday, everybody who is anybody is getting together for brunch at Streisand's place in Malibu to present Mr Clinton with a large cheque for his library.

Mr Gore will not be present. The Vice-President will still be on his "Going the Distance Tour", which must rank as one of the least rousing political slogans ever devised. Even "Slogging along with Al" or "Dutiful but Dull" might have been more inspiring.

Mr Clinton has written his own speech for Monday night, and its contents remain a secret. Will he apologise for the Monica Lewinsky affair again? Hollywood likes a sinner, but positively drools over a repentant one. ("Regrets, I've had a

few...") Will he play the saxophone? Cry? Do that funny thing with his eyes when he's being extra-sincere? Will he claim to have planned each charted course, and make light of the grim moments: "And now, as tears subside, I find it all so amusing."

Whatever he does, he will upstage Mr Gore. He can no longer help it. They are locked in the older brother syndrome. Whatever Mr Gore does can never be as slick, as money-pulling, or as news-making as Mr Clinton. He is trapped in the role of supporting actor. Mr Gore's aides become enraged on the subject, saying that the "Veep" not only has to run against a Republican opponent,

straight out of central casting; the Clintons' filmed response to her was perfectly scripted.

This was often tacky, but compulsive viewing, like those Spanish soap operas on daytime US television, in which everyone is always slapping everyone else and secretly making love in cupboards.

Mr Clinton made the melodrama of his tenure into a virtue, and by so thoroughly merging the qualities of film into politics he has changed what America expects and wants of its candidates. Voters have been trained to see the process through a camera lens: they want the simple verities of cinema, stirring biography, a strong storyline with a plot twist or two, some

Mr Gore's life has in many ways been more interesting than his opponent's: wrestling with his conscience over Vietnam, dreaming of novel-writing, coming to terms with a demanding father. Yet whenever he tries to tell it, the drama seems to drain away in a welter of documentary detail.

Multiple costume changes have not worked for Mr Gore, who began in starchy suits, swapped to beige slacks and earth tones, and has now reverted to the crisp white shirt with a tie so exactly and firmly knotted it appears to have been nailed to his Adam's apple.

He has buffed himself up in the gym, fixed his teeth and started hugging people at random; he

man lacks star appeal, that Mrs Tipper Gore and Mr Lieberman are anti-entertainment, that Sunday's "do" may be the last such glittery extravaganza for a long, long time.

Mr Gore still has not connected with America. He remains a blur, a flurry of different images without a defined character. When Mr Clinton leaves the stage on Monday night and the deafening applause dies away, Mr Gore has a chance to play

the performance of | can never out-Cl Clinton in the "I feel category, but to hav of winning he has to | new rules of politic forged by the incur the past eight years echo that old but t Hollywood storyline, understudy takes ove leading man, and out- To borrow Mr Bush he must look into it



Vice President Al Gore pledges to "elevate" the level of his campaign as he appears with his running mate, Senator Joe Lieberman (right) at a town hall meeting in Tennessee on Wednesday. — AP/PTI.

but against his own boss.

The Gore campaign slithers between a desire to display Mr Clinton, in the hope that some of his showmanship will rub off on Mr Gore, and keeping him out of the way because he makes his deputy seem so dowdy.

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Hollywood is the place to reinvent yourself. After all, the late Walter Matthau was once Wally Mattaschanskayasky. Perhaps, Mr Gore can change his script at this late stage, but it is a huge rewrite job.

The moguls are already dubious, concerned that the new

Big boots for the understudy

Bill Clinton made the melodrama of his tenure into a virtue, and by merging the qualities of film into politics, he has changed what America expects of its candidates. When he leaves the stage in Los Angeles on Monday, Al Gore must play his part in the political cinema if he wants to make a fight of it in the presidential race, says BEN MACINTYRE

few...") Will he play the saxophone? Cry? Do that funny thing with his eyes when he's being extra-sincere? Will he claim to have planned each charted course, and make light of the grim moments: "And now, as tears subside, I find it all so amusing."

Whatever he does, he will upstage Mr Gore. He can no longer help it. They are locked in the older brother syndrome. Whatever Mr Gore does can never be as slick, as money-pulling, or as news-making as Mr Clinton. He is trapped in the role of supporting actor. Mr Gore's aides become enraged on the subject, saying that the "Veep" not only has to run against a Republican opponent,

straight out of central casting; the Clintons' filmed response to her was perfectly scripted.

This was often tacky, but compulsive viewing, like those Spanish soap operas on daytime US television, in which everyone is always slapping everyone else and secretly making love in cupboards.

Mr Clinton made the melodrama of his tenure into a virtue, and by so thoroughly merging the qualities of film into politics he has changed what America expects and wants of its candidates. Voters have been trained to see the process through a camera lens: they want the simple verities of cinema, stirring biography, a strong storyline with a plot twist or two, some

Mr Gore's life has in many ways been more interesting than his opponent's: wrestling with his conscience over Vietnam, dreaming of novel-writing, coming to terms with a demanding father. Yet whenever he tries to tell it, the drama seems to drain away in a welter of documentary detail.

Multiple costume changes have not worked for Mr Gore, who began in starchy suits, swapped to beige slacks and earth tones, and has now reverted to the crisp white shirt with a tie so exactly and firmly knotted it appears to have been nailed to his Adam's apple.

He has buffed himself up in the gym, fixed his teeth and started hugging people at random; he

man lacks star appeal, that Mrs Tipper Gore and Mr Lieberman are anti-entertainment, that Sunday's "do" may be the last such glittery extravaganza for a long, long time.

Mr Gore still has not connected with America. He remains a blur, a flurry of different images without a defined character. When Mr Clinton leaves the stage on Monday night and the deafening applause dies away, Mr Gore has a chance to play

the performance of his life. He can never out-Clinton Mr Clinton in the "I feel your pain" category, but to have a chance of winning he has to play by the new rules of political cinema forged by the incumbent the past eight years; he must echo that old but treasured Hollywood storyline, when the understudy takes over from the leading man, and out-acts him.

To borrow Mr Bush's phrase, he must look into the camera

and show what is in his heart and, may I say, not in a shy way.

Alternatively, he can stick to the plot he has framed so far: worthy, dedicated, an actor who can play many parts but shine in none, a master of the smallest print who will not pander to the demands of a shallow cinematic culture. Then, come November, he can truly declare: "I did it my way." And lose.

— *The Times, London.*



Vice President Al Gore pledges to "elevate" the level of his campaign as he appears with his running mate, Senator Joe Lieberman (right) at a town hall meeting in Tennessee on Wednesday. — AP/PTI.

out against his own boss.

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Reform Party factions go to court

13/8
By Sridhar Krishnaswami HD 12

WASHINGTON, AUG. 12. In a development that will have marginal impact on the American presidential election this November, a faction of the Reform Party has nominated Mr. Patrick Buchanan, as its nominee for the Fall election. Mr. Buchanan in turn has picked an African American woman, Ms. Ezola Foster, as his running mate. The former Republican introduced his running mate as the first African American woman to ever appear on a "major party" ticket.

The rival faction of the Reform Party has endorsed Mr. John Hagelin, a physicist; and after a big shouting match at the Party convention in Long Beach, California, the factions are headed to court, each laying a claim on the US\$ 12.5 millions that is coming in federal campaign funding. Mr. Buchanan has told his opponents that they are better off folding their camp and coming over. But the anti-Buchanan elements, many of them loyalists of Mr. Ross Perot, founder of the Reform Party, are vowing to keep up the struggle.

Neither the "nomination" of Mr. Buchanan nor his choice of running mate is going to matter much for the simple reason that a majority of the voters have little to no use for the extremist fringes of Mr. Buchanan's politics. Supporters of the former GOP loyalist say Mr. Buchanan is only against the "free loaders" in the system, his revulsion directed against this category of people who believe they are doing a favour.

Mr. Buchanan is barely registering in the national polls, his approval rating now standing between one and four per cent. What may make a difference is if the Court rules in his faction's favour on the federal funding giving the candidate the much needed financial power to run a limited national campaign. The one time Republican activist runs on a platform that is highly conservative on the social and



The Reform Party candidate in the U.S. presidential poll, Mr. Pat Buchanan, with his running mate, Ms. Ezola Foster, during a press conference at the party convention at Long Beach, California, on Friday. — Reuters

economic fronts besides making the point that America's borders would have to be "protected" — a reference to both trade and illegal immigration.

In fact, there has been a sigh of relief in the Grand Old Party that Mr. Buchanan did indeed leave the party some 10 months ago. His presence meant that sufficient noise would be generated on such issues as abortion and free trade; and would have turned off the immigrant community support that the present nominee Mr. George Bush is actively courting.

There is also the realisation that quite unlike the candidacy of Mr. Ralph Nader of the Green Party who is making a small dent in the support of the Democratic presumptive nominee Mr. Albert Gore, Mr. Buchanan is not making headway into the solid Conservative base of the Republican Party backing Mr. Bush.

Republican political operatives say with a degree of confidence that it was Mr. Gore, not Mr. Bush who would have to worry about the presence of third party candidates in the fray.

THE HINDU

13 AUG 2000

13 AUG 2000

DEMOCRAT MEET / SURVEY REVEALS RISE IN RATING

Optimism reigns in Gore camp

HD-16
15/8

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

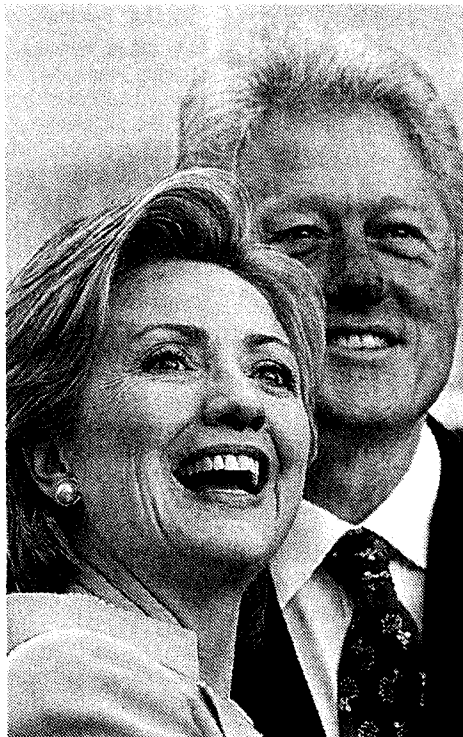
LOS ANGELES, AUG. 14. As the Democrats start their political convention here this evening with an address by the First Lady, Mrs Hillary Rodham Clinton, and the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, the overall accent seems to be on at least two themes: a sense of optimism, and a need to be comparative when taking on the policies of the Republicans.

The delegates of the Democratic party have reason to be optimistic. This partly stems from the fact that after being tied down to the Clinton Presidency, the Vice-President and soon-to-be official nominee, Mr. Albert Gore, will be defining his own agenda, not just in the weeks ahead of the November 7 poll, but in what a Gore administration will offer if elected.

The other aspect of the optimistic feeling comes from opinion polls which show a "modest" rise in Mr. Gore's ratings in the run-up to the national convention. Mr. Gore is still down between nine and 13 points in opinion polls, but at least one survey has shown him within four percentage points of his Republican rival, Mr. George W. Bush. As was the case with Mr. Bush, Mr. Gore will get a boost once the convention is over.

All the talk of a pre and post-convention "bounce" is a very temporary phenomenon in the sense that these numbers do not last long. The real race will start after Labour Day, in the first week of September. Convention has it that the candidate who leads on Labour Day will have the edge on the election day.

The continuing problem for the Vice-President and the Democratic party is the presence of the Green Party candidate, Mr. Ralph Nader. His inclusion in the polls only widens the gap between Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore. The Reform Party "nominee", Mr. Patrick Buchanan,



The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, and Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton react to applause from supporters at a fundraiser in Los Angeles on Sunday. The Clintons are in California for fundraising stops prior to their speeches at the Democratic National Convention later on Monday. — Reuters

is hardly in the reckoning now. He has polled only between one and three percentage points and does not make any appreciable impact on Mr. Bush. Winding up his tour in the Mid-

West, Mr. Gore will head for Los Angeles on Tuesday. But on Monday in Michigan there is the ceremonial passing of the torch, featuring Mr. Clinton. For his part, Mr. Clinton will be working on several fund-raisers in the Los Angeles area for the Democratic National Committee, for his wife for the New York Senate seat and then leave town after giving his address.

Democrats are making the point here that Mr. Gore and the party will have to go "comparative" — both will have to stress the substantive aspects of policy in a next Democratic administration.

For this reason, there is the expectation that the Vice-President, in his acceptance speech, will focus in minute details on his \$ 500-billion package that involves tax cuts and spending programmes in such areas as social security and prescription drugs.

In trying to wean away from the eight years of the Clinton administration and Presidency, the Gore campaign is going about it in a very careful manner. On the one hand, there is the strategy of projecting Mr. Gore as being very much involved in the successful policies of the past.

For instance, it is being stressed that the economic expansion and success of the last eight years was not something that was a "gift from heaven"; it was a result of ~~some~~ solid work of which the Vice-President was very much a part.

And yet, on the other hand, in shedding the "baggage" of the Clinton era, there is the realisation that the Gore campaign will have to factor in the sensitivities. Mr. Clinton is still a very popular President and hence any attempt to criticise his shortcomings — especially on the personal front — will have its fallout, not just among the delegates, but in the country as a whole.

THE HINDU

15 AUG 2000

AD-16
'Keep progress going with Gore' 1678

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

LOS ANGELES, AUG. 15. The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, opened the 43rd Democratic national convention stressing that America's success of the last eight years was "not a matter of chance" but a "matter of choice". He expressed confidence that the Vice-President and Presidential aspirant, Mr. Al Gore will "keep this progress and prosperity going."

Mr. Clinton, who will formally step down on January 20, 2001, asked the 4,338 delegates gathered on the convention's opening night, "Now, at this moment of unprecedented good

fortune, our people face a fundamental choice. Are we going to keep this progress and prosperity going?" To thunderous applause he said, "My fellow Americans, tonight we can say with confidence: We built our bridge to the 21st century. We crossed that bridge together. And we're not going back."

The good orator that he is, Mr. Clinton's speech repeatedly brought the audience to its feet. He spoke at length of his Presidency's record, comparing it with before 1992. In his last major political address before leaving office, the President did not talk about the Le-

winsky sex scandal despite the expectation in some quarters that he would again express some contrition and ask Americans not to associate Mr. Gore with his actions. His speech was, for the most part, focussed on the domestic policies of his tenure and his hope that the good times will continue under a Gore Presidency. "Al Gore and Joe Lieberman (Mr. Gore's running mate) will keep our prosperity going by paying down the debt, investing in education and health care and...providing family tax cuts that we can afford," Mr. Clinton said.

"In stark contrast, the GOP (Grand Old Party) wants to spend every dime of our projected surplus and then some tax cuts — leaving nothing for education or medicare prescription drugs, nothing to extend the life of medicare and social security, nothing for emergencies, nothing in case the projected surpluses don't come in," the President observed. Taking a dig at the Republicans and their nominee, Mr. George Bush, the President remarked, "To those who say that the progress of the last eight years was an accident, that we just coasted along, let's be clear: America's success was not a matter of chance, it was a matter of choice."

Mr. Clinton, who will symbolically pass the torch of party leadership to Mr. Gore in Michigan tomorrow, did not mince words when he referred to the achievements of his two-term Presidency, saying America progressed not just economically but as a community as well. "Jobs are up and so are adoptions. The debt is down and so is teen pregnancy. We are growing more diverse and tolerant. But we're not just better off, we're also a better country — more decent, more humane, more united. Now that's the purpose of prosperity," Mr. Clinton noted. The President made a brief reference to his foreign policy achievements in Northern Ireland, Bosnia and Kosovo and said West Asia was closer to comprehensive peace.

The First Lady, Ms. Hillary Clinton, in her address also pitched for the Vice-President, saying that the way to keep America "peaceful, prosperous and promising" was by electing Mr. Gore and Mr. Lieberman. Echoing the sentiments of her husband, the First Lady remarked that both Mr. Clinton and Mr. Gore had together made hard decisions and together put people first as also the future of children.

THE HINDU

16 AUG 2001

HD-14
1678

Dialogue with India, Pak. to continue

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

LOS ANGELES, AUG. 15. A Gore administration will continue to work with India and Pakistan to "dampen down" the nuclear arms race in South Asia, and urge the two countries to have a dialogue over Kashmir. The new possibilities of a dialogue with the two nations, created as a result of the President, Mr. Bill Clinton's visit to the region this March, will also be continued vigorously, says the Foreign policy platform of the Democratic Party.

"And we will continue our work with India and Pakistan to dampen down a nuclear arms race on the sub continent and continue to urge them to deal with their differences over their conflict in Kashmir with peaceful means. President Clinton's historic trip to India and Pakistan has created new possibilities for dialogue with these countries, and under a Gore administration these will be continued vigorously," the Platform says.

The brief references to India and Pakistan are prefaced in the document which says that the United States helped facilitate the dialogue between North and South Korea, "without which the recent summit could not have occurred;" and that Washington would continue to work with China and Taiwan to resolve their differences by peaceful means.

In talking about the strategy of Forward Engagement, the Democrats say that the lessons of the past century have taught that if war is to

be avoided, the United States must be strong enough to deter aggression and also farsighted enough to invest in peace. "Forward Engagement means addressing problems early in their development before they become crisis, addressing them as close to the source of the problem as possible and having the forces and resources to deal with these threats as soon after their emergence as possible."

"And Forward Engagement means drawing on all three main sources of American power — military strength, a vibrant, growing economy and a free and democratic political system — to advance our objectives around the world," the Party Platform argues.

Taking a shot at the Grand Old Party, the Democrats are making the point that at a time when new conditions required new thinking, "the Republican Party offers little more than outdated positions and a narrow worldview that lets international problems fester." The Democrats, in crafting their version of what it would be in a Gore administration, are saying that while a few in the GOP want to turn away from the world, there are others pushing for unilateralism.

"Some Republicans believe America should turn away from the world. They oppose using our armed forces as part of international solutions even when regional conflicts threaten our interests and our values. Other Republicans want America to act unilaterally," going on to point out that the GOP has attacked the

1972 ABM Treaty, has shot down the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty and sabotage negotiations on other arms control agreement by saying that it would be "dead on arrival."

At a time when the GOP has made it clear that a Bush administration would go ahead with the deployment of a "more robust" National Missile Defence, keeping in mind the security of not only the fifty States of America, but also its allies, the Democrats say a Gore administration would only push for a limited NMD, which would be based on four criteria — the nature of the threat, feasibility of technology, overall cost and impact on American national security.

The GOP has also made it known that its relationship with China would be based on the notion that the East Asian country was a competitor; and in the last several months has lashed out at the Clinton administration for serious breaches on the national security front by way of China's espionage in this country and in its so-called stealing of nuclear secrets.

A Gore administration would continue to engage China and look out for ways to cooperate on a range of issues and at the same time insist on such issues like human rights, religious persecution, suppression of Tibet and threats against Taiwan. "A deterioration of Sino-U.S. relationship would harm, not help American national security interests and the promotion of our values," the Democrats say.

THE HINDU

1 AUG 2000

Clinton hands over party reins to Gore

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

LOS ANGELES, AUG. 16. The second day of the Democratic National Convention saw some well-known political names at the mike. Delegates recalled the legacy of former President John F. Kennedy and the most vivid reminder was a rare public speech by JFK's only surviving heir, Ms. Caroline Kennedy Schlossberg. The assassinated President's brother, Senator Edward Kennedy was also present.

Among those touting the Democratic agenda was the former New Jersey Senator, Mr. Bill Bradley, whose Presidential aspirations were thwarted in the primaries. "Our country needs a Democratic President, a Democratic Congress and more important, a democratic conscience," Mr. Bradley said, adding that there was a profound difference in philosophy between the Republicans and the Democrats. The veteran civil rights leader, Mr. Jesse Jackson was also at the podium. Mr. Gore chose a young African-American Congressman from his home State of Tennessee, Mr. Harold Ford, to give the keynote address.

The second day of the convention belonged to the traditional liberals — the left of centre — of the party. And the focus was on Mr. Gore, who is seen as a centrist Democrat, as the future leader of America. The delegates approved the party platform for the election. The Gore agenda supports abortion rights and gay rights, opposes school vouchers and partial privatisation of social security. The agenda calls for paying off the national debt in 12 years. "If America is to secure prosperity, progress, peace and security for all, we cannot afford to go back," the Gore agenda says.

Away from the convention proceedings, another event took place several hundred miles away in Michigan, though more symbolic in significance. The President, Mr. Bill Clinton, symbolically transferred the mantle of party

leadership to Mr. Gore. The Vice-President vowed to extend the current economic expansion, saying there was no question of turning back. Mr. Clinton, the Vice-President noted, had worked hard to get the economy right. "I am not going to let the other side wreck it," Mr. Gore said.

Meanwhile, outside the convention centre protests continued for the second day today with more planned over the next two days. Compared to Monday's violence, today was relatively peaceful but the Los Angeles Police have warned that their response will be strong should there be further trouble on the streets. While the police maintain that the protestors broke the security perimeter hurling rocks and other missiles, the demonstrators argue that the policemen, who did not give them sufficient time to withdraw from the area, were aggressive. The police used tear gas, pepper spray and rubber bullets to clear the downtown areas of protestors. The civil rights leader, Rev. Jesse Jackson condemned the police action calling it "unnecessary brutality".

Mr. Gore's running mate, Mr. Joseph Lieberman, arrived in town today amid criticism of his track record on civil rights and affirmative action. Some African-Americans are upset that Mr. Lieberman had supported California's Proposition 209 in 1998 that banned State funded affirmative action programmes. He is also opposed to racial quotas. The Gore campaign countered the criticism saying that the Connecticut Senator had a strong track record on civil rights. "This is someone who went down to the South and marched," it said. Mr. Lieberman himself has argued that he supported affirmative action programmes that were not quotas. Mr. Gore though has criticised efforts to roll back affirmative action programmes. Mr. Lieberman, who will address the delegates today, is expected to high-

light the differences in the agendas of the Republicans and the Democrats. It has to be recalled that the Republican Vice-Presidential candidate, Mr. Dick Cheney used his acceptance speech to criticise the Democrats on their "failure" in the areas of social security, education and for encouraging "partisan bickering."

CRASH HINDU

THE HINDU

17 AUG 2000

Shed bias, Lieberman tells people

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

LOS ANGELES, AUG. 17. Reminding Americans that the Democratic Party would keep the current prosperity going and that the Republicans would only "squander it", the Senator from Connecticut, Mr. Joseph Lieberman, accepted the nomination as the running mate here today and in the process, made history. Mr. Lieberman is a Jew, the first such person ever to be nominated by a major party.

On the third day of the Democratic convention, the party officially made the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore Jr, its official nominee. Mr. Gore came on to the stage to hug his daughter, Ms Karena Gore Schiff, after she gave a speech seconding his nomination.

But Wednesday belonged to Mr. Lieberman and the start of the grand finale which will end tomorrow with the acceptance speech of Mr. Gore. In many ways, it was seen as the start of the "Gore convention" with the Democratic ticket having to chart a clear but careful course from the eight years of a very successful Clinton era.

Reflecting on his own upbringing where the focus was on importance of work and responsibility, Mr. Lieberman said, "Is America a great country or what? As every faith teaches us, we must, as Americans, try to see our nation not just through our own eyes, but through the eyes of others. In my life, I have seen the goodness of this country through many sets of eyes."

Joining issue with the Republicans, Mr. Lieberman lashed out at them, repeatedly pointing to the pitfalls of pursuing their agenda on education, social security, medicare, campaign finance reform, environment and affirmative action. All this, even while saying that Mr. George W Bush and his running mate, Mr. Dick Cheney, were "decent and likable" men.

"It's this simple — we Democrats will expand the prosperity. They (meaning the Re-



The Democratic Presidential candidate, Mr. Al Gore (left), cheers alongside his running mate, Mr. Joseph Lieberman, at an airport rally in Burbank, California, on Wednesday. — Reuters

publicans) will squander it", he said, making the point that while he was glad that the GOP had changed its rhetoric in an election year, he wished they would also change their policies.

Introduced by his wife, Ms Hadassah Lieberman, the Senator promised the audience that the Democratic ticket would "renew the moral centre of the nation", an oblique reference to what went on in the Clinton presidency. "That is why I hope you will conclude — as I have —

that for his honesty, for his strength, for his integrity and for his character, Al Gore must become the next President of the United States".

Mr. Lieberman made a forceful pitch for tearing down the remaining walls of discrimination in the U.S., whether it was based on race, gender or sexual orientation. "Together we will", he said.

Shortly before Mr. Lieberman's speech at the Staples Centre, the police and demonstrators had a face-off for the third day. The protesters were highlighting what they termed as "police brutality". The stand-off outside the Convention Centre was peaceful, but there were a few arrests.

One of the things that Mr. Lieberman had to do in his historic address to the convention was not only introduce himself but also mollify the liberal wing of the party and core support groups that he is really a centrist and not a conservative when it comes to issues dear to the party. The Democrats would need the core support groups to pull it off on the polling day.

Mr. Lieberman will have to reassure the African American community over his stance on affirmative action as also square off with labour unions over trade, the movie industry over sex and violence, and teachers over school vouchers.

Mr. Gore, who arrived here this morning to formally pick up his "prize", said, "We're the new guard and we're going to bring positive change to the United States of America".

Meanwhile, Republicans and Democrats together conveyed their genuine feelings and wishes to Senator John McCain who was today diagnosed with having melanoma, a dangerous form of skin cancer. Mr. McCain who was till recently hitting the campaign trail with the Republican nominee, Mr. George W. Bush, will be taking a few days off from the hectic schedule.

THE HINDU

18 AUG 2000

SATURDAY, AUGUST 19, 2000

THE LEADERSHIP STAKES

THE HOME STRETCH in the latest U.S. presidential race, which has yet to capture worldwide imagination despite the imminent end of the eventful Clinton era, is gradually beginning to come into a global focus, though, following the emergence of the incumbent Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, as his "own man" and the anointed nominee of the Democrats for the august office of "the leader of the free world". It is an obvious sign of the political vibrance and international stature of the current U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, that Mr. Gore has considered it essential to identify himself as a leader in his own right as he delivered the traditional acceptance speech at this time at the Democratic National Convention in Los Angeles, already dubbed the city of the 21st century. For all the many controversies that Mr. Clinton has revelled in stoking and managing at home and abroad, not to mention his blotted copybook on the impeachment count, he has towered head and shoulders above Mr. Gore in a purely political sense. Mr. Gore's existential dilemma of this magnitude had already lent the Democratic Convention a touch of the virtual reality and he was determined not only to banish the Clinton shadow but also to set out an agenda that would sustain and improve the qualitative mystique of the economic prosperity that is now reckoned to reign in the United States. Inevitably, Mr. Gore's agenda can only centre on a Clinton-speak message, namely, the real "purpose of prosperity" — the very phrase that the President conjured as he exhorted his fellow Democrats and the American voters to trust his long-time deputy to nurture the progress that was achieved as a "matter of choice".

Now, as Mr. Gore waits to see if there would be a "bounce" in his popularity ratings, following his own pledge to ensure that the "prosperity enriches not just the few but all working families", his running mate, Mr. Joseph Lieberman, has sought to reassure the party's traditional supporters among the African-Americans by

reaffirming his faith in the concept and practice of affirmative action for their benefit. And, as the Democrats seek to turn Mr. Lieberman's identity as a Jewish-American to some electoral advantage through a deft move to project that itself as some form of affirmative politics on a pan-national scale, Mr. Gore is clearly hoping that his new deputy's timely and thundering stand earlier against Mr. Clinton's personal indiscretions in the White House would adequately address the so-called morality factor in this presidential election. The Gore camp's transparent calculation is that any political gain on this account can also be reinforced by Mr. Lieberman's apparent pact of goodwill with the African-Americans, some of whom are reported to have felt that a candidate belonging to their community should have been preferred to underscore the Democrats' minority-friendly politics.

For the moment, with the Republican Party's self-confident presidential nominee, Mr. George Bush, continuing to ride the "bounce" that followed his party's convention in Philadelphia in early August, on hold still is the cynical expectation that this year's contest for the White House may well turn out to be a political show of the "kangaroo ticket" — the real battle of wits being the one anticipated between Mr. Lieberman and Mr. Bush's running mate, the "formidable" Mr. Dick Cheney. That leaves Mr. Bush with the opportunity of keeping the prime contest focussed on the heartbeat of the presidency per se and not on the standard imagery of a Vice-President being only a heartbeat away from the White House. Yet, Mr. Bush, currently the clear front-runner, has not so far managed to trigger a battle of ideas, especially so as Mr. Gore is only now beginning to come into stride. However, as and when the spotlight shifts to the party platforms from personalities, the Grand Old Party's notion of a need to engage South Asia and the parallel idea of "forward engagement" may catch the attention of India.

THE HINDU

19 AUG 2000

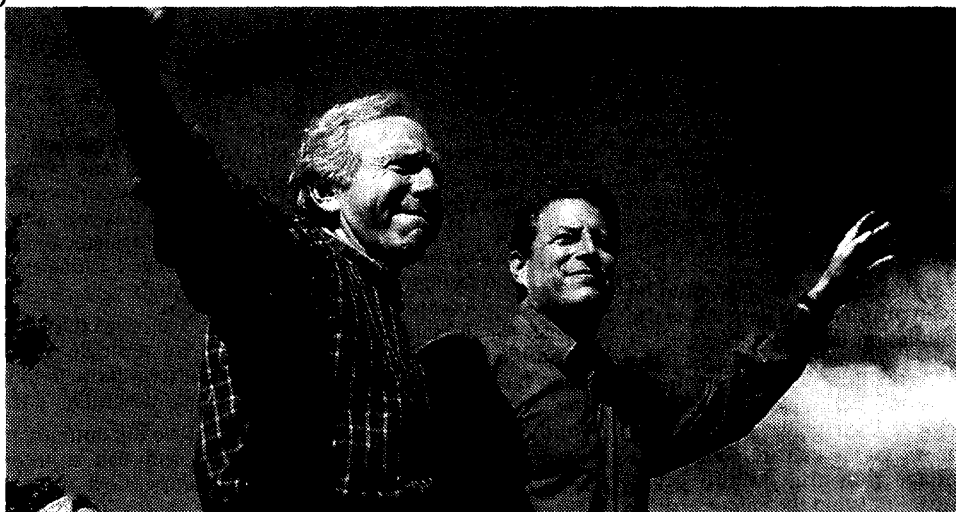
Gore overtakes Bush in poll rating

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, AUG. 20. The Democratic nominee for the Presidential elections, Mr. Al Gore, has got his first piece of good news in several weeks — the latest polls show Mr. Gore leading his Republican counterpart, Mr. George W. Bush, by eight percentage points. For a person who has been all along trailing Mr. Bush, the Vice-President had the support of 52 per cent as against 44 per cent for Mr. Bush in the latest *Newsweek* poll of registered voters.

For Mr. Gore and his campaign, this is the first indication of the party convention's "bounce". Mr. Gore had to come off from the convention at Los Angeles in a strong fashion if the momentum was to be sustained. Last Thursday, Mr. Gore, among other things, laid out his agenda in precise terms as also in making the point very clear that he should not be seen as being in the shadows of the President, Mr. Bill Clinton. "I am my own man", he remarked. Right through the Democratic show last week, there was the concern that Mr. Gore was not making sufficient impact.

On his boat ride along the Mississippi, Mr. Gore was enthusiastic about the latest news on the polling front. "People are now just beginning to pay close attention to the election", he said. And hundreds of miles away in New Mexico, the response of the Bush camp was along expected lines. "Like we have said all along, let's see where things are around Labour Day", a spokesman for the campaign said. Conventional wisdom has it that the candidate leading the polls on Labour Day in the first week of September will have the edge in the November



The U.S. Vice-President and Democratic presidential candidate, Mr. Al Gore (right) and his Vice-Presidential running-mate, Mr. Joseph Lieberman, wave to the crowd in La Crosse, Wisconsin, in this Aug. 17 file picture. — Reuters

Mr. Gore's acceptance speech in Los Angeles has been received well by a cross section of the country, the main emphasis being that it was sound in specifics as far as policy alternatives were concerned. The Grand Old Party has hit out at the Gore speech as being divisive.

The strategy of the Gore campaign for the next two weeks will be to stay the course and ensure that the current lead at the polls stays that way. For Mr. Bush, it is one of taking on the Democratic opponent without being seen as leaning too heavily on partisan attacks.

The challenge for Mr. Gore is also the Green Party candidate, Mr. Ralph Nader, who is courting labour unions and environmentalists very actively. Mr. Nader is hurting the Democratic candidate in key areas of the Mid-West and the West. In a hypothetical four-way race in the latest *Newsweek* poll involving Mr. Nader and the Reform Party candidate, Mr. Patrick Buchanan, Mr. Gore leads Mr. Bush by six percentage points. The Green Party candidate registers between three and six percentage points. The same is not the case for Mr. Buchanan who hardly makes an impact.

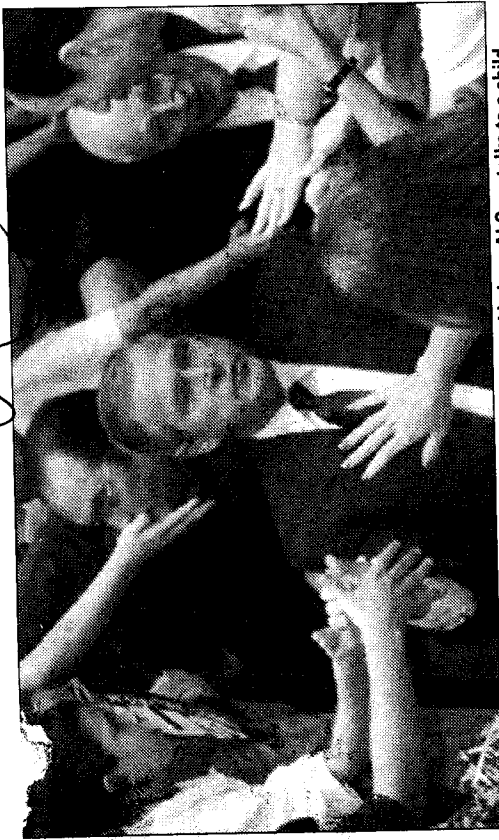
THE HINDU

21 AUG 2000

Hard drive at issues

LETTER FROM
AMERICA

V. S. MANIAM



George Bush being greeted in Dallas on Saturday and below; Al Gore talks to a child through a fence in Canton on Monday. — AP/PTI.

THE candidates for the next US presidential election have been anointed. The campaign has begun in earnest. And a question that has troubled many — whether the 7-November election would hinge on which of the two principal candidates, Al Gore and George W. Bush, has the more appealing personality, or whether voters would go beyond personality to focus on an issues' agenda — has finally been answered, after Mr Gore's ringing speech of acceptance of his party's nomination. It will clearly be an issues-based election.

A *Wall Street Journal* report had said the sharply divergent positions of Mr Gore and Mr Bush on the most fundamental issues — such as taxes, Social Security and the Supreme Court's makeup — would prove crucial to the election's outcome. Especially because, said the report, the November election is likely to produce a Congress divided roughly equally between both parties, which would make the next President's role unusually decisive.

The differences between the two candidates are particularly sharp on taxes. The Congressional Budget Office projects a \$2.2 trillion surplus over the next 10 years.

Mr Bush has promised to use the projected surplus for a variety of tax cuts — mostly to the wealthy, under the reasoning that they pay most of the taxes.

His tax cuts, amounting to \$1.3 trillion in the first 10 years, could dissipate much of the surplus, as *Business Week* (among others) has said, and leave no margin for fiscal error. Mr Gore would, in contrast, spend only about a third of the projected surplus on targeted tax cuts, focusing primarily on paying off the national debt.

"Let me say plainly," Mr Gore told the Democratic Party convention in Los Angeles last Thursday, "I will not go along with a huge tax cut for the wealthy at the expense of everyone else and wreck our good economy in the process."

Even the public does not seem particularly keen on tax cuts. The Gallup Poll found that only 21 per cent of

something of a challenge to cartoonists: How is this pleasant-faced and eminently likeable politician to be caricatured?

Tony Auth, Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist of *The Philadelphia Inquirer* (and member of its editorial board), mused at-oud last week about his quest to "capture" Mr Bush — providing, a rare peep into the creative process of cartooning.

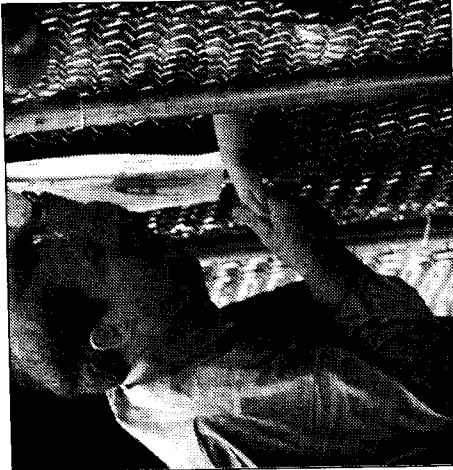
Auth wrote: "There is a process of evolution in which my drawings of a new person on the scene move from tentative and more realistic attempts at a likeness until they reach simplicity. The goal is to capture the essence of a person with as few lines as possible.

After I struggle through five or six cartoons, studying photographs and experimenting (alas, in public), something clicks, and my drawing of that person solidifies.

Then something magical happens. The caricature takes on a life of its own, features begin to elongate, twist, shrink or grow, seemingly on their own. That's when drawing that person begins to be fun."

Auth regards the widely syndicated Pat Oliphant as among the masters of caricature. And, Oliphant, also a Pulitzer Prize winner for editorial cartooning, disclosed in a book published two years ago that he was influenced by the English cartoonist Ronald Searle — especially by his "stretching of possibilities, the attenuation he gave his drawings — long and narrow bodies and legs and arms: it seemed to intensify what he was trying to do, just the drawing itself."

Recent cartoons on Mr Bush by Auth and Oliphant illustrate these points.



the "secret ingredient" to good cartooning was hate. "Not personal hate, but professional hate: the intensity of conviction that comes to a craftsman's work when he has made the decision to kill; a commitment to shun all political and behavioural complexities, so that the subject becomes...purely and simply, a demon."

Valentine to public service

POSSIBLY the biggest success among prime time television shows during the past year, *The West Wing* (telecast by the NBC network on Wednesday nights), has been a puzzle to critics. They had thought that politics and politicians could hardly make for engrossing drama, especially in these times when people seem to be cynical about politics and government. Yet that is precisely what this sophisticated political drama about the inner workings of

the President's Office has pulled off in episode after episode, to the point where it has become must-see TV — not just in and around Washington DC.

The West Wing, which debuted last September, is about a fictional White House headed by Liberal Democratic President Josiah Bartlet and about his, and his senior staffers', constant effort to do the right thing by the country in the face of pressures from special interests. The Bartlet White House is clearly based on the Clinton White House. Bartlet himself is regarded as a hybrid of Bill Clinton and John F. Kennedy. Jimmy Carter and Harry Truman.

"It's about a group of people who serve a President and believe in his agenda," Martin Sheen, who had a key role in Richard Attenborough's *Gandhi* and who plays Bartlet in this series, said about it not long ago. "But it's not a bully pulpit. The Opposition voice is always heard. And we don't always win. Most of the time we get our butts kicked." Sheen admitted that he does model some facets of his performance on Mr Clinton, whom he described as "a hero of mine."

A film critic of *The New York Times* noted last week that Sheen's Bartlet is "a key to the show's success, tempering its political realism with an idealised chief executive."

The series is astonishingly close to reality — thanks, manifestly, to its array of consultants who include a former Clinton press secretary, a former Bush press secretary and a former Reagan speech writer. According to the media analysis magazine *Brill's Content*, the show "beats the Washington press corps to the real story" of White House politics. The issues it deals with are real-life ones: gun control and campaign finance reform, for instance. In its second season it will "get into all kinds of things," the creator of the show, 38-year-old Aaron Sorkin, promised sometime ago. Sorkin wrote the screenplay for the successful 1995 film *The American President* (with Michael Douglas as the widower environmental lobbyist) and found that he had enough material left over to fashion the present television series about the workings of the White House.

Critics attribute the success of the series primarily to Sorkin's ability to make even the minutiae of government entertaining. "Sorkin has managed to deal with substantive issues — like the census — in prime time when most cable networks wouldn't even deal with them at midnight," one columnist said. "He managed to figure out how to create drama around complex and sometimes dull issues." More importantly, he has made the fictional Bartlet administration resonate with heart, drive and brainy, high-speed banter.

Sorkin's explanation for the success

of his series: "Here's a show with no gratuitous violence, no gratuitous sex, that celebrates our institutions, is a valentine to public service, and has featured a character, the President of the United States, kneeling in the Oval Office and praying." One member of the show's strong ensemble cast noted that it offered "optimistic, positive examples of what public servants can bring to our nation."

A *Boston Globe* writer attributed the show's success to its "tapping into a subconscious public desire for a reconnection not only with government, but with politicians they can admire." Others believe that its success is part of a burgeoning anti-irony and anti-cynicism backlash in popular culture. *The West Wing* has secured 18 nominations for Emmy awards, the annual presentations by the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for outstanding achievements in television; and should bag quite a few at the awards function in September. (The name Emmy, incidentally, derives from Immy, a nickname for image orthicon, a TV camera tube.)

According to Sorkin, National Security Adviser Sandy Berger was indignant that there was no counterpart of his on the show. Even Secretary of State Madeline Albright wanted to know who was running foreign policy in the Bartlet administration. Chairman of Federal Reserve System Alan Greenspan was unhappy that when his counterpart died of a heart attack, "nobody on the show gave a damn that the guy was dead." President Clinton joked that *The West Wing*'s first season "got lot better ratings than mine did."

Baggage tips

FOR the growing tribe of air travellers, here are some down-to-earth tips from *The Wall Street Journal* on how to improve what it called survival chances for baggage.

Don't put your nametag on the bag handle: if the handle comes off, so does your ID. Double-check the tag before the bag goes down the chute. Agents make mistakes. Put your name also inside the bag: tags can get torn or demolished; and airlines have sometimes to open bags. Don't pack cameras and valuables in checked luggage: they could get stolen. Save receipts for items that will go in checked luggage: with claim limits up to \$2,500 per bag, airlines now require receipts. Buy sturdy luggage; don't overpack; and, above all, check in early. The paper's advice was prompted by the fact that 2.5 million bags were mishandled in 1999 on the domestic airways system. The problem was a low-tech one. "The technology that airlines use for luggage-handling is minimal. Air-lines now put bar-coded tags on luggage, but only use them to sort bags at their originating airport — not to track their progress down the line."

ON DEMOCRATIC TURF

9/26 25/8 Bush is ahead on most counts WJ

THE most striking thing about the presidential campaign in the United States is that in spite of having engineered an unprecedented economic boom and a welfare programme that has become so much of a policy creed that even George Bush has to go along with it, there are 14 states with a 109 electoral college votes, considered safe for the Republican contender. His proposal to spend the \$ 2.2 trillion surplus to give tax cuts to the wealthy, which would imply corresponding cuts in the social security and education budgets, his emphasis on private insurance and private schools and so forth, should lose him a lot of sympathy with Middle America. Al Gore's proposal to use the surplus to pay off the national debt and use the rest to give tax cuts to middle-class families, besides expanding the social security net coupled with a classic Democrat social vision, should have given him a lead over Bush in winning over a majority of the undecided voters spread over ten states who will finally tilt the balance on 7 November.

Al Gore is closing the gap in the opinion polls and most people are predicting a close finish. He has also stopped trying to be someone else. At the Democratic convention he said he may not be the most exciting president ever and confessed in another interview that he may not be able to match President Clinton's political skills. But the fact that he has decided to bank on his own qualities — hard work, solid thinking plus a knowledge of how Congress works — rather than on borrowed ones, is a big improvement in terms of campaign strategy. Despite this, only Michigan, Delaware and the District of Columbia are considered sure-shots for Gore, while Bush led him 48 per cent to 39 per cent on education and came to within two points on health care thinking. Which may mean that some of that prosperity may be playing against the Democrats, instead of for them, by giving Middle America choices — private schools and private health insurance — they didn't have before. Al Gore will have to hope that most of the 45 million Americans who don't have any health insurance at all will offset the gains made by Bush on this issue. Bush is taking Democrat turf with proposals that are conservative Republican. He is not far behind with women either — traditionally, a Democrat bastion — in spite of his conservative views on abortion. There is a strong Christian Conservative streak in this election — partly in reaction to Clinton's philandering — and though Al Gore tries to pray as hard, has an Orthodox Jew for a vice-president, Bush is still ahead.

THE STATESMAN

25 AUG 2000

WITH the US presidential election in November, and Vice-President Al Gore closing the gap but still behind in the opinion polls, it may seem that he needs the help of a man he resembles — Superman, or at least the Christopher Reeve incarnation.

Republican candidate George Bush Jr, after his convention, has united his party and the Americans appear to be looking for change. They seem to have decided on Mr Bush and the Republicans.

Still, frontrunners have stumbled before and even from here, Mr Gore can win. For, this election could be like the one in 1988, when the challenger was running against the deputy of a very popular twice-elected President.

In 1988, Michael Dukakis was the Democrat challenger and he was fighting George Bush, Vice-President to the popular Ronald Reagan. This year, it is Mr Gore who is the Vice-President in the shadows, and the twice-elected President Bill Clinton, despite sex scandals, is considered a successful chief.

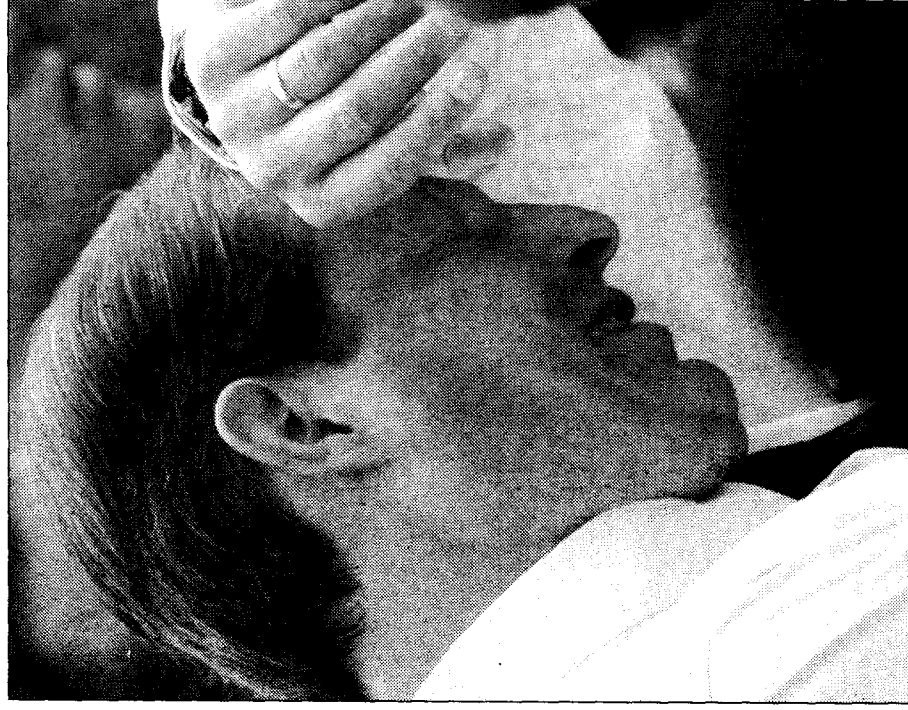
Mr Dukakis had a 17-point lead in the polls after his convention; Mr Bush had an 18-point lead after his. Yet, Mr Dukakis lost, getting only 46 per cent of the vote. As in 1988, the US economy is in good shape. And as in 1988, the election could get ugly.

Can Mr Gore do what Mr Bush did? Mr Bush victory was a result of merciless personal attacks on Mr Dukakis. There was the Willie Horton TV advertisement by the Republicans that evoked strong racial feelings. Horton was a jailed African-American sent on furlough to Massachusetts where Mr Dukakis was governor.

There, he committed more crimes. Then there were stories that Kitty Dukakis, the Democratic presidential candidate's wife, had burnt the American flag as a student. The attacks were so relentless that Americans began to believe that Mr Dukakis was soft on crime, knew nothing about the military (the Soviet Union hadn't collapsed) and was a "liberal" — a dirty word after Mr Reagan's conservatism. Equally important is the analysis that a strong economy favoured Mr

Can Gore do a tortoise on the Bush hare?

George Bush Jr has united the Republicans and the Americans seem to be in the mood for change. But front-runners have stumbled before and even from here, Al Gore can win if he builds his positives, says SRINJOY CHOWDHURY



WHERE IS SUPERMAN! Al Gore has to hammer in the issues and ensure he is not mistaken for George Bush Sr or a watered-down Republican.

out the terrible negative campaign that Mr Bush unveiled? At first glance, he seems to have done better than Mr Bush. He chose a good running mate in Joe Lieberman (Dan Quayle, Mr Bush's running mate, couldn't spell potato). Mr Gore went to Vietnam, still an issue. His rival in this election didn't. And unlike Mr Dukakis, he isn't unknown outside the state.

Mr Gore has reinvented government, a euphemism for shrinking the government apparatus by trimming the flab, he's known for his enthusiasm for information technology and the environment. And no international news magazine has done a cover story on him like they

did with George Bush, with the headline "The wimp factor." He is a southerner from Tennessee — the last Democrat from the north who won a presidential election was John F Kennedy 30 years ago, and there are some doubts about how free and fair it was.

The votes in the crucial state of Illinois may have been rigged by the Democrat apparatus. All the Democrats to be President after that — Lyndon Johnson, Jimmy Carter and Bill Clinton — were from the south. Mr Gore has to "build his positives" and "bring down Mr Bush Jr's negatives" and that can be done with attack-dog politics that George Bush



Ex-President George Bush: Attacked his opponent mercilessly.

used in 1988. There is perhaps, enough. Mr Bush Jr is strongly linked with the oil industry, something many Americans are wary of. He has a poor environmental record as Texas governor, he doesn't know the names of heads of governments of India and Pakistan, among other countries; he went to speak at a university which is apparently racist.

Also, that he is a rich kid, a child of privilege, but that is something President Clinton, the man from Hope, could have said, Mr Gore being pretty privileged himself.

To win from here, Mr Gore has to do something different, well in the coming debates, and hope that the "bounce" from his convention sticks. Choosing Mr Lieberman was a risk. Sure, he would appeal to moral Middle America. Sure, he's a centrist Democrat, more acceptable in the south and the mid-west, but he's a Jew from Connecticut in the end.

And that's not going to fly well in the southern and mid-western states Mr Gore should be looking at — Georgia, Louisiana, Missouri and Iowa. He might do better in Florida, as the population profile of this state has changed over the years due to immigration from the north.

Mr Gore has to hammer home the issues — that he is different from Mr Bush Sr, not just a watered-down Republican.

He has to shore up support among African-Americans, the blue-collared workers, women (who haven't supported him as much), and minorities like Hispanics and Asians. With his reputation, he should aim at the information technology and the environment lobby.

What is hurting him in some crucial states like Florida and even, California and Minnesota, is the quixotic candidacy



Joe Lieberman: Should be Gore's vote-catcher in New York.

of environmentalist and crusader Ralph Nader. Till he can persuade the world that a vote for Mr Nader is a vote for Mr Bush, he will be uncertain of victory.

What could help him now is the way American elections are conducted — indirectly. He could poll 2-3 per cent less than Mr Bush but still win. For the electoral votes from the state are decided on a winner-take all basis. Mr Gore, despite Mr Nader, leads in California with 54 votes. In New York, which has a strong Jewish population, he should cement his lead with Mr Lieberman as his running

mate. And that should give him about 90 of the 270 needed to win.

To get the other 180, he needs to sweep the north-east states of Maine, Vermont, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Rhode Island and hopefully, New Hampshire, which has strong Republican links. But winning the north-east and the west — Oregon, Hawaii and Washington also vote Democrat — is not enough. He has to win enough states in the middle. Washington DC and West Virginia have traditionally voted Democratic as do frost-belt states like Wisconsin and Minnesota, but he has to win others.

Tennessee and Arkansas, Mr Clinton's home state, are possibilities and he also has to look to Colorado, Georgia, Florida (nominating Governor Bob Graham as running mate would have helped) New Mexico and Louisiana.

If there has to be a President Gore next year, he has to do well in the mid-west, as most of the south, south-west, including Texas (where Mr Bush has a 50-point lead) and the Rocky Mountain states are firmly Republican.

On election night, the states of Ohio, Michigan, Illinois and Missouri will probably have to be Democratic blue in the maps of the TV channels. Otherwise, there will be a President Bush in office next year.

(The author is on the staff of The Statesman, New Delhi.)

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They're off the blocks

278

IN ABOUT a week's time the American Presidential election will hit another milestone — Labour day on September 4 and the start of the 'actual' show-down for the November 7 election. And if the Gore campaign was somewhat upset that he was not getting anything going into Los Angeles, the Vice-President has not only pulled even but has gone way ahead of his Republican rival, Mr. George W. Bush.

If the Americans are going to vote by their pocket-books, as the traditional saying goes, then one would have to wonder why the Texas Governor is running for the White House at all. For seven years, Americans have been shown such economic success and prosperity that many would think it bizzare to upset the current scheme of things. Yet the Democrats and Mr. Al Gore are leaving nothing to chance.

Their plan includes giving credit to the President, Mr. Bill Clinton; taking credit for the economic success by arguing that Mr. Gore was very much a part of the team; and promising "more" of the same in the next administration. Political conventions, the argument goes, have lost their charm in recent years; many have become mundane and long-drawn-out exercises that even major TV networks are avoiding for the most part.

And this year's Republican and Democratic events in Philadelphia and Los Angeles were not any dif-

The 2000 U.S. presidential election was billed one of the most boring events in recent political memory. Yet, says SRIDHAR KRISHNASWAMI, the winner will be hard to predict.

ferent. Hopefully, the Presidential election of 2000 will not just be remembered for the tightly-scripted Republican drama — the "inclusion illusion" as Democrats referred to it; or for that matter the "lip lock" of Mr. Gore and Mrs. Tipper Gore at the Democratic Convention which looked like well-planned theatrics as well.

The Presidential election of 2000 — given the candidates in the fray initially and those who finally emerged — was billed as one of the most boring events in recent political memory. Yet, the winner will be hard to predict. The GOP believes it has the advantage on issues such as leadership, values and character to pull it off on November 7. The Gore Campaign is very much assured after his acceptance speech in Los Angeles which was solid on policy alterna-

tives. In fact, Mr. Gore appeared as if he was making his First State of the Union Address.

This year's Presidential event also did not have that element of thrill by way of the running mates. Both Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore settled for safe candidates in the sense that neither wanted to bring in names which had the potential to create trouble from within the parties. For all his talk about disliking the ways of Washington D.C., Mr. Bush settled for Mr. Dick Cheney who is well known in the corridors of power in the city; and Mr. Gore picked Mr. Joseph Lieberman as a way of cleansing himself of all the cheerleading that went on during the days of the impeachment of Mr. Clinton.

To say that this election is going to be decided by the raft of opinion polls between now and November would be stretching things. While polls are indicators of shifts in moods and attitudes, candidates hardly rely on them as the only tools to get them into the White House. For instance, right through the primaries Mr. Bush was the unquestioned hero within the GOP and even when it came to the Democratic challenger. That was until the time the John McCain phenomenon hit the Bush trail. Suddenly the whole thing evaporated.

Critical for Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore are the independent voters; and their own ability to not only hold on to the core groups but to

convince others to join their bandwagon. Right now, in the aftermath of the Democratic Convention, Mr. Gore is seen as having the edge in such States as Michigan, New Jersey, Minnesota and California. But neither candidate is close to the 270 electoral college votes needed to win.

Independent voters may be a critical bunch but they are not the only groups that Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore are after. The Democratic nominee is seen as being weak among the white male voters; and Mr. Bush is seen as making some inroads into a Democratic stronghold — the women vote. And then there are the labour, the environmentalists, the minorities and the immigrants such as Hispanics.

If this Presidential race is going to tighten up in the next few weeks, some of it will be on how defensive the candidates are going to get; and with this defensiveness will come howlers. Already there is this feeling that Mr. Bush is so desperate to get attention for his tax plan that he has started attacking his opponent's proposals, in the process making wrong projections.

And this is precisely the kind of strategy the Gore campaign will be working on leading up to the three debates in October and beyond — nailing down the Texas Governor on specifics instead of getting involved in broad oratory involving character, vision, leadership and what not.

THE HINDU

27 AUG 2000

Gore narrows gap with Bush

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

SAN FRANCISCO, JULY 19. The problem that the U.S. Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore Jr. faces with respect to Mr. Ralph Nader is based more on political and legislative points than on any ideological division within the Democratic party.

And the issue of coming to terms with the left-of-centre Democrats is making an impact on who Mr. Gore will pick as his running mate.

On the one hand, Mr. Gore is getting some good news on the polling front. At least two surveys have shown him narrowing the gap with the Texas Governor, Mr. George W. Bush, who was until recently leading in all national polls by at least eight percentage points. Now, polls show a statistical deadheat.

The narrowing of the gap has been attributed by analysts not to any dramatic change in the strategy of the Gore campaign but more in terms of the endorsement from the one time challen-

ger at the primaries, Mr. Bill Bradley. This is especially so if the attitudes of the young women voters are factored into. Mr. Bradley had the backing of young affluent, educated and suburban independents.

But pundits maintain that the troubles are not over for Mr. Gore, for at least one national poll has shown that the margin between Mr. Bush and Mr. Gore widen to at least five percentage points if the Green Party candidate, Mr. Ralph Nader, is taken into account.

In contrast, Mr. Patrick Buchanan of the Reform Party who quit the Grand Old Party, is yet to register in any meaningful manner on the survey to pose any threat to Mr. Bush.

It is pointed out that while at the national scale Mr. Gore appears to be pulling up, it is a totally different story at the regional and State levels where Mr. Nader is still making inroads into the Democratic candidate's vote bank.

This is one reason that Mr. Gore is still apparently considering the name of Mr. Richard Gephardt, the Minority Leader in the House of Representatives, as his running mate. Mr. Gephardt, the argument goes, has the backing of the labour and the environmental groups which now appear to be the weak spot of the Gore candidacy.

A long-term consumer advocate, Mr. Nader is being increasingly backed by some labour and environmental groups largely as a result of the Clinton administration's stance on China vis-a-vis the granting of the Permanent Normal Trade Relations. Mr. Gore's initial support to the idea and his subsequent waffling on the issue has not won him many friends.

Media reports have it that Mr. Gephardt has told the Vice-President that he is not too keen on the Number Two slot. And a person seen as being "dragged in" does little help either to the main candidate or to the ticket.

Grandma's gown no more

5-7
29/7
WHEN the US President travels abroad, including his most recent trip to Okinawa for G-8 summit, his official entourage can easily add up to 1,000.

With several hundred journalists and photographers in tow, his presence radiates with authority and importance.

For good reason, he is widely seen as the most powerful person in the world. Within the context of East Asia, the region has directly experienced the power of the US presidency on at least three occasions — in Japan, Korea and Taiwan.

During World War II, when the war in the Pacific theatre was lumbering to an uncertain end, it was President Harry Truman who approved the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

The decisions proved decisive as a defiant Japan was soon brought to its knees. In one audacious stroke, Truman showcased the power and impact of a non-sense US President. On 25 June 1950, when the North Korean army crossed the 38th Parallel, the response by the President to protect Seoul was equally rapid.

Within weeks, the UN command, under General Douglas MacArthur, was already repelling the North Korean forces and pushing them back successfully.

When Gen. MacArthur over-stepped his orders by crossing the Yalu river to flush the Chinese soldiers out of North Korea, Mr Truman had the General fired immediately. Having brought Gen. MacArthur to yield, the US presidency was once again seen as the epitome of power.

Following the Korean War armistice on 27 July 1953, China began to test the resolve of US relationship with Taiwan by bombing the offshore islands of Quemoy and Matsu.

Unfazed by China's aggressive postures, President Dwight Eisenhower signed the Mutual Defence Agreement with Taiwan in December 1954. Although just the defence of Taiwan and Pescadores were included, the agreement demonstrated the indomitable will of the US President to resist China's frontal assault. These events combined to reinforce the impression of an office which carries immense political and military weight.

For better or for worse, the US presidency also became known as an institu-

When dealing with the USA, says PHAR KIM BENG, Congress assistance is as crucial as the President's support.



tion which can affect the flow of history. After all, East Asia's geo-strategic order was transformed qualitatively by it.

Closer to South-east Asia, US Presidents such as John F Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson each left an indelible legacy.

Like his predecessors, President Kennedy embodied their resolve in no uncertain degree. With his inaugural address to "pay any price and bear any burden" ringing audibly, Kennedy began the USA's official involvement in South-east Asia, by assigning military advisers to the South Vietnamese government. The President's plan seemed to have a genuine momentum as well.

Despite his assassination, the policy was followed by President Johnson. Between 1964 and 1967, he increased US troops in South Vietnam from a mere few thousand to 540,000 men. The massive troop despatch was approved by the Congress under the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution.

The powers granted to the President proved so sweeping, that Johnson later likened it to his "grandmother's nightgown that covered everything".

Be that as it may, the resolution was approved only because of misleading

information provided by the President.

Contrary to his claim that a US battleship in the Gulf of Tonkin was fired upon by hostile elements, it was later found that the battleship was manoeuvring provocatively in North Vietnamese waters. But when the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution was repealed in 1971, the damage to the integrity of the US presidency had already been done.

To begin with, US forces were losing the war in South Vietnam. Secondly, presidential connivance in Indochina had become commonplace.

By 1970, President Richard Nixon had already carried out a secret air war in Cambodia without Congress's knowledge. The military operated in Laos without formally notifying the Congress.

Although the aim was to bomb the Ho Chi Minh Trail, to prevent North Vietnamese forces from penetrating South Vietnam, the seedy manner in which the Indochina operations were carried out caused the Congress to be suspicious of the Oval Office's foreign-policy manoeuvres.

When Nixon was impeached in 1974, for his role in the Watergate scandal, Congress quickly seized on the prevail-

ing cynicism against the White House to curb the subversion of the political process.

Since then, the modern US presidency has become less influential and free-wheeling. Indeed, it has become increasingly necessary for the presidential incumbent to work with the Congress rather than against it. Public perception of the presidency has undergone changes too.

The change in public attitudes is well documented by polls taken before and after Vietnam and Watergate. In 1959, social scientists at the University of Michigan asked: "Some people say the President is in the best position to see what the country needs."

Other people think the President may have good ideas about what the country needs, but it is up to the Congress to decide what ought to be done. How do you feel about this?" Sixty-one per cent chose the President and 17 per cent chose Congress. In 1977, *The New York Times* asked virtually the same question. This time, 58 per cent chose the Congress and just 26 per cent, the President. Since then, polls have been taken regularly.

In the main, the American public wants both the Congress to play a more significant role, and a stronger, more assertive problem-solving presidency. This trend suggests the American electorate has since become more mature, rigorous and demanding.

It also implies that no future occupant of the Oval Office can have a free rein. His influence and authority have to be "negotiated" with the Congress.

While the US presidency remains an influential institution, leaders in East Asia are warned not to expect too much from it. As it is, intricate bargains between Congress and the President have become the norm, rather than the exception. In this context, when China or any nation cuts a deal with the Oval Office, for instance, there is no guarantee it will go through the Congress without some significant amendments. So when dealing with the US government, while it is important to engage the President's support, it is equally crucial to enlist Congress assistance.

This is an arrangement which no East Asian government can walk away from.

— *The Straits Times/Asia News Network*

THE STATESM...

29 JUL 2000

~~Nuke secrets~~ go missing from US lab yet again

PTI WSJ 19/6
Washington, June 13

THE UNITED States nuclear secrets contained in hard drives in the Los Alamos laboratory have disappeared from a vault, prompting the authorities to launch a joint probe by the Energy Department and Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

The drives reportedly contained information on how to disarm and dismantle US, Russian and other country's nuclear devices. The secrets were to be used by the emergency response team in case of a nuclear threat or accident.

The classified information was stored on two computer hard drives, kept in a suitcase that was locked in a vault, media reports, quoting Energy Department officials said.

The Energy Department said it was informed about the incident on June 7 by the laboratory, already at the centre of an alleged espionage by China, following which it launched a joint probe with FBI into the matter.

"This is an extremely serious matter, and we are taking swift action to deal with it," laboratory director John Browne said.

"If the inquiry reveals that individuals did not fulfil their responsibilities, they will face appropriate action," he said.

Says Ed Curran, Director of the department's counter-intelligence office, "there is no indication that espionage is involved in the latest disappearance at this point." (PTI)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

14 JUN 2000

WFO

Six Los Alamos staffers suspended

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WASHINGTON, JUNE 14. The Los Alamos National Laboratory has suspended six employees as the FBI intensified its investigation into the disappearance from the lab of two computer hard drives loaded with nuclear secrets.

The Energy Secretary, Mr. Bill Richardson, under fire from Republicans for insufficient security at the laboratory, yesterday launched a bipartisan probe into the loss.

He said espionage was not suspected, but vowed to take disciplinary action against those responsible.

Republicans said Mr. Richardson was ultimately to blame. An Energy Department official said six managers at the lab were put on paid leave for failing to immediately report the disappearance of the hard drives when it was discovered on May 7.

The managers said they were

unable to get back into the vault where the hard drives were kept until May 24, when the facility reopened after wildfires that caused over \$300 millions in damage. Coming up empty-handed after an intensive search, the managers notified the laboratory's security chief on May 31, and a day later word was passed to Washington.

Mr. Richardson said he was outraged by the incident. "I will not tolerate security lapses and I'm outraged at what happened," he said in a written statement, announcing his appointment of the former Tennessee Republican, Sen. Howard Baker, and ex-Indiana Democratic Representative, Mr. Lee Hamilton, to perform a "thorough investigation and assessment" of the loss.

Mr. Baker and Mr. Hamilton are to recommend security fixes for Los Alamos, the nation's premier nuclear laboratory. — Reuters

RECEIVED

JUN 15 1980

Missing US hard drives with N-secrets found

Washington, June 17

TWO OUTER hard drives containing nuclear secrets that disappeared at the US Nuclear laboratory at Los Alamos have resurfaced under questionable circumstances in a secure area within the facility, US officials have said.

Energy secretary Bill Richardson, at a hastily called news conference in Phoenix, said the FBI is treating the area where the hard drives were found as a crime scene. Earlier investigators searched the location where the hard drives were found.

The drives contained highly sensitive technical information on nuclear weapons design, including information on US, Russian, Chinese and French systems. Officials have not ruled out the

possibility of espionage.

Government officials said they suddenly turned up under questionable circumstances. Mr Richardson added that there were "inconsistencies" that were being probed concerning the missing hard drives. He did not elaborate.

"I want to assure the American public that we're going to get to the bottom of the incident. We're going to hold people accountable, there's going to be disciplinary action," Mr Richardson said.

"This is not a victory speech, we still have a long way to go to ensure that security is protected in our national labs."

CNN reported that the hard drives were found behind a photocopy machine in an area that had been twice searched previously.

(Reuters)

THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

18 JUN 2000

Congressmen grill Richardson over Los Alamos

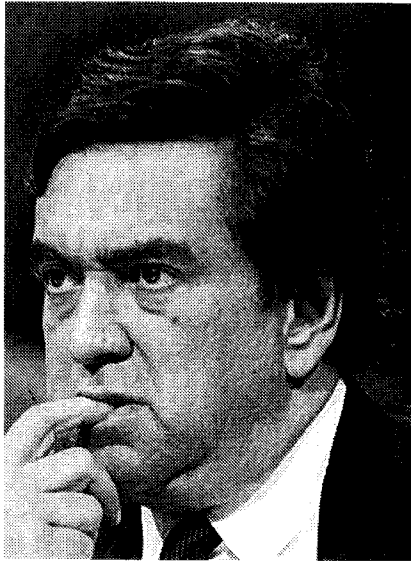
By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, JUNE 22 The argument of the U.S. Energy Secretary, Mr. Bill Richardson, that the Federal Bureau of Investigation has found no evidence of espionage or that the missing computer disks ever left the Los Alamos Lab has changed few minds on Capitol Hill. Both Republicans and Democrats who were hitherto supportive of Mr. Richardson are putting pressure on him to either come up with fuller answers to persisting problems at the nuclear lab or quit the job.

A defiant Mr. Richardson as early as last week refused to step down from the Clinton administration; and while the President, Bill Clinton, has expressed outrage at the security lapse, he has not said that he has lost trust in the Energy Secretary. And the Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore has commented very little on the matter. Among the candidates talked about as Mr. Gore's running mate is Mr. Richardson.

The vice-presidential slot is hardly at the top of the Energy Secretary's mind, for he is being grilled by Republicans and Democrats alike on Capitol Hill. Reiterating his view that Mr. Richardson should quit, the Chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence told the Energy Secretary at a hearing on Wednesday, "You've lost all credibility". The embattled Cabinet official took the view that he has done more on security in the last two years than has been done in the last 20 years.

"The FBI has now determined that these are the authentic disk drives...So far there is no evidence of espionage nor is there evidence that the drives have ever left the Los Alamos X Division", Mr. Richardson told the Senate Armed Services Committee. The disk drives were noticed missing from a secured vault on May 7; the disappearance was not reported to senior lab officials or the Energy Department for more than three weeks. But the two disk drives mysteriously re-appeared behind a copying machine — an area in the highly secretive X Division that had been thoroughly searched by the FBI.



The focus of this high profile inquiry is on a group of individuals who have made conflicting statements to investigators. The strong theory doing the rounds is that the re-appearance of the disk drives was part of a clumsy cover-up operation as a result of panic. But the security lapse has prompted Members of Congress in the House of Representatives and in the Senate to ponder seriously whether the nuclear labs have to be handed over to an independent agency or come under the control of the Pentagon.

The larger question that Democrats and Mr. Gore would have to address in the near future is whether the security lapses at Los Alamos has forced Mr. Richardson out of the political spotlight. The Energy Secretary, who came over from being U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations has been seen in a positive way for the Vice-Presidential slot. Even at that time it was suggested that there were political reasons why Mr. Richardson moved away from New York.

THE HINDU

23 JUN 2001

Spy threat to US nuclear scientists

FROM VERNON LOEB

Washington, June 25: A report by the US General Accounting Office says the Department of Energy has identified more than 75 incidents of foreign spies targeting American nuclear scientists travelling abroad by bugging their hotel rooms, rifling their personal belongings and offering them sexual favours.

The report, requested by Representatives Timothy Roemer and Benjamin Gilman, faults the department for underestimating threats posed by travel to non-sensitive countries such as Britain and France.

It recommends that counterintelligence officials at DoE's national laboratories review and approve all requests for foreign travel to non-sensitive and sensitive countries, a category that includes China, Russia, Pakistan and Israel.

"Laboratories' foreign travellers face many threats in other countries," the report says. "DoE's approach of emphasizing 'sensitive' country travel discounts the reality that travellers to non-sensitive countries may be targeted by intelligence entities from 'sensitive' or even 'non-sensitive' countries."

While members of Congress

have grilled DoE officials in recent weeks over security lapses at Los Alamos National Laboratory after two computer hard drives containing nuclear secrets could not be located, Roemer said the GAO audit underscores equally serious vulnerabilities related to foreign travel.

"I think the Department of Energy is working on the problem," said Roemer, a member of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. "We are in the midst of a paradigm change in safeguarding our security. We need to move from the old philosophy of guns, guards and gates to concentrating on our laptops and hard drives, and on changing human nature."

According to the GAO report, scheduled for release this week, one US scientist travelling to a "sensitive" country reported that he was propositioned every night by prostitutes. Another admitted to "extensive sexual contact" with women from the host country and another "sensitive" country while on official foreign travel, the report says. "This included a prostitute, a waitress and two female employees at the facility where he was visiting."

In one incident involving electronic surveillance, a scientist travelling to a "sensitive" country

realised his personal calls were being monitored after speaking on the telephone to his wife in the United States.

"A short time later in the hotel lounge, someone mentioned to the traveller the bingo trip that his wife had talked about," the report says. "The next day, another person asked, 'What is bingo?'"

In an incident involving video surveillance, another scientist in a "sensitive" country reported seeing a flashing light whenever she undressed or changed clothes in her hotel room.

She also reported hearing "an unusual noise that sounded like an auto-focus camera lens as it adjusted," the report says. "The traveller believed that pictures were possibly being taken from a smoke detector attached to the ceiling."

Another scientist visiting a sensitive country reported finding that someone using a "guest access" sign-in had secretly logged onto a laptop computer in his hotel room, even though it had been secured with a padlock, according to the report.

The scientist then went back and checked his computer logs and found that an identical "guest access" had occurred during a previous visit to the country.

THE WASHINGTON POST

THE TELEGRAPH

26 JUN 2000

U.S. undecided on missile shield plan

WASHINGTON: U.S. President Bill Clinton has insisted he had not yet decided whether to go ahead with a proposed missile defence shield, despite reports he is ready to approve preliminary construction on the project.



Bill Clinton

"I have not made a final decision and most of this speculation that is coming in the press is coming from people who have not talked to me about it," Mr Clinton said at a White House news conference on Wednesday. "I have not yet formulated a position which I am prepared to go to the American people with," he said, but added he would be able to do so "sometime over the next several weeks."

The national missile defence (NMD) system is designed to knock out incoming ballistic missiles with interceptor missiles.

Supporters of the project argue it is needed to protect the U.S. from attack from potential enemies like North Korea, which has been developing a missile programme that experts say could soon threaten U.S. territory.

Opponents of the scheme, including Russia, claim its deployment could trigger a new arms race and may infringe international arms control treaties which the U.S. has signed.

Mr Clinton reiterated on Wednesday that he would make a decision on the system based on four criteria: the potential threat to the U.S., the cost of the system, its technical feasibility, and its impact on security, including arms control pacts. (AFP)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

30 JUN 2000

Fighting for the Big Apple

VS
H.D. B
THE GRAND Old Party, at least in the State of New York, seems to be looking for some answers and it is not going to find them easily. After berating the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, for his low moral standards and questioning the role of his wife, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is running for the Senate seat being vacated by Mr. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, the Republican party is somehow unable to withstand the bombshell dropped by its Mayor of New York City, Mr. Rudy Giuliani.

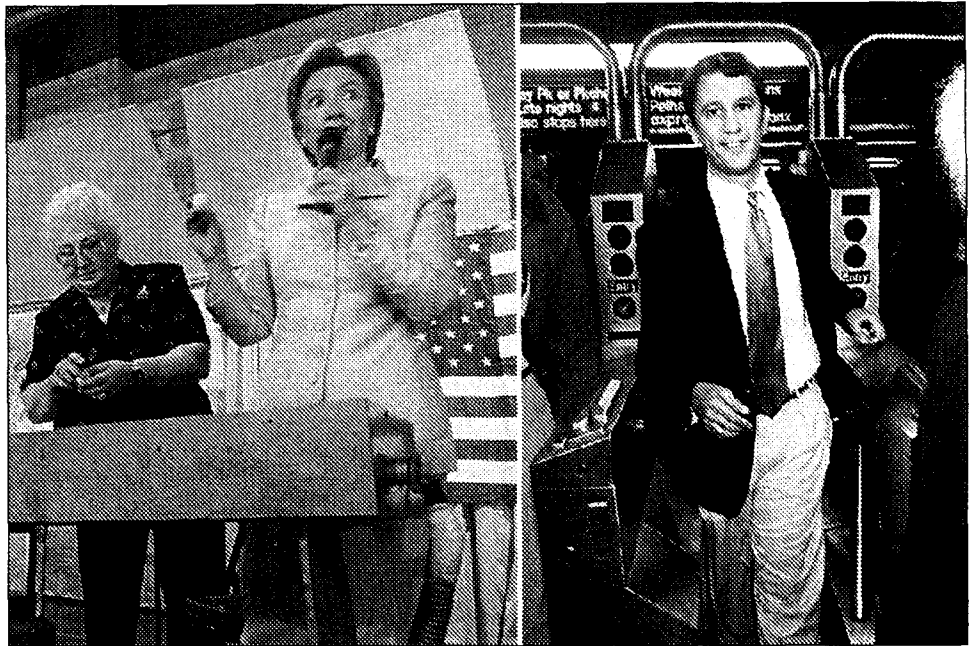
hfi
The first announcement by the Mayor that he has been diagnosed as suffering from prostate cancer was a sure jolt to the state and national party machines. But when Mr. Giuliani followed this with a statement that he had problems in his marriage of 16 years, that must have been the final nail driven into his Senate campaign against the First Lady. Even those very optimistic that the Mayor would get around his "illness" and fight the political battle soon realised the hopelessness of the task.

The campaign, that started to totter when the Mayor announced his health problems, was practically over when people started talking about his affair with a former aide and the Mayor himself referring to a "very special" friend with whom he had been seen lately. For all the noise the Republicans have been making about Mr. Bill Clinton's morals and character, Mr. Giuliani came around and showed that the so-called lack of morals and character was not a prerogative of the Democrats.

Suddenly from a media point of view, an election that was going to be so much "fun", excitement and down to the wire seems to be no longer there. And the first temptation is to write off the New York Senate race as something the GOP has given away to the Democrats on a platter. In making the decision to get out of the race, and in relatively quick fashion, Mr. Giuliani spared himself and the party from being dragged around. The longer the Mayor stayed in the race, the bigger would the mess have been for the GOP.

The more interesting question in all this is how the Mayor could have even expected that his personal life would have been off the table in this November's Senate race. With the conservatives, nationally and in New York, making such a big deal out of Mr. Clinton and his wife, there is no question that the Democrats would have hit back at Mr. Giuliani if he had stayed in the race even without his health problems. After all, the New York Senate race was supposed to be "nasty".

The Democrats in the State must have been quietly chuckling at the fact that "one more" high profile Republican stood exposed on the personal life front. But in fairness to Mr. Giuliani it has to be said that the Mayor had not, yet, started attacking the personal characteristics of either the President or the lifestyles of the Clintons. But somewhere down the line if



The U.S. First Lady, Mrs. Hillary Rodham Clinton, is well into her campaign for the New York Senate seat but the Republicans have trouble with Mr. Rick Lazio (right) entering the race late after the New York Mayor, Mr. Rudy Giuliani, dropped out.

With Mr. Rudy Giuliani pulling out of the race for New York Senate seat, there is a temptation to write off the Republicans. But, says SRIDHAR KRISHNASWAMI, a strong conservative candidate could still emerge to give Mrs. Hillary Clinton a run for her money.

Mr. Giuliani had continued in the race, the Democrats would have done their research as well.

Perhaps the smartest thing that the Democrats led by the First Lady did after Mr. Giuliani announced that he was bowing out of the race was not to open the champagne bottles. Instead, Mrs. Clinton went about in a professional sense, saying, among other things, that she had spoken to the Mayor and wished him well.

If some in the Giuliani camp expected a "bounce" in his approval rating after the Mayor announced that he has been diagnosed with prostate cancer, that did not happen. In fact an argument could be made that Mr. Giuliani would have been on a stronger campaign trail "only" with his health problems — the conservative voters of the state would have seen him as a determined person not just taking on a high profile and tough political rival, but trying to beat cancer as well. Health is a problem in American electioneering politics; but when adding personal issues to this, it takes on a deadly turn. Nationally many a politician in the U.S. has been "burnt" on any one of these factors.

The GOP is naturally stung by the sudden developments, but the conservatives have not lost heart. Many still believe that a strong candidate could still emerge to give Mrs. Clinton a run for her money. And if

the first impressions are anything to go by, the challenger has already emerged and hopefully will be confirmed at the State Party Convention on May 30.

The Long Island Congressman, Mr. Rick Lazio, is seen having all the credentials to challenge the First Lady and he has already taken on the job seriously.

Mr. Lazio may not have difficulty in the realms of politics, ideology and familiarity within the State of New York, but the GOP would have to rally behind him on the financial front.

It is not enough if party heavyweights lend their names to the campaign; it is critical for them to round up the millions needed to wage a serious campaign. In terms of campaign finance, Mr. Lazio is now seen as having only one-third of the funds that the First Lady has at her disposal. And it is a long way to go.

One way that some are looking at the New York Senate race in the post-Giuliani phase is as a move away from an exclusive focus on personalities to perhaps an issues-based contest. While that would be the ideal, nothing is being ruled out. In fact one of the first things that Mr. Lazio took on the First Lady was the notion of being a "carpetbagger" — a comment that will be around for the rest of the season.

Democratic convention nominates Hillary Clinton for Senate seat

By Marc Humbert

ALBANY (New York): With thousands of supporters, including her husband, cheering in a packed sports arena, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton was nominated for the Senate at the Democratic Party convention in



Hillary Clinton

her adopted state.

The nomination by the 352 delegates of the only first lady to run for public office was unanimous on Tuesday night. "Make no mistake, this election is not about me or my Republican opponent," Ms Clinton said in a 38-minute address that ended with the triumphant theme from the movie *Chariots of Fire*. "It's about the people of New York and our common mission."

The first lady said the mission was to improve the lives of New York's families and children. "We are producing countless new fortunes, yet we have the second-highest rate of poverty in the country and the biggest gap between the rich and the poor," she said.

Still uncertain was whether Ms Clinton would face Republican Rudolph Giuliani, the New York City mayor, whose candidacy was expected to make the Senate race a clash of political titans. Three weeks ago, the mayor announced he had

prostate cancer and said he was uncertain if he could continue in the race.

The Republican state convention in Buffalo is on May 30. Shaking hands with supporters, signing autographs and posing for photographs with admirers at the arena in downtown Albany before the convention began, the first lady predicted she would be "victorious in November".

In a last-minute addition to the festivities, President Bill Clinton changed his schedule on Tuesday in order to join the crowd of about 10,000 people at the convention. "I just decided I ought to be there," Mr Clinton said before leaving Washington.

"It's a big deal for her, a big night for her and I want to be there with her. I just want to be there to support her."

The president did not address the convention, but at a reception afterward hosted by top New York Democrats, he told supporters he was "profoundly grateful for the way you have embraced her. She will not disappoint you."

The first lady lavished praise on her husband during her convention speech, a tribute that had the thousands in the arena on their feet and cheering. He mouthed a silent "thank you" to his wife as he bowed his head.

Three weeks ago, Mr Giuliani stunned New York with the an-

nouncement that he had been diagnosed with cancer and might have to quit the race.

Things turned even more topsy-turvy when the married mayor subsequently confirmed that he was seeing "a very good friend", Judith Nathan, and then announced that he was seeking a legal separation from his wife of 16 years, TV personality and actress Donna Hanover.

Mr Giuliani told supporters at a fund-raiser Monday night that he was "very much inclined" to stay in the race, but still had to determine his course of medical treatment before he could decide on the Senate contest.

Democrats tried to keep the focus on their convention and on the first lady. There was no mention of Mr Giuliani in the speeches. The delegates didn't seem to care, cheering lustily for speaker after speaker.

"This is the kind of excitement we haven't seen since Bobby Kennedy," state Democratic Chairwoman Judith Hope said on the eve of the convention. Ms Clinton is seeking the Senate seat from New York once held by Robert F Kennedy, who like Ms Clinton adopted New York as his home, and later by the man she hopes to replace in the Senate, fellow Democrat Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Mr Moynihan is retiring after 24 years in the Senate. (AP)

THE TIMES OF INDIA

18 MAY 2000

Bush leads Gore by eight points

BEN MACINTYRE
THE TIMES, LONDON

WASHINGTON, May 11. — Mr George W Bush, the Republican presidential candidate, has opened up a solid eight-point lead over Mr Al Gore, the Democratic contender, according to a national poll published the day after Mr John McCain, his former rival, was hauled onto the Bush bandwagon.

With six months before the US presidential election, Mr Bush leads among registered voters by 51 per cent to 43 per cent, the poll by the *Los Angeles Times* found.

The survey was conducted before Mr McCain, the Arizona senator, offered a formal, if somewhat grudging, endorsement of the Bush candidacy. But the poll numbers reflect the Texas Governor's early success in unifying the fractious Republican Party of which Tuesday's Bush-McCain "rapprochement" is the most obvious symbol.

After a primary campaign in which he swung sharply to the right to head off Mr McCain's challenge, Mr Bush has refocused his appeal towards the centre. Most notably, the poll numbers indicate a growing level of support for Mr Bush

among women, hitherto seen as the bedrock of Mr Gore's support. This week a delegation of women activists told Mr Gore that he should sharpen his appeal to women, or risk losing it.

Mr Bush is specifically trying to appeal to the "swing" voters who handed Mr Bill Clinton successive presidential victories, and is attempting to rebuild the coalition that returned a Republican to the White House in five of the six elections before the Clinton presidency. Mr Bush's lead in the new poll was not substantially affected when third-party candidates were factored in, such as Mr Ralph Nader of the liberal Green Party, and Mr Patrick Buchanan, the conservative seeking the Reform Party candidacy.

The poll suggests that Mr Bush has established a firm grip on the party faithful despite the acrimony of the primary season. Nine out of 10 Republicans say they will vote for him, while one in six Democrats is apparently preparing to defect from Mr Gore.

The majority of voters have yet to establish a clear impression of either candidate, creating a fluid situation that could change rapidly when the campaigns accelerate.

THE STATESMAN

J 2 MAY 200

2 ex-U.S. Presidents push for China vote

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

WASHINGTON, MAY 10. The White House has got a boost for the China Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) legislation when two former Presidents, Mr. Gerald Ford and Mr. Jimmy Carter, signed on to the move.

In the last several days, top officials of the administration have been on a mission to ensure that the bill gets through the House of Representatives when the vote is scheduled in the week of May 22. The administration does not see a major problem in the Senate vote that is to follow in June.

The backing from Mr. Ford and Mr. Carter does mean something to an administration which has been quite active in securing endorsements for the bill from a variety of sources. The crux of the White House argument is that if the U.S. rejects the measure it would be like kicking itself in the foot or the "rear".

The President, Mr. Bill Clinton, said, "If Congress votes against it, they will be kicking themselves in the rear 10 years from now, because Americans will be paying the price". Senior officials doing the lecture circuits have been pointedly saying that irrespective of how the American Congress votes, China will get into the WTO implying that it would be better for the U.S. to be on the right side of history.

Supporters of the PNTR look at it from an economic and business point of view. "A negative vote in the House or Senate would be catastrophic to American agriculture, electronics, communications, autos and countless other products and services," said Mr. Ford. But critics look at it differently in terms of China flooding the American market with cheap goods produced with dubious and flagrant violation of labour and human rights.

Mr. Carter said a negative vote would be a "serious setback and impediment for the fur-



The U.S. President, Mr. Bill Clinton, and the Vice-President, Mr. Al Gore, are joined by a bipartisan group of distinguished Americans highlighting support for permanent normal trade relations with China, in Washington on Tuesday. — AP

ther democratisation, freedom and human rights in China". The high pitch from the White House has mainly to get over the problem from Democrats who are sitting in the Opposition largely on account of the labour vote. Key Democrats like the House Minority Leader, Mr. Richard Gephardt, have come out against the PNTR but the saving grace is that he has promised not to force anyone else toeing his line.

The Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore Jr., who

is the presumptive Democratic Party candidate for the November 7 Presidential elections finds himself in a tough spot. On the one hand he is unable — because of his dependence on the labour and the environmental vote — to fully sign on to the administration's aggressive posturings on the PNTR. And on the other hand for Mr. Gore to totally break ranks on such a major foreign policy issue will also have political fallouts. On Tuesday, his comments were suggestive of a careful endorsement that looked at only the positive side — more jobs.

THE HINDU

21 MAY 2000

Élian case leaves impact on Florida politics

By Sridhar Krishnaswami

NEW YORK, APRIL 30. All indications thus far point to the Elian Gonzalez case staying in the realm of Florida politics even if the ramifications and the noise on the legal front is being heard on a national level. On Saturday, thousands of Cuban Americans marched through the streets of Little Havana protesting the way in which the authorities seized the six-year-old Elian and re-united him with his father.

That politicians have been quick to latch on to the case has been apparent from the day the Justice Department made it known that it was for reunion between the father and the son. But on Saturday, the focus on the streets of Little Havana was on unity and peace — that the community was rallying behind the young boy and the protests having to be peaceful as the earlier ones got out of hand resulting in the arrest of some 300 persons.

The Republicans' stance on Elian Gonzalez was clear from the very outset and even politicians in New York like the Mayor, Mr. Rudy Giuliani, have reasoned that he must stay in this country. In fact, Mr. Giuliani — who is still saying that he is interested in challenging Mrs Clinton for the New York Senate race — had come down heavily on the manner in which the Federal Agents went about their business "securing" Elian from the home of his great uncle. Mrs Clinton lost no time in taking the Mayor to task for his reference to the Federal Agents as "storm troopers".

To even the very ignorant of how politics takes shape in this country, what is taking place in Florida and in the context of Elian Gonzalez is not too difficult to figure out. The only loud noise coming from politicians are from the State of Florida — both Republicans and Democrats. And on a national level, the person to add his "voice" to the Cuban American community has been the Democratic Vice-President, Mr. Albert Gore Jr.

In distancing himself from the administration tactics, Mr. Gore has been accused by his detractors of playing the political game — looking for a few votes in Florida, if not the State itself on November 7. The latter may be hard to come by just on account of Elian Gon-



Members of the Cuban-American organisation, Mothers Against Repression, chant while they march on Calle Ocho, in the Little Havana section of Miami on Saturday. They were among thousands of still-angry Cuban-Americans who marched through Little Havana the same day protesting against the operation to seize Elian Gonzalez. — AP

zalez. But in the State of New York, the First Lady who defended the actions of the Attorney General, Ms Janet Reno, and the Justice Department has taken a lot of flak from the Cuban American National Foundation.

The Foundation denounced Mrs Clinton's statements on the Elian case, calling them an offence to the Cuban American community and to the intelligence of the American people. Arguing that Mrs Clinton has failed to ask why Ms Reno took forcible steps to remove the boy when negotiations were going on, the Cuban American National Foundation said, "She (Mrs Clinton) is trying to defend an indefensible position. This is unconscionable and yet another reminder of the deplorable lies and

'Clinton-speak' that the people of New York are now being subjected to."

In the State of New York, Mrs Clinton is in a difficult position in the sense that she — like the Vice-President — is constantly having to comment on actions of the President, Mr. Bill Clinton, and his administration.

On a national level, this is particularly more troublesome to Mr. Gore either way — if he supports an administration policy or distances himself. The Cuban American community may not mean much in terms of political weight in the State of New York, but the responses of Mr. Gore and Mrs Clinton on the Elian Gonzalez case will continue to merit attention.

Elían to stay in USA till court hears asylum plea

DESIKAN THIRUNARAYANAPURAM
STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

WASHINGTON, April 20. — A federal appeals court on Wednesday ruled that Elían Gonzalez would remain in the country at least for a few more weeks until it hears a full appeal of his case.

The ruling by the United States Court of Appeals in Atlanta barred anyone from taking the six-year-old Cuban boy from the country until it hears his appeal for asylum on 11 May.

It also suggested that his Miami relatives' efforts to have his request for asylum heard in court should not have been ignored.

The three-judge court panel seemed to chastise the government for its assertion that only

the boy's father is legally entitled to speak for him, adding they "doubt that protecting a party's day in court, when he has an appeal of arguable merit, is contrary to the public interest."

However, the ruling did not address the important question of who should have custody of the boy during the legal process.

The Justice Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service are insisting that Elían be sent back to Cuba

with his father who is now staying at the home of a Cuban diplomat in a Washington suburb, waiting to take custody of his son.

Attorney General Janet Reno said that this left her with the option of removing the boy from his uncle's home, as she has been threatening to do for days.

"The court's order does not preclude me from placing

Elían in his father's care while he is in the United States," she said.

She added that the Justice

Department would "take and consider all our options and take the course of action that we deem appropriate under the circumstances."

The court decision was received with jubilation in Miami where Elían is now living with relatives who filed the appeal to keep him in the USA. "We will continue to pray," said Lazaro Gonzalez, Elían's great-uncle, who defied a federal order last week to send the boy for a reunion with his father.

In an interview with NBC Dateline's Dan Rather aired on Tuesday, a tearful Juan Miguel said he wanted his son to grow up in the country he himself had grown up in, and loved. It is not a view shared by the Cuban community in the USA.



Lazaro Gonzalez, Elían's great uncle, after the court ruling. — AP/PTI

THE STATESMAN

21 APR 2000

Officials snatch Elian for father

Reuters, PTI & AP ^{5/1 2/8/94}

WASHINGTON, April 22. — Elian Gonzalez was today reunited with his father after armed federal agents stormed his Miami relatives' home just before dawn and seized him.

Elian (6) was flown to Andrews air force base near Washington, where his father was waiting for him, around 9:20 a.m. (6.50 p.m. IST). Father and son were then driven to a nearby building on the base. *Central & Latin*

CNN television beamed live coverage of what appeared to be Mr Juan Miguel Gonzalez carrying his son in his arms to the building.

The US attorney-general, Ms Janet Reno, said she had no choice but to send the federal agents because the relatives would not give Elian up peacefully. The move was okayed by President Bill Clinton late last night, the White House said.

"Elian is a child who needs to be cherished, who needs to have quiet time and private time, and to be with his father," Ms Reno told reporters.

She said Elian and his father would remain in the USA while a court injunction is in force preventing them from leaving the country.

Earlier, more than 20 federal agents, carrying automatic weapons, arrived in vans at the Miami home of Elian's relatives shortly after 5 a.m. (2.30

p.m. IST). They used rams on the chain-link fence and on the front door and burst into the house.

They took the frightened child out of the arms of one of the fishermen who had rescued the shipwrecked boy on 25 November last year.

A woman and man brought Elian out of the home and

him in one of the vans which sped off with the Cuban boy weeping and screaming "help me, help me, don't take me away" in Spanish.

"Assassins", yelled some of the about 100 protesters, many of whom climbed over the barricades to try and stop the agents, prompting them to fire

Elian was later bundled into a government plane which took him to the air base. The boy was unhurt in the operation, an official said.

Officials explained to the boy what was happening to him and he was reportedly calm on the plane, which also carried a

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23 APR 1994