

# National News

## Uncertainty Clouds Lame-Duck Congress

U.S. Congressional leaders, clearly unsettled in the aftermath of the Nov. 7 Presidential election, decided on Nov. 14 to put off work on completing the unfinished fiscal year 2001 budget until Dec. 5. Pundits had speculated before the election that whichever party won the White House would have stronger leverage over the agenda of the lame-duck session. However, with the Presidential contest still undecided two weeks after Election Day, exactly what will happen in the session is still unclear, in spite of conciliatory language coming from both sides.

The election results leave the Congress more evenly divided than ever before. In the Senate, a number of prominent Republicans, including Finance Committee Chairman William Roth (Del.), John Ashcroft (Mo.), Rod Grams (Minn.), and Spencer Abraham (Mich.) went down to defeat. In Florida, Democrat Bill Nelson won the open seat being vacated by the retiring Connie Mack (R). Despite the defeat of Charles Robb (D) in Virginia, the Democrats had a net gain of at least four seats, with the Washington State contest between incumbent Slade Gorton (R) and Democrat Maria Cantwell still to be decided. Depending on whether Sen. Joe Lieberman (D-Conn.) becomes Vice President or not, Democrats could have as many as 50 seats in the Senate. This has led Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-S.D.) to call for a power-sharing arrangement with the GOP. "There is no way we can survive the gridlock and the bitter partisanship that has existed now for the last couple of years," Daschle said, during an appearance on CBS's "Face the Nation," on Nov. 12. "We need to see inclusion. We need to see a power-sharing arrangement between Republicans and Democrats."

For his part, Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) responded with similar words, on "Fox News Sunday," the same day. "We will have to think innovatively," he said. "We'll have to be prepared to work with the Democrats." While Lott has been criticized for losing so many seats, a challenge to his position has yet to emerge.

On the House side, Democrats gained two seats, with two more still to be settled. Otherwise, so far, no conflicts have emerged, with both caucuses re-electing their entire leadership on Nov. 13 without any challenges. The day before, House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt (D-Mo.), appearing on ABC's "This Week," said that the lame-duck session is a "chance to show a different atmosphere" from the sharp partisanship that characterized the last few weeks before the election, "and I'm going to work hard to do that."

## Windsors Plan Invasion Of Post-Election U.S.

The British Royal Family is so encouraged at the thought of either Al Gore or George Bush becoming President, that leading Windsors are planning a comeback inside the United States, wrote the London *Daily Telegraph's* Buckingham Palace leaker Robert Hardman on Nov. 16, under the bizarre title, "America Starts To Love the Windsors Again."

Hardman says that "whatever the result of the great American electoral tombola, the monarchy will be hoping to patch things up with the Land of the Free. Indeed, after several chilly years, there is now talk of a major royal tour of America next year, the first for years."

Relations, he claims, were very good during the Reagan-Thatcher years, as well as the Major-Bush years, epitomized by the Queen's state visit in 1991. However, things declined in President Clinton's first term, especially because the Conservative Party "had been digging up dirt on Mr. Clinton. . . . America was falling out of love with the Windsors." This mood was intensified, after Prince Charles and Princess Diana divorced, and her ensuing death. "America became a no-go zone, except for short private visits."

But now, there are "signs of a thaw. . . . Provisional plans are being made for the Prince of Wales to tour America next year. It will be his first proper visit since 1994. . . . Indeed, if Al Gore wins the election, it could be a particularly chummy trip. The two men have very similar views on matters spiritual and environmental; they hit it off during a

long flight together in the early 1990s, and even started corresponding."

He concludes: "It should be a pretty cordial affair if George W. Bush wins, too. After all, they will both understand the ups and downs of inheriting a country from one's parents."

## Clinton: My Enemies Are The Same as Roosevelt's

President Bill Clinton, in an interview with former London *Times* editor Sir Harold Evans, gave a wide-ranging discussion of his Presidency and philosophy, published in the December-January issue of *Talk* magazine, whose publisher is Evans's wife, Tina Brown. The interview was made before the post-election crisis, as Evans followed Clinton around during campaign events in Florida and New Jersey.

One of the most fascinating interchanges occurs toward the end of an extended discussion on the forces that were thrown against Clinton, during the "Whitewater" investigations, the impeachment, etc. Evans asks: "What is the root of this particular venom in American politics? Everyone remembers how much hostility Franklin Roosevelt attracted. In the 1936 election, he made a great speech at Madison Square Garden, saying: 'They are unanimous in their hatred for me, and I welcome their hatred.'"

Clinton responds: "A lot of the same kind of people who hate Hillary and me, hated Franklin and Eleanor. Thank goodness the Republican Party, then, couldn't get control of the special counsel apparatus!"

"America really has a very well organized right wing that's quite venomous. Richard Mellon Scaife funded a lot of it. He funded \$2 million that they washed through the *American Spectator* just to try to hound me in Arkansas."

Clinton also attacks the agreement among Supreme Court Chief Justice William Rehnquist, and Senators Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), and Lauch Faircloth (R-N.C.) to appoint the "overtly partisan" Judge David Sentelle, to oversee key inquiries, and blasts the way in which the innocent members of his Cabinet, Henry Cisneros and Mike Espy, were gone after.