

Rivals ready rejoinders for Sunday's St. Louis debate

WASHINGTON—President Bush studied at the White House on Tuesday for Sunday's leadoff debate. Bill Clinton summoned stand-ins for mock debates in Kansas City, including a Washington lawyer to play Bush and an Oklahoma congressman to play Perot.

With the approach of the nationally televised debate, which the Bush forces hope will shake up the final few weeks of Campaign '92, full-tilt preparation was beginning.

Clinton planned to hole up in battleground Missouri for the latter part of

the week, practicing and trying to figure out Bush attack avenues in advance of the real show, set for Sunday across the state in St. Louis.

Bush, meanwhile, charted his own debate tactics Tuesday from the White House, setting aside three hours for a session with Chief of Staff James A. Baker III, budget director Richard Darman and other top policy aides.

If and when Bush moves on to

rehearsal debates — aides said there could be one Saturday at the White House — Darman could play the role of Clinton.

Robert Barnett, a Democratic attorney who played Bush in mock debates for Geraldine Ferraro and Dukakis in the past two elections, was heading to Kansas City with his 12-year Bush file in tow.

"The goal is not to imitate George Bush; that's Dana Carvey," said Barnett, referring to the Saturday Night Live actor. He said of Bush: "My goal is to state his positions, his attacks, his

punch lines."

Rep. Mike Synar of Oklahoma — tapped by Clinton to play Perot because he's a quick study and hails from a state close to Perot's Texas — was heading to Kansas City, too. Clinton was set to be there Thursday through Saturday.

Clinton's aides huddled in Little Rock on Tuesday, ready to prod him to be more aggressive on the stage. Many inside the Clinton campaign thought he was too gentlemanly during the primary debates, landing tough,

good lines only when riled by an opponent. They want him to land the tough lines first with Bush.

Perot's staff said the independent candidate hasn't done any debate rehearsals and doesn't plan any.

"He is the producer and script writer," said his national volunteer coordinator, Orson Swindle, adding that Perot has been studying the issues.

"I think it's safe to say Perot will be Perot," Swindle said. "It will be unorthodox. It will not be like you have seen in the past."

Russia sends troops to Abkhazian coast

MOSCOW — President Boris Yeltsin said Tuesday that Russian troops were taking control of the railway and the coast in Georgia's separatist region of Abkhazia, deepening Moscow's involvement in the troubled area.

Yeltsin told lawmakers that Russia was not involved in offensive military actions in Abkhazia, disputing accusations by Georgia's Defense Ministry that Kremlin forces were aiding the separatists.

Both former Soviet republics have engaged in an increasingly sharp war of words over the 6-week-old conflict, in which Georgia sent troops to oust Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia. Abkhazia claims they were sent to crush its independence drive.

The move by Yeltsin appeared aimed at protecting the railway and Black Sea coast, rather than an attempt to seize territory. The north-south railroad, Russia's main land link with Georgia and Armenia, has come under attack during the unrest in the Caucasus Mountains nation.

However, Georgia was likely to regard the move as an infringement on its territory. All the principal cities of Abkhazia, including its capital of Sukhumi, are along the coast. Along with their ports, they represent the

richest part of the western region of Georgia.

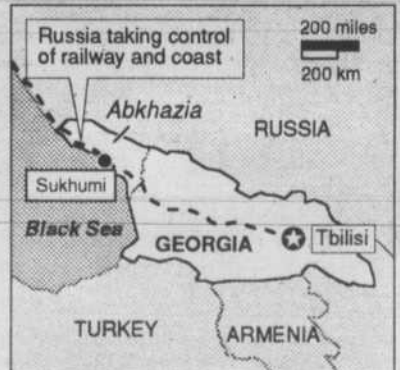
Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze, while not responding directly to the announced seizure of the railway, criticized a statement Yeltsin had made earlier in the day. Yeltsin had said: "Russia will not stand aloof when human rights are violated, the interests of people of Russian origin are trampled."

At a news conference in Tbilisi, Shevardnadze said all Russians — including its military — have enjoyed full legal rights in Georgia and were safe from harm.

"The president (Yeltsin) believes that he is obliged to protect and defend the rights of Russian nationalists wherever they may be, including Georgia," Shevardnadze said. "If we are guided by this principle, then any kind of annexation of territory may be justified."

On Sept. 3, Yeltsin and Shevardnadze agreed to joint Georgian-Russian military control of railroads, highways and bridges in Abkhazia, to protect them in the conflict. But Yeltsin told the Russian legislature Tuesday that Russian troops were taking the railway "entirely under our control."

"We are taking full control over the railway on Abkhazian territory, from the Russian-Abkhazian border,



to the Abkhazian-Georgian border," Yeltsin said. "And the coastline, from the railway to the sea."

"That means additional forces," Yeltsin said. "Yes, there is shooting there, and we are defending our material and ourselves. We aren't taking direct part in military actions."

On Saturday, Georgia's ruling State Council said it was seizing all military hardware in Georgia from the Russian troops.

House members go home; tax bill impedes Senators

WASHINGTON — The 102nd Congress stumbled toward adjournment Tuesday, the House going home but the Senate staying on to face a \$27 billion tax bill and stubborn stalling by dissenting lawmakers.

It was a fitting final act for a messy, contentious Congress.

House members approved the disputed tax bill on a 208-202 vote and left shortly after noon, presumably for the year — though they could return to session, if necessary.

House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt told President Bush in a telephone call: "We have now sent our members home. Our legislative effort has been completed." He said the House's adjournment would take effect officially once the Senate concludes.

But no one was sure when that would be. The Senate was recessing for the Jewish Yom Kippur holy day Tuesday evening, but planned to return on Thursday. Senate Majority Leader George Mitchell said the Senate may drag on until Saturday or even into next week.

The uncertainty in the Senate threw into doubt not just the tax bill but a smattering of other bills passed by the House but left in limbo by Senate inaction. Among them was an anti-carjacking bill, a housing bill that would raise the limits on FHA home loans, and a major energy bill.

Republicans said that even if Democrats manage to dislodge the tax bill, Bush might veto it.

Lawmakers in both parties were in a rush to return home to campaign for re-election.

But adjournment, already put off by one day, became elusive when Sen. Alfonse D'Amato, a New York Republican battling for re-election, snarled the Senate in a 15-hour filibuster over the tax bill after it cleared the House early Tuesday morning.

Then, another vulnerable Republican, Sen. John Seymour of California, stalled the Senate again by invoking rules to demand that clerks read aloud the full text of a long, detailed water projects bill he opposes.

D'Amato's filibuster was an unconventional one: He wasn't so much seeking to obstruct the bill as to demand that a deleted provision be restored — one designed to provide relief for New York state typewriter-factory workers facing loss of their jobs.

Aided by a pair of sympathetic senators, D'Amato gamely held the floor through the night and beyond noon. His talk turned to song a few times.

But D'Amato's hopes of changing the bill evaporated when the House, which would also have to approve any change, went home.

Bush's veto streak falters at inopportune time

WASHINGTON — President Bush calls his 35-1 veto record a "good streak." But the first defeat couldn't have come at a worse time.

The override of Bush's veto of legislation to re-regulate the cable industry dealt a major psychological setback at a time when he hardly needed more bad news.

In a blatant gesture of kick-him-when-he's-down, Democrats in the House whistled, cheered and shouted "Four more months" Monday

Congress deals president cable bill blow

night as Bush's perfect veto record was broken.

When he was soaring in popularity, such an override would have been unthinkable.

In the past, Bush managed to prevail even when the measures he vetoed were politically appealing.

In January 1990, he was even able to persuade the Senate to sustain his veto of a popular bill protecting Chinese students from deportation after the House of Representatives voted 390-25 to override.

But Democrats have managed to turn Bush's veto strategy — a strategy that once gave him enormous leverage despite Democratic majorities in

both chambers — into a weapon against him in the final days of the campaign.

At the Republican National Convention in August, Bush said he would use his veto pen to hold the line on spending. Instead Congress has sent him popular measures that hold potential for political damage when they are vetoed.

For example, Bush vetoed a bill requiring employers to provide workers with time off in family emergencies and he prevailed. But he paid a price — giving the Democrats a chance to claim he lacks commitment to the family values he and other Republicans trumpeted at their convention.

With the president unable to close the gap with Democratic nominee Bill Clinton in national polls, the cable-TV veto override was just one more political sour note for Bush.

To make matters worse, Democratic vice presidential nominee Al Gore was a sponsor of the bill that nearly everyone but Bush and the cable industry seemed to like.

The president's explanation for his defeat: "We were overwhelmed by a very good sales job on the part of the networks." Bush had argued that the bill, while ostensibly seeking to lower cable rates, would end up costing consumers more.



Brian Shellito/DN



Kuwaiti opposition gains Parliament seats

KUWAIT — Government critics woke up to something of a shock Tuesday — a landslide victory in Kuwait's first parliamentary elections in seven years.

Seven loosely allied opposition groups and independent candidates captured 35 of the 50 Parliament seats. Most of the 15 solid seats for the government came from the ruling al-Sabah family's traditional supporters in tribal areas.

Ward politicians who tried to trade on their influence with the bureaucracy lost nearly everywhere in Monday's vote.

"I think the Iraqi invasion was a shock to the Kuwaitis. They did not want to give any chance to someone interested in dilly-dallying. They want strong representatives," said Abdul Rahman al-Najjar, a columnist for the

government-backed newspaper Sawt Al-Kuwait.

But it was unclear how much power the opposition will be allowed to wield. The ruling family ignored previous parliaments in choosing a Cabinet to run government agencies and dissolved the previous Parliament in 1986.

Throughout the 18 months since Iraqi occupiers were driven from Kuwait in the Gulf War, opposition speeches calling for a strong Parliament to supervise the government seemed to draw only small knots of committed followers in this emirate of 650,000 people.

But the election indicated that the country — or at least the male elite allowed to vote — agreed. Only about 81,500 "first-class citizens" who can trace Kuwaiti ancestry to 1921 could

vote.

"It's definitely much much better than expected. We thought pro-government candidates would win," said Mubarak al-Adwani, a spokesman for one opposition group.

There was no immediate reaction from the government or the al-Sabah princes, who were barred from voting.

"I am sure none of them slept yesterday when they learned the results. But they will have to accept it because the whole world is watching whether Kuwait is democratic," said Imad al-Seif, a lawyer who ran the successful campaign of opposition leader Ahmed al-Khatib.

"The people in Kuwait need a strong Parliament to stop the government and the royal family from their continuing mistakes," he said.

Daily Nebraskan masthead and staff list including Editor Chris Hopfensperger, Managing Editor Kris Karnopp, and various news and production roles.