

## Clinton begins Cabinet picks with Bentsen for treasury

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — President-elect Clinton began building his new administration Thursday by selecting Texas Sen. Lloyd Bentsen for treasury secretary, and a cadre of other experienced hands from Wall Street and Congress for remaining top economic jobs.

Announcing his first Cabinet selections 37 days after his election, Clinton said to "stay tuned" for more major appointments, with his health, housing and environmental picks among those that could come yet this week.

Propelled into office on a pledge to restore the nation's economic vitality, Clinton promised to "work my heart out" with his new economic team. He announced five appointments in all, selecting faces familiar to the Washington scene and reassuring to the business community.

Besides Bentsen, who chairs the Senate Finance Committee, they are:

- Rep. Leon Panetta, chairman of the House

### New selections are skilled, seasoned, Clinton says

Budget Committee, who will be director of Office of Management and Budget.

- Robert Rubin, co-chairman of Goldman, Sachs & Co., to be assistant to the president for economic policy and coordinate a new National Economic Council.

- Roger Altman, a Wall Street investment banker, who will serve as Bentsen's top deputy.

- Economist Alice Rivlin, former director of the Congressional Budget Office, who will be Panetta's deputy.

The five nominees offer what Clinton hopes will be the right mix of economic philosophy and practical skill to fill in the details of his economic proposals, and get them enacted. Rivlin and Panetta are known as strong advocates for cutting the federal deficit.

"These people are seasoned, skilled, incredibly able and ready to work for the American people," Clinton said of his first appointees, who appeared with him at a news conference in Arkansas' Old Statehouse. He was questioned on other topics as well, and said at one point that he would ask his attorney general to review whether a special prosecutor should be appointed to investigate potential criminal wrongdoing in the Bush administration's prosecution of a \$5.5 billion loan scheme to Iraq.

Clinton's appointments came on a day that brought yet more encouraging news about the health of the economy. The government reported that new claims for jobless benefits dropped in November and so did wholesale prices.

Clinton continued to caution that the economy may not yet be out of recession and that the nation needs a long-term strategy to correct underlying weaknesses.

"We did not get into the situation which has led most Americans to work harder for lower wages than they were making 10 years ago overnight, and we're not going to get out of that overnight," he said.

Bentsen said the new administration was inheriting "twin deficits. In effect, what we're talking about is lagging investment and unbalanced budgets, and we're determined to cut both down to size in order to spur this economic growth."

Clinton has settled on University of Wisconsin Chancellor Donna Shalala to lead the Department of Health and Human Services and Carol Browner to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, sources close to the situation said.

### Jobless benefit claims decline; inflation steady

WASHINGTON — The number of Americans filing new claims for jobless benefits fell to a three-year low in late November while inflation on the wholesale level remained well under control, the government reported Thursday.

"It's a nice little holiday gift," Robert G. Dederick, an economist at the Northern Trust Co. in Chicago, said of the reports.

The Labor Department said first-time applications for unemployment insurance fell 38,000 to 324,000, during the week ended Nov. 28. It was the lowest since 323,000 claims were filed the week of Sept. 23, 1989.

The decline was widespread; 41 states and territories reported decreases, and only 12 recorded increases. A work week shortened by the Thanksgiving holiday may have caused some of the big decline, the government said.

The department said wholesale prices, held to moderate gains this year, actually fell 0.2 percent in November. It was the first decline since the Producer Price Index fell by a similar amount last January.

Excluding the volatile energy and food components, prices inched up a tiny 0.1 percent. For the year so far, wholesale prices have risen at an annual rate of just 1.4 percent.

Despite the effect of the Thanksgiving holiday on layoffs, analysts said the overall employment trend continues to improve.

It was the 10th straight week that new jobless claims have remained below 400,000, which many analysts interpret to mean the unemployment situation gradually is improving.

The department on Friday said the jobless rate fell to 7.2 percent in November from 7.4 percent a month earlier and the recent peak of 7.8 percent last June. And 105,000 new jobs were created last month.

## Troops fire on Somalis, kill 2

MOGADISHU, Somalia — Troops opened fire on a truckload of Somalis who barreled through a French checkpoint Thursday night, killing two and injuring seven in the first bloodshed of the U.S.-led military mission in Somalia.

The shooting came nearly two days after American and French soldiers took control of Somalia's capital to protect food shipments. The two main Somali warlords agreed Thursday to their first meeting since they began fighting two years ago.

The shooting episode foreshadowed the unpredictable situation U.S. troops may face as they deploy in Somalia's interior. On Saturday, Marines are to escort the first land convoy in a month to the strife-torn city of Baidoa, 125 miles to the northwest.

CARE International said Thursday night that its five-member staff in Baidoa had barricaded themselves inside their compound in anticipation of an armed attack by clansmen. The staff were an American, two Britons and two Austrians.

CARE's manager in Mogadishu, Rhodri Wynn-Pope, asked American troops to provide air cover for the town Thursday night.

Army troops from Fort Drum, N.Y., were scheduled to begin arriving over the weekend in Baidoa, then split off and seize three other centers of the starvation zone — Belet Wen, Oddur and Gailassi. Fresh Marines were expected in Mogadishu by Friday.

On Nov. 11, a 34-truck relief convoy to Baidoa was ambushed,

resulting in heavy casualties. Only one truck made it through. Since then, truck convoys have not ventured out of Mogadishu.

Fifty to 60 deaths are reported each day in Baidoa. Regular airlifts have done little for the hundreds of thousands of people encamped around the town because the battling clans and looters have prevented agencies from distributing food and medicine.

Even worse is Bardera, about 50 miles south of Baidoa. Unlike Baidoa, Bardera has neither camps nor sanitation. Heavy seasonal rains have limited food flights into Bardera's muddy airstrip.

Relief officials reported Thursday that a large convoy of Somali "technical" was spotted headed west from the Baidoa area toward the Ethiopian border.

Alarmed by sporadic gunfire

near the U.S. Embassy compound in Mogadishu, Marines on Thursday raided several buildings in pursuit of snipers.

With Cobra attack helicopters hovering, Marines burst into a villa a half mile from the embassy and seized two anti-aircraft guns, two surface-to-air missiles and 10,000 rounds of rifle ammunition, according to an NBC reporter.

At the Pentagon, Lt. Gen. Martin Brandtner said the truck that plowed through the roadblock manned by French Legionnaires had been a "technical" mounted with a gun, but there was no further word on who was in it.

The injured Somalis were airlifted to the USS Tripoli for treatment, Brandtner said. Two of the Somalis suffered bullet wounds and five were hurt when the vehicle slammed into a cement wall after it was shot.

## Parents fight Queens school official over gay lessons

NEW YORK — The chief of the nation's largest school system is locked in a bitter dispute with some parents over whether first-graders should be taught to respect gay people.

Schools Chancellor Joseph Fernandez suspended a neighborhood school board last week for refusing to accept the "Children of the Rainbow" curriculum, which contains a section on how to teach respect for homosexual parents.

The city's Board of Education dealt him a setback Wednesday night by voting to reinstate the nine-member elected board in District 24, a largely Roman Catholic section in Queens.

It affirmed Fernandez's authority to supersede the board if the two sides cannot come to terms on an alternative curriculum.

### Teaching respect for homosexual parents at center of dispute about new curriculum

Fernandez set a Friday evening deadline for the school board to meet with him and his staff. If the board doesn't respond, he will appoint three trustees to assume all responsibilities for the development of a multicultural curriculum.

What has particularly angered some parents in the district are two books on a suggested reading list for teachers — "Daddy's Roommate" and "Heather Has Two Mommies."

Thousands of letters have been mailed to parents warning that the curriculum meant first-graders would be taught about the "homosexual

lifestyle, including oral and anal sex."

"I'll be the first one to pull my kids out of the school" if the curriculum is enforced, said Anna Saez, who heads a parent association at Public School 89.

"I wish it wasn't in the school at all," said another parent, Betty LoCicero. "If it's going to have to be, let it be in the junior high school."

It's the latest controversy involving Fernandez, whose name has surfaced as a potential education secretary in President-elect Clinton's administration.

As education chief in New York, Fernandez hasn't shied from controversy. He was a leader in paving the way for AIDS education nationally and for condom distribution in schools.

The curriculum fight is his worst crisis so far — parents have come close to blows and security was tightened around the schools chief after two death threats were delivered.

The city's 32 school districts were given the option of accepting the curriculum or coming up with an alternative. The alternative had to include tenets of a multicultural curriculum policy adopted by the Board of Education in 1989. The "Rainbow" curriculum is designed to introduce children to positive images of women, blacks, Hispanics and other groups.

## NATO eyes intervention in hungry Sarajevo

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — The hungry hung on the gates of Sarajevo's last functioning bakery Thursday, but bread supplies were running out nine days after the humanitarian airlift was suspended because of fighting.

U.N. officials said their emergency food stocks were almost gone.

In Brussels, diplomats said several NATO nations were on the verge of intervening militarily to stop the ethnic war over Bosnia's secession from Yugoslavia.

Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers made an impassioned plea Thursday for outside intervention.

"I don't give a damn who takes the lead," he told his parliament. "I think it's downright scandalous that there's intervention in Somalia, but not in Yugoslavia."

Lubbers said his government would "do our absolute utmost" to ensure

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— Lubbers  
Dutch prime minister

that Bosnia was high on the agenda of the European Community summit that begins Friday.

"The basic food now is bread," said Husein Ahmovic, assistant manager at the bakery. "Without it, it's starvation."

Amira Pinjic, a typist, said she had been living on bread and tea for 10 days. She got her last U.N. aid package on Nov. 21. It contained two small cans of meat, two of fish, 6 1/2 pounds of flour, some hot chocolate and four

U.S. military combat meals.

"I feel very weak," she said.

Sarajevo suffered through a fourth straight wintry day without electricity and water because fighting prevented repairs to power lines.

Dwindling bread production has heightened tensions at the bakery's gates, where people collect a daily ration of a 6-inch chunk of bread. One man who felt his slice was too small Wednesday battered a bakery employee's head with an umbrella,

Ahmovic said.

Larry Hollingworth, the head of the U.N. aid office in Sarajevo, said there were no stocks of food left in U.N. warehouses.

"Everything I've got, they've got. It goes within minutes," he said.

In Zagreb, Croatia's capital, U.N. spokesman Peter Kessler said relief flights likely would not resume before Tuesday. They were halted on Dec. 1 after a U.S. plane was hit by gunfire.

Fighting and Serb roadblocks also have hindered truck convoys. One U.N. convoy of 19 trucks with 221 tons of supplies reached Sarajevo on Thursday. A tire of one truck was hit by a sniper's bullet on the way, Kessler reported.

Diplomats said the defense ministers of NATO's 16 nations discussed the possibility of military intervention under U.N. auspices.

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