

Clinton rejects deal, says he'll hold firm

WASHINGTON — With a partial shutdown stretching through a second day, Republicans crafted legislation Wednesday to reopen government on condition President Clinton agrees to balance the budget in seven years.

Clinton threatened to veto the measure even before the lawmakers could pass it, saying the GOP was demanding "a level of cuts in Medicare and Medicaid, in education, in the environment and a tax increase on working people, all of which I find objectionable."

In an interview on CBS, Clinton vowed to hold firm in the standoff, "even if it's 90 days, 120 days or 180 days."

That left the impasse without any clear end in sight, and with the two sides debating an issue that has divided them all year.

"It's time for him to put up or shut up" on balancing the budget, Mississippi Rep. Mike Parker, who switched from Democrat to Republican last week, said of Clinton.

Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle, D-S.D., accused House Speaker Newt Gingrich of provoking the budget crunch. "He wants chaos. He wants collapse of the government, and now he's got it."

In a bizarre interlude, Gingrich complained to reporters at breakfast that Clinton had mistreated him and Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole during a trip on Air Force One recently, and he said that was "part of" the standoff.

The budget impasse and a Republican "hardening of attitudes" prompted Clinton to cancel his abbreviated weekend trip to Japan, White House spokesman Mike McCurry said.

Congress, meanwhile, completed work on a spending bill that would, among other things, provide the money to keep the White House running through the year. While Clinton did not sign that immediately, he did sign a measure putting the Transportation Department in business for the year; Congress finished that spending bill last month, but it wasn't sent to the White House un-

til Wednesday.

As for the proposed legislation that would reopen the entire government through Dec. 5 while requiring Clinton to balance the budget by 2002, Gingrich and Dole unveiled it shortly before the evening newscasts aired in the East.

"We're going to give him a chance to sign up for a balanced budget," said Gingrich, R-Ga. Both he and Dole, R-Kan., said Clinton had repeatedly expressed support for such a plan.

In a retreat for Republicans, the bill would be stripped of a hike in Medicare premiums that Clinton cited in vetoing an earlier bill.

It would put Clinton on record in favor of technical economic estimates made by the Congressional Budget Office — less optimistic than the administration's own.

McCurry said that was tantamount to accepting the GOP balanced-budget bill, which would squeeze Medicare, Medicaid and other social programs while financing a tax cut that Democrats say if tilted to the rich.

"By endorsing the seven-year balanced budget, you have to endorse their Medicare cuts. You have to endorse their whole budget. And the president has said that's unacceptable," McCurry said.

Earlier, Gingrich had said lawmakers would begin work on legislation to reopen targeted agencies, such as Social Security and passport offices. Officials said that approach was being sidetracked, at least for now.

With the government's borrowing authority curtailed, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin earlier in the day executed a bookkeeping maneuver that gives the government greater flexibility. In effect, he replaced securities in two trust funds with \$61.3 billion in IOUs that do not count against the debt limit.

"This is no way for a great nation to manage its financial affairs," said Rubin, a former Wall Street financier, underscoring that Social Security trust funds were not involved. But "using this authority is immeasurably preferable to default."



Research gave him a future

Shell will participate in gas plant

LAGOS, Nigeria — Royal Dutch Shell confirmed Wednesday that it will participate in a \$3.8 billion natural gas plant in Nigeria, despite international outcry about the execution of nine dissidents.

In Brussels, Belgium, the 15-nation European Union approved an arms embargo against Nigeria's military government but stopped short of imposing sanctions on trade or oil exports.

Shell officials said it wasn't clear when negotiations on the natural gas project would conclude but said a formal agreement may be signed as early as December. They disputed criticism that such a deal amounted to an endorsement of Nigeria's crackdown on political dissent.

"There have been suggestions that the project should be deferred or canceled because of recent events in Nigeria. But you have to be clear who would be hurt," said Dick van den Broek, a director of Shell International who confirmed the company's intention to stick with the project.

He added that revenues for the project wouldn't have any impact on the current Nigerian rulers because it wouldn't start producing gas until early in the next century. Shell says the project will create 6,000 jobs during construction.

Van den Broek said job creation and environmental improvements were compelling reasons to proceed. The executions Friday of play-

wright Ken Saro-Wiwa and eight other anti-government activists drew international condemnation.

"I'm absolutely amazed and flabbergasted that they can go ahead with this at this time," Saro-Wiwa's son, Ken, told reporters in Strasbourg, France, where he was addressing the European Parliament.

Nigerian dictator Gen. Sani Abacha said his regime was determined to maintain security. "We will do everything possible to maintain our unity, to maintain our stability, to maintain our security and to preserve, protect and maintain our integrity as a nation," state-controlled TV quoted him as saying during a visit to northwestern Nigeria.

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Corrections & CLARIFICATIONS

● A story in Monday's Daily Nebraskan incorrectly reported that Jean Cahan, a representative of the Harris Center for Judaic Studies at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, said Israeli students had been involved in book burnings, physical intimidation and bombing laboratories for two centuries. Cahan actually said that extrem-

ist students all over the world had been involved in violence. Also, Israel has not existed for two centuries. ● A story in Wednesday's Daily Nebraskan incorrectly reported that a panel on the Million Man March would meet that day. The panel will meet tonight at 7:30 in the Nebraska East Union.

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