

## Presidential campaigns escalate

MANCHESTER, N.H. - Republican presidential hopeful Steve Forbes said Sunday he might change his flat tax plan to counter criticism from rivals that it would benefit millionaires like Forbes but punish some middle-class Americans.

Also Sunday, former White House aide Pat Buchanan launched the first television ads of his campaign, casting himself in the mold of two former bosses. "Richard Nixon and Ronald Reagan were not men of compromise and neither am I," Buchanan says in the New Hampshire spot. "... I will never be afraid to lead."

Fresh from a Saturday night debate in South Carolina, the Republican hopefuls brought their road show to New Hampshire for a parade of speeches at a state GOP fund-raiser. But winter weather hurt attendance: Forbes, Texas Sen. Phil Gramm and GOP front-runner Bob Dole had to speak by telephone, unable to make it to New Hampshire because of the

snow that paralyzed East Coast air travel.

One who did make it to New Hampshire was former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander, who said having Gramm and Dole trapped in Washington fit perfectly with his campaign theme: that a GOP nominee from Washington would lose to President Clinton and imperil the Republican congressional majorities.

Taking particular aim at Dole, Alexander said Clinton had no vision but would fake it and win a race against "a senator who is too decent to fake a vision."

Gramm said Dole was too eager to compromise in the budget talks, warning that Republicans had better keep their promises to balance the budget and cut taxes. "If we don't stand up for what we promised, how are we any different from Bill Clinton," Gramm said.

Buchanan also took after Dole's budget role, saying it was time for "a

leadership that believes in the politics of confrontation and fighting, not the politics of the deal." Buchanan also promised as president to vigorously oppose abortion, end affirmative action, get the federal government out of the gun control business and end the congressional pension system.

Dole, barely audible because of a poor phone hookup, didn't mention rivals by name but tried to undermine their attacks. In the budget talks, he vowed "we will fight to the end for fundamental conservative change."

Disputing suggestions he can't beat Clinton, Dole cited a new CNN poll showing him with a narrow - though statistically insignificant - lead over the president. "We're back in the lead," Dole said, promising if elected to "bring about a new conservative era in American government."

Earlier on NBC's "Meet the Press," the multimillionaire publisher vigorously disputed assertions that a flat tax would be a boon to the rich - and

him personally - but raise taxes on middle-income families. Several studies have suggested that, but Forbes insisted "every American comes out ahead with a flat tax."

Still, Forbes said it might become a "political necessity" to change a provision that would not require individuals to pay taxes on interest, dividends and other investment income. He said that money should not be taxed twice, but that because of political attacks he was searching for a formula to have the tax paid by the individual instead of the business.

Forbes has vaulted into second place in most Republican presidential polling, benefiting from a \$10 million barrage of television advertising promoting the flat tax and criticizing other candidates, particularly Dole, as typical Washington politicians.

His support has stymied the efforts of Gramm, Alexander and Buchanan to emerge as the principal alternative to Dole, the Senate majority leader.

## Arafat blames Israel's Peres for assassination

DURA, West Bank - Yasser Arafat on Sunday blamed his partner in peace, Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres, for the assassination of an Islamic militant who had masterminded suicide attacks against Israel.

Arafat, speaking at a rally, said the killing of Yehiya Ayyash violated the spirit of the peace process. He accused Israel of undermining PLO authority by carrying out the attack in the Gaza Strip, which is under his control.

"This is not what we have agreed upon. I appeal to Peres, the prime minister, to stop damaging the Palestinian security inside Palestinian territory," Arafat said.

Israel "should not kill and assassinate on Palestinian land the struggler, the martyr Yehiya Ayyash," Arafat said. The crowd of 4,000 applauded and chanted "Allahu akbar" - God is great.

Arafat's laudatory characterization of Ayyash was a departure from his recent refusal to praise terrorists. The statement appeared to be an attempt to ensure he could not be blamed in any way for the killing.

Any indication that Arafat had allowed the killing would aggravate tensions between the PLO and Palestinians opposed to the peace process and erode support for him ahead of the Jan. 20 elections for the self-rule legislature.

Israeli officials, who have refused to confirm or deny involvement in the assassination, would not respond to Arafat's comments Sunday.

On Sunday, Israeli newspapers reported that the Shin Bet secret service was responsible for the slaying, and that Peres had reaffirmed the orders of the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to hunt down Ayyash, who topped Israel's most-wanted list.

Ayyash, known as "The Engineer," had orchestrated a series of suicide bombings - Israel blamed him for seven attacks that killed 55 people and wounded 300. He was a legendary figure to many Palestinians, especially young people.

Ayyash died Friday at his hideout in the Gaza Strip while talking on a booby-trapped cellular telephone.

Palestinians observed the second day of a three-day strike to mourn Ayyash's death. The strike was widely observed in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but in Nablus, Palestinian police forced stores to remain open and fined 30 shopkeepers who closed up and fled.



### Democracy leads in Guatemalan politics

GUATEMALA CITY - A businessman who promised to strengthen democracy in a country once ruled by military strongmen took an early lead Sunday night in presidential returns over a lawyer backed by a former dictator.

The election is Guatemala's third civilian balloting after a rocky path to democracy: A 1940s experiment with civilian rule was derailed by a U.S.-backed right-wing coup in 1954 that ushered in three decades of military control. Civilian rule began in 1986.

### TV show aids in finding kidnapped child

NEW YORK - Within three hours after their story was depicted on TV's "America's Most Wanted," an 8-year-old Seattle boy and his alleged kidnapper were found by FBI agents in a Manhattan hotel early Sunday.

Jason J. Murphy, 19, who faces charges of kidnapping and child molestation in Washington's Snohomish County, was being held on a federal fugitive warrant.

The boy, Nicholas Sullivan, was taken to an unidentified state medical facility in New York City, and a preliminary examination showed him to be in good health, FBI spokesman Joe Valiquette said. He refused to say if the exam indicated the boy had been molested.

### Employee error causes flight delays

SEATTLE - A technician won't be disciplined for an accident that cut off all power to an air traffic control center and delayed flights throughout the Pacific Northwest, an FAA spokesman said Sunday.

The power outage early Saturday darkened radar screens and silenced radios and telephones at the Federal Aviation Administration center, leaving controllers completely in the dark for at least five minutes.

At least 50 airborne aircraft were affected and more than 150 flights delayed by an average of an hour or more, according to the air traffic controller's union. There were no reports of aircraft placed in jeopardy.

## New questions raised in Whitewater affair

WASHINGTON - The possibility that Hillary Rodham Clinton will eventually have to appear before Congress in the Whitewater and travel office affairs seemed to rise Sunday, with Sen. Alfonse D'Amato and Rep. William Clinger saying newly produced documents raise a broad spectrum of new questions about her role in both matters.

D'Amato said that billing documents the White House turned over to the Senate late Friday afternoon show that Mrs. Clinton has not told the truth about Whitewater, particularly her activities relating to a fraudulent Arkansas land deal known as Castle Grande.

D'Amato stopped short of flatly accusing the first lady of lying and he was careful in hewing to his long-held position that he doesn't currently plan to summon Mrs. Clinton before the Senate Whitewater Committee.

But in an appearance on ABC's "This Week With David Brinkley," D'Amato, R-N.Y., said the committee is growing increasingly frustrated with delays in turning over Whitewater information and doubtful of getting truthful answers from White House aides on Whitewater.

The billing records show "tremendous inconsistencies" with Mrs. Clinton's sworn statements to federal regulators that she performed only minimal work for her Whitewater partner's savings and loan, said D'Amato.

Mrs. Clinton's answers are "not the truth," D'Amato added. "We've had this kind of thing over and over again from her people who have stonewalled us, who feign memory loss."

Appearing in defense of Mrs. Clinton were Ann Lewis, Clinton's deputy campaign manager, and promi-

nent Washington attorney Robert Bennett.

Bennett said he has represented clients in Washington scandals for 25 years and has "never" seen "a White House as cooperative with an investigation" as the Clinton administration.

Mrs. Clinton's billing records of her work for her Whitewater partner's failed savings and loan were first sought two years ago by prosecutors. In the absence of the documents, it was impossible to evaluate Mrs. Clinton's position that she had nothing to do with the Castle Grande deal and that her work for Madison Guaranty S&L was "minimal."

The billing records show 68 meetings and telephone calls on Madison business, including 14 conversations with Seth Ward, the Arkansas businessman who co-owned Castle Grande with Mrs. Clinton's Whitewater partner, James McDougal. Federal regulators have characterized Castle Grande as a "sham" transaction designed to circumvent Arkansas law restricting the amount of funds an S&L may invest in real estate. The deal has cost taxpayers nearly \$4 million, according to a still-unreleased report prepared for the Resolution Trust Corp. Ward had no funds at risk in the deal and his share of the purchase was financed entirely by the S&L, according to the RTC.

Lewis said Mrs. Clinton's early responses to her doing a "minimal" amount of work for Madison Guaranty dealt with the S&L's effort to get state regulatory approval for a plan to issue stock in the institution. At the time, it was not publicly known that Mrs. Clinton also had done work on behalf of the institution in connection with the fraudulent Castle Grande deal.

## Blizzard wreaks havoc in capital

WASHINGTON - First it was Congress. Now, Mother Nature may keep the federal government shut down.

A blizzard on Sunday snarled the capital's streets with more than a foot of snow, making it likely museum guards, Education and Transportation Department workers and passport officials won't return to work Monday, just two days after Congress and President Clinton said they could.

"It's kind of God's revenge on the craziness of Washington, I guess," said John Sturdivant, head of the American Federation of Government Employees.

Officials, watching snow stream out of the sky, planned to decide by early Monday whether to keep workers home, said Janice Lachance, spokeswoman for the Office of Personnel Management.

They made the call at 10:30 p.m., saying federal workers should stay home for their own safety.

The National Weather Service issued a blizzard warning through Sunday night, forecasting 20 to 30 inches of snow and winds 25 to 35 miles an hour.

Depending on conditions, workers could be told to stay home, come in late or take voluntary leave if their

commute is particularly snarled. Either way, most federal law-enforcement, hospital and other emergency workers still will work, Lachance said.

For workers relieved by an end to weeks of uncertainty, the blizzard seemed a final irony.

"I think I can safely say everyone is ready to get back," said Kerri Morgan, who works for the Education Department.

President Clinton ended the three-week partial shutdown of federal programs on Saturday when he acceded to Republican demands and offered a seven-year balanced budget plan.

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