

# NEWS DIGEST

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 17, 1999

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## Congress to vote on budget cut After veto of reduction in agency budgets, GOP accused of excessive cuts

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans pressed the White House on Tuesday to accept a small across-the-board cut in federal spending as the two sides edged to the brink of a near-\$400 billion budget deal that Congress might vote on by Wednesday.

President Clinton vetoed a 1 percent reduction in agency budgets two weeks ago, and Democrats have accused the GOP of pursuing mindless, excessive cuts ever since. Eager for political cover, Republican negotiators have offered a 0.4 percent reduction, and House Speaker Dennis Hastert, R-Ill., pursued such a cut in a telephone talk with Clinton, who is in Turkey.

"I talked to the president last night. He didn't reject it," Hastert said.

Resorting to gimmickry, bargainers agreed to delay the military's scheduled Sept. 30, 2000, pay day to the next day — the first day of fiscal 2001. That plan, described by members of both parties speaking on condition of anonymity, would save the

government more than \$2 billion on its fiscal 2000 books, even though the same amount of money would be spent.

The hunt for about \$6.5 billion in fiscal 2000 savings loomed as the major remaining hurdle to a budget package that would all but finish Congress' work for the year. The savings are aimed at letting Republicans claim they honored their pledge not to spend Social Security surpluses — a contention rejected by Democrats and the Congressional Budget Office.

Another possible problem was a demand by Sen. Robert Byrd, D-W.Va., to let his state's coal mines continue stripping mountaintops and dumping the waste into valleys and streams. The administration was threatening to veto such a measure on environmental grounds, but was offering temporary relief as a compromise.

The emerging budget deal would combine five spending bills financing seven Cabinet departments, dozens of agencies and the budgets for the District of Columbia and foreign aid. The other eight measures for fiscal

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House minority leader

2000, which began Oct. 1, have already become law.

The White House crowed about winning money for hiring teachers, police officers, land purchases and United Nations dues, as well as GOP retreats on provisions helping the oil, mining and other industries that Clinton considered anti-environmental.

But at the Capitol, many Democrats seemed underwhelmed as lawmakers returned to the Capitol en masse from a Veterans Day break.

"I don't think most members have figured out how they're going to vote on it," House Minority Leader Dick Gephardt, D-Mo., said after a meeting of House Democrats.

He cited "some real victories" but said the year was ending with "a mixed picture" because of no action on gun control, a minimum wage increase or enhanced rights for patients in managed care programs.

House Republican leaders tried to rally their own members to support the package. They boasted about protecting Social Security, boosting defense spending, curtailing Clinton's spending requests, winning more flexibility for states using federal education funds and administration concessions on abortion activities overseas.

"Our negotiators did as good a job as possible," said House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, R-Texas.

## Jackson arrested for students' cause

**In a protest of six students' expulsion, the reverend forced his own incarceration.**

DECATUR, Ill. (AP) — Leading a made-for-TV demonstration that evoked the style of the civil rights movement, the Rev. Jesse Jackson was arrested Tuesday as he stepped onto the grounds of a high school to protest the expulsion of six students for a brawl at a football game.

Jackson was taken away in handcuffs after leading a throng of ministers and other protesters to Eisenhower High. He had promised to force his own arrest to dramatize the students' cause.

Three other demonstrators were arrested, police said. Police would not say who they were and what charges Jackson or the others faced, and it was unclear whether he would post bail or remain in jail.

Detective Cmdr. Mark Barthelmey said two officers were struck in the face during the confrontation after Jackson was led away. He did not provide details on who was involved or whether the officers were injured.

The arrests came nine days after Jackson's arrival in Decatur brought national attention to school officials' decision to expel the students for their part in the Sept. 17 fight.

Jackson had indicated earlier he would try to bring the students back to school, but the teen-agers did not

approach the police line.

"We want the youth to stand still knowing that their parents and their ministers would cross the line for them," Jackson declared. "The parents will fight for their children. And that is a good and noble thing."

Jackson inched toward the school through a phalanx of reporters, photographers and TV crews holding boom microphones high overhead.

At one point, he asked the media throng to move out of the way so he could approach the police line and get arrested.

At the law enforcement center where he was held, about 75 people gathered, chanting, "Let the children in, let the reverend out."

Jackson had spent Tuesday morning in closed-door talks with school

officials but made no headway.

An emergency school board meeting was set for Tuesday night, but school officials indicated they were unlikely to offer further compromises.

The six students were expelled after a brawl in the stands at a football game. A seventh student was threatened with expulsion but withdrew first. Three of the seven also face criminal charges.

Under pressure from Jackson and some state officials, including Gov. George Ryan, Decatur's school board voted last week to reduce the expulsions from two school years to one and to let the students attend alternative education programs immediately.

However, Jackson wants them reinstated as early as January if they do well in alternative school.

## Egypt objects to FBI investigation

WASHINGTON (AP) — Objections by the Egyptian government have delayed a decision to turn the EgyptAir Flight 990 crash investigation over to the FBI, a federal law enforcement official said Tuesday.

The nature of the objections could not immediately be learned.

U.S. officials sought FBI control of the investigation amid indications someone in the cockpit prayed before the jet went into its fatal plunge, The Associated Press learned.

The timing of the prayer — before the jet's autopilot was disengaged and the plane dived from 33,000 feet — raised

suspicion that Flight 990 was deliberately brought down.

Egyptian officials sought and got a delay in the turnover, a source said.

Earlier Tuesday, two U.S. officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the FBI would take over the investigation. "The (National Transportation Safety Board) investigates accidents, the FBI investigates other things," said one of the officials.

The prayer was apparently spoken by someone in the co-pilot's seat, but it was unclear whether it was the co-pilot, a source speaking on condition of anonymity told the AP.

The evidence of the prayer and its timing emerged when information from the flight data recorder was synchronized with sounds picked up by the cockpit voice recorder, Clinton administration officials told the AP.

Although the phrase heard on the cockpit recorder was characterized as a prayer, that doesn't necessarily mean it was related to the cause of the plunge. Arabic speakers commonly make references to God in everyday statements. For instance, the phrase "inshallah," or "God willing," is frequently used in everyday conversation for the most mundane statements.

## Political rivals to aim for a compromise

BELFAST, Northern Ireland (AP) — Northern Ireland's political rivals signaled Tuesday they were determined to break the past year of stalemate, making conciliatory statements and building expectations of an important Irish Republican Army announcement.

In a pivotal concession, Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble dropped his Protestant party's refusal to form a Protestant-Catholic administration for Northern Ireland — the intended cornerstone of the Good Friday peace accord of 1998 — in advance of receiving an

IRA promise to disarm.

The IRA-linked Sinn Fein party, which is to receive two posts within the proposed 12-member Cabinet in exchange, called disarmament "an essential part of the peace process."

The emerging compromise, mediated by U.S. diplomat George Mitchell during the past 11 weeks, depends upon the IRA appointing a senior figure to negotiate terms with a disarmament commission. Politicians expect the shadowy group's ruling Army Council to confirm this decision in a policy

statement by Thursday.

Trimble, who had sought a fixed date for disarmament to start, indicated Tuesday he would now recognize this gesture as providing a "genuine and meaningful" measure of the IRA's commitment to destroy its secret weapons dumps.

Ulster Unionist negotiators, speaking on condition of anonymity, say a key factor was an assurance that the IRA representative would be the group's alleged senior commander, Brian Keenan.

### World and Nation

#### Datelines

##### Michigan

#### 13-year-old boy receives 2nd-degree murder charge

PONTIAC, Mich. (AP) — One of the youngest murder defendants in U.S. history was convicted of second-degree murder Tuesday for shooting a stranger outside a convenience store with a rifle when he was 11.

In a case that stirred fierce debate over how to treat young offenders, Nathaniel Abraham, 13, sat expressionless and looked straight ahead as the jury announced its verdict after 18 hours of deliberations over four days.

He was acquitted of first-degree murder, which could have sent him to prison for life with no chance of parole.

At his sentencing Dec. 14, Nathaniel could get a maximum of life in prison with a chance of parole or he could be sentenced as a juvenile and held until his 21st birthday.

Prosecutors said they would recommend a blended sentence, keeping him imprisoned until at least age 21 and then reviewing his case to determine whether he has been rehabilitated.

##### Washington

#### Chairman trying to block new organ transplant rules

WASHINGTON (AP) — A House committee chairman and at least one senator are trying to block new rules overhauling the organ transplant system, despite a high-level agreement last week allowing the rules to take effect.

House Commerce Committee Chairman Tom Bliley is threatening to prevent an unrelated piece of health legislation from coming to the House floor unless a delay in implementation of the transplant rules is attached to a bill that is scheduled to move before legislators go home for the year.

Bliley, R-Va., is searching for legislation on which to attach a delay, although the Clinton administration has refused to go along with further postponements and is certain to resist. House Speaker Dennis Hastert, following the wishes of his home state of Illinois, is backing the administration, which makes Bliley's last-ditch effort more difficult.

##### Turkey

#### Aftershocks, rains sweep through devastated Turkey

DUZCE, Turkey (AP) — Incessant rain swept through quake-stricken northwestern Turkey on Tuesday, adding new misery to people living without shelter in the freezing cold.

The 7.2-magnitude quake hit Friday, killing at least 549 people, toppling at least 300 buildings and leaving thousands of people homeless. The earth shattered violently yet again Tuesday evening, when an aftershock rocked the city of Bolu and the surrounding area.

Measuring 4.8 in magnitude, Tuesday night's temblor was the strongest of a dozen aftershocks during the day in the area. Bolu is 35 miles west of Kaynasli, the town hardest hit by Friday's earthquake.

The latest aftershock collapsed some already damaged buildings in Bolu, but there were no reports of injuries.

**Daily Nebraskan**  
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Fax number: (402) 472-1761  
World Wide Web: www.dailynebraskan.com  
The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 20, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board.  
Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.  
Subscriptions are \$60 for one year.  
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