

Presidential race getting tighter, poll suggests

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON — Al Gore and George W. Bush targeted the battleground states of the Midwest on Monday as a new poll of likely voters suggested the presidential race is very close.

The CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll had Democrat Gore at 47 percent, Republican Bush at 46 percent, Green Party candidate Ralph Nader at 3 percent and Reform Party candidate Pat Buchanan at 2 percent.

Bush aides cautioned the surge Gore has gotten in the

polls after his party's national convention last week could be short-lived. The CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll of 697 likely voters taken Friday and Saturday had an error margin of 4 percentage points.

That same poll right before the convention showed Bush 16 points ahead of Gore, 55 percent to 39 percent.

Gore's campaign chairman, William Daley, said on NBC's "Meet The Press: "We are encouraged that people obviously listened to the vice president (in his acceptance speech)

on Thursday evening. ... There are issues that we've got to address, and he was specific about them. And I think that's what people reacted to."

Bush aide Karl Rove countered that Gore's convention speech could cost him support in the long run.

"Al Gore launched out talking about populism, about class warfare, about powerful forces that were supposedly keeping us from making progress," Rove said.

The CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll is one of several that have indicated Gore made significant gains in public opinion after the convention. A Newsweek poll out Saturday showed Gore ahead at 48 percent to 42 percent, but that measured all registered voters, which tends to give stronger results to the Democrats.

Gore pulled even in the CNN-USA Today-Gallup poll by building about a 20-point lead among women, while Bush has about the same size lead among

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men.

The poll suggested that Gore helped himself on the issues of health care, Medicare and Social Security during the convention.

Both campaigns are launching TV ad campaigns in key states to kick off the fall campaign. While Bush aides said they planned a positive focus, they said they would quickly respond if attacked.

Gore had about \$6.4 million in the bank at the end of July before setting out for the Democratic National Convention. He had spent \$44 million for his campaign, according to records filed Sunday with the Federal


Election Commission.

A Gore campaign manager termed "ridiculous" an editorial in a black New York City weekly, the Amsterdam News, that vice presidential nominee Joseph Lieberman, an Orthodox Jew, was put on the ticket to get money from the Jewish community worldwide.

Bush was to campaign in Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Louisiana and Florida in the coming week, while Cheney heads to California.

Gore and Lieberman were getting back aboard their riverboat Monday to head to Hannibal, Mo., the boyhood home of Mark Twain.

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Rebels promise not to disrupt Clinton

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SAN VICENTE DEL CAGUAN, Colombia — President Clinton is coming to visit Colombia. But leftist rebels who oppose growing U.S. ties to Colombia's military said Monday they wouldn't disrupt the visit.

"We will not impede (the Aug. 30 visit) with guerrilla actions," Andres Paris, a commander and spokesman of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia told The Associated Press.

But the insurgents known as

FARC are "calling on the Colombian people — the labor unions, student groups, organizations of the unemployed and others — to protest Clinton's visit," Paris added.

Paris said a \$1.3 billion U.S. anti-narcotics aid package for Colombia recently approved in Washington is "just a smoke-screen to promote imperialist interests." He said he thinks the U.S. government aims to exert control over the Andean region's oil and mineral wealth.

Clinton's planned one-day visit is intended as a show of

support for President Andres Pastrana. He also will promote his so-called "Plan Colombia." It's a strategy to revive Colombia's economy and stem the country's booming cocaine and heroin trade to the United States and Europe.

Security is expected to be extremely tight for Clinton's brief visit and meeting with Pastrana in Cartagena, a Caribbean port. The president is only scheduled to stay a few hours and will not spend the night in Colombia, one of the world's most violent countries.

X-ray scans debated in airport use

■ System used in six U.S. airports; it shows clear outline of navel, other parts.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON — Some might consider it an X-rated X-ray.

The government calls it security.

A device called BodySearch is being used by U.S. Customs inspectors at six airports to detect contraband.

The low-power X-ray penetrates only a few millimeters below the skin, seeing through clothing and eliminating the need for strip or pat-down searches.

BodySearch scans are so sharp that the shape of a person's navel is visible, along with the shapes of other, more private parts. And that's raised the concern of groups who say it violates privacy.

U.S. Customs uses BodySearch at international airports in Atlanta, Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Miami and New York's John F. Kennedy.

It also is being used at six U.S. prisons and a gold mine in South Africa. And with a price tag of roughly \$140,000, some private businesses could likely afford one.

"I think they're kind of controversial for an employee operation," said Ralph Sheridan, president and CEO of American Science and Engineering, which makes BodySearch.

However, he sees no harm in governments using the device for security and crime-fighting.

"Our whole goal is to make the government more effective in dealing with these problems," Sheridan said.

American Science and Engineering, based in Billerica, near Boston, has developed similar products that can see into trucks and unopened cargo containers.

Though these devices can also pick up human forms, the resolution isn't as good, and features of the body can't be seen clearly.

BodySearch has earned its manufacturer a dubious distinction.

Privacy International, based in Washington, gave the company one of its annual "Big Brother" awards. The prize honors the invention that most invades people's privacy.

David Banisar, deputy director of Privacy International, said his colleagues were shocked when they saw an image recorded by the device.

"If you look at the pictures, you could literally see everything," Banisar said. "This is a very intrusive thing. It has been installed with very little discussion ... about whether this is a good idea or not."

U.S. Customs spokesman Dean Boyd said BodySearch scans are strictly voluntary, and that people have to sign a release form before the government can do the scan.

"Everyone thinks this is some government people who sit around in a crowded room and look at the images and store them and pass them around to people. Like we're doing this just for kicks," Boyd said.

Boyd said U.S. Customs doesn't keep BodySearch images unless contraband is detected. In those cases, the images could aid prosecutors.

At the six airports, only passengers suspected of having contraband are asked to undergo a pat-down search or a BodySearch; that affects only one in 2,000 passengers, the Customs Service says.

Still, the American Civil Liberties Union isn't satisfied the technology is being used fairly.

"The biggest problem in Customs searches is that they are conducted with only a minimum level of suspicion and are conducted disproportionately against people of color," said ACLU legislative counsel Greg Nojeim.

The ACLU is urging Congress to consider limiting Customs' use of BodySearch. But Sheridan doesn't think that's necessary.

"It's an alternative to a strip search," he said. "And a strip search is much more invasive than the BodySearch technology."

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