

Campaign-finance reform, tax plans top debate topics

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

BOSTON - Vice President Al Gore and Texas Gov. George W. Bush clashed over tax cuts, Medicare prescription drug benefits and campaign finance Tuesday night in their first campaign debate of the fall pivot point in the closest White House contest in a generation.

Combative from the outset, Gore charged that his rival's tax plan would "spend more money on tax cuts for the wealthiest one percent than all of the new spending he proposes for education, health care, prescription drugs and national defense all combined."

But Bush, standing a few feet away on a debate stage at the University of Massachusetts, said Gore's economic plan would offer tax cuts only to the middle class. "Everybody who pays taxes ought to get relief," he said. At the same time, he said, Gore's blueprint would produce "dramatically" bigger government with 200 "new or expanded programs" and 20,000 new bureaucrats.

"It empowers Washington," added the governor, who hastened to tell a national viewing audience he was from West Texas — not the nation's capital. Over and over, he accused Gore of "fuzzy math."

Gore and Bush met for the first of three presidential debates over the next two weeks, each man seeking advantage in a race so close that poll after poll shows them within a point or two of one another. Their vice presidential candidates, Democrat Joseph Lieberman and Republican Dick Cheney, debate Thursday in Kentucky.

Jim Lehrer of PBS was the moderator, operating under strict rules negotiated in advance by the Gore and Bush camps. It was the first of three 90-minute debates between the two major party rivals — a format that excluded minor-party candidates Ralph Nader and Pat Buchanan.

In a reprise of his acceptance speech at this summer's Democratic National Convention, Gore said it was important to stand up to special interests, pharmaceutical companies among them. "Big drug companies sup-

Students mirror support for candidates nationwide

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"Bush was too quick to react with his one-liners," she said. "I think Gore went back to the issues and stayed with his proposals to help citizens."

But in an age of media sound bites, Martin said, Bush's quick-hitting attacks on Gore showed he could keep pace with vice president, who is known for his formidable debating skills.

"Those are the things people remember from debates," he said. "This is about issues, but at the same time you can't bore your audience. It helps Bush create the impression that he's a relaxed guy and fun to be around."

Mello praised Gore for supporting tax-deductible college tuition for middle-income families, and he said Bush did not address that issue. He said Gore spoke more impressively about education.

"He made a lot of attacks on Gore, but on the biggest issue, he kind of sidestepped it," he said.

Martin, who supported Arizona Sen. John McCain during the GOP primary, said he objected to Gore's attempt to associate himself with McCain. Like McCain, Gore supports campaign finance reform, but he has little credibility on the issue because of his involvement in past campaign finance scandals, Martin said.

Aaron Scheibe, a senior political science, economics and international affairs major, said he supports Bush but was disappointed by Tuesday's debate.

"I think the thing that disappointed me most was the lack of any questions or specifics that were directed to younger voters," he said. "I want to know what they're going to do to get me better student loans and grants."

"Social Security is a long way off for me."

Pi Sigma Alpha will gather to watch the next presidential debate on Oct. 11. Anyone interested in attending can e-mail Judd Choate at jchoate@unlserve.unl.edu

port Governor Bush's prescription drug proposal," he said. "They oppose mine."

Bush made a sour face when he heard that, and in his next breath offered a swift rebuttal.

"I've been standing up to Big Hollywood and Big Trial Lawyers," he shot back, mentioning two groups that have lavished campaign donations on Gore and Democrats.

Each man came equipped with a refrain. For Bush, it was the accusation that Gore was practicing "fuzzy math" with his attacks, sometimes rendered as "fuzzy Washington math."

For Gore, it was a loud, audible sigh, meant to convey profound skepticism over Bush's claims about the economy, prescription

drugs and other issues.

The criticism grew sharper in the debate's closing moments, when Bush criticized Gore over the fund-raising scandals of the Clinton era. He mentioned Gore's controversial visit to a Buddhist temple, where robed priests later made donations, and said Gore needed to take responsibility for what went on in the White House.

"You may want to focus on scandals. I want to focus on results," Gore countered, maneuvering to turn the spotlight away from questions of his own fund-raising activities. But when the vice president challenged Bush to support campaign finance legislation, the Texas governor said bluntly: "This man has no credibility on the issue."

Jury members chosen for murder trial

BY MARGARET BEHM

With the jury selected Tuesday, the murder trial of Linh Bao begins today.

The prosecution will begin its case against Bao at 9 a.m.

Fifteen people were chosen as jury members Tuesday, and

three of the 15 are alternate jurors.

The jury hasn't been informed who will be serving as alternate jurors. None of the jurors are Vietnamese.

Bao was arrested in connection with the shooting of Vu Hoang La on Feb. 5. He was

arrested on Feb. 6.

He was charged with first-degree murder and using a firearm to commit a felony.

If convicted of murder, Bao could face the death penalty. The firearm charge carries a penalty of one to 20 years in prison.

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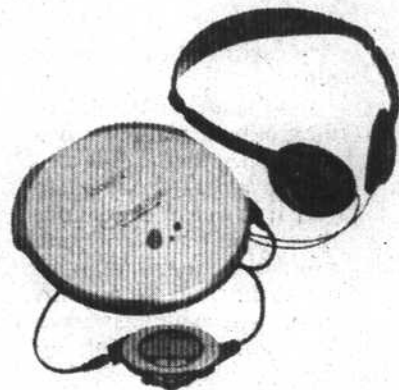
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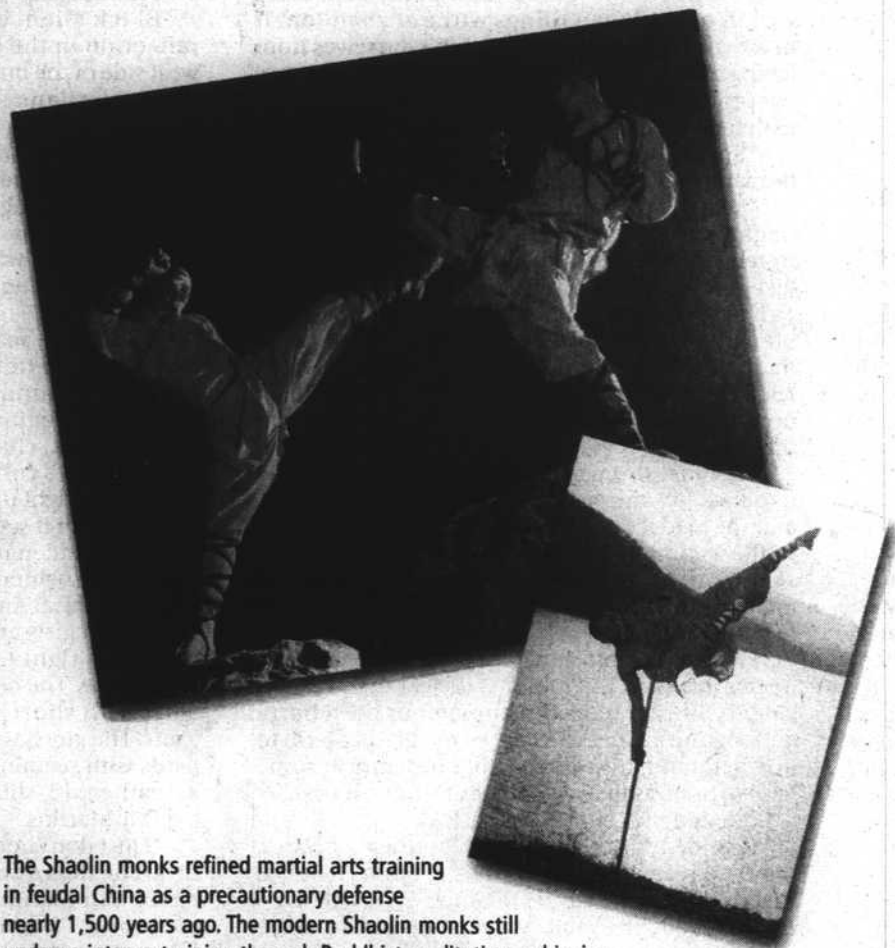
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