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Senior Staff Speeches - Rahm [Emanuel]: "Race to the Bottom"

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Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

Clinton Library

DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. draft	Race to the Bottom. (6 pages)	05/16/1998	P5
002. note	Draft for Race to the Bottom. (2 pages)	n.d.	P5

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
Speechwriting
Jeff Shesol
OA/Box Number: 24501

FOLDER TITLE:

Senior Staff Sp. - Rhame: "Race to the Bottom"

2006-0467-F

vz1331

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
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C. Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.

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RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

10-1030

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Salomon

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JS 5/26/98
for Ralun
op-ed

For more than five years now, from my vantage point in the West Wing of the White House, I have kept an eye focused on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. I have observed the political contortions of the Republican Party and experienced a range of emotions, from impatience to amusement to, occasionally, anger. In recent months, though, I have experienced a new feeling: pity. Or something approaching it. Watching today's GOP is like watching a schoolyard bully trip over his own shoelaces. Republican leaders are so clumsy, so stumblingly inept, they can no longer inspire fear or command respect--even among their own underlings. "We have no program," a Republican-congressional staffer recently sighed to the *National Journal*. "And we don't have our act together."

The fortunes of the Republican party stand in stark contrast to the state of the union. For most Americans, this is a remarkable moment in our history, an economic renaissance. Recent economic reports show that in the first quarter of 1998, our economy grew at a rate of 4.2 percent, an expansion fueled not by growing government deficits but by booming business investment. Wages are rising while inflation remains low. Unemployment is at its lowest in 28 years; inflation the lowest in more than 30 years; and consumer confidence the highest level in 30 years. These are prosperous and productive times for the American people. Opportunity is abundant; communities and families are more secure.

An economy like this is usually a blessing to political incumbents. A satisfied electorate pulls the lever for the status quo, so Republican members of Congress should have little to fear. But recent polls reveal plenty of cause for concern: according to a CNN-Time poll, only 36 percent of Americans would vote for the Republican in their district if the election for Congress were held today; 49 percent would vote for the Democrat. And just last year, an ABC-Washington Post poll showed that even on "Republican" issues like crime, taxes, the balanced budget and the economy, voters trusted Democrats more than they do Republicans. Small wonder. The Republicans talk about these problems; the Democrats are solving them.

The stock Republican response to this anemic showing is to curse the fates: Ronald Reagan is gone, they lament, the Cold War is over. The public, they say, has forgotten what it means to be a Republican. But one need not turn to history for an explanation, and if anyone has abandoned the tenets of the GOP, it is party leaders themselves. They have forsaken principle for fierce, unfettered partisanship, and are chasing each other downhill in a race to the bottom.

There are several reasons for the Republican collapse. First among them is the success of President Clinton's economic strategy: maintaining fiscal discipline while investing in our people, balancing the budget while protecting our values. The balanced budget was, historically, a Republican rallying cry, proclaimed with fervor even as they ran up massive deficits under Republican Presidents Reagan and Bush. President Clinton's success where his Republican predecessors failed has left the GOP deflated and disoriented. The return of fiscal common sense to Washington has deprived the Republican Party of its sense of purpose, leaving it to sputter weakly that a Democratic President, Bill Clinton had "borrowed" their agenda.

In truth, the Republican agenda was mostly lip service. The Republican reality was more than a decade of deficits and, in the end, a recession. But at least their rhetoric was consistent.

Today, budget-busting Republicans like Bud Shuster, who wants to pave every congressional district with pork, do battle with equally irresponsible Republican tax-cutters like John Kasich, who gripe about "too much spending" by their own party. The GOP's messages are terribly mixed: as Franklin Raines, the former director of the Office of Management and Budget, recently explained, in the Senate's budget resolution "the Senate's message was to try to nullify the President's priorities. They didn't necessarily have their own. 'Not his' was sort of their message. And . . . the House Republicans don't know what their message is." Hence we are treated to a unique spectacle in American politics: a majority party doing its best to behave--or, rather, misbehave--like a minority party. They do not lead, they merely obstruct those who do.

The loss of an organizing principle has hurt the GOP every bit as much as the loss of Ronald Reagan and the Communist menace. "There's a leadership vacuum and an ideological vacuum that nobody's been able to fill," admitted Rep. Scott Klug, a Republican from Wisconsin, last year. "We've lost a lot of our vision about what we're going to do."

That vision becomes even more blurry as the next presidential election approaches--call it the GOP's own "millennium bug," poor programming that will cause systems to crash when they hit the year 2000. The Republicans are crashing early--and into each other, mostly, as they jockey for position and advantage in race for the presidential nomination. The party primaries are still years away, but you would never know it from watching Republican antics on Capitol Hill: the endless infighting is like an ongoing primary on the House and Senate floors. Those who are not running for President are, it seems, running for Speaker. And the Speaker just runs: he runs from subject to subject, he runs from fundraiser to fundraiser, he runs at the mouth.

Into this leadership void scurry party activists and outsiders. The largest and loudest faction belongs to James Dobson, a right-wing radio and TV evangelist. The trouble for Republicans is that Dobson is both their electoral savior--his loyal listeners number 28 million--and their harshest political critic. Insisting on ideological purity, Dobson regularly threatens a November walkout; he toys with the notion of "going nuclear" against Republicans who have betrayed the ideals of the "revolution." The end result, Dobson knows, "would be Democrats in the White House *and* the Congress . . . so that would be unfortunate. But you never take a hill unless you are willing to die on it. And we will die on this hill if necessary."

Dobson is not referring to Capitol Hill, but he might well be. In both directions, Dobson's road leads to ruin for the Republican Congress. If party leaders ignore him they risk his electoral wrath. If they appease him, as many are scrambling to do--Dick Armey has ordered House subcommittee chairmen to pursue the Dobson agenda; senators are blocking the President's nominee for ambassador to Luxembourg, James Hormel, because he is gay; others are demanding a constitutional amendment that mandates school prayer--they alienate mainstream voters.

GOP leaders will have you believe that Dobson is the problem. I believe he is merely a symptom of deeper, more fundamental Republican problems: ideological drift, intellectual and moral decay. Their hatred of government is, at heart, a distaste for governing. They have broken the faith with the American people, who agree with President Clinton that the government has an

essential role in widening opportunity, promoting community, and demanding responsibility. The Republican party has never really come to terms with President Clinton or the ideas he embodies--of a new kind of government, limited but efficient, small but progressive, one that elevates principle above party. Instead, the GOP continues to fight the culture wars of the Sixties and the political wars of the Seventies and Eighties. They are terribly out of step with the American people and running roughshod over one another. The GOP is in a downward spiral. My prediction--and, increasingly, many other observers'--is that it will hit bottom on November 3, when Americans go to the polls in a referendum on Republican rule. The winners will be the Democrats--and the American people.



Shesol <Shesol@aol.com>
05/25/98 11:08:32 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Jeffrey A. Shesol/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Rahm

For more than five years now, from my vantage point in the West Wing of the White House, I have kept an eye focused on the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue. I have observed the political contortions of the Republican Party and experienced a range of emotions, from impatience to amusement to, occasionally, anger. In recent months, though, I have experienced a new feeling: pity. Or something approaching it. Watching today's GOP is like watching a schoolyard bully trip over his own shoelaces. Republican leaders are so clumsy, so stumblingly inept, they can no longer inspire fear or command respect even among their underlings. We have no program, a Republican staffer recently sighed to the National Journal. And we don't have our act together.

The fortunes of the Republican party stand in stark contrast to the state of the union. For most Americans, this is a remarkable moment in our history, an economic renaissance. [details from opening statement]

An economy like this is usually a blessing to political incumbents. A satisfied electorate pulls the lever for the status quo, so Republican members of Congress should have little to fear. But recent polls reveal plenty of cause for worry: according to a CNN-Time poll, only 36 percent of Americans would vote for the Republican in their district if the election for Congress were held today; 49 percent would vote for the Democrat. And just last year, an ABC-Washington Post poll showed that even on Republican issues like crime, taxes, the balanced budget and the economy, voters trusted Democrats more than they do Republicans. [pithy]

The stock Republican response to this anemic showing in the polls is to curse the fates: Ronald Reagan is gone, they lament, the Cold War is over. The public, they say, has forgotten what it means to be a Republican. But one need not turn to history for an explanation, and if anyone has abandoned the tenets of the GOP, it is party leaders themselves. They have forsaken principle for fierce, unfettered partisanship, and are chasing each other downhill in a race to the bottom.

There are several reasons for the Republican collapse. First is the success of President Clinton's economic strategy: maintaining fiscal discipline while investing in our people, balancing the budget while protecting our values. [balanced budget analysis]

As Franklin Raines, the former director of the Office of Management and Budget, recently explained, in the Senate's budget resolution the Senate's

message was to try to nullify the President's priorities. They didn't necessarily have their own. Not his was sort of their message. And . . . the House Republicans don't know what their message is. Hence we are treated to a unique spectacle in American politics: a majority party doing its best to behave or, rather, misbehave like a minority party. Not to lead, but to obstruct those who lead.

The loss of an organizing principle has hurt the GOP every bit as much as the loss of Ronald Reagan and the Communist menace. There's a leadership vacuum and an ideological vacuum that nobody's been able to fill, admitted Rep. Scott Klug, a Republican from Wisconsin, last year. We've lost a lot of our vision about what we're going to do. That vision has been blurred further as the next presidential election approaches call it the GOP's own millennium bug, the poor programming that will cause some computers to crash when they hit the year 2000. The Republicans are crashing early and into each other, mostly, as they jockey for position and advantage in the upcoming primaries, still years away.

[party politics]

Party outsiders are scurrying to fill this leadership void. The faction belonging to James Dobson, a right-wing radio evangelist, is the loudest and the biggest.

[Dobson]

GOP leaders will have you believe that Dobson himself is the problem. I believe he is merely a manifestation of deeper, more fundamental problems...

[GOP and Clinton who better understands the values of the American people and refuses to meet the Repubs on their terms]

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001. draft	Race to the Bottom. (6 pages)	05/16/1998	P5
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~~SEPTEMBER 27, 1997~~

SECTION: CONGRESS; Pg. 1890; Vol. 29, No. 39

LENGTH: 1753 words

HEADLINE: ~~The GOP Heads Toward a Crack-Up~~

BYLINE: ~~Richard E. Cohen~~

BODY:

Since seizing the majority in 1995, House Republicans have depicted themselves as a family--one that works together despite its differences. But continuing tensions and the prospect of further ugly clashes support the increasingly prevalent view among Members that their family has become dysfunctional.

The evidence is mounting: Some party leaders barely speak with one another. ~~Many Members say that they expect most, if not all, of the House leadership team to face serious challenges for their positions after the November 1998 elections, or perhaps sooner.~~ The year-long effort to develop a new House GOP agenda has faltered to the point where despairing lawmakers agree that they should get out of town quickly and make a fresh start next year. And some Republicans fear that in next year's election, they'll even lose their narrow majority.

Beneath the current superficial calm, ~~unrest continues among House Republicans, following the botched attempt by the top lieutenants of Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., to oust him in July.~~ Although Gingrich and those in his inner circle insist he'll be around for a few more years, many Members believe--and some hope--that he will not seek another House term. The embattled Speaker has been flirting with a possible presidential candidacy, which could provide a graceful cover for his exit, Members say.

"There is a heavy rumor that he will announce in January his retirement," House Majority Whip Tom D. DeLay, R-Texas, said in a recent interview. "A lot of Members are talking about it." DeLay--who concedes that he joined in the summertime coup discussions but insists that he never pledged to support the plotters--quickly added that he expects the Speaker to stay, and that he fervently hopes the Speaker will. If Gingrich left, "there would be massive leadership races that would undermine our ability to keep the majority," he predicted. "It would be horrible."

The course of events will depend upon such factors as the House GOP's performance in coming months, next year's election results and the willingness of prospective insurgents to make a move. But in the wake of the summer debacle, two things are clear: that any lingering facade of unity has crumbled and that

~~some Members will try to settle old scores.~~ "It's like a cut that takes time to heal," said a top Republican leadership aide.

Some Members' willingness to go public with their gripes underscores the rifts. Rep. Peter Hoekstra, R-Mich., a close Gingrich ally in the 1994 campaign, complains that the Speaker's "most fundamental mistake is that he has not fostered a team vision and a shared strategy to implement that vision." Rep. Ray LaHood, R-Ill., places the blame elsewhere. "Our other three leaders demonstrated a loss of credibility and that they are not part of the leadership team," said LaHood, referring to ~~DeLay~~, Majority Leader Richard K. ~~Armey~~ of Texas, and GOP Conference chairman John A. ~~Boehner~~ of Ohio.

GOP leaders, for the most part, have sought to maintain a business-as-usual approach and are focusing on their largely routine legislative workload. They point to their successes this month in matters such as the fiscal 1998 spending bills, the tentative approval of the congressional pay raise and progress on ethics reform, in addition to the August enactment of the balanced budget and tax-cut packages.

"I think that the leadership is functioning far better as a result of the coup," said Republican Conference vice-chairwoman Jennifer B. Dunn, R-Wash. "Newt is much more disciplined. He is engaged and focusing on his responsibilities. We needed to tighten up our operation." While she conceded that "communication" needs improvement, Dunn added that the party will benefit in coming months from its emphasis on overhauling the Internal Revenue Service and the tax code, and on giving parents more control over money for their kids' schools.

Although ~~Gingrich's national travels during the August recess fueled Capitol cloakroom chatter about his presidential ambitions,~~ his activities could serve other interests. "Many Members believe that he will leave next year and run for President," said Hoekstra, who voiced doubts about that scenario. "In the past, I've heard Newt talk about this.... But I think that he recognizes that he needs to restore his credibility."

Gingrich has gotten the credit for some recent legislative wins. He derailed--at least temporarily--the attempt by House Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chairman Bud Shuster, R-Pa., to increase spending for transportation programs. On Sept. 17, Gingrich called committee Republicans into his office and laid down the law--they must not bust the balanced budget agreement. "He has conducted himself in a far more forceful and effective manner," said Charles F. Bass, R-N.H., a Transportation committee member. On Sept. 23, Gingrich and Shuster agreed on a six-month extension of current transportation programs, but some observers suggest that the wily Shuster could end up getting his way. (For a report on Shuster, see NJ, 9/20/97, p. 1838.)

The National Journal, SEPTEMBER 27, 1997

Conservatives praised Gingrich for letting them conduct a two-week floor debate this month on the appropriations bill for the Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Departments. "That debate was very positive in identifying issues that Democrats did not want to defend," said Rep. John Shadegg, R-Ariz. He said that although GOP Appropriations leaders did not enjoy the exercise, "it was unifying for the (Republican) Conference."

Still, Gingrich apparently will fail to deliver on even his own promises for the autumn legislative schedule. In an interview with National Journal on Aug. 1, he predicted the impending passage of several bills, including changes in the Clinton Administration's rules for implementing welfare reform. (See NJ, 8/9/97, p. 1609.) But GOP sources said the timing is not right for that measure to move.

As Gingrich has become more engaged in legislative operations, he has worked with additional GOP Members who are separate from the formal leadership structure. "It's not a well-functioning team," said a Republican leadership aide. "But we may not need that." A GOP lawmaker said Republicans see through the "picture of a happy family" and are reconciled to "limping along" until after next year's election, while recognizing that, meanwhile, "we will have to take a minimalist approach."

Although reports of the July insurrection caused turmoil on Capitol Hill, Members agree that the rebel leaders lacked a credible game plan and probably never had a chance of success. Lawmakers also contend that the public dismissed the event as "inside baseball" and showed little interest. "I call it the coup de flop," said Rep. Richard Burr, R-N.C., a second-term member who has been close to some of the dissidents but did not participate in their meetings. "There was never any intention other than to send a message to insist on our principles in the budget negotiations."

The ramifications, however, are inescapable. ~~Relations between Armey and DeLay remain chilled in the wake of Armey's decision to spill details of the rebellion to Gingrich and to distance himself from the effort.~~ Other Members contend that Armey has "lied" about his role. ~~The ostensible rapprochement between Gingrich and Armey is a "shotgun wedding," said one Member.~~ DeLay and Boehner, meanwhile, are working on their own, each trying to prove his effectiveness.

Furthermore, Rep. Bill Paxon, R-N.Y., whom Gingrich dumped as the head of his leadership team, appears to retain widespread popularity, especially among the dissidents. "Bill remains a leader today, even though he doesn't have the title," Burr said. During a speech this month to Republicans in New York, Paxon, who lately has kept a low profile on Capitol Hill, took a shot at "our finger-pointing and our paralysis-through-analysis, which today bogs us down."

~~Perhaps the biggest immediate problem facing House Republicans is their failure to unify the rank and file with a compelling message.~~ The leaders' plan for a relatively early adjournment this fall has been fueled by the view that Members benefit politically when they are back home, distant from the inevitable Capitol Hill conflicts. Although some respond that they should spend more time in Washington, working out their differences and preparing an agenda, that seems to be a minority view. "With our short weeks in Washington, we don't do a lot of committee work," Bass said. "But I think that the public believes that the less Congress meets, the better it is. I believe that we are doing enough."



Looming ahead are the midterm elections, which, based on past history, should offer House Republicans a big opportunity. GOP strategists concede, however, that they have lowered their expectations amid concerns that they will have difficulty retaining the growing number of vulnerable seats where an incumbent Republican is departing.

~~Disappointing election results would pose additional problems for Gingrich. Some Republicans contend that if the party fails to gain at least 15-20 House seats next November, a broad-based move will be made to dump him as party leader and elect either Paxon or House Budget Committee chairman John R. Kasich, R-Ohio.~~

As the rebels learned this summer, it's difficult to beat somebody with nobody. That helps to explain the growing gossip that House Members such as Dunn, Paxon, David McIntosh, R-Ind., and W.J. (Billy) Tauzin, R-La., are being groomed to challenge the current GOP leaders, possibly as a team. LaHood noted that that would "complicate" Republicans' ability to do business in the coming year. But another well-placed Member said the current leaders already "assume that there will be such contests."

However improbable such a scenario--and notwithstanding Gingrich's recent recovery--the disarray that the House GOP has endured in the past year shows that anything is possible.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: September 30, 1997

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~~The National Journal~~

~~March 28, 1998~~

SECTION: CONGRESS; Pg. 692; Vol. 30, No. 13

LENGTH: 1698 words

HEADLINE: ~~House GOP Living on the Edge~~

BYLINE: ~~Richard E. Cohen~~

BODY:

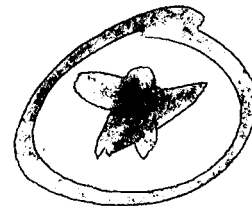
At nearly every turn, House Republicans are consumed by fractious and often-embarrassing intraparty tiffs. Although disarray may be too strong a word for what ails them--at least, for now--they no longer even try to mask their conflicts on issues ranging from budget policy to impeachment turf to leadership succession. In fact, ~~they seem uncomfortable unless they get involved in a near-death experience every few months.~~

For GOP insiders, it's no longer news that they are on the verge of implosion. "Are you referring to the return of the Keystone Kops?" said a veteran House Republican staffer when asked about the recent events. A more circumspect senior aide said that he's keeping his head out of the line of fire to avoid blame for the next free-for-all.

The House Republicans' latest problems may not rise to the level of previous crises--such as the Christmas 1995 federal government shutdown, the 1997 ethics reprimand against Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., and the move by renegades last summer to force his ouster as Speaker. But history has shown that in the ever-volatile House, it doesn't take much of a spark to ignite a firestorm of protests or even a serious political showdown.

~~With their slim majority, their chronic factionalism and their aversion to bipartisanship, the House Republicans move to a jarring, yet familiar, beat:~~ Gingrich establishes his initial position on a pending problem. Then he gets pushed by advocates toward one end of the spectrum. That almost inevitably breeds counter-reactions by additional players, who force him to other positions.

Recent examples demonstrate the pattern. ~~Last fall, as Republicans basked in the glow of their much-hyped balanced budget deal with President Clinton,~~ Transportation and Infrastructure Committee chairman Bud Shuster, R-Pa., busted up ~~other party by insisting on budget-breaking increases in highway spending.~~ Budget Committee chairman John R. Kasich, R-Ohio, and other senior Republicans fiercely resisted, saying they wanted instead to cut taxes or reduce the federal debt, and Gingrich deferred the clash. This month, the persistent Shuster won most of what he had sought, and Kasich griped about "too much



*jeopardize
balanced
budget*

The National Journal, March 28, 1998

spending." Later this spring, though, ~~Kasich~~ will have an opportunity to respond with proposed budget cuts that surely will yield new protests.

A similarly messy exchange ensued this month when the House GOP jostled over how to handle the preliminary steps of a possible impeachment inquiry against Clinton. Gingrich worked out an awkward detente with Judiciary Committee chairman Henry J. Hyde, R-Ill., after other barons--such as Government Reform and Oversight Committee chairman Dan Burton, R-Ind., and Rules Committee chairman Gerald B.H. Solomon, R-N.Y.--made clear that they wanted a select committee created to give them a piece of the action. But that arrangement is only temporary, pending the next skirmish. "I'm still concerned" about threats to the Judiciary Committee, said Rep. Charles T. Canady, R-Fla., a Hyde ally who sits on that panel.

Gingrich allies downplay the tension as natural and not necessarily a hindrance in a legislative body filled with big egos, especially when one party has only a 10-seat majority. As Gingrich wrote in a letter to The Wall Street Journal on March 24, the recent criticism of a "do-nothing Congress" ignores "a lengthy record of congressional accomplishment," which he said will continue this year.

Still, it's been clear throughout Gingrich's speakership that his often-lax style of command encourages the chaos--controlled or otherwise. "Newt thrives in the environment, going from meeting to meeting as ringmaster," said a disenchanted insider, who added, "The need to improve management has existed since day one" of the House GOP majority in 1995. As has been the case in the impeachment maneuvering, Gingrich often makes decisions without consulting other party leaders.

For the most part, Republicans have publicly circled their wagons to try to reduce election-year discord that could jeopardize their majority come November. Key GOP players privately concede that they have burrowed themselves into their work because they do not want to call attention to the continuing problems. And this year's light Capitol Hill work schedule serves the party's interests by minimizing the opportunity for conflict.

But the constant infighting has taken a toll. Last summer, when Rep. Bill Paxon, R-N.Y., then a key Gingrich lieutenant, voiced sympathy with the GOP's restless conservative Young Turks, he was booted from the party leadership. A half-year later, after he mulled a challenge to Majority Leader Richard K. Armey, R-Texas, Paxon's ambition was squelched, and he decided in February to leave the House altogether.

Now dissatisfaction with the current leadership has a new outlet. Although Armey, Gingrich's heir apparent, survived last summer's coup-plotting by alerting Gingrich and covering himself, he's the object of mistrust for many members and the target of an unusual challenge from Appropriations Committee chairman Bob

In Slap at G.O.P. Leadership, House Stops M

By LIZETTE ALVAREZ

WASHINGTON, May 22 — In a startling rebuke to the Republican leadership, the House today thwarted a conservative move to deny food stamps to a quarter of a million immigrants, leaving the fate of the legislation in doubt.

Defying their own party, 98 Republicans joined 190 Democrats in defeating a last-minute effort to strip the food stamp provision from an agriculture conference agreement between the House and Senate. That provision would restore the eligibility of some legal immigrants who were stricken from the rolls by the

1996 welfare overhaul law.

The agreement, which includes the food stamp restoration and a crop insurance provision for farmers, was overwhelmingly approved by the Senate on May 12. It is also supported by the Clinton Administration. While the House had not included the food stamp provision in its agriculture bill, its negotiators accepted it in conference with the Senate.

The 1996 decision to deny food stamps to elderly and infirm legal immigrants has been criticized as overly harsh by the Clinton Administration, by Republican governors as well as Democratic ones, and by ad-

vocates for immigrants and the poor.

The House-Senate agreement would restore food stamps to 250,000 elderly and disabled legal immigrants dropped from the rolls in 1996. To qualify under the agreement, the immigrants must have been living in the United States on Aug. 22, 1996, the day President Clinton signed the welfare bill into law.

The agreement would also maintain the Federal crop insurance program, which is crucial to millions of farmers, for the next five years. Without it, some farmers would lose such insurance as early as June 30.

The House recessed tonight with-

Debate on Campaign Finance Begins

By ALISON MITCHELL

WASHINGTON, May 22 — In the hours before its third recess of the year, the House today sandwiched debate on the overhaul of campaign finance laws between a battle over food stamps and consideration of a public works bill. But it put off any votes on the issue until June.

The sometimes passionate two-hour exchange was mostly dominated by the coalition of Democrats and some Republicans who want to restrict the influence of money in politics. Only a few Republicans spelled out their party's opposition to the measures.

By claiming to argue for free speech, the opponents of reform are mainly attempting to make sure money not only talks but it

ment, said Representative Asa Hutchinson, Republican of Arkansas. The judge said that money

ties by corporations. The President has described the issue as a privilege of the Secret Service rather than of Mr. Clinton today that he would stay

lated donations to political parties known as soft money that were at the heart of the campaign finance abuses of 1996. But they could not muster the votes to break a Republican filibuster.

In March, House Republican leaders tried to dispense with the campaign overhaul effort by sharply limiting debate and blocking the main bipartisan bill from consideration. But the move boomeranged, and the Republicans agreed to a new debate.

This time, House leaders are allowing, perhaps the most unscripted, uncontrolled debate that the House will see on any issue this year. Each of the 11 bills will be thrown open to a flood of amendments and then voted on. By the end of the process, which ever bill gets the most votes will be

sequences.

An describing the potential effects of agents' testimony, Mr. Clinton said that at least it will have a chilling effect on, perhaps on the conversations Presidents have and

Republicans were trying to kill campaign finance overhaul through openness.

There is so much debate scheduled on this issue that I am afraid it could go on for months, said Representative Carolyn B. Maloney, Democrat of Manhattan. Tempers frayed, and Representative Sander M. Levin, Democrat of Michigan, demanded to know whether hissing was allowed on the House floor.

But today the sides were decorous as the House pushed to get out of town for Memorial Day.

The bills under consideration include the House's destroy of the Senate's relationship of confidence that must exist the Secret Service to effectively protect the President.

The department drew a parallel to the privilege granted for state secrets, saying the nation had a similar interest in protecting the President. It said there could be an exception

from Justice Dept. R

Move to Deny Food Stamps to Immigrants

But emphasizing the bill's impact on the nation's food stamp program, the House bill would deny food stamps to immigrants who have been in the country for less than five years. The bill also would deny food stamps to immigrants who have been in the country for less than five years and who are not citizens of the United States. The bill also would deny food stamps to immigrants who have been in the country for less than five years and who are not citizens of the United States.

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Defying their own party, Republicans break ranks and join Democrats.

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Godzilla of the Right

James Dobson, the radio psychologist who is the new Godzilla of the religious right, looks like a guy who would smack you down if you gave him any lip. And not without reason: he's in favor of corporal punishment. At the moment he is applying his belt to the Republican Party.

A media flavor of the month, Mr. Dobson has made Newt Gingrich and company quake by publicly threatening to bolt the G.O.P. and take his five million listeners with him if Congress does not further an agenda amenable to his Colorado Springs-based Focus on the Family. His blackmail is producing instant results from a full-court press on a constitutional amendment mandating school prayer to the increasingly uncloseted hate of senators blocking the Clinton nominee for ambassador to Luxembourg, James Hormel, because he is gay. This week James Inhofe of Oklahoma nonsensically likened Mr. Hormel, a philanthropist and former dean at the University of Chicago Law School, to the Ku Klux Klan alumnus David Duke.

It's actually Mr. Dobson who may be a ringer for a fringe firebrand like Duke; he voted for the theocratic U.S. Taxpayers Party Presidential candidate in '96 rather than Bob Dole. One major G.O.P. donor calls Mr. Dobson's current power play "one of the most divisive things that has happened to a political party since George Wallace split the Democrats over the civil rights issue." Other worried Republicans compare him and his take-no-prisoners, post-Ralph Reed allies to the old Democratic left, which would rather lose than compro-

A Dobson's choice for the G.O.P.

mise its principles. Certainly Mr. Dobson sounded like a 60's Weatherman last month when he wrote, "I believe a Republican meltdown is preferable to . . . the present betrayal of the moral agenda."

The question is whether Mr. Dobson is more likely to cause a meltdown by bolting the G.O.P. or by bullying it to the point of scaring away moderates needed to hold its slender majority in the House this year, let alone win the Presidency in 2000. The religious right now demands an ideological purity that few to the left of the U.S. Taxpayers Party can meet. Not only do pro-choice nemeses like Christine Todd Whitman and Rudolph Giuliani fall short, but so do pro-life Republicans who refuse to kowtow on every issue.

The religious right in Texas views even the conservative Gov. George W. Bush as suspiciously unreliable in backing its anti-public school agenda. John McCain, the Arizona Senator who is pro-life, was nonetheless pilloried in radio ads placed by the National Right to Life Committee in Presidential primary states last fall because he defied its opposition to campaign-finance reform. Mr. Dobson has condemned Gov. John Engler of Michigan, an abortion foe, for joining such leftists as Al D'A-

mato and Pete Domenici on the board of the centrist Republican Leadership Council.

As Governor Whitman observed when I interviewed her in Trenton last month, "You can never be right enough" for the right. She believes it should have been "a wake-up call" for her party when zealots turned on Senator McCain.

To which one might add: If potential Republican Presidential candidates of the stature of Mr. McCain and Mr. Bush don't measure up with the religious right, who does? So far, mainly Steve Forbes and Senator John Ashcroft of Missouri — G.O.P. George McGovern incarnate. (Mr. Forbes is so eager to pander to the Dobson forces that he now says outlawing abortion, not cutting taxes, is his top priority.) Gary Bauer, the Dobson ally who tried to push Colin Powell (whom he called "Bill Clinton with ribbons") out of the G.O.P. in '96, is also talking of running for President: "We are the party," he boasts of religious-right clout.

Is that clout all he, Mr. Dobson and a credulous press say it is? The nasty "partial birth" abortion TV ads that Mr. Bauer poured into a California House election this year backfired and may have cost the G.O.P. the seat. Last week a homophobic, Dobson-endorsed candidate for governor, Jon Christensen, sank to third in the Republican primary — in conservative Nebraska.

If there's anything that may play worse with voters than the disingenuousness of Clinton Democrats, it just may be the hard right's politics of mean. □

The New York Times

WEDNESDAY, MAY 20, 1998

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The New York Times

It's Not Just the Hours

By Mark Savant

The New York State Department of Health released a study this week that found that nearly all the residents in the hospitals studied worked longer hours than the law allows. Many residents worked more than 24 hours straight, and a few worked more than 126 hours in a week.

Working to the point of exhaustion hurts both residents and the patients they treat. But the number of hours worked is not necessarily the best, and certainly not the only, measure of the quality of care patients will receive or of good resident training. We also need to make sure residents receive proper supervision by attending physicians and the support of an adequately staffed nursing unit.

I completed my residency a year

Mark Savant is an attending physician in general medicine at St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital Center.

ago at Santa Clara Valley Medical Center, a county hospital in San Jose, Calif. When I moved to New York last year to become an attending physician, I was surprised by the differences, even though I knew that policies differ not only region to region, but also hospital to hospital. At my previous hospital, each attending

Who's supervising hospital residents?

physician was in charge of a resident and two interns on the hospital ward. Here in New York City, I am in charge of twice that number. So the attending physicians at the hospital in California were much more closely involved with the residents in the daily care of patients.

It's not just a tired resident who can make a bad decision involving a patient's care. An alert resident who can't easily consult an attending phy-

sician to double-check a decision can make the same mistakes.

Furthermore, a good nursing staff is essential for both the patients' well-being and the quality of a resident's training. Because many New York City hospitals have cut back on nurses for budgetary reasons, a resident on call has to perform many tasks a nurse would otherwise do, like drawing blood. If the hospital wards had enough nurses, residents would be able to spend time on duties more useful to furthering their training — and would also have more time for sleep.

St. Luke's-Roosevelt Hospital already has plans to hire more attending physicians to improve the supervision of residents, and many institutions have worked hard to reduce the hours residents work.

But hospitals are under pressure to cut back on the number of residents they train because of a perceived glut of doctors, and the Federal Government is offering financial incentives for them to do so. As a result, the problem of overworked residents may only get worse. □




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WHO'S ON TOP?



Cover Story **5/4/98**

A Righteous Indignation

James Dobson--psychologist, radio host, family-values crusader--is set to topple the political establishment

BY MICHAEL J. GERSON

On March 18, in the basement of the Capitol, 25 House Republicans met with psychologist James Dobson for some emotional venting. But this was not personal therapy; it concerned the fate of their party. Dobson, long on loyal radio listeners and short on patience, was threatening, in effect, to bring down the GOP unless it made conservative social issues, including abortion, a higher-legislative priority. "If I go," he has said, "I will do everything I can to take as many people with me as possible."

In the audience sat some of Dobson's closest ideological allies. Rep. Steve Largent of Oklahoma, a former star football player, was a volunteer speaker for Dobson's organization, Focus on the Family, from 1990 to 1993. He credits this with "sparking my interest in public policy." Rep. James Talent of Missouri, years before, had pulled off the highway and prayed along with Dobson on the radio to become a Christian. "He is the instrument through which I committed my life to Christ. It is the single most important thing that has ever or will ever happen to me."

But for over two hours, until nearly midnight, House conservatives confronted Dobson about his indiscriminate attacks on the Republican Party, asking credit for achievements he had ignored. At one point the wife of a congressman, in tears, explained how Dobson's broadside had hurt their family, inviting harsh questions from friends. An emotional Dobson, according to one witness, responded, "I'm so sorry I hurt you."

Sobered, Dobson canceled planned meetings with the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post*, where he would have laid out his threat to leave. But in the next two weeks, he sent lengthy, public letters renewing the threat, which hangs in the air like distant thunder at the Republican picnic.

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This conflict dramatizes a growing gap between grass-roots conservatism and governing conservatism, between the raised expectations of activists and the weary realism of legislators. It reveals a party that may be crumbling, not at its periphery but at its center, among its most loyal supporters. And it may be signaling a major shift in the attitudes of Christian conservatives toward politics.

Many Republicans are taking Dobson's divorce threats very seriously. House Speaker Newt Gingrich has hosted several meetings with other House leaders to discuss Dobson's specific demands, which include defunding Planned Parenthood, requiring parental consent for abortions, and eliminating the National Endowment for the Arts. House Majority Leader Dick Armey has asked subcommittee chairmen to explore how Dobson's agenda could be advanced. But Dobson will not be easily appeased. Of the assurances he has been offered that his issues will be taken seriously, he says: "We've got to see the proof. . . . If they will not change, I will try to beat them this fall."

His focus

Dobson is a central figure in Republican politics because he is the central figure in conservative Christianity. His radio and TV broadcasts are heard or seen by 28 million people a week. A core audience of 4 million listens to his *Focus on the Family* radio show every day. That gives him a greater reach than either Jerry Falwell or Pat Robertson at the height of their appeals. Dobson's most popular books have sold more than 16 million copies, and his other tracts and pamphlets have sold millions more. His organization, Focus on the Family, has a budget five times the size of the Christian Coalition's and gets so much mail it has its own ZIP code. His mailing list of over 2 million is one of the most potent organizing tools in the religious world.

But the 62-year-old Dobson is not a preacher or political activist. He is a psychologist, and his authority comes from an ability to connect with people right at the level of their problems. "His family advice is simply helpful, and he has a reputation for absolute integrity--standing for something and sticking to it," says Prof. John Green of the University of Akron, an expert on the religious right.

The effect is completed by the slight drawl of a country doctor, a radio voice that is at once effortless and authoritative. Its influence seems to surprise even him. "My voice is a friendly voice that comes into the home each day, somebody they know, somebody many of them trust. And it does become a kind of friendship. It's a strange thing. I have a lot of women especially who write me and say, 'My father was not a father to me. . . . You've become a father to me,' which is interesting when you consider I've never met them."

Dobson is very much the son, grandson, and great-grandson of Nazarene evangelists, a denomination known both for moral sternness--no movies or makeup--and for the emotional openness of the camp meeting. This is the evangelicalism of the quivering lip, the arm around the shoulder, the lump in the throat, the easy tear. Though he might resent the

comparison, Dobson displays a Clinton-like emotional connection, particularly with women, who make up the vast majority of his audience. He accepted the Nazarene faith at the age of 3 and never rebelled against it, though, like many of his generation of Nazarenes, he abandoned its more rigid prohibitions against pop culture.

As an only child, Dobson was "spoiled rotten," recalls old friend Mike Williamson. "His family doted over him." And Dobson developed a particularly close relationship with his father, who combined the moral rigor of a preacher with the softer traits of an artist. (He was a serious painter.) "He was a gentle man, a kind man, an easy touch, but outraged toward sin," Dobson says. "He had an abhorrence of that which offended God, and a lot of what I feel today reflects that."

Dobson might have been expected to go into the ministry himself. But Nazarene ministry must be inspired by a very specific calling from God, and Dobson never felt it. He went instead to a Nazarene school in California, Pasadena College, and then to the graduate program in psychology at the University of Southern California. There he found himself interested in the science of child development, and he spent 14 years as a professor of pediatrics at the USC School of Medicine and 17 years on the attending staff at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles.

In the middle of this career, Dobson was hungry for broader influence on the issue he cared about most: child rearing. He hired an agent and began lecturing. And he published a book in 1970 titled *Dare to Discipline*. It sold 3 million copies and established his national reputation. Dobson, who has written 15 other books, is a critic of permissive parenting. He stresses the idea that kids need boundaries to develop self-esteem and self-confidence. Children's behavior can be conditioned by the judicious use of rewards and punishments. He believes spanking is permissible, but only between 18 months and 8 years, and never by anyone with a history of abuse or a violent temper. But he also argues that rules without relationship lead to rebellion. So parents, while firm, should be emotionally accessible to their children.

Dobson stresses the need for fathers to be fully engaged in the life of their family, in contrast to the distant breadwinners of the past. His film on the subject, *Where's Dad?*, had a profound effect, for example, on Rep. Frank Wolf of Virginia. "That film, that day, changed my life. After that, I never went to a political event on Sunday, not when asked by George Bush or Ronald Reagan. I dedicated myself to spending more time with [the children]. My kids joke about B.D. and A.D.--before Dobson and after Dobson."

The psychologist's method is a mix of traditional parenting, biblical insights, and basic psychology--a traditionalism humanized by common sense and flexibility. His advice to a mother and 12-year-old daughter fighting bitterly over whether the young girl should be allowed to shave her legs: "Lady, buy your daughter a razor!" His counsel on masturbation: "Attempting to suppress this act is one campaign that is destined to fail--so why wage it?" He urges discipline for the big issues and tolerance on the smaller stuff.

When demand for Dobson as a speaker began to steal time from his own two children, he quit his job at Children's Hospital of Los Angeles in 1977 and started his radio program. Two years later, he summarized his parenting views in a seven-part Focus on the Family video series, which has now been seen by 70 million people. Rapid growth carried the ministry through five headquarters buildings and from California to Colorado Springs, where 1,300 people work in the \$113 million enterprise.

Focus provides answers to those seeking advice. It is also the center of a pro-family culture that is a kind of parallel universe to mainstream popular culture. There are monthly magazines for preschoolers, grade schoolers, teen boys, and teen girls. Glossy, frank, and helpful, they have articles like "Battle of an Anorexic," "Back-to-School Fashion," and "Spiritual Growth Boosters." Other magazines go to single parents, teachers, physicians, and pastors. Focus's second-most-popular production--after Dobson's daily radio program--is *Adventures in Odyssey*, a children's radio drama with moral story lines that is carried on over 1,500 radio stations. There are women's seminars and "Life on the Edge" seminars, designed to help parents and teens communicate about the challenges of adolescence. A new abstinence video, titled *No Apologies*, combines MTV production techniques, biblical values, and the explicitness of an Army VD training film. Teens who have already had sex are urged to be "recycled virgins." It is countercultural, urging children to rebel against the slipshod moral world around them by displaying virtue.

Most of the Focus operation, which receives up to 12,000 letters, calls, and E-mails every day, is occupied with "constituent service." In one pile of counseling requests at a random Focus cubicle, a long-distance trucker asks how to keep his family together when he is always gone; a woman deals with a miscarriage; a divorced man asks if it is OK to remarry. Prototype responses, drawn from Dobson's vast output of advice, guide counselors. All incoming letters are stored by computer, so the next time these people write, the dialogue will pick up where it left off. Focus does not just answer mail; it maintains relationships. Some hard cases are referred to licensed counselors. Some people are offered temporary financial help. They deal with one or two suicide threats a week.

Dobson's reach grows each day. At a recent weekly meeting of the Focus "cabinet"--Dobson plus his senior executives--there were reports on the translation of Focus broadcasts into Zulu. On how three Central and South American countries were putting Focus abstinence material into their public schools. On how *Adventures in Odyssey* is now one of the top five radio programs in Zimbabwe. On how 500 state-owned radio stations in China are about to begin the Focus broadcast.

When it comes to the business of helping people, Dobson the empathetic extrovert has a reputation as an intimidating micromanager. No one, no matter how long or loyal their service, is exempt from confrontational scrutiny. "I saw people who had given blood [serving] him come out of his office weeping," says a former employee. "He believes so strongly in his rightness." Another former employee says "the pace [at

Focus] is *unbelievable*. But everyone has to appear perfectly happy."

At the center of it all is a man who does not lack confidence. He tells a story about his ill father, who prayed for three days and nights without sleep that his time on Earth would be extended so he could finish his work as a minister. At dawn, God told him he was going to reach millions around the world--not through himself but through his son. The next day Dobson's father suffered a major heart attack; he died in a few weeks. "I saw for the first time," says Dobson, "why [Focus on the Family] seemed charmed--beyond my ability and beyond my intelligence, my academic knowledge, my ability to communicate." This is the person who has chosen to test his influence against the Republican Party. He does not describe his actions as those of a man moved by grubby ambition; he sees it as a calling.

Politics and prophecy

Dobson was once positioned to be a more conservative version of Joyce Brothers. "If I had simply stayed on those [family] themes, I could have moved with ease through all denominations in both political parties. But I care about the moral tone of the nation. I care about right and wrong. I have very deep convictions about absolute truth."

His sense of political urgency has come in stages. Convinced that his and his followers' views were not being given voice in Washington, he created in 1982 an advocacy group, the Family Research Council. But it was purposely designed to keep him one step removed from direct political involvement. Gary Bauer, a key aide in Ronald Reagan's White House, now runs the group, and he is supposed to be the partisan lightning rod, allowing Dobson to focus, as it were, on the family.

But Dobson, in the past several months, has become so dissatisfied with conservatives' performance in Congress that he wants to become more directly and personally involved in politics. "He has watched the manipulation of the religious right for the last decade," argues his close friend Charles Colson. "He feels a sense of betrayal and responsibility for stewardship of the great silent majority."

He is particularly intolerant of those who share his views but not his driving sense of urgency. So he has developed a habit of targeting allies with footnoted letters showing that Dobson can at times slip over the line between righteousness and self-righteousness. When Ralph Reed, then the head of the Christian Coalition, was insufficiently critical during the last election of Colin Powell for his support of abortion rights, Dobson wrote to Reed: "Gary Bauer and I have discussed your recent statements and considered the need to distance ourselves from you. ... Some of the politicians with whom you have made common cause ... would seal the fate of [unborn children] and sacrifice millions more in years to come. I will fight that evil as long as there is breath within my body." Commenting on Dobson's tendency to attack allies, conservative columnist Cal Thomas argues, "You begin to marginalize yourself, saying, *I am the only true believer*. Soon you are left only with your wife, then

you begin to look at her funny. All of a sudden, you're Ross Perot." When confronted with the charge, Dobson responds: "I guess it irritates me when people who know what is right put self-preservation and power ahead of moral principle. That is more offensive to me, in some ways, than what Bill Clinton does with interns at the White House."

Dobson is not the kind of traditional conservative who has a keen appreciation of the limits and complexities of politics. He is a moralist and a populist, demanding rapid, immediate progress to fit a flaming moral vision: "If you look at the cultural war that's going on, most of what those who disagree with us represent leads to death--abortion, euthanasia, promiscuity in heterosexuality, promiscuity in homosexuality, legalization of drugs. There are only two choices. It really is that clear. It's either God's way, or it is the way of social disintegration."

Some conservatives dismiss this as an impractical philosophy for a governing party since progress emerges by small steps. Other conservative critics fear that Dobson's increased partisanship might undermine the generally nonpartisan good works of Focus on the Family. Still others warn that his walkout strategy will only result in the election of Democrat Dick Gephardt as House speaker. Dobson's response: "It is never wrong to do what's right. And you stand for what's right whether it is strategic or not."

The fact that Dobson has struck a chord among conservative activists may be signaling an important shift of political styles in evangelicalism. There are at least three of those tendencies to be considered: priest, kingmaker, prophet. From the 1950s to the 1970s, Billy Graham performed a priestly function as minister to the ministers of state. His role was to legitimize power and to use his access to present the Christian Gospel, which was his primary goal. Personal contact and influence were paramount. In the 1980s, culminating in the rise of Pat Robertson and the Christian Coalition, the goal shifted from legitimizing power to exercising power--the role of kingmaker. Robertson, the son of a senator, understood the give and take of coalition building and the need for a place at the table.

But the pragmatism of the religious right is under serious question, particularly in the wake of the coalition's embrace of Republican Bob Dole in the last presidential election, which many in the movement argue was a compromise too far. University of Akron's Green compares Dobson to an Old Testament prophet "speaking truth to power." It is a designation Dobson accepts: "I really do feel that the prophetic role is part of what God gave me to do."

And that frames the questions for his supporters: Do Christian activists want to be players or prophets? Insiders who accept inevitable compromises, or outsiders who hold on to higher standards?

The next move

Dobson has rejected the idea of becoming a political candidate himself or trying to create a third party. This leaves him with two options. The conventional choice is for Dobson to intervene directly in Republican primaries on the side of social conservatives. This

would require, in Dobson's words, "periodic leaves of absence" to protect the nonprofit status of Focus on the Family. Bauer's political action committee has already scouted 40 races where Dobson might throw his weight on the side of a candidate. After the congressional elections, Dobson would determine how to have the maximum impact in the 2000 presidential campaign. Bauer himself is considering a presidential run and covets Dobson's endorsement.

But Dobson is also actively considering "going nuclear" against the GOP leadership. Instead of working through primaries in the summer, Dobson would urge social conservatives to abandon Republicans in November--to stay at home or vote for third parties--with the goal of ending the GOP majority in Congress. "It doesn't take that many votes to do it. You just look how many people are there by just a hair, [who won their last election by] 51 percent to 49 percent, and they have a 10- or 11-vote majority. I told [House Majority Whip] Tom DeLay, 'I really hope you guys don't make me try to prove it, because I will.' " One senior Republican official says he has identified six districts in which Dobson could "turn the tide" against the GOP candidate. Dobson muses about delivering this message by "getting a stadium with 50,000 seats and having Chuck Colson and Phyllis Schlafly and Alan Keyes and Gary Bauer and myself fill it at a strategic time. That gets the attention of Republican leaders."

Some Republican insiders believe the effect of either approach--working within the party or working against it--would be much the same. Bauer's political action committee's fervent support for a conservative candidate in a recent California congressional special election helped elevate the abortion issue. Party leaders believe this allowed Democrat Lois Capps to win in the moderate district. They fear that if Dobson intervenes on behalf of social conservatives in other contests, similar results will follow. As for the nuclear option, the mood of many Republicans is frustrated resignation that Dobson will always be on the attack against the GOP. "It wouldn't matter how many hoops of fire we jump through, it is never enough for him," complains one party official. That strategist and others say majority parties have a responsibility to govern, and that means muting ideological fervor at times. It is hard to imagine this official and Jim Dobson in the same party--and it may be increasingly hard for Dobson to imagine that as well.

With Major Garrett and Carolyn Kleiner

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HEADLINE: ~~The Politics of Surplus~~

BYLINE: ~~Ben Wildavsky~~

BODY:

Old-fashioned ideology hasn't disappeared now that the fiscal talk in Washington has switched from how to fight federal deficits to what to do with anticipated budget surpluses. But it's sometimes a little harder to discern.

In the era of big deficits, the parties' playbooks were familiar: Republicans attacked Democrats as tax-and-spenders more interested in preserving big government than in looking out for average taxpayers; Democrats blasted Republicans as heartless defenders of the rich intent on destroying social programs such as Medicare and Social Security. ~~The era of surpluses, however, has found Republicans split over exactly what their budget priorities should be: cutting taxes, paying off the national debt, boosting spending on defense and scientific research or shovelling dollars into local road and bridge projects.~~

Among Republicans, there is ~~a lot of schizophrenia~~, said Brookings Institution budget scholar Robert D. Reischauer. "On the one hand, they want to be fiscally responsible and adhere to the budget agreement of last year. On the other hand, they want to provide significant tax cuts to the American people."

Senate Republicans, Reischauer added, "demonstrated this schizophrenia by ~~producing a budget resolution that adhered to the former, but couldn't pass it without a big wink in the direction of larger tax cuts.~~" The nonbinding Senate budget resolution that passed on April 2 called for about \$ 30 billion in tax cuts over five years--but conservatives persuaded Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., to promise \$ 60 billion or so in tax cuts when the House and Senate later produce their joint budget resolution.

Some Republicans say their internal divisions have been exaggerated. After all, this year certainly won't be the first time House and Senate lawmakers will cobble together a joint budget resolution from disparate starting points. "Republicans in the past made mistakes--they made tax cut promises that were not realistic. Nobody believed them," said L. Ari Fleischer, Republican spokesman for the House Ways and Means Committee. "If we as Congress do our job and pass a moderate, realistic tax cut,

The National Journal, April 25, 1998

Bill Clinton will sign it because it will be popular."

For their part, Democrats have "put forward some soft and fuzzy initiatives in the form of increased education spending, more health research, an expansion of Medicare, and they want to go to the American people saying, 'Those are the things we should be identified with,' " Reischauer said. And while they may have disparate wish lists, both sides are maintaining that they wouldn't dream of touching budget surpluses until a Social Security fix has been made.

As this year's elections approach, however, both parties know that the budget and tax legislation that is or isn't passed may not matter as much as the respective messages they send to voters. "The achievement is less important than the symbolism," Reischauer said. "The fact of the matter is, the economy is strong, many of the problems that the nation has been in the grips of over the last decades have attenuated. The American people aren't crying out for government action, either on the spending side or the revenue side. No incumbent is going to be defeated at the polls because Medicare wasn't made available to 62-to-64-year-olds or because a new school construction program wasn't started or the marriage penalty wasn't reduced."

An official at the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) agreed: "I think there's going to be a lot of frustration and very little that's going to get done this year. . . . It suits both the Republicans and the Democrats to make their points clearly, rather than to reach consensus."

Outgoing OMB director Franklin D. Raines said in a recent interview that "there's some truth" to the notion that there's more election-year message sending than real policy making going on this year--then instantly made it clear he was referring solely to GOP lawmakers. In its budget resolution, the Senate's message was to try to nullify the President's priorities, Raines said. "They didn't necessarily have their own. 'Not his' was sort of their message." And the House, at least the House Republicans, don't know what their message is; they're struggling with their message. I think that helps the President."

Robert Greenstein, who heads the liberal Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, said he remains "puzzled" by where both parties are heading. He predicted a tobacco bill would pass in some form, because Democrats in the White House and on Capitol Hill want tobacco money for their domestic initiatives and Republicans want tobacco money to pay for tax cuts.

At the same time, Greenstein said, he doesn't see how Republicans will be able to pay for \$ 60 billion in tax cuts over five years, even assuming they get their hands on some tobacco dollars. "Unless they think they can get agreement on spending some of the surplus for tax cuts, then I wonder whether a tax bill that's in the \$ 60 billion-\$ 80 billion range isn't a bill that's put together in such a way that it can't be signed."

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Ultimately, he said, the question for Republicans will be: "Do they want a tax bill that can be signed, or do they want a tax bill that's been vetoed?"

If there was a budget surplus and you had to choose between the following things, how would you like the money to be used?

	2/98
Preserve Medicare, Social Security	59%
Pay down the national debt	18
Cut income taxes	13
Other	9
Don't know, no answer	1

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

April 23, 1998

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO SUPPORTERS OF 1993 BUDGET

State Dining Room

8:54 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you. Many of you have said to me tonight that this was like a reunion. I hope you have loved being here and enjoyed seeing each other, but you couldn't be nearly as happy to be here as Hillary and Al and I are to have you here.

And I just want to say -- there are a couple of other people I would like to mention. There are so many people in the administration who were critical to this, but I want to add my thanks to Mack McLarty and acknowledge Gene Sperling. I want to thank Larry Summers, our Deputy Treasury Secretary; and in absentia, I'd like to thank Laura Tyson, Bob Rubin, Leon Panetta, and our friend Lloyd Bentsen, who's been a little under the weather, and I hope we will never forget him.

I never will forget when he came down to Arkansas before I got sworn in, and in that sort of dour, Texas, patrician way of his, and said, "Now, if we don't reduce the deficit by at least \$500 billion, interest rates will not go down and the market will not go up."

And then they proceeded to tell me how hard it would be to do that, based on accepted scoring techniques. And then we proceeded to do what we all did.

And I want to thank you because it was so easy, there was no arm-twisting involved. Not a deal made; it was all a high-flown sort of thing. I'm so indebted to all of you. I would like to thank especially Bob Kerrey for never releasing the contents of our last telephone conversation. And I don't know if he's here tonight, but I invited him -- I'd like to say a special word of thanks, too, to Roger Altman, who ran our war room, which helped us to keep that non-pressure up.

But it was a wonderful experience. I, too, would like to personally thank George Mitchell, who has done a magnificent job in the Irish peace process; and Tom Foley for his work

-- And I want to thank Speaker Foley, too, who is doing a great job in Japan. And I want to join what has already been said about Senator Moynihan and Chairman Rostenkowski. In different ways they were both absolutely indispensable.

You should take a lot of pride at this golden moment in America's history, with the economy up and our social problems down and the deficit going to zero. All of you know that it's one of those rare moments, as the Vice President said, where you can literally say that this has happened because of the energy and spirit of the American people, but also because we passed an economic plan that liberated that energy and spirit.

In every home where wages are rising and people now have jobs, in every town which was down and is now up, there are millions of people who are in your debt. And I did mostly just want you all to be in this room so I could say on their behalf, thank you and God bless you for what you did.

I want you to think a little bit about what this plan represented. One of the reasons I ran for President was it seemed to me that everyone knew that something bad was wrong, but no one was prepared to do what it took to change it; and that we had to replace drift and deadlock with a real sense of momentum and purpose.

In the process of passing this plan, you set a new direction for our country, forged a new identity for our party, and helped to revitalize and redefine the whole idea of progressive government for a new century, and a new economy.

You know, we knew we had to bring the deficits down, and they were enormous. But we also knew that we could do it and we had to do it, and still invest in our future -- in education, in health care, in tax cuts for small businesses, and for 15 million of the hardest-pressed working people. Because you doubled that earned income tax credit in that economic plan, which was a painful thing -- it required us to do a lot of other things that were exceedingly difficult -- you need to know, tonight when you go to bed I want you to think about this, there are 2.2 million children who are not in poverty because you did that. And you should be very proud of that.

When you replaced trickle-down economics with invest-and-grow economics, and let this economy spring to life, you took a situation where we had a deficit with \$290 billion and brought it down before the bipartisan balanced budget plan, which I also supported and believed in -- but before that plan saved one red cent, the deficit had already been brought down by more than 90 percent -- 93 percent, to be exact.

The deficit used to have 11 zeros; now it will have no zeros. In fact, we're going to be in surplus.

In '92, the unemployment rate was 7.5 percent; now it's the lowest in 25 years. In '92, new jobs were scarce; now there are 15 million more. Business investment has increased, more than any -- at a rate higher than any time since the Kennedy administration.

From '81 to '92, real wages fell. Last year, the average paycheck of the American worker rose 2.9 percent, the fastest growth in more than 20 years.

Soon we will mark the longest peacetime expansion in our history. Merrill Lynch says there has never been a better economy. Goldman Sachs says it's the best economy America has ever had. And just as important, maybe, over the long run, when you took this vote and weathered the consequences, you began to restore the faith of the American people in their government.

Americans are always given to a healthy distrust of government, and that's good. A lot of our Constitution is structured to prevent the abuse of power, and well it should be. But for too long this skepticism risked running into a sort of corrosive cynicism. A lot of people had become convinced by the time I ran for President that the government couldn't organize a two-car parade -- and that everything we did that looked bold led to unintended consequences, most of which were bad.

Well, the '93 economic plan worked, and it worked for the reasons we said it would work. So in a way, with that law, you actually enacted a law of intended consequences in American public life and, therefore, you helped to lift the public's appreciation for what we could do through representative government.

The vote you cast was probably among the most difficult ever cast by members of the Congress of the United States in the history of our republic. You had withering partisan criticism. I can only ask you to remember the people you helped, the families you strengthened, the opportunity you created.

Let me just give you three examples. Karen Shepard represented a district in the only state where I ran third in 1992. But because she took the vote she did, those people, notwithstanding the fact that sometimes they stray in their political judgment -- have an unemployment rate of 3.1 percent.

Karen English, because of the courage you showed in 1993, Arizona has the fastest job growth in its history.

And Marjorie Mezvinsky, because you laid down your seat, your county has the fastest job growth of any county in the entire state of Pennsylvania. Unemployment has dropped by 25 percent. And it gave me a great deal of pleasure to have you sit with the First Lady at the State of the Union address this year when I announced that. Because of the vote all of you cast, we would, in fact, balance the budget years ahead of schedule.

In Profiles in Courage, President Kennedy wrote these words: Democracy means much more than popular government and majority rule; much more than a system of political techniques to flatter or deceive powerful blocs of voters. A democracy that has no moment of

individual conscience in a sea of popular rule is not worthy to bear that name.

Karen, Karen and Marjorie, to all the rest of you, every one of you has a story. And I only wish I could tell them all tonight. The 103rd Congress was chock-full of profiles in courage. And when you add them all up, by the narrowest of margins, repeatedly, they led to the first balanced budget in 30 years, an American economic renaissance, and a resurgent conviction on the part of our people that together we can solve our problems and seize our opportunities, and do great things; that our old-fashioned government that Mr. Washington and his friends helped to start still works in this new-fangled age if it has the right people willing to do the right things at the right time.

It is altogether a monument to your determination, your conscience, and overall, your love of your country. So on behalf of your country, again I say, thank you and God bless you.

END

9:05 P.M. EDT

out regard to your party or philosophy, when the August recess is over, let us join again in the common work of American renewal. There is so much to be done that can only be done if we're all willing to carry our share of the load. Clearly, that is what the American people want us to do.

In the very first week when the Congress comes back, the Senate will have a chance to demonstrate that bipartisan spirit by passing the national service plan that the House has already passed and opening up the opportunity for hundreds of thousands of young Americans to pay their college way by serving their communities and rebuilding a sense of community in this country. And then we will move on to the other great issues of the day. And move on we must. We cannot stand still.

I remember every time I do something like this who we're really working for: I remember the people that Senator Moynihan and I saw lined along the long way from the airport to Hyde Park in New York; the people who stood out in 3-degree weather in Chillicothe, Ohio, to visit with me about their hopes for America; the young people I saw at Rutgers in New Jer-

sey, in New Orleans, and in Boston, so deeply committed to the idea of national service because they want to be in a position to give something back to their country and to believe that their country can work for them again; high school students in Chicago who for the first time are dreaming of an affordable college education; and inner-city youths I saw at the playground in Los Angeles who believe that there's no reason they can't live in a neighborhood that is free of crime and full of opportunity. These are the people that we all came here to work for. These are the people that we celebrate for today.

This is a beginning. Let us resolve when this recess is over to come back with a new determination to finish the work. And let us again hold our hands out to those who were not part of this process and say, "America needs us all. Let us go forward together."

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:33 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. H.R. 2264, approved August 10, was assigned Public Law No. 103-66.

Remarks on the Swearing-In of Supreme Court Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg

August 10, 1993

The President. Please be seated. Welcome to the White House. It is my distinct honor to introduce the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

[At this point, Chief Justice William Rehnquist administered the oath of office, and Justice Ginsburg then made brief remarks.]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, before we adjourn to the reception in honor of Justice Ginsburg, I'd like to acknowledge the presence here today of Senator Moynihan, who sponsored her so strongly in the Senate, Senator Larry Pressler of South Dakota, Senator Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, and the chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, my good friend Jack Brooks from Texas. It's good to see all of you here.

This was a very important appointment to me.

In one of my former lives I had the great joy and responsibility of teaching the United States Constitution and the decisions of the Supreme Court under it to aspiring, but not always interested law students. *[Laughter]* I have learned over the course of a lifetime of practical experience what I knew then: We breathe life into the values we espouse through our law. It gives to every American, including the most illiterate among us, the most totally unaware of how the legal system works, a fair measure of our ideals and some reality that comes into life from the speeches given by the rest of us. There is no one with a deeper appreciation of this fact than Ruth Bader Ginsburg. This is a moment, this historic moment, therefore, that all Americans can celebrate. For no one knows better than she that it is the law that provides the rules that permit us to live together and that permit

created, in the small business sector. That's what this plan does. Instead of talking about doing something for small business, this plan actually did it. And all of you need to be proud of that.

The plan offers incentives to Americans to invest to revive the homebuilding market; to invest in research and development, something that especially helps high-tech companies; to invest in new plant and equipment. Even the biggest companies in America now will be able to have tax incentives if they are willing to invest in growing more jobs here at home. These are the right ways to cut taxes, my fellow Americans, cutting taxes for people because they spent their money in growing this economy and putting their fellow Americans to work. And that's what this plan does.

This plan was criticized in some quarters because it did spend some new money on some new things. I would argue to you that anybody who thinks that all Government spending is the same might just as well say all kinds of bread taste the same. We did not come here to leave our judgment and our knowledge about the global economy at the city borders of Washington, DC.

So yes, I plead guilty: We reformed the student loan program to lower the interest rates on student loans and make it easier for people to take out college loans and to repay them. We did, finally, after 6 long years of reducing defense spending at rapid rates, at throwing people in the street from California to Connecticut, we finally did put some more money in here for defense conversion to give those people a chance to go back to work in a peacetime economy, to contribute to the American dream. We did spend some more money on Head Start and on poor pregnant mothers to try to get their children into the world in good shape, to try to lower the tax burden on other people and increase their productivity. We did spend some money to try to give 6 million more children inoculations, because no one can explain to me why the United States of America has the third worst immunization record in the Western Hemisphere and we're paying a fortune for it.

This plan has already begun to work. Ever since it was clear that we were working to bring down the deficit and every time we made progress along the way, long-term interest rates dropped, enabling millions of Americans to refi-

nance their home either to lower their monthly payments or to build up their own savings, enabling businesses to refinance their loans and, over the long run, lowering the cost of new investment in new jobs.

Because of the leadership of the Speaker of the House, Senator Mitchell, Congressman Gephardt, the hard work of the committee chairs, Senator Moynihan, Congressman Rostenkowski, Senator Sasser, Congressman Sabo, the committee chairs in all the other committees in the Congress, and as I said earlier, the simple courage of millions of Americans in supporting this plan and the quiet courage of so many Members of Congress who literally put their careers on the line, this country has begun to take responsibility for itself.

I say to those Members who took a big chance in voting for this, with all the rhetoric that was thrown against them, if you go home and look your people in the eye and tell them you were willing to put your job on the line so that they can keep their jobs, I think they will understand and reward you with reelection.

This plan is only the beginning. As I said on February 17th and would like to say again today as we close, this administration views job creation and deficit reduction, expanding international trade and providing health care at affordable rates to all Americans, training and educating our work force, making our families healthier and our streets safer, reforming our welfare system and reinventing our Government not as different challenges requiring disparate solutions in different coalitions but part of the fabric of reviving the dream that we were all raised with.

We cannot simply say, "This is a complicated time, and we're unequal to the challenge. So we'll do this, and 4 or 5 years from now we'll worry about that." We have to think about what it takes to build the fabric of community, to rebuild the fabric of our families, to give our children a good shot, and to have sensible economic policies at home and with our allies around the world. Toward this end let me say again, in the long run we cannot succeed in an endless season of partisan bitterness and rancor and bickering. If some of us have to make hard choices while others stand aside and hope that the house collapses, nothing will in the end get done.

And so I ask today of the American people and the American people's representatives, with-

fidence in our own ability to take charge of our own affairs. This was clearly not an easy fight. When I presented this program to Congress, I had hoped for something quite different: I had hoped that it would spark a genuine, open, honest, bipartisan national debate about the serious choices before us, about the world economy we face as we move toward the 21st century, about the problems we have here at home and all the people whose lives and potential we lose and what economic consequence that has for all the rest of Americans. I had hoped that we could discuss whether and to what extent the revival of the competitive skills of our work force could raise incomes and generate jobs; how we could both reduce the deficit and increase investment in our future; whether we could escape the trap that has afflicted so many wealthy countries, that even when their economies are growing now they don't seem to be creating jobs; how we could escape the policies of the seventies and the eighties which led middle class Americans to work longer work weeks for lower pay while they paid more for the essentials of life; whether we could bring the power of free enterprise to bear in the poor inner cities and rural areas of this country and lift people up with the force of the American dream; whether the short-term consequences of bringing the deficit down would be more than outweighed by the short-term benefits of lower interest rates and the long-term benefits of being in control of our economic destiny.

These are the kinds of things that I wanted to see debated. And to be sure, to some extent, we did debate them. But for 5 months the American people heard too little about the real debate and too much from those who oversimplified and often downright misrepresented the questions of tax increases and spending cuts because they had narrow economic or political or personal reasons to do so.

So today, as we sign this landmark legislation, I say again, now we can talk about the national interests, how this plan will begin to bring the change we need in America, how we can have economic revival and hope if this is a beginning and we move forward from here. After all, after 12 years of the most rapid increase in deficits in our country's history, when the national debt went from \$1 to \$4 trillion in only 12 years, this is the largest deficit reduction plan in history, with \$255 billion in real enforceable spending cuts in very specific areas, not generalized

hot air and tomorrow's promises but specific cuts. After 12 years of trickle-down economics where taxes were lowered on the wealthiest Americans, raised on the middle class, hoping that investments would be made which would reverse the trends of the last 20 years, we now have real fairness in the Tax Code with over 80 percent of the new tax burden being borne by those who make over \$200,000 a year, with the middle class asked to pay only \$3 a month, and with a tax cut to working families with children who make under \$27,000 a year. By expanding this earned-income tax credit to working families and especially to the working poor, this Congress has made history by enabling us to say for the first time now, if you work hard and you have children in your home and you spend 40 hours a week at work, you can be a successful worker and a successful parent, and you will be lifted out of poverty.

Every elected public official in America sometime in the last 10 years has given someplace between one and a thousand speeches decrying the welfare system, extolling the values of work and family. But finally, the people who voted yes on this plan put a down payment toward ending welfare as we know it by finally doing something to reward work and family instead of just talking about it.

Everybody in this debate talked about small business, and the people who opposed this plan said it was bad for small business. But in truth, the opposition plan actually increased the burden on small business people who took out their own health insurance by taking away their deduction for it, while this plan increases by 75 percent the expensing allowance for small businesses in ways that will give over 90 percent of the small businesses in America a tax cut if they do what they ought to do, invest more money in their business. Others talked about it; we did it. And we should be proud of it, and we should tell the small business community about it.

Others talked about the importance of small business as a job generator. This plan passed a pro-jobs capital gains tax that reduces tax rates by 50 percent for people who invest their money in new and small businesses and hold those investments for 5 years or more, the most dramatic incentive we have ever had to encourage people to take money out of their savings and take a chance on the free enterprise sector in America in the places where the jobs are being

Our relations with Canada are far more than economic, however. The fact that we share the world's longest undefended border is one of our greatest security assets. And Canada's cooperation on a host of international security efforts is absolutely invaluable. Canada has been our partner in efforts toward the former Soviet Union, Haiti, Somalia, and many other areas. With Canada we founded the United Nations and NATO. We work closely together today in the Group of Seven, in GATT, in international peacekeeping operations, just to name a few of the arenas that are important to us because of what we are able to do together.

Today the United States and Canada share a challenging list of opportunities for mutual progress. We can work together to promote greater economic growth in our own hemisphere and throughout the world. We can work together to protect the air, the water, the environmental quality that is significantly shared by our two peoples. We can work together to improve the security of both our nations in this new era of world affairs.

In all this I have greater confidence in the ability of Canada and the United States to make

that kind of progress represented in Ottawa. I appreciate the fact that Jim [Name] to accept this assignment. great success.

And now, Mr. Vice President, to ask you to do something I cannot administer the oath of office.

[At this point, the Vice President administered the oath of office.]

NAFTA

Q. Mr. President, have you given up on NAFTA?

The President. That's ridiculous. No.

Q. Some people say that the administration isn't fighting hard enough for it.

The President. We don't have an agreement yet. We have to wait until we finish. The Trade Ambassador has not finished with the negotiations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:48 a.m. at the North Portico of the West Wing at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993

August 10, 1993

Thank you very much. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, the Vice President has given me a very generous introduction and has fairly characterized the struggle in which we have been engaged. I might say also, for all of you sports fans, he's given a whole new meaning to the term "tie-breaker." [Laughter]

But I think it would really be unfortunate if this event were to come and go without recognizing the fact that the people in Congress who voted for this plan had to labor under historically difficult circumstances. They had to reverse a plan of trickle-down economics in which it was the accepted path always to say the right thing but never to do it, and in which, if you tried to do the right thing, people would say the wrong things about you and cloud the debate with a fog of misinformation.

In this incredible series of events that have unfolded, there were many Members of Con-

gress who never appeared on the evening news, whose names never appeared in the newspapers simply because of their quiet courage and determination to do what they thought was right and to see this process through to the end. And I think I would be remiss, therefore, if on this occasion I did not ask at least all the sitting Members of the United States Congress who are here to stand and to receive a round of applause. Would you all please stand? I also want to explicitly thank all the many members of the Cabinet and the administration who are here who worked so hard on this program, as well as the many citizens throughout the country who helped us to lobby it through.

Today we come here for more than a bill signing. We come here to begin a new direction for our Nation. We are taking steps necessary and long overdue to revive our economy, to renew our American dream, to restore con-

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HEADLINE: Beginning of the End

BYLINE: Richard E. Cohen

BODY:

The tumultuous Gingrich era is moving by fits and starts to its denouement. That's the increasingly prevalent view among rank-and-file Republicans.

House Speaker Newt Gingrich has strengthened himself for "the short term" with Republican colleagues by displaying backbone in response to harsh criticism and a bungled coup attempt, said one Republican Member. But this lawmaker--who is a legislative activist though he hasn't participated in the recent infighting--and many others believe that Gingrich will not seek another term as Speaker because he'll recognize that his troops have grown weary of his shortcomings and want him out. These Members also expect that Gingrich, having no desire to stick around after he's lost his power, will announce by early next year that he won't run for reelection to the House.

Indeed, the politicians and journalists who are trying to decipher the motives and actions of four party leaders who huddled with anti-Gingrich renegades on July 10 may be overlooking the bigger story. What's being settled during this acrimonious summer is not the fate of the Speaker's top lieutenants, but that of Gingrich himself.

While House Republicans were publicly repentant and appeared to unite behind Gingrich during lengthy meetings on July 23, another Republican Member cautioned that day that the Speaker's fate remains very much an open question. During a separate session of sophomore Republicans the previous night, a participant said, "I sensed vastly more insecurity than I expected" about Gingrich's prospects, unless he addresses his problems. "He's not listening and leading," said the lawmaker, who also echoed the widely held view that Gingrich is serving his final term.

Why is Gingrich's tenure as Speaker in jeopardy? The answer has been taking shape for months. In the first place, Gingrich is politically damaged goods. In January, he barely survived when nine Republicans defected in the House vote for Speaker, and two weeks later, he was slapped with the stiffest formal sanctions ever administered to a Speaker after the House found he violated ethics rules. Moreover, Gingrich and the other

The National Journal, July 26, 1997

House GOP leaders have been plagued by an inability to legislate effectively--to set an agenda and get it passed. They've been forced to contend this year with the slimmest House majority in 40 years, which has invited numerous factions to exploit Gingrich's weakness in order to display their own presumed strength in the party. The GOP leaders have also cut back their efforts to build coalitions with moderate Democrats, following last year's bitter election campaign.

During the first several months of this year, the Republicans squabbled endlessly over their modest aims, blaming Gingrich and their other leaders for failing to develop a legislative agenda for the new Congress. Only when President Clinton in early May unveiled the framework of a balanced budget deal with GOP leaders--Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., played a far bigger role in the negotiations than Gingrich--did the House Republicans gain a legislative focus.

Gingrich's top lieutenants, who work closely with him in developing a legislative program and communicating its merits to Members and then to the public, felt the wrath of the rank-and-file most directly. This inner circle consisted of Majority Leader Richard K. Armey, Majority Whip Tom D. DeLay, both of Texas, GOP Conference chairman John A. Boehner of Ohio, and Rep. Bill Paxon of New York, who on July 17 announced his resignation as the appointed chairman of Gingrich's leadership council. In recent months, they tried--both individually and as a group--to bring problems to the boss's attention. But sources close to each said they never felt they received an adequate response.

"We are not performing well as a team," a well-placed House Republican said soon after the coup attempt. "But Newt's response was condescending, and he felt that the others were just bitching." Paxon, for example, was miffed this spring when Gingrich unexpectedly reclaimed authority that he had given to the New Yorker to develop a long-term plan for the party. Others were unhappy that Gingrich did not fully discuss with them his changing tactics for managing the showdown with Clinton on the flood aid legislation. An article that appeared in the conservative The Weekly Standard in late June turned out to be prophetic: It reported that the Speaker's four chief deputies were "all fed up with" him and "desperate for Gingrich to step down, the sooner the better."

The aborted coup on July 10 exacerbated the tensions among his closest advisers and most-likely successors. As the old team of leaders pointed fingers at one another, Gingrich turned to an informal leadership network, including Jennifer B. Dunn of Washington, the newly elected vice chairwoman of the Republican Conference; J. Dennis Hastert of Illinois, the chief deputy whip; and John Linder of Georgia, the National Republican Congressional Committee chairman. It's only a matter of time, insiders agreed, before the Republicans reshuffle their leadership.

The National Journal, July 26, 1997.

But Gingrich's woes have not been due solely to his dealings with other party leaders. He's also been crippled by the very system that he put in place after he led his party to win the House majority in 1994. Compared with the chamber under Democratic control, the Gingrich-led House is less hierarchical, less mindful of presidential prerogatives and not so disciplined in keeping to a legislative schedule.

Perhaps most significant, Gingrich has been plagued by the large corps of junior Members who take pride in themselves as outsiders and have made clear their disdain for business as usual. Rep. Mark W. Neumann, R-Wis., summarized their mind-set when he recently told fellow Appropriations Committee members that they should place a higher priority on principle than on passing bills to operate the government. With their influence enhanced by the narrow GOP majority, the renegades' continuing unhappiness with Gingrich's occasional deal cutting has been a spark in a dry tinderbox. (See related story, this page.)

Gingrich has acknowledged the problems that his party faces. "Managing the process of change is much more difficult than maintaining the status quo," he told a Georgia business group on July 21. "It is not altogether surprising that we have made mistakes, experienced conflict or doubts, and undergone moments of uncertainty. It is not even surprising that we have, at times, forgotten that we are a team and lost sight of the fact that we all have the same goal." Those divisions have been heightened by the current debate over how to craft and reach agreement with Clinton on a tax cut, a longtime GOP goal that may prove to be the House Republicans' undoing.

But Gingrich, who had few legislative interests during his 16 years in the House before he became Speaker, must look inward to address part of his problem. Even some senior Republicans complain that he does not send clear signals about his plans. "There is a perception, which I share, that the leaders have not always shot straight with us," said Rep. Joe L. Barton, R-Texas. "They have had to resort to sleight of hand to bring some bills to the floor."

Democrats, not surprisingly, have mostly been content to sit back and watch the internecine warfare. "Their majority is in real trouble," said Vic Fazio of California, who chairs the House Democratic Caucus. "They don't have the organization or the discipline in their ranks to put a new idea through the House." With Clinton's leverage giving Democrats a huge opening to score partisan points in the current tax debate, Fazio said that Democrats can prevail politically no matter what the outcome. "We'll talk about the extreme nature of their views and the squandering of opportunities," he said. (For a related story on the White House's take on the House GOP chaos, see this issue, p. 1519.)

Still, veteran Democrats are mindful that the current chaos has precedents--and that it won't last forever. Indeed, in

The National Journal, July 26, 1997

1984 a group of mostly junior, moderate Democrats--featuring the then-renegade Richard A. Gephardt, D-Mo.--schemed to shake up the majority party's liberal ideology, plus its command-and-control system, led by Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill Jr., D-Mass., who retired two years later. "The idea of back-benchers trying to kill the king is not a new one," said Jim Jaffe, a veteran Democratic insider who was Gephardt's top aide at the time. "But the response by Tip (O'Neill) was better in that he didn't embarrass them or himself."

As the historical figure who withstood the Reagan onslaught after 1980, O'Neill may have benefited from his popularity with his colleagues, which derived from his accessibility and his desire to accommodate their concerns. Although it was never in the cards for the more-ideological Gingrich to adapt O'Neill's leadership style, the contrast between them helps explain why the Democrats retained House control for 40 years.

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July 20, 1997, Sunday, Final Edition

SECTION: A SECTION; Pg. A01

LENGTH: 1377 words

HEADLINE: House Leadership Battle Mirrors Deeper Conflict; Lack of Unifying Themes, Chiefs Frustrates GOP

BYLINE: Dan Balz; Ceci Connolly, Washington Post Staff Writers

DATELINE: CLEVELAND, July 19

BODY:

The infighting over the leadership of House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) that rocked House Republicans this week reflects far deeper problems than a debate over who will lead the House.

Republican activists and key strategists interviewed over the past few days say the absence of leadership nationally and lack of consensus on a new party agenda invite intensified intraparty conflict that will leave Republicans weakened in upcoming battles with President Clinton and the Democrats.

"We don't have unifying themes and we don't have unifying leadership," said Steve Merksamer, a California attorney who was chief of staff to former California governor George Deukmejian. "We have control of both houses [of Congress] and the country sympathetic to our agenda . . . and what are we doing with it? We're squandering it."

The uproar over Gingrich's weakened leadership, which led to the hasty resignation of Rep. Bill Paxon (R-N.Y.) as a key member of the speaker's team in the House, helped crystallize a growing sense of frustration within the party. As one top party strategist put it late this week, "The tragedy is that we're on the verge of passing a balanced budget and cutting taxes and we're in a circle shooting each other."

In one sense, the frustration grows out of the party's collective failure to compete against a popular president who they believe has stolen their best issues and thrown them back in their faces. Sharp differences among Republicans over whether they should pursue cooperation or confrontation with the president have helped undermine confidence in Republican leaders on Capitol Hill.

But the party's problems also reflect a loss of confidence in their own agenda. Support for the potency of supply-side economics has frayed in the face of the strong economy, and with Clinton and the GOP nearing agreement on a balanced budget with tax cuts, there is no consensus about how to shape a new agenda with those issues largely off the table.

These problems are responsible not only for the complaints about Gingrich's leadership that brought about last week's abortive coup attempt but also for an escalation in long-standing tensions between economic and social conservatives

The Washington Post, July 20, 1997

and between northern and southern Republicans.

Many conservatives complain that the party is losing its identity as a result of Clinton's shift to the center and what they say is their leadership's collective lack of courage in developing a clear conservative alternative to the president's policies. Moderates complain that conservatives care more about ideological purity than governing. With no one exerting strong leadership, the fragmentation of the party has increased.

"We are like the Democrats of the '60s and '70s," said one midwestern Republican. "We've become captive of a wing of our party, just as the Democrats were captive of their left in the '60s and '70s. . . . Remember when Republicans used to laugh at Democrats beating themselves up. Now we're doing the same thing."

Gingrich's problems drew the headlines, but there were other signs of unrest this week. In Boston, Massachusetts Gov. William F. Weld lashed out at Senate Foreign Relations Committee Chairman Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), accusing Helms of "ideological extortion" in holding up his proposed nomination to be Clinton's ambassador to Mexico. In Washington, conservative Republicans were engaged in a skirmish with 1996 GOP vice presidential nominee Jack Kemp, once the darling of the conservative movement, over the sales of high technology computers to China, which Kemp supports.

Weld and Helms disagree on social issues, such as abortion and gay rights, and Helms has accused Weld of being soft on the war against drugs. Weld's attack on Helms threatens to strain relations between the party's moderate and conservative wings. The Kemp dust-up with conservatives represented the next phase of the ongoing debate within the party over China policy but also underscored the lack of consensus on foreign policy in the post-Cold War world.

Republicans haven't fully recovered from the public relations debacle of the fight over disaster relief, in which the president vetoed a disaster-aid bill and charged that the Republicans had loaded it up with extraneous issues. Eventually the Republicans caved to Clinton's pressure. Now they fear Clinton is on the brink of stealing the tax issue from them as they settle the final terms of balancing the budget. Cutting taxes once was the GOP's most powerful political weapon; today, by a slight margin, Americans say they trust the Democrats over the Republicans to hold down taxes, according to a Washington Post-ABC News poll.

These frustrations prompted members of the Republican National Committee on Friday to urge RNC chairman Jim Nicholson to convene a party summit to bring the bickering to an end and produce a new agenda that the party can push once the budget and tax fights are settled. But many Republicans fear the unrest will continue well into the presidential campaign in 2000.

Party leaders and activists offered a variety of explanations for the problems, including the difficulty of trying to be a governing party from Capitol Hill.

"We are clearly suffering from the transition of having been a presidential party to one that is more diverse, with power that is more diffuse," said Tom Rath, the national committeeman from New Hampshire. He added that members of the national committee, who finished their summer meeting here today, feel "we've

The Washington Post, July 20, 1997

not had strong leadership out of the Congress."

Another Republican was more blunt: "If we had a strong leader in either House to rally around, we wouldn't have this problem," he said.

That may oversimplify the problem, but party leaders and activists agree that, for the first time in a generation, the Republicans emerged from a presidential campaign without prominent national leaders popular with the American people.

With Gingrich crippled first by an ethics investigation and later by sniping from a boisterous corps of dissidents, many Republicans assumed that Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) would emerge as the party's strong voice on Capitol Hill. Instead, Lott has disappointed many of his fellow Republicans, who say privately he has not been able to project a national message for the party.

Public polls show that Lott has created virtually no profile for himself with the public and his decision to join Clinton in supporting a chemical weapons treaty was one of several issues that caused strains in his relationship with conservatives.

The party also is suffering from an erosion in the once-strong relationship between congressional leaders and the 32 GOP governors around the country. "They were partners in everything that was done," one party strategist said of the relationship during the 104th Congress. Today, he said, governors have "thrown their arms up in the air. They see a lack of leadership in Washington, so why engage in that. But also they haven't been invited to the table as regularly and as substantively as in the past."

Despite the resolution for a party summit approved here, the RNC has offered little help in harmonizing the warring factions of the party. Nicholson, elected in January as the compromise candidate, has lacked the experience in national politics or the standing on Capitol Hill to smooth relations or butt heads, according to many Republicans who were interviewed over the past few days.

The internal divisions are particularly galling to Republican activists because they come when the party appears to be on the brink of achieving long-standing goals of balancing the budget and cutting taxes. Instead of leaders effectively engaging Clinton and the Democrats, many Republicans around the country see weak leaders cowed by Clinton's skills and uncertain of whether to confront him or sue for peace.

Tom Pauken, the Texas GOP chairman, complained that the party's defensive posture allows the White House "to shape the debate."

"We're acting like we're making peace because we're afraid to make war," Merksamer said, "and on other hand getting the you-know-what kicked out of us and don't have the strength to stand up and fight back."

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July 20, 1997, Sunday, Final Edition

SECTION: OP-ED; Pg. C09

LENGTH: 829 words

HEADLINE: The Plot Against Gingrich

BYLINE: E. J. Dionne Jr.

BODY:

Newt Gingrich's Republicans took over the House of Representatives in 1994 not because Americans shifted their views sharply to the right but because Democrats had controlled the place 40 years and looked ineffectual, divided, in some instances corrupt, and incapable of coherent action.

Now along come the Republicans with their Thursday Morning Massacre, a political spectacle that even Democrats, notorious for stab-in-the-back divisiveness, never managed in all their years in power. The Republicans are into stab-in-the-front politics, complete with a secret but well-leaked botched coup attempt against Gingrich that inveigled the rest of the party leadership.

The sound bites from the leaders who were, in one way or another, complicit in the effort to bring down Gingrich needed translation from political English into plain English. When they said, "We fully support Gingrich and had nothing to do with this," what they meant was, "We tried to bring him down, didn't have the votes, and so we're ducking for cover." Said one pro-Gingrich House Republican of the secretly anti-Gingrich leaders: "They were all in it for anywhere from 15 hours to 50 hours."

Only Rep. Bill Paxon (R-N.Y.) took responsibility. He had to. Once one of Gingrich's closest allies -- he had been appointed chairman of the House leadership by Gingrich himself -- Paxon emerged as the choice of the dissident Republicans as the speaker who would replace Gingrich. If you want to know how Gingrich feels, think of one of your best friends, whom you helped promote, trying to take away your job.

By most accounts except for his own, House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Tex.) lost interest in the anti-Gingrich plot only when it became clear that Paxon, not Armey, was the choice of the rebels to become speaker. "Armey was interested if he could be the speaker," said a Republican House member. "Then he bailed out." House Whip Tom DeLay, also of Texas, is described by the rebels as having given them much encouragement. He denies this.

The pro-Gingrich Republican said that if Armey and DeLay had been attending these meetings as Gingrich's "eye and ears" and not as potential plotters, they would have told him in advance. They did no such thing. They were keeping their options open. Now both Gingrich and the rebels feel betrayed by them.

House Republican rank-and-filers who were neither leaders nor plotters were aghast at the mess going on around them. "I guess Republicans can't stand success," said another House member, a moderate who supports Gingrich for now.

The Washington Post, July 20, 1997

A popular view among Republicans is that Paxon is now in a strong position to build an anti-Gingrich majority and emerge as speaker eventually. He is seen as less discredited than Armey and DeLay, old friends who are now feuding (they deny this now, too). But the Republican rank-and-filers, disgusted with the plot of the unmerry pranksters, may start looking among themselves for entirely new leadership.

This intrigue might have as much interest to Americans in Peoria, Portland or Phoenix as a coup in Paraguay except for one thing. The troubles in the unhappy House Republican family bespeak divisions and uncertainties over just what they should do with the power they won less than three years ago. That will affect how the country is governed.

There is a rational reason to depose Gingrich, and an ideological reason. The rational reason is that Gingrich, according to the polls, is both an unpopular Republican leader and the best-known Republican leader -- not a good combination.

But many of the plotters are anti-Gingrich for a different reason. They see him as dangerously "moderate," too ready to accommodate President Clinton. They want the Gingrich of the old days, "the revolutionary." These Republicans don't like minimum-wage increases or children's health care spending, and think Gingrich did not wring enough tax cuts out of the president.

The truth is this: Compared with many in his caucus, Gingrich is a moderate. He learned some lessons from the Republicans' near-defeat in 1996. He respects Clinton's political skills. His 1995 strategy failed. As a result, his base in the House has shifted from young right-wingers to older moderates and pragmatic conservatives. "Imagine that," one House moderate said as he leaned against a rail chatting with like-minded colleagues off the House floor. "We're going to be the ones who save Gingrich."

The pragmatic conservatives -- who increasingly call themselves "rank-and-filers" -- are now the key to Gingrich's future, and to where the party goes. The problem faced by moderates and pragmatists is not only that Gingrich is a badly weakened leader. It's also that a large House contingent believes that the pure doctrine of 1995, which almost got the Republicans defeated, is the wave of the future.

Gingrich, who rode the tiger of "revolution," must now tame it before it consumes his speakership and his party.

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July 19, 1997, Saturday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section 1; Page 8; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 1168 words

HEADLINE: Congressional Memo;
Republicans Stumble Over Speaker's Chair

BYLINE: By ADAM CLYMER

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, July 18

BODY:

With their plots and high-level dismissals, the Republicans have engaged in another collective stumble, and this time many of them knew it right away.

The stakes seem petty and personal when compared to the issues of policy over which the Republicans shut down the Government in the winter of 1995 and 1996. At the time, they were fighting a tone-deaf fight over major matters, like the shape of Medicare. And this summer when they stumbled into a posture of blocking disaster aid to flood victims, their purpose was to take a stand on government shutdowns and census-taking methods.

But this time, the issue is the Speaker of the House, which is of far more interest to a few dozen Republican Representatives than to the rest of the population.

"We seem to be spending more time reading stories about the palace intrigue than we are focusing on the national agenda," Gov. John Engler of Michigan said today at a Republican National Committee meeting in Cleveland.

Representative Marge Roukema of New Jersey complained of "civil war" and added: "I hope this does not impact on the real progress of the budget and the tax legislation. I feel like I am giving them all a lecture, 'Do your job and stop quarreling in the sandbox.' "

In the short run, Speaker Newt Gingrich put down a rebellion, never more than vaguely explained but apparently focused on a belief that he was too unpopular nationally to help the Republicans in the future and in the present is a disorganized and not always successful leader for their causes in the House. No motion was offered to vacate the Speaker's office, a motion that would surely pass with Democratic help. And the reason was the same as the reason Mr. Gingrich was re-elected as Speaker in January: There was no obvious successor.

That is why the Speaker's top associates in the leadership backed away from the hard-line conservatives who have been pondering a move to oust him and who insist that they were encouraged by each of the other four leaders: Dick Armey, the majority leader, and Tom DeLay, the majority whip, both Texans; John A. Boehner of Ohio, the caucus chairman; and Bill Paxon of New York, the chairman of the leadership group.

The New York Times, July 19, 1997

Mr. Armey apparently backed off first after being told that the dissidents thought he did not have enough appeal to the moderates to be elected. Then the others also walked away from the coup.

Only Mr. Paxon suffered any immediate punishment. He resigned from a job that Mr. Gingrich had invented for him, and he insisted he did so because he had been damaged and had lost the Speaker's trust. But one adviser to the Speaker had a different story: "Newt told him he had 12 hours to clean out his office."

In the view of Mr. Gingrich's allies, Mr. Paxon will be damaged by appearing treacherously ungrateful. Richard Galen, a former press secretary who is still close to the Speaker, took this line. He said today Mr. Paxon "is singularly guilty."

"As the only appointed member of the leadership," Mr. Galen said, "he had a duty to say not only 'No,' but 'Hell no' to the dissidents, but a duty to immediately inform Newt of what they were planning. Instead, at a minimum, he allowed the conversation to continue and, at a maximum, gave it aid and comfort."

But another view is that Mr. Paxon, who already had a non-ideological breadth of support among House Republicans that rivaled the Speaker's, has only been strengthened by being pushed out. The dictum "Keep your friends close, but your enemies closer" may have been a Corleone family mantra in "The Godfather," but it applies to politics, too. Lyndon B. Johnson once said, vulgarly, that he thought it was better to have J. Edgar Hoover, the Director of the F.B.I., behaving badly in the tent than outside it.

And some of the dissidents promptly rallied to the side of Mr. Paxon, who has many friends in the junior ranks of the party from having headed the campaign committee in 1994, when Republicans captured the House, and in 1996, when they retained it.

"He's a man of honor and integrity," Representative Tom Coburn of Oklahoma was quoted as saying in The Tulsa World today.

Representative Steve Largent, another Oklahoman and a leader of the dissident group who sought out the four leaders to see what they thought about a possible ouster of Mr. Gingrich, told The World that it was wrong for Mr. Paxon to go.

"Bill Paxon is no more responsible than I am," Mr. Largent said.

Mr. Armey said today of the effort to oust Mr. Gingrich, "The dust may not be settled, but it is stopped."

He also told reporters, "The relationship between myself and the Speaker is as good as it has ever been."

Other Republicans were far from convinced. One dissident Representative, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Mr. Armey had told their leaders that the last six months with the Speaker had been the worst six months of his life. The rebel Congressman said tonight that he thought another effort to replace Mr. Gingrich might go farther this fall. Of Mr. Paxon's chances of succeeding Mr. Gingrich as Speaker, he said, "Maybe he is now a better bet" than before his ouster.

The New York Times, July 19, 1997

In January, after it was known that the House ethics committee had decided to punish Mr. Gingrich but before its findings and a \$300,000 fine were known, all four of the leaders worked hard to get him re-elected as Speaker.

Now Mr. Gingrich has at best an uneasy relationship with Mr. Armey and Mr. Boehner, and a frigid one with Mr. DeLay. Dissident Congressmen said Mr. DeLay had told them late on the night of July 10 that he would walk down to the center of the House with them when they moved against the Speaker. Unlike Mr. Paxon, who contended that he had been trying to heal the rift in the party, Mr. DeLay's only response to the uproar has been to say he will not resign as whip, which is an elected position, unlike Mr. Paxon's.

Mr. Gingrich and his allies among the committee chairmen will be working on the budget, dealing with President Clinton and trying to retain their majority. If the Speaker cannot trust Mr. Largent and his allies to back him on tough votes, he may feel that it is necessary to compromise more in the direction of Mr. Clinton and the conservative Democrats in the House.

House Democrats today were wearing their biggest smiles in months, hoping that the appearance of disarray would damage the Republicans in 1998.

And the Senate Democratic leader, Tom Daschle of South Dakota, said, "Clearly, as it comes time to make some very tough decisions about where you compromise, they're going to have to get back on focus. They're going to have to try to resolve these questions in a way that will allow them to be effective negotiators. And at this point, I don't think they're prepared to do that."

Mr. Daschle also said, not meaning a word of it: "We're just really disappointed to see all the turmoil on the Republican side in the House."

When reporters laughed, he added: "And our thoughts and prayers are with them, too."

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June 23, 1997, Monday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section B; Page 6; Column 5; National Desk

LENGTH: 1093 words

HEADLINE: Congressional Memo;
Effort to Stop Rumors Of Unrest Leads to More

BYLINE: By ADAM CLYMER

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, June 22

BODY:

Last Wednesday, when Speaker Newt Gingrich was assuring reporters that rumors of his declining authority were only rumors, Dick Armey, the House majority leader, was sounding as though he believed them.

After Mr. Gingrich left a Republican caucus where at least some members had hoped to hear an explanation of the evident friction between them, Mr. Armey took over and not once, but twice, committed the slip of the tongue of saying "As your Speaker, I"

On Friday, just before the House adjourned for the week, the two men sought to put to rest rumors of division. At a news conference called to boast jointly about the Republican tax bill, Mr. Gingrich presented Mr. Armey with a huge stuffed moose as a present for his first grandson, born that day.

In fact, the House Republican leadership is divided and cranky, but hardly crumbling.

The divisions are not so bad that Mr. Gingrich has any doubts about finishing his term as Speaker. Nor so bad that the party doesn't stick together on most crucial votes, as it did Friday when all but one Republican -- Representative Marge Roukema of New Jersey -- voted with the party on rules for the campaign finance inquiry. And there is no reason to doubt that -- despite some internecine quarrels -- the tax bill will pass in the coming week.

But the disputes among leaders, and the rank and file factionalism that underlies them, make Republicans increasingly vulnerable to occasional defeats on issues where their increasingly irritable moderates make common cause with Democrats, or where their increasingly frustrated ultra-conservatives desert the majority and join with Democrats whose opposition to a given bill has entirely different motives.

"The infighting is a distraction," said Prof. Jack Pitney of Claremont McKenna College, a political scientist of Republican inclinations. And with the narrowest House majority since the 1950's, the party cannot afford it, he said. With 228 House Republicans, Mr. Gingrich and Mr. Armey can afford no more than 10 defections on a vote if the opposition is united.

The New York Times, June 23, 1997

"That gives every rebellious group tremendous leverage," Mr. Pitney said.

The last rebellious group to use its leverage to win an intra-party fight was the moderates who demanded a disaster relief spending bill without the riders about keeping the government open and statistical sampling in the census that had led to a veto by President Clinton.

Mr. Gingrich had been dubious about the rider strategy all along, but had gone along with Mr. Armey at first, apparently unsure of his ability to enforce his will. But when he decided that the moderates and the Democrats could win on an up or down vote, he decided to give in. Then most of the Republican leadership voted no.

The Speaker, following custom, did not vote. But not only did Mr. Armey vote no, so did Representatives Tom DeLay of Texas, the majority whip, and John A. Boehner, chairman of the Republican caucus. Representative Susan Molinari of New York, vice chairman of the caucus, was the highest ranking leader to vote for the bill.

That left a lot of Republicans wondering why they were being asked to vote for a bill their leaders deserted, stripped of provisions they liked (like the shutdown and census measures) but retaining ordinary pork for a garage in Cleveland or a theater in Kentucky, which they disdained.

Mr. Gingrich's strategy had been proved sensible. But even though he had the sense not to say "I told you so," he got more resentment than credit for being right.

A few Republicans, led by Representative Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, called a meeting Tuesday. It drew more reporters outside than members inside, because it was sounding like a dump-Gingrich meeting. Hardly any House Republican is ready for that. Mr. Graham said later all he had ever wanted was better communication from the leaders to the followers.

The same day Mr. Armey held an astonishing news conference of his own in which he ignored repeated opportunities to paper over his differences with Mr. Gingrich. As the session ended, he was reminded of the questions he had ducked and was asked, "Do you think the Speaker is doing an effective job?"

He answered, "You all have a good day, now."

Several hours later, he issued a statement explaining that he had not answered substantively because he was "halfway out the door with my back turned." He added, in a constricted endorsement, "The Speaker and I continue to work as effectively together as we have for the last four years." He added that he thought it was "perfectly clear that the leadership continues to be a cohesive team."

Mr. Armey went a little further in his endorsement of Mr. Gingrich on NBC's "Meet the Press" today, declaring that, "For as long as he says 'I want to continue to be Speaker,' he will be enthusiastically supported by the Republican Congress."

Mr. Armey is entitled to his opinion, but Republicans of all ideological persuasions were grumbling that their leaders were not leading, that schedules

The New York Times, June 23, 1997

were being shifted back and forth, and that an off-again, on-again handling of ethics rules was an embarrassment on an issue to which Mr. Gingrich and Mr. DeLay, both with charges pending against them, should have been sensitive.

The decisions to suppress and then reopen the ethics rules issue were made Tuesday night and Wednesday without any thorough consideration by the leadership. But a meeting might not have helped. One participant in those sessions scoffed at them, saying recently they were devoted less to serious planning than to sloganeering.

And while there seems no prospect of a coup against Mr. Gingrich, some of his colleagues seem to be preparing to run for Speaker after the 1998 elections -- even if he does, too.

Mr. Armey, as his Freudian slips suggest, would be one obvious candidate, but hardly an odds-on choice. Not only has his political judgment proved unsuccessful, as on the disaster relief bill. Furthermore, his formal duty, the day-to-day management of the House, has not been a sparkling success.

From time to time, the House quits in the afternoon one day, then works late the next night. Reflecting that pace, one Congressman's young son, reacting to the television accounts that Mr. Gingrich might be ousted, asked his father, "When are you going to dump Armey?"

His father explained that there was no such movement under way and wondered why he had asked. The boy replied that the television had said Mr. Armey managed the House, "so he's why you're never home to dinner."

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March 28, 1997, Friday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 24; Column 5; National Desk

LENGTH: 395 words

HEADLINE: Report Says Gingrich Faces G.O.P. Rebellion

BYLINE: By KATHARINE Q. SEELYE

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 27

BODY:

The conservative journal Human Events is to report in next week's issue that up to 40 conservative Republicans are exploring how to depose Speaker Newt Gingrich for what they consider betrayal of the conservative cause.

The magazine, in its April 4 issue, said the lawmakers, whom it did not identify, were considering calling for a vote of no-confidence in the Speaker. Republican House rules say that 25 members can offer a resolution and that with no action, 50 members can petition for the vote. John Gizzi, the magazine's political reporter, wrote, "From numerous interviews on Capitol Hill, it is clear that a significant group of conservative backbenchers have started plotting what would amount to a coup against Newt Gingrich."

The House is in recess, and Mr. Gingrich is traveling in China and not available for comment. His supporters have said he has no intention of quitting.

Conservatives have complained that Mr. Gingrich has retreated on making tax cuts a priority, eliminating affirmative action programs and eliminating money for the National Endowment for the Arts.

In an interview today, Representative David M. McIntosh, Republican of Indiana, said that while some members were complaining about a lack of leadership he was unaware of as many as 40 members calling for such a vote.

In today's Roll Call, a Capitol Hill newspaper, Representative Matt Salmon, Republican of Arizona, said he and 10 other House Republicans had met at least three times to discuss the drift in the House and had set a deadline of August for the leadership to redirect the party or face a more serious rebellion.

Terry Jeffrey, editor of Human Events, said the younger, conservative members of Congress were trying to "build momentum and build some pressure around Gingrich so he seriously considers stepping aside."

The Human Events article follows one earlier this week in The Weekly Standard, a conservative weekly, in which Representative Peter T. King, Republican of New York, wrote that Mr. Gingrich should be replaced.

It followed an item by Bill Shipp, who writes a political newsletter, that some "leading Republicans have suggested funding a faculty chair at an as-yet-unnamed university for Gingrich in exchange for his promise not to seek

The New York Times, March 28, 1997

re-election to the House." This was strongly denied to Human Events by someone close to the Speaker.

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~~March 01, 1996~~, Friday, Final Edition

SECTION: A SECTION; Pg. A01

LENGTH: 1503 words

HEADLINE: ~~When Unity Becomes Division; Party's 'Contract With America' Is Now a Footnote~~

BYLINE: ~~David S. Broder~~, Washington Post Staff Writer

DATELINE: COLUMBIA, S.C., Feb. 29

BODY:

In the 58th minute of a 60-minute Republican presidential debate here today, something remarkable happened. A candidate mentioned the 1994 Republican "Contract With America."

It was only the briefest reference by former Tennessee governor Lamar Alexander, a mere footnote in a debate in which the four leading aspirants for the GOP nomination pummeled each other with the same slam-bang attacks that have marked this campaign.

But it was a reminder of how far the tone and substance have shifted from the time, just a year ago, when a seemingly unified GOP, reveling in controlling Congress for the first time in 40 years, was making rapid headway on fulfilling the contract. Back then, too, a field of confident presidential candidates was lining up for the honor of defeating President Clinton, who looked so much like a lame duck that he had to call a news conference to insist he was still "relevant" to the government of the United States.

Today, the contract's main items -- a balanced budget, a tax cut and welfare reform -- are mired in the mess of Washington and, after two government shutdowns, the Republican Congress and the leader of the Revolution of 1994, Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), are taking a shellacking in the polls.

The Republican presidential candidates are mostly ignoring the 1994 agenda in favor of their pet projects. And the once-scorned Clinton has revived to the point that he seems capable of beating any Republican nominee.

Is this just a bump in the road to Republican realignment or has the GOP blown what appeared to be its best chance in four decades to become the dominant party in American politics?

Republican activists and party leaders stew about this question, and they have no clear answers. David Keene, president of the American Conservative Union, reflected the ambivalence: "The values and ideas that put us in power are still there. But they can be destroyed by inept leadership."

Keene said the problem goes back to the 1994 victory that so inflated Republican hopes.

The Washington Post, March 01, 1996

"Newt Gingrich, who prides himself on being a student of history, mistook a battle for the war," Keene said. "He had no backup plan in case Clinton slammed the door on him with his vetoes. He had not a clue as to what to do if his forces didn't succeed on the first try."

Grover Norquist, president of Americans for Tax Reform, which organized business and conservative support for the contract, took the opposite view.

Arguing there has been "no loss of faith in the leave-us-alone, small-government philosophy of 1994 among Republican governors, congressional leaders or freshmen," Norquist said the problem lies in the presidential field.

Television commentator Patrick J. Buchanan, with his calls for trade protectionism and measures to curb big-business layoffs, "is a threat to Reagan Republicanism." Malcolm S. "Steve" Forbes disputes the importance of a balanced budget.

Only Alexander, whose campaign is struggling for survival after a string of third-place finishes, and Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (Kan.) take the 1994 agenda seriously, and Dole, said Norquist, "is incapable of waxing lyrical about it the way [Ronald] Reagan did."

Norquist argued that "for the first time, the presidential race doesn't matter when it comes to the future of the Republican Party."

The GOP, he said, is now so strong in the states and in Congress that "its coattails will carry the presidential candidate, not the other way around."

Few others are so optimistic that the personal and ideological fissures revealed in the presidential primaries will disappear during the autumn campaign -- or, indeed, if the Republicans will run Washington in 1997.

A. James Reichley, a scholar of the GOP at the Brookings Institution, said, "The closer the Republicans get to being a majority, the more the divisions appear. There are differences on moral and social issues, differences on the priority of budget cutting and economic stimulus and, with Buchanan, you have a recurrence of the isolationism and protectionism which have been dormant for quite a few years."

Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas, the presidential contender who identified himself most closely with the contract and the revolution of 1994, was also one of the first candidates forced out of the race. In an interview, he endorsed the Reichley analysis.

"These primaries clearly have shown up new fractures in the party," he said. "Our party is now composed almost equally of social conservatives and economic conservatives. But in the primaries, the clamor of the social conservatives has been much louder, and it has moved the whole campaign in that direction. It's become a contest of who can be most strident about those issues, and it has moved the message away from the issues of the '94 election, which were mainly economic issues."

Gramm also pointed out that "the contract was a general-election message, not a Republican primary message. The people whose votes gave us our new majorities were independents and Democrats. And those people for the most part are not

The Washington Post, March 01, 1996

voting in the primaries."

Since his effort collapsed, Gramm has endorsed Dole as the Republican most likely to "unite social conservatives and economic conservatives" against Clinton.

And in today's debate, Dole sought repeatedly to remind his audience that "the real target is Clinton." Get rid of Clinton, he said, and the revolution of 1994 will be complete.

But the difficulty for Dole is that he is identified in many Republican voters' minds with the stalemating of the 1994 contract, many of whose provisions were emasculated or stymied in the Senate, even before the president wielded his veto pen to stop their enactment.

William Kristol, a Republican strategist and editor of the Weekly Standard, said that after progress on the contract was halted, "there was no message [for the presidential candidates] to pick up on. The congressional message stalled out, because it became almost exclusively balancing the budget and changing Medicare, and a lot of Republicans thought it was a negative to embrace it too closely. Dole, who is the co-leader of the congressional party, saw his agenda disappear, and he has nothing to say. The outsider candidates, especially Alexander, have some sensible ideas but haven't succeeded in framing a message that is compelling for Republican primary voters.

"So there's a vacuum," Kristol concluded, "and Pat Buchanan loves to fill a vacuum. He will stay in until the end, and it will be very hard to assimilate his voters into the party without antagonizing moderates and independents we need to win the election. You know, coalitions don't stay unified unless leaders work at it and are imaginative about devising an agenda that gives them all a stake in success. Realignments don't happen automatically."

From the Democratic perspective, White House pollster Stanley Greenberg said; the "unraveling came in two stages. In 1994, the Republicans seemed unified and self-confident. The budget fight undermined the sense that they were strong and in charge. They lost a lot of ground. . . . The public does not have patience with good ideas that are undeliverable. . . . And now in this nominating stage, they look divided and fractious. . . . And I think Buchanan has opened a Pandora's box of issues that Bob Dole and other Republicans will have great difficulty addressing."

Some Republicans insist that is far too gloomy a view. House Majority Leader Richard K. Armey (R-Tex.), a principal architect of the contract, said Republicans have hit a rough patch, but have not gone on a long detour.

"We fell into a bit of a trap," Armey said. "When we got on the field last year, the Democrats were disoriented and confused. So they went to a 'prevent defense' and we scored some big gains. But as we moved the ball down the field, when we got to the balanced budget and welfare reform and Medicare, they solidified and made a goal-line stand that kept us from scoring. Those presidential vetoes were a very difficult thing for us to withstand.

"But now we've revised the game plan, and we're back on the field, and I think we'll move a lot of legislation, including some of the contract items. And if the president, as he indicated in the State of the Union address, wants to

The Washington Post, March 01, 1996

get right with the American people and end the era of big government, he'll be less likely to veto them."

Asked if he was disturbed that the contract issues largely have disappeared from the Republican presidential race, Armey said, "That doesn't bother me. I have learned that in politics, everybody tends to his own business. I didn't expect anyone short of Ronald Reagan to broaden the debate beyond their own particular message. They all want to say, 'I'm my own guy. I'm an original thinker.' We don't have a Ronald Reagan in there delivering a message for the whole party."

On that point, at least, all would agree.

Staff writer Dan Balz contributed to this report.

GRAPHIC: Photo, pool photo, Malcolm S. "Steve" Forbes talks and Robert J. Dole listens as Republican contenders debate.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 01, 1996

64TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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May 08, 1997, Thursday, Final Edition

SECTION: OP-ED; Pg. A27

LENGTH: 804 words

HEADLINE: The GOP's Platform Of Nothing

BYLINE: George F. Will

BODY:

It is said that publishing the best dictionary is simple: Copy the one that currently is best and correct one error. That is the approach taken by both sides in what is called the budget "battle." By tiny tweakings of the status quo, both sides claim to have won famous victories. Listening to those claims, one remembers that there is unseemly exposure of mind as well as of body.

The budget agreement was made possible not by the political tweekers but by the millions of wealth-creating Americans responsible for the humming economy and the \$ 225 billion five-year surge of revenues. Asked the secret of his success, billionaire J. Paul Getty wrote: "Some people find oil. Others don't." The budget-balancers found money.

The significance of the budget agreement is twofold. It demonstrates the indispensability of the locution "political class" when discussing contemporary politics. And it guarantees that the 1998 midterm elections will not resemble those of 1994.

The budget agreement, which does nothing decisive about anything (not about entitlements, or estate and capital gains taxation, or the consumer price index), is characteristic work of risk-averse careerists, people in politics less to do something than to be something -- to be in politics. The agreement demonstrates that, never mind lamentations about "partisanship," most of today's politicians comprise a homogenized class, less divided by ideology than united by a desire to skate past the next election.

Twenty-eight months ago, Republicans fresh from the 1994 elections announced themselves unsatisfied by little aims. They would not just quibble about funding levels for the various tentacles of the federal Leviathan, they would shrink the government's reach, beginning with the abolition of entire Cabinet departments -- Education, Commerce, Energy, perhaps Housing and Urban Development, too. They huffed and they puffed and they blew . . . a little inconvenience toward the National Endowment for the Arts, which, unlike Republican aspirations, survives.

In 1994 Republicans raised the stakes and improved the tone of politics by nationalizing the off-year elections around bold themes and promises. In 1998, politics will be local again, the old maelstrom of mere interests, unleavened by ideas. What can Republicans run on collectively? Nothing.

Regarding domestic policy, the budget agreement defines them as slightly sullen and somewhat embarrassed defenders of the status quo. Regarding defense policy, which used to highlight a realism that made Republicans indispensable,

The Washington Post, May 08, 1997

does anyone believe the defense numbers Republicans found convenient in the deal-making bear any relationship to a sober analysis of threats and responsibilities? With those numbers, the current party severs its connection with Ronald Reagan who, forced to choose, unhesitatingly chose national strength rather than a balanced budget.

Some Republicans say that getting budget-balancing out of the way opens the way for them to concentrate on "the rest of our agenda." And what might that include? Tax reform? The budget deal will mean new doses of what real reform would curtail -- further complications of the tax code designed to reward particular constituencies and behavior (as with the \$ 35 billion worth of credits and deductions for college tuition).

Besides, the code's complexities create muscular client groups that benefit from them. And the code sustains the capital's class of lawyers and lobbyists who serve those interested in bending public power for private advantage. Forbes magazine notes that more than 5,000 changes were made in the tax code in the last decade -- almost two per workday. Does anyone believe that the gang that cannot eliminate the National Endowment for the Arts is up to the kind of combat that serious tax reform would entail?

Well, then, will those tough-talking Republicans do for the federal government what the people of California did for themselves with the California Civil Rights Initiative (CCRI) -- end racial and gender preferences in government programs? Newt Gingrich, the Gen. McClellan of the culture war, says not yet: "We need a black, Hispanic, Asian leader or a group of leaders who are prepared to stand up and say, 'The time has come to move beyond quotas, to move beyond set-asides.' "

No, the time has come to move beyond nonleaders like Gingrich, who evidently thinks African Americans like Ward Connerly, the prime mover of CCRI, and the other African Americans (e.g., Shelby Steele), Hispanics (e.g., Linda Chavez) and females (e.g., the superb Independent Women's Forum) who are Connerly's allies do not count.

Listening to Republicans these days, one understands the misanthropic Evelyn Waugh writing late in life, "I am quite deaf now; such a comfort."

GRAPHIC: Illustration, bill lee

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LOAD-DATE: May 08, 1997

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March 11, 1998, Wednesday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 14; Column 1; National Desk

LENGTH: 1263 words

HEADLINE: House G.O.P. Content to Make Ripples

BYLINE: By ALISON MITCHELL

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, March 10

BODY:

Three years after sweeping into office on their Contract With America, House Republicans are acting as if they now have a contract with their campaign consultants: to keep the revolution on hold.

In this election year, the House leadership has scheduled a mere 89 days when votes will be taken. And the Republicans, who once yearned to abolish whole Federal departments, are whiling away much of their time with the same kind of small-scale gestures and symbolic actions that President Clinton deployed in his re-election campaign.

So they have passed legislation to rename Washington National Airport for Ronald Reagan and moved to ban possession of machines that clone cell phone signals and to make it a Federal offense to cross a state border to intimidate a witness in a state criminal case. They have approved nonbinding resolutions, such as one proclaiming that Congress will not discriminate against stay-at-home moms.

The most radical idea on the horizon is an overhaul of the tax code. But for campaign purposes, the Republicans are working to stir up public opposition to the tax system without actually planning to bring a new code up for a vote this year.

All of this represents a strategic decision. Republican leaders believe their party will do best in the coming campaign by running on last summer's balanced budget agreement, adding some grace notes on education, crime and tax cuts and, most important, doing nothing to alarm the public.

"For the most part, this is going to be a year of don't make any waves," said Rich Galen, executive director of Gopac, the Republican political action committee. "Let's see what happens with the President and get out early and campaign hard at the end."

Even Newt Gingrich, the House Speaker, has become noticeably cautious. At news conferences the once freewheeling House Speaker has taken to checking his behavior with his press secretary, Christina Martin. He often catches her eye when he has delivered a well-crafted phrase or gives her a wary glance when he has failed to muzzle his biting humor.

The New York Times, March 11, 1998

He avoids some topics altogether. Asked about President Clinton and Monica S. Lewinsky recently, he said, "I have no comment at all on that entire zone."

Some of the combative conservatives who went to Washington to remake it are starting to complain about a lack of will. Representative David M. McIntosh of Indiana told House Republican leaders recently that when Congress is in town, "we want real things on the agenda." He said the party leaders replied, "You need to spend more time at home."

On the other side of the aisle, Representative Barney Frank, a Massachusetts Democrat, has taken to joking that Congress has given up legislating for Lent.

Underlying the Republican strategy is the fact that in sharp contrast to the anti-Washington fury that shaped the 1992 and 1994 elections, pollsters this year are finding voters content with the booming economy, optimistic about the nation's future and with no dominant problem on their minds.

"The voters are not angry about anything," said Charles Cook, who puts out a nonpartisan political newsletter, The Cook Political Report.

Public approval of Congress is up and even Mr. Gingrich's approval ratings are inching higher. An internal poll by the Republican National Committee that is circulating among Congressional Republicans shows that in February Congress's own approval ratings reached an extraordinary high of 68 percent.

What all that means is that unless some new crisis rocks public life, it will be a good year for incumbents and a good year for the Republicans to hold on to their majority.

"I think the political decision has been made -- and it might be right -- that Congress right now is held in high regard," said Representative Peter T. King, a Long Island Republican, "that we've gotten the job done. We're a check on Clinton. He's a check on us, and the American people seem satisfied. The Republican leadership has made a decision not to upset that balance and equilibrium."

The question is whether rank-and-file party members and particularly those on the Republicans' conservative flank will follow the script.

For underneath the surface calm simmer profound Republican disagreements over the new fiscal era of budget surpluses, and how far to go in tax cutting and overhaul of the tax code. The Republicans in Congress are splintered over what to do about issues like tobacco and health care. And they are divided, too, over how hard to push a conservative social agenda.

The talk show host Rush Limbaugh recently complained on Fox television that it was getting harder to tell Mr. Clinton and the Republicans apart. And some Republicans are worried that they are not doing enough to energize their core supporters in November.

"A basketball team that tries not to lose invariably loses," said Representative Lindsey Graham, a Republican from South Carolina and a member of the landslide House class of '94.

The New York Times, March 11, 1998

A short Congressional session provides less time, however, for dissatisfied legislators to create waves like last year's abortive coup against Mr. Gingrich. And the leaders hope votes on such conservative issues as school vouchers or a planned attempt to override Mr. Clinton's veto of a ban on a form of abortion will be enough to placate those on the right.

Perhaps the greatest test of the leaders' ability to hold the party together will come as the House and Senate try to draft a new budget.

The party leaders want a plan that will provide enough new tax cuts to keep the party's imprint on the issue yet not go overboard and raise questions about whether Republicans are risking the fiscal stability they helped bring about.

One small group of Senators and Congressmen blasted their party at a news conference recently for missing an opportunity to push for further tax cutting. Senator John Ashcroft, a Missouri Republican, called for \$600 billion to \$1 trillion in tax cuts. Mr. McIntosh, who was at Mr. Ashcroft's side to complain of "the incredible shrinking leadership" in the party, said, "Our goal is to send a clear message to the leadership: We want tax cuts now."

Perhaps the most ambitious Republican idea on the horizon is radical revision of the tax code. Party leaders have been rousing their core voters and attempting to stir up new anti-Government fervor by touring the country debating the merits of a flat tax or a national sales tax.

Yet while the issue gives the party an election-year rallying cry, House and Senate leaders do not plan to take up any overhaul measures this year. Instead they plan a vote on legislation to have the tax code expire by Dec. 31, 2001, and trap the Democrats into defending the code.

As frustrating as the inactivity is for House conservatives, it is worse for Democrats, who are trying to win back control of the House, and need a net gain of 11 seats to do it. Richard A. Gephardt of Missouri, the House minority leader, has denounced "a do-nothing Congress" and a Republican Party "frozen in the ice of their special interests."

But that line of argument only goes so far as a campaign theme. As a minority party, the Democrats do not expect to pass much legislation this year. But they do need opportunities to win the war for public opinion. And it is harder to showcase their differences with the Republicans if debates showing the contrast between the two parties on issues like the tobacco settlement, or restraints on health maintenance organizations or expansion of Medicare never take place on the House floor.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: March 11, 1998

5TH STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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January 1, 1998, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 14; Column 4; National Desk

LENGTH: 1020 words

HEADLINE: Judiciary Report: Congress Is Prodded

BYLINE: By The New York Times

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Dec. 31

BODY:

Following are excerpts from the 1997 Year-end Report on the Federal Judiciary by William H. Rehnquist, Chief Justice of the United States:

As I review the state of the judiciary this year and compare it with the 11 previous years I have served as Chief Justice, I am impressed by the degree to which our relations with Congress have dominated 1997. Congressional responses and initiatives on judicial issues ranging from funding to salaries, and from Federal jurisdiction to judicial vacancies, all have had a significant influence on the judiciary over the past year.

The results have been mixed, which is scarcely surprising, and therefore we will face some of the same challenges in 1998 that confronted us in 1997. Despite the work that remains to be done, I am encouraged by the judiciary's ability to perform its essential role in our constitutional structure of Government.

I first would like to express my gratitude to Congress for its financial support of the judiciary. In a time of scarce resources, Congress responded favorably to the careful financial plan adopted by the executive committee of the Judicial Conference of the United States. These moneys will be used wisely and economically. The judiciary supports fully the national goal of eliminating the budget deficit and has instituted a formal process to identify and implement initiatives to reduce or avoid costs.

In general, Congress has declined to eliminate the disparity between resources and workload in the Federal judiciary by an expansion of the number of judges. There have been instances, however, in which Congress wisely has acted to reduce this disparity by enacting laws that in effect decrease the number of potential filings in Federal court. In 1996, Congress enacted the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, which streamlined habeas corpus procedures for both state and Federal prisoners, and the Prison Litigation Reform Act (P.L.R.A.), which did the same for prisoners' civil rights actions.

With limited degree of hindsight available to us -- and keeping in mind that there are many variables that could affect the future rate of prisoner filings in Federal court -- the Effective Death Penalty Act and P.L.R.A. appear to be promising examples of how Congress can reduce the disparity between resources and workload in the Federal judiciary without endangering its distinctive character.

The New York Times, January 1, 1998

Unfortunately, Congress's effort to enact legislation of this type have been sporadic and inconsistent. I therefore call on Congress to consider legislative proposals that would reduce the jurisdiction of Federal courts. For many years, diversity of citizenship cases have been identified as one such area in which Congress could enact some very useful reforms.

Should Congress, conversely, consider expanding the jurisdiction of the Federal judiciary, it should do so cautiously and only after it has considered all the alternatives and the incremental impact the increase will have on both the need for additional judicial resources and the traditional role of the Federal judiciary.

If Federal jurisdiction remains at its current level -- or, worse, increases -- judicial vacancies will aggravate the problem of too few judges and too much work. Currently, 82 of the 846 Article III judicial offices in the Federal judiciary -- almost 1 out of every 10 -- are vacant. Twenty-six of the vacancies have been in existence for 18 months or longer and on that basis constitute what are called 'judicial emergencies.' In the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, the percentage of vacancies is particularly troubling, with over one-third of its seats empty.

Judicial vacancies can contribute to a backlog of cases, undue delays in civil cases, and stopgap measures to shift judicial personnel where they are most needed. Vacancies cannot remain at such high levels indefinitely without eroding the quality of justice that traditionally has been associated with the Federal judiciary. Fortunately for the judiciary, a dependable corps of senior judges has contributed significantly to easing the impact of unfilled judgeships.

The institutions that have the constitutionally assigned powers of nominating and confirming judicial nominees bear some of the responsibility for the current situation, but structural aspects of the appointment process also contribute to the existing high level of vacancies. For example, a larger judiciary increases the average number of retirements per year and the corresponding number of nominees. The additional burdens placed on the appointment process by such an increase may slow it down.

An appointment process that might work well to fill the vacancies of the 700-member judiciary might struggle with a judiciary of 800 or 850 members. Accordingly, increasing the size of the Federal judiciary so that it can handle expanded workloads might have the unintended effect of increasing the vacancy rate, perhaps leaving unaffected the gap between resources and workload that motivated the initial increase in the number of judges. This ironic result strongly supports the common-sense conclusion that, in this country, a bigger Federal judiciary is not necessarily a part of a solution for every public-policy question.

Whatever the size of the Federal judiciary, the President should nominate candidates with reasonable promptness, and the Senate should act within a reasonable time to confirm or reject them. Some current nominees have been waiting a considerable time for a Senate Judiciary Committee vote or a final floor vote. The Senate confirmed only 17 judges in 1996 and 36 in 1997, well under the 101 judges it confirmed during 1994.

The New York Times, January 1, 1998

The Senate is, of course, very much a part of the appointment process for any Article III judge. One nominated by the President is not "appointed" until confirmed by the Senate. The Senate is surely under no obligation to confirm any particular nominee, but after the necessary time for inquiry it should vote for him up or vote him down. In the latter case, the President can then send up another nominee.

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LOAD-DATE: January 1, 1998

3RD STORY of Level 1 printed in FULL format.

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January 1, 1998, Thursday, Late Edition - Final

SECTION: Section A; Page 1; Column 6; National Desk

LENGTH: 1128 words

HEADLINE: SENATE IMPERILS JUDICIAL SYSTEM, REHNQUIST SAYS

BYLINE: By JOHN H. CUSHMAN Jr.

DATELINE: WASHINGTON, Dec. 31

BODY:

In an unusual rebuke, Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist today criticized the Senate for failing to move more quickly on judicial appointments, saying that the "vacancies cannot remain at such high levels indefinitely without eroding the quality of justice."

The Chief Justice made the statement in his annual year-end report of the state of the judiciary -- a 19-page document in which he also praised Congress for responding to other judicial concerns, like increasing judges' salaries and providing more money for operations of the courts.

But he said that the major problem facing the judiciary was "too few judges and too much work" and that continuing inaction on nominees was imperiling the court system.

Chief Justice Rehnquist said delays by President Clinton in sending nominations to the Senate had contributed to the problem, but his main criticism fell on the Senate itself, which is responsible for approving or rejecting nominees to the Federal judiciary.

"The Senate is surely under no obligation to confirm any particular nominee, but after the necessary time for inquiry, it should vote him up or vote him down," the Chief Justice said. Excerpts, page A14.

Chief Justice Rehnquist and other judges have complained before about the problem of vacancies, but the Chief Justice's remarks today were especially pointed.

Disputes over judgeships have raged for more than a year, sparked by what conservatives have called the activist leanings of Mr. Clinton's nominees. The Senate confirmed only 17 judges in 1996 and 36 in 1997, compared with 101 confirmed in 1994.

As a result, nearly 1 in 10 seats on the Federal bench is now vacant, Chief Justice Rehnquist said. Twenty-six of the 82 openings have been unfilled for more than 18 months.

In the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, in San Francisco, where the conservatives have directed much of their ire, one-third of the seats are empty, a problem the Chief Justice called "particularly troubling."

The New York Times, January 1, 1998

While Chief Justice Rehnquist's criticism indirectly implicated Congressional conservatives, he later aligned himself with them as he called on Congress to consider proposals that would reduce the jurisdiction of Federal courts, and to move cautiously when it considers any legislative proposal that would expand jurisdiction.

Since 1990, the number of cases filed in courts of appeals has grown by 21 percent and those brought in district courts have increased by 24 percent. A 5 percent increase in criminal cases in 1997 brought the Federal criminal caseload to the highest level in 60 years, he said.

Senator Patrick J. Leahy of Vermont, the ranking Democrat on the Judiciary Committee, said he hoped the Chief Justice's report would "help shame the Senate into clearing the backlog."

Mr. Leahy said more than 40 judicial nominees were kept on hold in 1997, some of them in limbo since 1995.

In September, President Clinton accused Senate Republicans of putting politics above justice in refusing to act on his nominees. But Senator Orrin G. Hatch of Utah, the Judiciary Committee chairman, dismissed the complaint, saying that Mr. Clinton was largely responsible for the problem since some judgeships have remained without nominees for years. Mr. Hatch could not be reached today for comment.

Joe Lockhart, a Presidential spokesman, welcomed the Chief Justice's remarks. "Hear! Hear! Justice Rehnquist," he said, adding, "Our judicial system is more important than playing partisan politics."

The Chief Justice's emphasis on filling the vacancies adds to the concerted pressure that has been coming from the White House for months, and amplifies the voices of other judges on the matter. In September, in hearings before the Senate, the Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit and his immediate predecessor both warned that the quality of justice in New York, Connecticut and Vermont would suffer if the Senate did not soon fill vacancies there.

Chief Justice Rehnquist, who was first nominated to the Supreme Court by President Richard M. Nixon and was chosen as Chief Justice by President Ronald Reagan in 1986, said the judicial branch's relations with Congress have "dominated" the last year and that "the results have been mixed."

Aside from the judicial vacancies, he spent a considerable portion of his report discussing another facet of the growing workload facing the Federal courts: expanding numbers of cases, partly caused by new laws that expand Federal jurisdiction.

"Unless steps are taken to stop or reverse this trend," he wrote, "either the demands placed on the Federal judiciary will eventually outstrip its resources, or the judiciary will become so large that it will lose its traditional character as a distinctive judicial forum of limited jurisdiction."

Noting that Congress had generally declined to address the problem by expanding the number of judgeships, he said with approval that Congress instead had been decreasing the numbers of potential Federal cases, as when it

The New York Times, January 1, 1998

streamlined habeas corpus procedures and limited civil rights actions by prisoners in 1996.

"In this country, a bigger Federal judiciary is not necessarily a part of a solution for every public-policy question," he said.

"Whatever the size of the Federal judiciary," he added, "the President should nominate candidates with reasonable promptness, and the Senate should act within a reasonable time to confirm or reject them. Some current nominees have been waiting a considerable time for a Senate Judiciary Committee vote or a final floor vote."

In a statement, Senator Leahy listed the 11 nominees who had been pending before the Senate for at least 18 months, and said, "Each of these outstanding nominees deserves an up or down vote, as the Chief Justice recommends."

According to Mr. Leahy's tabulation of nominations to the circuit and district courts, there have been 78 nominees presented in the 105th Congress. The Senate has confirmed 7 circuit judges and 29 district judges, and 8 nominees are pending on the Senate floor. And 34 nominees are pending in the Judiciary Committee.

The Chief Justice, in his annual report, also criticized President Clinton for failing to make appointments to the Sentencing Commission, a panel that makes recommendations on the sentences that are appropriate for Federal crimes. The terms of three commissioners expired in October, and while they will continue to serve there were already three vacancies on the seven-member panel, two of them dating to 1995.

"The long and the short of the matter is that for the Commission to function properly six appointments to vacancies are needed," he said. "But the President has simply not made any nominations to fill these vacancies."

GRAPHIC: Photo: Chief Justice William H. Rehnquist's report criticized Congress. (Associated Press) (pg. A14)

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: January 1, 1998

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The Atlantic Monthly

JUNE 1998

JAPAN'S SOCIAL CRISIS

The bad economic news is a symptom of a worse problem

By MURRAY SAYLE

A GOOD CLIMATE FOR INVESTMENT

How saving the environment could mean profits instead of deprivation

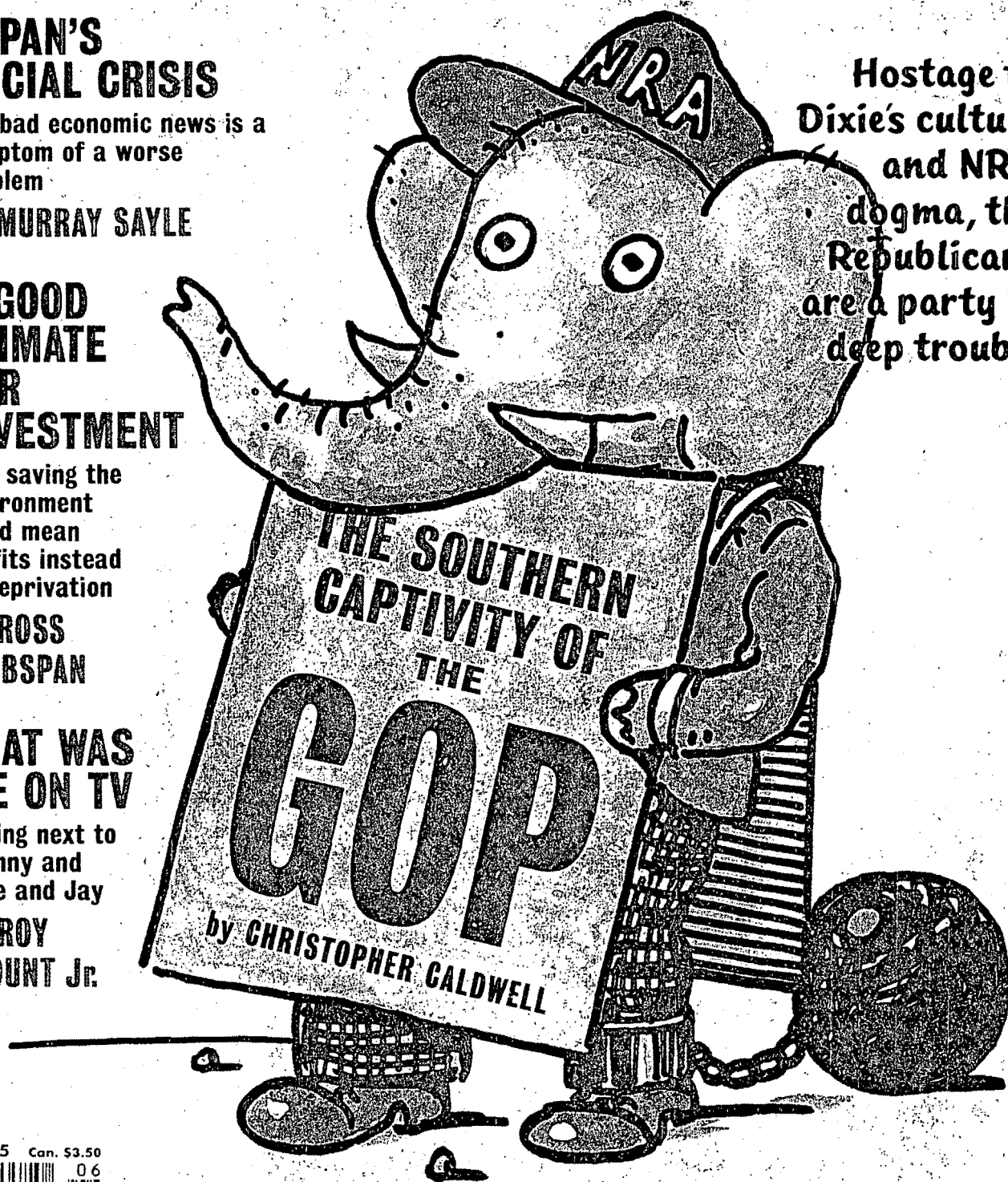
By ROSS GELBSPAN

THAT WAS ME ON TV

Sitting next to Johnny and Dave and Jay

By ROY BLOUNT Jr.

Hostage to Dixie's culture and NRA dogma, the Republicans are a party in deep trouble



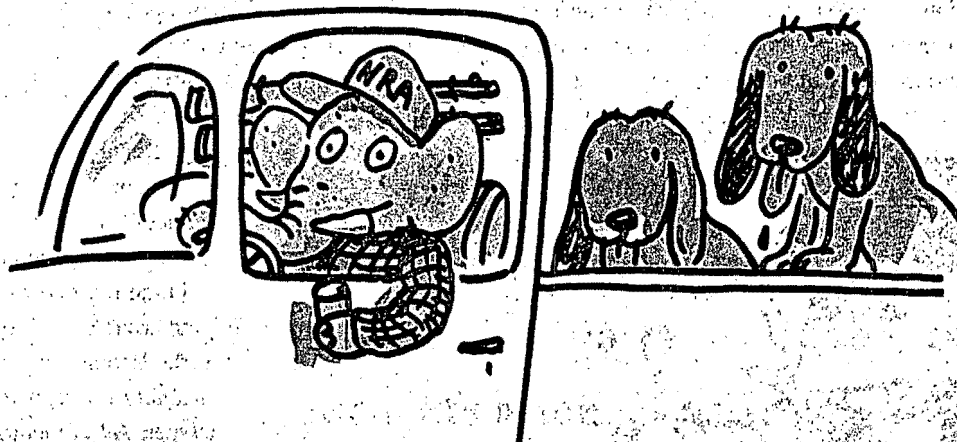
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THE SOUTHERN CAPTIVITY OF THE GOP

by CHRISTOPHER CALDWELL



In a geographic and cultural box, with political demography tilting against it, the Republican Party is "an obsolescent one," argues the author, a senior writer for the conservative Weekly Standard

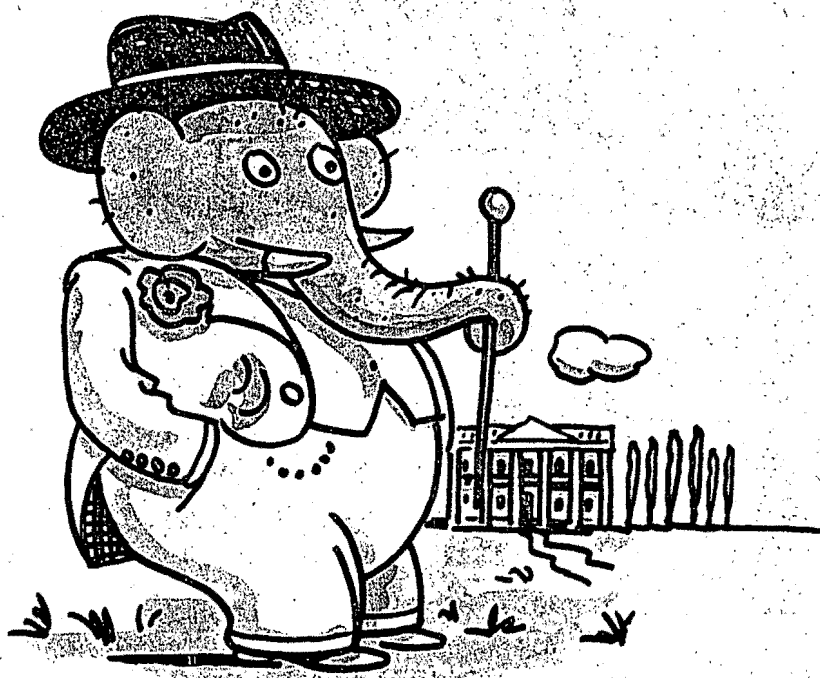
SHORTLY before the 1994 midterm elections, when House Minority Leader Newt Gingrich began talking about a coming Republican takeover of Congress and outlining plans for his speakership, David Dreyer, a White House aide, remarked, "He's done Lord Acton one better. He's corrupted by power he doesn't yet have." After Election Day it was Dreyer who had egg on his face. The Republicans did take over the House and the Senate, controlling the two for the first time since 1955—and by a broad enough margin that they seemed likely to hold both houses indefinitely. Everyone spoke of a "revolution"—both politicians and the wider public, both those who favored and those who feared one. Pundits resurrected the decades-old metaphor of the political analyst Samuel Lubell, according to which America has essentially a one-and-a-half-party system. One party is the sun, illuminating all the planets. The other is the moon, giving off only reflected light. For the first time since before FDR's election, it looked as if Republicans were the sun and Democrats the moon.

Today Dreyer and others who scoffed at a Republican ascendancy seem likely to have the last laugh. There has indeed been a movement to the right on some issues, but it has not translated into a partisan shift. A stunning mid-1997 ABC/Washington Post poll, asking voters: "Which party do you trust more to . . .," showed the Democrats besting the Republicans on practically all issues, including such Republican staples as taxes, crime, and budget balancing.

Trust more to . . .	Democrats	Republicans
Improve education	51%	30%
Help middle class	51	30
Handle economy	43	39
Hold down taxes	41	38
Balance budget	39	36
Handle crime	38	34
Handle foreign affairs	38	40
Reform campaign finance	34	31
Maintain strong defense	32	50

Suddenly it looked as if either the 1994 election was a fluke or the 104th Congress had done something dramatically wrong. The Republicans have narrowed the gap in party registration until they're only four percentage points behind the Democrats (39-35), but the Democrats still lead on the issues. The Republicans hold a majority in Congress, but that Congress
 ★ has been trumped by a Democratic President on every major policy initiative of the past three years. And when a midwinter sex scandal initially sees the President's job-approval ratings rising to about 70 percent, the Republicans have cause for worry. There is now no sense in which they are the sun of American politics. Far from it: they are a majority giving rise to second thoughts among those who made them one.

This is something the Republicans seem not to realize. Their party was thrashed in the 1996 national elections. In presidential politics they were stuck on the Goldwater-McGovern-Mondale landslide-loser plateau of 40 percent, as they had



been in 1992. They lost nine seats in Congress. Yet the party is approaching the 1998 election as if it won the last time out. Republicans of all persuasions view their party's problems as temporary, remediable through either ideological fine-tuning or image buffing and spin. Certain Republicans—particularly cosmopolitan governors on the East and West Coasts, such as Christine Todd Whitman, of New Jersey, and Pete Wilson, of California—claim that the party has moved too far to the right, and that its stances on social issues, notably abortion, are driving away centrist voters. Others—particularly those at Christian organizations, such as Gary Bauer, of the Family Research Council, and James Dobson, of Focus on the Family—say it's too far left, lacking the guts to assert itself on family dissolution and related family-values issues on which the public is in

its corner. Still others—among them such Class of '94 congressional firebrands as Steve Largent, of Oklahoma; Linda Smith, of Washington; and Mark Neumann, of Wisconsin—say that the party has ignored centrist, Reform Party-style outrage and made itself a campaign-finance-swilling incumbency-protection machine. Another line of thinking is that the party has merely been victimized by accidents of personality: the mysterious ability of Newt Gingrich to generate loathing and of Bill Clinton to generate support.

Many, if not most, Republicans view the 1994 election as a mandate stolen from them by accidents of leadership and the collusion of the press and other "elite" institutions. In this reading Bill Clinton lifted "their" issues by mouthing conservative positions on the budget and welfare reform, and the credulous media have abetted Clinton's public-relations war of "micro-initiatives" such as school uniforms, the V-chip, portable phones for neighborhood-watch groups, and various small education proposals.

Republican problems go deeper than that, however. The party faces a crisis of confidence that has many symptoms—repudiation in the most sophisticated parts of the country; widespread distrust of the Republican leadership; an inability to speak coherently on issues. All of them grow out of the same root cause: a vain search to rediscover the formula that made that unformulaic President, Ronald Reagan, so broadly appealing—even beloved. Congressional Republicans triumphed decisively in 1994 on such Reaganite issues as free trade, welfare reform, and shrinking the government. But thanks to a deficit-dis-solving economy and a dwindling memory of the Cold War, those is-

ssues were of declining importance even then, and they have given way to a bipartisan consensus. "Consensus," of course, is only another way of describing the issues that have been taken off the table. What remains for the party to talk about? On first thought, not much. The Republican strategist Ed Gillespie says, "We're like the dog that caught the bus."
 Now that there is no longer any force on the political landscape to challenge their general principles, the Republicans are clinging to power, even as they grow confused about what exactly they are supposed to do with it. They are infuriating voters by blaming them at every turn for the party's failure to win their hearts. In other words, the Republicans are looking more and more like the Democrats of the 1970s and 1980s, and less and less like the party that overthrew them.

They didn't Clinton did

STOLEN BASES

SINCE the 1960s Republican gains at the national level have been built on two trends. One is regional—the capture of more and more southern seats. The other is sociological—the tendency of suburbanites to vote Republican. The party's 1994 majority came thanks to a gain of nineteen seats in the South. In 1996 Republicans picked up another six seats in the Old Confederacy. But that only makes their repudiation in the rest of the country the more dramatic. The party has been all but obliterated in its historical bastion of New England, where it now holds just four of twenty-three congressional seats. The Democrats, in fact, dominate virtually the entire Northeast. The Republicans lost seats in 1996 all over the upper Midwest—Michigan, Wisconsin (two seats), Iowa, and Ohio (two seats). Fatally, they lost seats in all the states on the West Coast. Their justifiable optimism about the South aside, in 1996 it became clear that the Democratic Party was acquiring regional strongholds of equal or greater strength.

As Walter Dean Burnham, a political scientist at the University of Texas, has noted, the 1996 elections almost diametrically oppose those of 1896. (See maps below.) Anyone who is today middle-aged or older was born in a country with a solidly Democratic South and a predominantly Republican Midwest and Northeast, and probably will die in a country in which the Republicans hold the Old Confederacy and the Democrats dominate from the Great Lakes to the Atlantic. In effect, the two parties have spent the twentieth century swapping regional power bases.

Since it is the southern and mountain states—the Republican base—that are adding voters, congressional seats, and electoral votes, this constituency-trading was supposed to be all-gravy for the Republicans. It isn't. The bad news for the party in 1996 was not so much regional as sociological. In the suburbs—home to 40 percent of voters, by conservative esti-

mates—Clinton ran even with Bob Dole. Clinton won among eighteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds in 1996 and 1992, reversing Reagan and Bush victories among that cohort in 1984 and 1988, and he also won among Catholics, who had voted Republican in the three previous elections. (In Congress the Republicans won the Catholic vote for the first time ever in 1994; one election later they were routed, by 53 to 45 percent.)

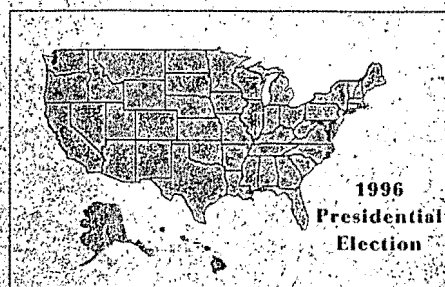
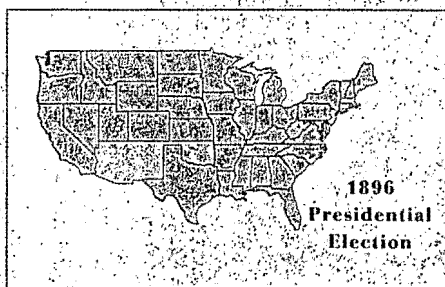
And the Republicans lost heavily among Hispanics, America's fastest-growing voting bloc, who added 1.5 million voters from 1992 to 1996, and will probably add as many again by the next presidential election. This alarming result confounded an earlier Republican optimism. Democrats who had arrogantly assumed that standard-issue minority politics would easily pull Hispanics into the party fold were proved wrong throughout the 1980s. Hispanic voters turned out to be disproportionately entrepreneurial and disproportionately receptive to Republican family-values rhetoric, and gave the party roughly a third of their votes in the three presidential

THE REPUBLICANS have reason to worry. They are a majority party that causes second thoughts among those who make them one. The Republicans are in the midst of a crisis of confidence that has many symptoms.

elections from 1980 to 1988. Leaving aside Puerto Ricans and Dominicans in New York, who *do* fit the Democrats' minority paradigm, the Republicans were doing better with the Hispanic vote than might be expected.

But the Republicans in the 104th Congress tried to shore up their Texas and California right wings with hostile rhetoric on immigration. They passed legislation that sought to deprive not just illegal but also legal immigrants of federal benefits. (Newt Gingrich and other Republicans backpedaled in 1997,

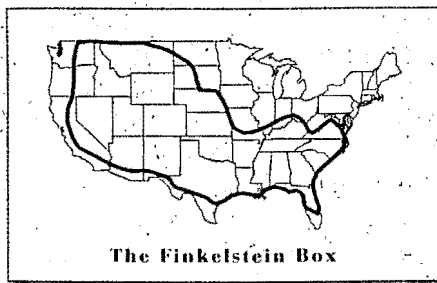
reversing some of the measures, but the damage was done.) And California's Proposition 187, supported by Republican Governor Pete Wilson and aimed at denying benefits to illegal immigrants, brought angry Hispanics to the polls in unprecedented numbers. Clinton took 72 percent of the Hispanic vote nationwide, including 81 percent in Arizona and 75 percent in California;



Democrat (or Populist)



Republican



he took 78 percent of Hispanics under thirty. He nearly split the Hispanic vote even in Florida, where 97 percent of the Cuban population voted for Reagan in 1984.

The hardening loyalty of Hispanics is a catastrophe for the Republicans' presidential prospects. According to census projections, by 2025 the country's two most populous states, California and Texas, will be 43 and 38 percent Hispanic respectively. And earlier in the decade California was hemorrhaging Republicans anyway, owing to what could be called the Fuhrman effect: a large secondary migration of older, middle-class whites who appear to have lost patience with the multiracial, multicultural society already in evidence in the state, and have moved to Idaho, Nevada, Arizona, and other more solidly Republican states of the intermountain West.

These in- and out-migrations, coupled with the growth of lifestyle liberalism and federal Democrats' careful nurturing of West Coast interests, could make California close to unwinnable for Republicans. That would put the White House, too, out of reach for a long time. The only Demo-

crat ever to win California and lose the presidency, after all, was Winfield Hancock—who was defeated by James Garfield in 1880, when the state had six electoral votes.

THE FINKELSTEIN BOX

THESE sociological and geographic shifts are part of a broad change in party allegiance. No one has been more astute in outlining its nature than the Republican consultant Arthur Finkelstein, who set the pattern for Republican triumphs in the 1980s by running aggressive, ideological campaigns that went after Democratic candidates for their uncommonsensical "liberalism"—a word that was repeated almost hypnotically in the ads and speeches he wrote. Of late Finkelstein has been criticized by some of his candidates outside the Northeast, largely for having the temerity to suggest that this message must be broadened now that liberals are drubbing Republicans on a range of new issues. These are issues on which the party has historically been silent—education, the environment, and health care, for example. The absence of a Republican voice on them helps to explain why the party has scraped up only about 40 percent of the vote for two presidential elections running.

Finkelstein uses a simple graphic device to show his Republican candidates, geographically, just how differentiated the country is. Put a pen point on Washington, D.C., and draw your way across a map of the continental United States, edging up between Iowa and Nebraska, running through the Dakotas and Montana, dropping down through Washington and Oregon and along the western border of Nevada into California, and then heading back east, with the tips of Texas and Florida south of the line. The box that results leaves you with two different political countries. (See map.) The Finkelstein Box refutes a long-standing axiom among political consultants: that as people prosper and grow more educated and cosmopolitan, they become more likely to be Republicans. In states that have their largest population centers outside the box, no Republican senatorial candidate got a majority in the last election. Inside the box no Democrat got a majority except Mary Landrieu, of Louisiana (and that barely). Although most Republican governors outside the box are pro-choice, almost every single Republican governor inside the box is pro-life.

The Republican Party is increasingly a party of the South and the mountains. The southernness of its congressional leaders—Speaker Newt Gingrich, of Georgia; House Majority Leader Dick Armey and House Majority Whip Tom DeLay, of Texas; Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, of Mississippi; Senate Majority Whip Don Nickles, of Oklahoma—only heightens the identification. There is a big problem with having a southern, as opposed to a midwestern or a California, base. Southern interests diverge from those of the rest of the country, and the southern presence in the Repub-

CORRESPONDENCE

"I hat you," my daughter writes in her newfound mastery of phonics. She has taken to sending me notes from kindergarten: love notes, joke notes, problem notes, and now angry notes that say I don't care about her feelings. These notes arrive after lunch in envelopes, like the mail, marked by hearts or skulls. You are "meen" she says today, you just sit around and "rit" and don't let me watch "moves." Why do her notes carry more weight than her spoken accusations? She isn't the same child now: she is an owner, a thief.

—TERESA CADER

lican Party has passed a "tipping point," at which it began to alienate voters from other regions.

As southern control over the Republican agenda grows, the party alienates even conservative voters in other regions. The prevalence of right-to-work laws in southern states may be depriving Republicans of the socially conservative midwestern trade unionists whom they managed to split in the Reagan years, and sending Reagan Democrats back to their ancestral party in the process. Anti-government sentiment makes little sense in New England, where government, as even those who hate it will concede, is neither remote nor unresponsive.

The most profound clash between the South and everyone else, of course, is a cultural one. It arises from the southern tradition of putting values—particularly Christian values—at the center of politics. This is not the same as saying that the Republican Party is "too far right"; Americans consistently tell pollsters that they are conservative on values issues. It is,

annual Washington marches still rankles the party's southern wing. Although he several times sent a message by phone hookup, he never once greeted them on the Mall.

Grover Norquist, the president of Americans for Tax Reform, disputes that the two wings were ever at odds, and insists that libertarians and moralists can still cohabit. And since Norquist is a key—if not *the* key—adviser to Newt Gingrich, his interpretation can be taken as a semi-official Republican understanding of what's left of Ronald Reagan's electorate. "The Reagan coalition is the Leave Us Alone coalition," Norquist says. "Tax activists want their paychecks left alone. Pro-family people want their kids left alone. Ralph Reed's constituents are not interested in running other people's lives. They don't care what odd people do in San Francisco on Saturday afternoon."

For his part, Reed, formerly the executive director of the Christian Coalition and now a Georgia-based political and public-affairs consultant, thinks the two wings get along as well as ever. Looking at the Republican field for President in 2000, he says, "Traditional supply-siders like Steve Forbes are enthusiastically embracing the social dogma of the party. Lamar Alexander is moving to the right, guys like John Ashcroft are picking up steam, John Kasich is talking about faith in God. I see a holistic message developing." To an extent Reed is right: this is not 1963 or 1964, when the Rockefeller

THE SOUTHERN presence in the Republican Party has now passed a "tipping point." As southern control over the Republican agenda has grown, the party has alienated even conservative voters in other regions.

rather, that the Republicans have narrowly defined "values" as the folkways of one regional subculture, and have urged their imposition on the rest of the country. Again, the non-southerners who object to this style of politics may be just as conservative as those who practice it. But they are put off to see that "traditional" values are now defined by the majority party as the values of the U-Haul-renting denizens of two-year-old churches and three-year-old shopping malls.

Southerners now wag the Republican dog. How did the party let that happen?

THE PARTY

GEORGE McGOVERN BUILT

THROUGHOUT the 1980s the Reagan coalition—economic and social libertarians on the one hand, and largely Christian "social issues" voters on the other—were in rough balance. If anything, southern Christians were the low men on the Reaganite totem pole, coddled far less than tax activists in the prosperous coastal cities. That Reagan paid only lip service to pro-life activists during their an-

wing and the Goldwater wing fought an intraparty civil war. Yet there is something more troubling going on. Every Republican candidate now has to "make his bones," to prove his good faith by declaring his unequivocal willingness to alienate the "elites" of the country. Describing the Christian right to a reporter last fall, the former Washington congressman Randy Tate, who is now the executive director of the Christian Coalition, said, "They don't just want to be given crumbs off the table and taken for granted." Far from proving Republican tolerance, the rapprochement Reed points to is merely the sound of the Republicans' cosmopolitan wing crying "Uncle."

This southern takeover is part of a natural, if paradoxical, transformation. It parallels the way the Goldwater debacle of 1964 destabilized the Democratic Party—by sending alienated northern Republican progressives into the Democrats' ranks. These progressives joined with northern urbanites to forge a party that was more to their liking, though it was too liberal for the Democratic Party's stalwart southern conservatives—and, eventually, too liberal for the nation as a whole. In like fashion, Democratic excesses since the seventies may have destabilized the Republican Party by chasing those southerners into the

fold, transforming the Republican Party into a machine that is steadily becoming too conservative for the country.

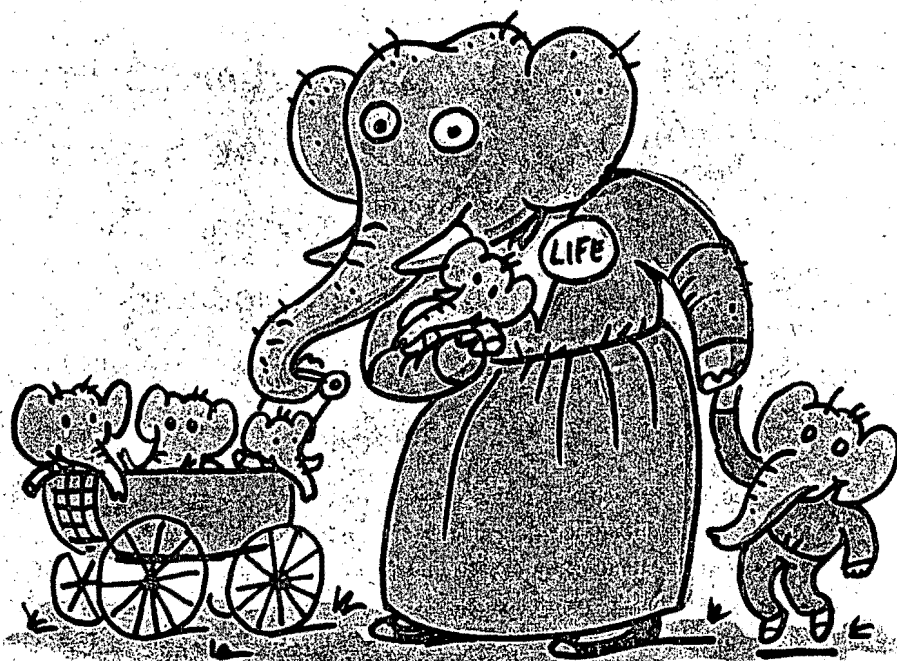
There has always been tension between the Republicans' constituent wings. What long masked it was the Cold War. The Reaganite party was never a two-part but always a three-part coalition, of social conservatives, economic conservatives, and foreign-policy hawks. The hawks' group was minuscule, but it happened that their passion (anti-communism) was shared by Christians and capitalists alike. This was a passion that Democrats—with a few notable exceptions, including Senator Scoop Jackson, of Washington—were renouncing by the mid-1970s. Foreign-policy hawkishness became a permanent electoral advantage for the Republicans, but just as important, it became the party's internal glue. When the Cold War ended, the coalition lost its last point of common ground. As one Republican consultant says, "In 1992 we go to Houston, and Jack Kemp and Pat Buchanan look up at one another and say, 'What the hell are you doing in my party?'"

The Republicans have been, in a word, "McGovernized." We think of McGovernization as a Democratic problem, largely because George McGovern was a South Dakota Democrat when he led a commission that reformed party structures three decades ago, increasing the importance of state primaries and thus shifting power away from compromise-oriented national conventions. Not incidentally, McGovern went on to suffer electoral humiliation in the first presidential election conducted under the reforms. The Republicans, too, soon adopted boss-proof electoral rules. These reforms were implemented just when money and television were driving politics away from "local" issues (that is, bread-and-butter ones) and toward "national" issues (that is, ideological ones). One party was bound to win and one to lose. In retrospect—and it was only the aftermath of Richard Nixon's disgrace that blinded people to it at the time—the ideological configuration of the country in the 1970s gave the Republican right a monumental advantage over the Democratic left. What was the 1976 Reagan movement if not a McGovernized groundswell?

Now the shoe is on the other foot. Overideologization is beginning to work against the Republicans. At the 1996 convention Christian conservatives moved to make their intra-party advantage permanent and institutional, much as racial and social liberals had done before the 1972 Democratic convention. Control over appointments to the Resolutions Com-

mittee was wrested from the national chairman and given to the (largely hard-line) delegates. Organized interest groups of the values right thus grew strong enough to bend the party to their own interests, at the expense of the party's. An unstoppable McGovernesque radicalization was under way.

At a January Republican National Committee meeting near Palm Springs delegates defeated—handily, but only after much effort—an initiative to withhold campaign funds from Republicans who didn't oppose late-term, "partial-birth" abortion. It should be noted that three quarters of Americans back Republicans on the merits of the issue—it may be their single best issue at present. But the vote was not about partial-birth abortion, because there are only a half dozen Republican congressional candidates in the entire country who would have been affected by the initiative. If more evidence were necessary that sectional interests trump party ones, last fall the National Right to Life Committee



began running ads against *pro-life* congressmen, including the Republican Zach Wamp, of Tennessee, for supporting a campaign-finance reform that the NRLC feared would threaten its ability to raise money.

At the same time, the abortion issue illustrates that the problems of a southernized Republican Party are not simply a matter of how far right the party is. Opinion on abortion has swung sharply toward the Republican position since the controversy over partial-birth abortions began. A January ABC poll found that the statement "A woman should be able to get an abortion if she decides she wants one no matter what the reason" drew the lowest level of support (50-47) it has since early in the Reagan Administration. Even so, polls asking Americans, in effect, which party they trust more on

the subject aren't budging. Why not? Many Republican politicians complain off the record about party rhetoric on social issues. It's not the issue of abortion that's driving people away, they argue, so much as it is the broader cultural claims of those who put it forward.

In this sense, conservative Christians are to the Republican Party what blacks were to the Democrats in the 1970s: its most loyal troops, the source of its most talented activists, its moral core. For that reason they are also the main source of radicalization and overreach. The activists who in the 1970s married the Democratic Party to a caricature of black interests burdened the party with busing, affirmative action, leniency on crime—all unpopular issues. As voters began to drift away, Democrats resorted to ever-more-preposterous accusations of Republican “racism.” From there it was easy for the Republicans to taunt the Democrats into pursuing policies that taxed the patience even of moderate voters. Attacks on the Demo-

rest of the country grows alienated from the party's southern message. Most members of the party are content with this arrangement, but they're also hoping that the South can be transformed enough to keep voters elsewhere from fleeing the party in droves. “I think the South is a new South,” says the Republican strategist Arnold Steinberg, of California. “You'll see southern cities that are more progressive.”

“On the other hand,” Steinberg admits, “the North doesn't exactly realize that.”

ACLU REPUBLICANS

AGAIN, it is simplistic to see Republican politics as merely too far right, particularly at a time when the difference in total spending between Clinton's and Congress's budget proposals, for instance, is just a fraction of a percentage point. But it's understandable that voters

have found Republicans “frightening,” given the dovetailing of southern Republican anti-government rhetoric with that of right-wing terrorists. From this standpoint the two signal events of the 104th Congress were the Oklahoma City bombing, on April 19, 1995, and the government shutdowns of 1995-1996, advanced in a belligerent rhetoric of “revolution” that, according to Goetas and other pollsters, Americans distrust—and none more so than the Republicans' own base.

On the morning that Timothy McVeigh sent hundreds of innocents to their graves, the lead story in all the major newspapers was President Clinton's disastrous speech of the night before, the low point of his entire presidency, in which he argued pathetically that he was still “relevant” to the country's politics. Clinton's numbers quickly began to turn around. Newt Gingrich's popularity, meanwhile, remained strikingly low. Gingrich called “pathetic” the media's conflation of his “revolution” and McVeigh's. But the court of public opinion is not a court of law, and politicians who show too much overlap with a force that Americans consider a genuine menace are punished for it, as the Democrats were during the Cold War.

And, like the Democrats of the seventies and eighties, the Republicans in the aftermath of Oklahoma City compounded the problem through their nitpicking-libertarian indifference to Americans' fears about armed violence. In thrall to their supporters in the National Rifle Association, the Republicans were soon trying to repeal a 1994 assault-weapons ban, after a brief post-bombing breather. And what could be more like the Democrats' “coddling of criminals” circa 1975 than the Re-

THE MOST destructive interest group on the right is the NRA. The Republicans' rabidly pro-gun rhetoric has put the Democrats on the side of cops and crime control, the Republicans on the side of criminals and crime.

crats for coddling “welfare queens” worked politically less because of their substance than because they goaded the Democrats into defending the worst kind of welfare abuse.

But there is an easily overlooked difference between southern Christian Republicans and black Democrats—or any Democratic group, for that matter. The great Democratic electoral liability has always been that the party is a congeries of constituencies—blacks, the welfare-dependent, Jews, union members, feminists, teachers—the loss of any one of which can cost an election. None of the individual Democratic constituencies can produce a commanding majority on its own, but for that reason none is particularly frightening, either. Southern-style Christians are a powerful bloc in a way that none of the Democratic blocs is. Ed Goetas, the president of the Tarrance Group, a Republican polling organization, routinely includes in his polls the question. “Has something happened in your life that has caused a recommitment to Christ?” Forty-three percent of respondents answer yes. This is a big enough bloc to take over not just a party but a country.

The bet that Republicans are making is that the South will add congressional seats and electoral votes faster than the

publican attack on "taggants" in the 1996 terrorism bill? Congressional Republicans, in the name of the Second Amendment, fought to prevent the use of chemicals that would allow plastic explosives to be traced. This kind of procedural excuse for letting murderers walk led one analyst at the conservative Heritage Foundation to coin the term "ACLU Republicans."

An apt parallel. (If Christians are the blacks of the Republican coalition, then the NRA is its ACLU.) The Republicans are not yet as beholden to their special-interest groups—their marksmen, polluters, and plutocrats—as Democrats are to their teachers' unions and race agitators, their feminists and ambulance chasers. But guns are special. (The bipartisan political consultant Dick Morris maintains that the single most destructive interest group on the right is the NRA.) Representative Henry Hyde, an Illinois Republican, holds guns—not abortion—to blame for the gender gap. Rabidly pro-gun rhetoric has succeeded in



putting the Democrats on the side of the cops and crime control, Republicans on the side of criminals and crime. Suddenly, in the wake of Oklahoma City, Americans noticed that it was conservatives, not liberals, who assailed the FBI and railed against putting 100,000 cops on the streets. It was the NRA, not the ACLU, that was raising money by attacking the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms as "jackbooted thugs." Today it is the right, not the left, on which suspicion falls first whenever a bomb goes off. The identification of Gingrich with McVeigh may have been excessive, but there was no denying that sometime since the Reagan Administration the Republicans had replaced the Democrats as the To-Hell-in-a-Handbasket Party, the party more congenial to haters of America.

POINTY-HEADED REPUBLICANS

THE rhetorical corner that the Republicans got stuck in after Oklahoma City convinced many of them of what non-Republicans had known for months: that the party had a major problem in its leader, House Speaker Newt Gingrich. First, in his self-aggrandizement, Gingrich set the tone by initially accepting a multimillion-dollar book advance from HarperCollins even before the start of his speakership, a speakership in which he was planning to ask Americans to make a number of difficult sacrifices. (After an uproar he announced that he would forgo the advance.) Second, in a nails-on-the-blackboard loquacity that shows no sign of abating. Last January, outlining his "vision for America" before the Cobb County (Georgia) Chamber of Commerce, Gingrich suggested that students read the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence: "It will do all of us good if every child

begins to learn that they're endowed by the Creator and, by the way, so is the person next to them," he said. Fine, so far, even inspiring—but then came the hallmark, cannot shut up Gingrich touch: "So, if you're a rapist, the person you're raping is endowed by God."

Asked at a press conference last September whether he worried that Gingrich was making headway in attacking the Internal Revenue Service, Michael McCurry, the White House press secretary, responded, "Since I think the speaker, last time I checked, is probably one institution in American political life less popular than the IRS, the more he wants to get up and talk, I guess the better off we are." He's right:

as a former college professor, Gingrich suffers from the stereotype developed by George Wallace but raised to an art by Republicans. He's a "pointy-head"—strange, abstract, condescending, with radical plans for reshaping society even though he's never had a job in the real world.

Under Gingrich's leadership the Republicans have not merely replaced the Democrats of the 1980s; they have become them. Gingrich was foremost among Republicans in diagnosing the corruption of the incumbency-protection system that Democratic majorities had consolidated in the wake of Watergate. The Democrats created ever-proliferating subcommittees, controlling ever-more-capricious regulations, to coerce big political donors into giving the party a campaign-finance monopoly. From 1973 on Gingrich called the system

a "dictatorship." But he owes his rise not to his diagnosis of the system but to his mastery of it. Last year Gingrich was hit with a \$300,000 fine for using tax-exempt donations for political purposes and for giving false information to the House Ethics Committee. And since coming to power Gingrich's Republicans have been inclined to inhabit, rather than demolish, the corrupt edifice that the Democrats built. Whip Tom DeLay is said to keep lists of "friendly" and "unfriendly" PACs, and has made clear to lobbyists that they will have to send more-conservative operatives to Capitol Hill if they want to get business done.

For much of his tenure Gingrich's approval ratings have hovered in the twenties, even dropping into the teens at times, and the Republican Party suffers to the extent that he's viewed as a national leader. Although profile-oriented news media have certainly played a role in identifying the party with its least popular member, Gingrich bears the lion's

ganomics, and however haphazardly it may have been implemented, its central insight—that beyond a certain level taxes retard investment, hinder economic growth, and lead to declining tax revenues—was merely common sense. At the beginning of the Reagan Administration taxes were indeed at such a level—70 percent for top earners. Today, with top marginal rates in the 30s, they're not. In a climate like this not only do tax cuts always produce less revenue, but modest tax hikes, such as the ones in Clinton's 1993 budget, produce more. Particularly now that U.S. interest rates are highly competitive in a rapidly globalizing capital market, tax cuts can no longer be justified on supply-side grounds. With the budget back in balance (owing partly to Clinton's rate hikes for top earners), and with voters leery of going back into the red, tax cuts are hard to defend on political grounds, too.

There is, however, a way that Republicans can keep promising to cut taxes. The old-fashioned way: by cutting spending. This should play to a Republican strength, because cutting spending means shrinking government, which has always been the noblest and most stirring part of the Republican philosophy, because it means giving people more freedom—and, arguably, not just economic freedom. In 1994 the Republicans promised exactly that with the Contract With America: the list of ten propositions—tax cuts, social-

service cuts, and such government reforms as term limits—announced as a manifesto six weeks before the 104th Congress was voted into office. There were two problems with the contract. First, two thirds of Americans didn't know it existed. Second, Republican polling, done by Frank Luntz, had been fraudulently presented to the public as showing that the contract commanded 60 percent support in all its particulars. An NBC/*Wall Street Journal* poll, in fact, found that people disagreed, by 45 to 35 percent, "with most of what the GOP House is proposing to do."

The structural reforms in the contract were the most popular of its items—although all the Republicans promised to do was to bring them to a vote. The Republicans never succeeded in passing the electoral reforms (like term limits) explicit in the contract. Nor could they have, as they well knew, given the impossibility of winning enough Senate votes. What's more, running as the "revolutionary" overthrowers of a corrupt system tends to produce self-delegitimizing victories. If the reform-minded "Perot voters" who played such a big role in the Republicans' 1994 victory were preoccupied with systemic—not economic or cultural—mat-

EVEN IF the Republicans were serious about shrinking government (and they are not), there are good structural reasons that people would begin to desert the party despite accepting its small-government message.

share of blame. Early in the 1980s, after all, the Republicans sought to forge precisely such a direct identification between Tip O'Neill and the Democratic Party. It didn't work, because O'Neill explicitly rejected it, saying that he was elected only by his constituents. Which is true. It's true of Gingrich, too. But Gingrich has treated descriptions of him as the Republican "leader" as an opportunity to compare himself to Churchill, Eisenhower, and FDR, as the former representative Susan Molinari remarked in her recent book.

THE FORBES POSTCARD

If it is taxes and spending, the Republicans' bread and butter, that best show how superannuated the party's agenda is. Just as the Democratic Party fell apart in the seventies and eighties when it could add no more to its proudest achievement, the social safety net, the Republicans are finding that their tax revolution is complete and they have no more reforms to offer the public that are sensible even on their own terms.

However much the Democrats may have derided Rea-



ters, then the very fact that the Republicans *could* get elected to a majority robbed the party of an issue.

It was the small-government part of the contract that Gingrich publicized and pursued most forcefully. In a series of maneuvers that owed much to his dismal tactical judgment, the new Republican majority frightened voters with what appeared to be a recklessly anti-government agenda. Most famous were the two government shutdowns in the winter of 1995-1996, but there were smaller confrontations as well: over school lunches, whose federal subsidies the Republicans wanted to eliminate; over disaster relief to the flooded Midwest, which Republicans held up to win budget concessions; over tax cuts that almost exactly matched Medicare cuts. These minor incidents mobilized much of the American public on behalf of a cause it didn't know it espoused: keeping government roughly the same size.

Gingrich had maneuvered the Republicans into a posi-

ther they had been disgraceful panders all along or they were just as reckless as their opponents had said. They suddenly had the worst of both worlds. They were indeed too far to the right for much of the country on social issues. But they were too far to the left for the base that had sacrificed so much to bring them to this point.

To be fair, even if the Republicans were serious about shrinking government (and they're not), there are good structural reasons that people would begin to desert the party despite accepting its small-government message. There must be a reason that countries all over the world have demanded reforms in their welfare states—and entrusted the *more statist* parties, which created the rickety structures in the first place, to enact those reforms. The reason may be this: A welfare state that funds itself on a pay-as-you-go basis, as all welfare states do, creates a "vesting problem."

Voters, even voters who think of the Great Society as a con game and a wretched investment, are on the hook for somewhere between a quarter and half of the money they've earned in their lives. The costs are already sunk. The benefits, however, are in most cases delayed until retirement. Voters will thus be inclined to look kindly on the party that promises to defend the benefits they've already paid for, and to look askance at the party that says, "Just trust me." Particularly when that party is led by a pointy-headed, never-met-a-payroll academic like Newt Gingrich.

The Republicans' loss on the Contract With America set up a chain reaction of political catastrophe. When they gave up small government, they gave up any credible tax plan as well. Too bad: tax cuts were the part of Republicanism that everyone loved, provided the deficit was kept in check. When the Republicans can no longer promise tax cuts, they're left with only the most abrasive aspects of the Reagan message, kept under wraps throughout the 1980s: the southern morals business. If the Republicans didn't believe in shrinking government, they didn't believe in the freedom that it was supposed to promote—which made it much harder to argue that their moral agenda was being advanced in the name of live and let live. And what did they have besides the moral agenda? A grab bag of minor issues dredged up from 1988: school choice, the Strategic Defense Initiative, tort reform, abortion. Worthy issues all, but none of them capable of winning elections.

So the Republicans, unable to promise tax cuts credibly, have decided to promise them incredibly. What's new is the language: regressivizing taxes is now couched in terms

SUCCESSFUL PARTIES create their own monsters. Reaganomics helped to create a mass upper-middle class, a national culture of childless yuppies who want gay rights, bike trails, and smoke-free restaurants.

tion where either they stood for the noblest kind of self-reliance and freedom or they stood for nothing. As soon as self-reliance was shown to be a bit less popular than Frank Luntz's bogus polling had assured them it would be, they decided they stood for nothing. There were still plenty of opportunities to carve out positions defending freedom against Democratic depredations. But the Republicans wanted none of it. Look at cigarettes: for all the money the party has received from tobacco interests, it is now seemingly impossible to find a Republican who will publicly disassociate himself from the largely Democratic campaign to regulate smoking. Look at affirmative action, the linchpin of the Democratic Party's monopoly on black votes: a petrified Gingrich was soon trying to bottle up in committee a bill that would have abolished it. In 1996 the Republicans chose as their presidential nominee Bob Dole, the archetypal stalwart of liberal-Republican support for the welfare state.

The Republicans have been on the defensive ever since. If they would abandon in a matter of months what they had proclaimed to be the heart and soul of their mission, then ei-

of abolishing the IRS and instituting a flat tax that you can file by filling out a postcard. Of course, since investment income is exempt from taxes under most flat-tax plans, the program is destined to be popular only until some Democratic strategist writes an ad showing that Steve Forbes would pay zero taxes on his enormous stock portfolio. The old Republican program to abolish estate taxes is advanced as the abolition of the "death tax." Even on entitlement reform, Gingrich's talk of "privatizing" Social Security has now yielded to rhetoric about giving taxpayers "personal accounts."

This is little more than a marriage of Reaganite issues—on which the Republicans have already won their victory—to Clintonite sweet talk. The Republicans would like to think that Americans are the dupes of a lecherous Arkansas sleazeball, just as the Democrats in the 1980s saw voters as gulled by a senile B-movie warmonger. But Clinton's success, like Reagan's, has to do with American beliefs and the extent to which he embodies them and his opponents do not.

THE HILLARY CLUSTER

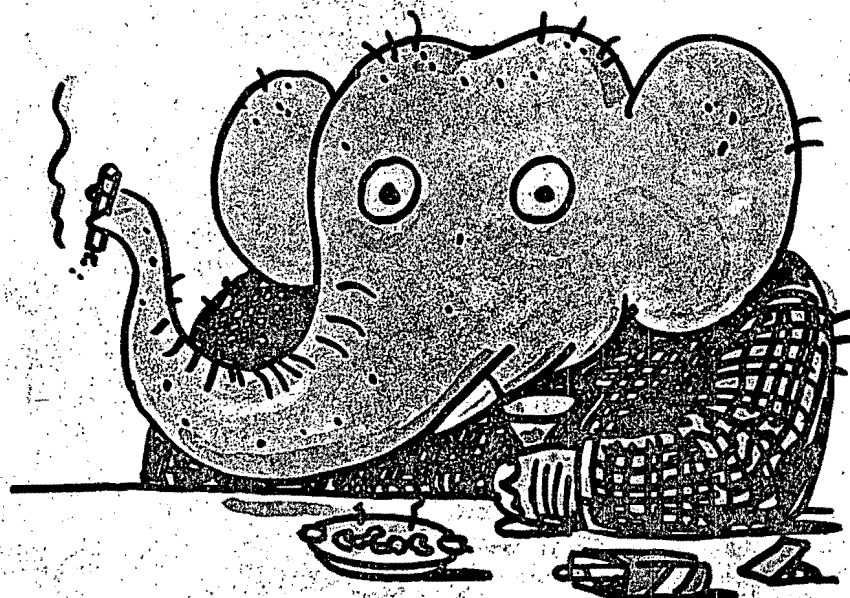
THERE is an ideological component to Clinton's success and the Republicans' failure. The end of the Cold War, the increasing significance of information technology, and the growth of identity politics have caused a social revolution since the badly misunderstood 1980s.

It's difficult to tell exactly what is going on, but in today's politics such subjects for discussion as Communist imperialism and welfare queens have been replaced by gay rights, women in the workplace, environmentalism, and smoking. On those issues the country has moved leftward. In 1984 the Republicans held a convention that was at times cheerily anti-homosexual, and triumphed at the polls. In 1992 the party was punished for a Houston convention at which Pat Buchanan made his ostensibly less controversial remarks about culture war. Reagan's Interior Secretary James Watt once teasingly drew a distinction between "liberals" and "Americans" while discussing water use, and pushed a plan to allow oil drilling on national wildlife refuges. By 1997 the New Jersey Republican Party was begging its leaders to improve the party's image by joining the Sierra Club.

This is in part a story of how successful parties create their own monsters. Just as Roosevelt's and Truman's labor legis-

lation helped Irish and Polish and Italian members of the working class move to the suburbs (where they became Republicans), Reaganomics helped to create a mass upper-middle class, a national culture of childless yuppies who want gay rights, bike trails, and smoke-free restaurants. One top Republican consultant estimates that 35 to 40 percent of the electorate now votes on a cluster of issues created by "New Class" professionals—abortion rights, women's rights, the environment, health care, and education. He calls it the "Hillary cluster." The political theorist Jean Bethke Elshstain calls it, more revealingly, "real politics."

And with this new landscape of issues, Republicans aren't even on the map. Because of the Reagan victory, the Democrats went through the period of globalization and the end of communism amid self-doubt and soul-searching. The experience left them a supple party that quickly became familiar with the Hillary cluster. Bill Clinton's ideology here is



necessarily an inchoate one, and in his heart of hearts he may be to the left of where the country is. But he is the first President to understand that the Hillary cluster is not on one side or the other of a partisan fault line (and that is his greatest contribution to American politics). The American people are not "for" or "against" gay rights. They overwhelmingly say they favor equal rights for gays—but then draw the line at gays in the military. They're for AIDS-research funding—but think gays are pushing their agenda too fast. Americans aren't "for" or "against" environmentalism. They believe that global warming is going on—but waffle on whether major steps should be taken to block it. They have shown a tolerance for paying more taxes to protect the environment; but few list it as their No. 1 concern when asked by pollsters.

Such jagged political fault lines make Americans' ideology look ambiguous by old definitions. In fact, the Boston University sociologist Alan Wolfe doubts whether the old polarity of "conservatives" and "liberals" is any longer meaningful at least on the increasingly important cultural issues. The big question is whether this blending of conservatives and liberals is happening at the party level—whether President Clinton has effected a wholesale change in his party. Ed Goetas and other Republican pollsters say there's no indication that Clinton is enticing people back to the Democrats. The best evidence, however, from 1996 exit polls is that the Democrats are no longer a liberal party—or at least they are far less liberal than the Republicans are conservative. Whereas 58 percent of Republicans identify themselves as conservative, only a third of Democrats identify themselves as liberal.

To the Republicans, it doesn't much matter. They've missed all of this, and continue to campaign against the Democrats

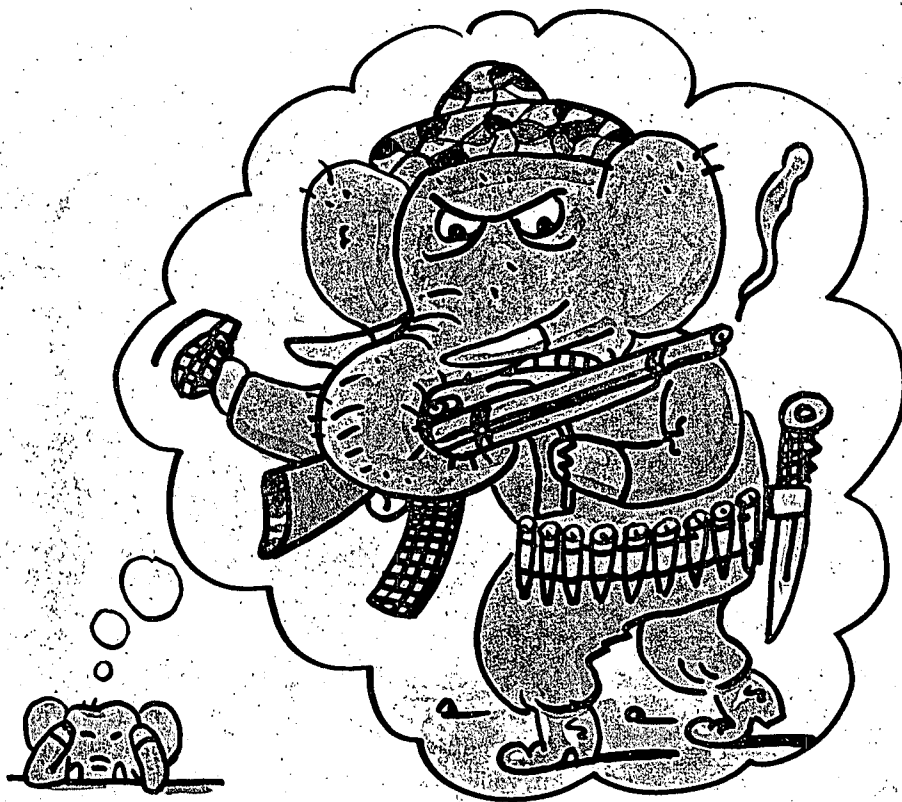
without telling people whose policies they are, they approve of them.' So what! Voters are merely making judgments based on the credibility of the party as an institution. And they're right. In 1980 I knew if people understood what many liberal Democrats really wanted, our vote would go down.

People are finding out that the Republicans don't want anything at all other than to re-elect enough of their members to keep enjoying the fruits of a congressional majority. Lacking a voice on the new 1990s issues, the Republicans are retreating to the issues on which they used to have a voice. In this they resemble those "boomerang kids" who after their first career reversal return home in their late twenties to live with their parents. Republicans are going home to Ronald Reagan but are finding that theirs is no longer the only house on the block promoting the most popular part of his agenda—free-market economics. They're finding that there's nothing to do around the house except dress up their old ideas in the clothes of Clintonite insincerity. Where is the broad argument of a "natural majority" here?

There is none. The Republicans are too conservative: their deference to their southern base is persuading much of the country that their vision is a sour and crabbed one. But they're too liberal, too, as their all-out retreat from shrinking the government indicates. At the same time, the Republicans have passed none of the reforms that ingratiated the party with the "radical middle." The Republicans' biggest problem is not their ideology but their lack of one. Stigmatized as rightists, behaving like leftists, and ultimately standing for nothing, they're in the worst of all possible worlds.

That's why the Republicans have spent the past several months waiting for a Clinton scandal to

blossom. Like the Democrats of the 1970s, they are now the party with a stake in institutional disruption and bad news. And their resemblance to the corrupt dynasty they overthrew does not stop there. Their party is now directionless, with only two skills to recommend it: first, identifying and prosecuting the excesses of its opponents; second, rigging the campaign finance system to protect its incumbency long after it has ceased having any ideas that would justify incumbency. The Republican Party is an obsolescent one. It may continue to rule, disguised as a majority by electoral leg- erdemain. But it will be a long time before the party is again able to rule from a place in Americans' hearts. ☼



they wish they were contesting against Jimmy Carter and his economy, against George McGovern and his foreign policy, against Jesse Jackson and his urban policy. They treat the past two presidential elections—the worst back-to-back disasters that either party has suffered since Roosevelt clobbered Herbert Hoover and Alf Landon in 1932 and 1936—as aberrations, much as certain Democrats throughout the eighties insisted that the only "typical" elections since Truman were in 1960 and 1976. According to Jim Chapin, for decades a New York Democratic activist and now the senior policy adviser to the city's public advocate, "Republicans remind me of us in the late seventies and early eighties. They say, 'If you lay our policies out

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BYLINE: ~~E. J. Dionne Jr.~~

BODY:

If you want to know who's behind the turmoil in the Republican Party, Republicans will happily supply you with a long list.

Some blame House Speaker Newt Gingrich, while others blame the House leaders who conspired with rebels to overthrow him. Some point to moderates who dilute the party's message, others to right-wingers whose message would drive the party into political oblivion. Some accuse conservative commentators and columnists, saying they lack loyalty and discipline. The commentators say their critics won't face unpleasant facts. And all Republicans blame President Clinton for craftily stealing their issues.

But there is a common thread to many of the complaints, and it transcends the failures of particular individuals or specific strategies. Since the 1996 elections, ~~Republicans -- who once prided themselves on big ideas and big commitments -- have not known what to say or where to lead.~~

This view comes from many varieties of Republican. Consider this testimony from interviews last week:

~~"We don't have an agenda of our own," said Rep. David McIntosh (R-Ind.), a staunch conservative and Gingrich critic. "We've agreed to let Clinton lead and we'll react and that's led to our coalition falling apart."~~

~~"There's a leadership vacuum and an ideological vacuum that nobody's been able to fill," said Rep. Scott Klug (R-Wis.), a moderate on some issues and conservative on others. "We've lost a lot of our vision about what we're going to do in the next two years."~~

"The 1994 election was a big election, but there's no denying that it was primarily a negative election," said William Kristol, editor of the conservative Weekly Standard. "The task of leadership is to take a negative mandate, whether it was 1789 in France or 1932 in America, and turn it into a positive mandate. It seems pretty clear that the Republicans failed at that."

They failed, of course, when they failed to oust Bill Clinton in 1996. As Kristol never stopped reminding audiences for two years after 1994, congressional election victories can be transforming only when they eventually lead to a takeover of the presidency. The Democrats' big gains in the 1930 congressional elections did not mark the beginning of a long Democratic Era. Franklin D. Roosevelt's victory in 1932 did that.

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The GOP's 1996 defeat opened the way for the rebirth of factionalism, as defeat always does. ~~(After the election, Republican pollster Tony Fabrizio did a study that unearthed five warring factions in the party. He labeled them supply~~ ~~siders, deficit hawks, moralists, cultural populists and progressives.~~ Whether Republicans bought Fabrizio's labels or not, it was hard to refute his argument that these are not the glorious Reagan days.

~~What gnaws at Republicans to this day is how Clinton maneuvered them, and they maneuvered themselves, into a strategy that guaranteed Clinton's re-election and nearly cost them their House majority.~~

Key players in this drama were members of the Class of 1994, the "revolutionaries" for whom compromise was a concept born in a corrupt and despoiled Washington. It's hard to remember now what heroes those new members were to the entire Republican party when they first arrived. They seemed to vindicate what had long been Gingrich's thesis: that an older and amiable Republican party leadership had been too accommodating to Washington's ways which, in the end, were the ways of Democrats and the New Deal. The new guard believed that confrontation in pursuit of total victory was no vice and compromise in pursuit of re-election was no virtue.

Gingrich not only drew energy from the rebels but set entirely new expectations for what a speaker should be and what he should do. As the main architect of the Republican triumph -- the one Republican who never stopped thinking about tomorrow and the victory it would bring -- he had this right, and he seized it. For a while, he displaced Bill Clinton as the main voice in Washington, taking on the aura of President Gingrich.

The combination of the uncompromising freshmen and the highly exposed Gingrich proved a killer for the Republicans once they decided to fight Clinton on the 1995 budget and shut the government down -- twice. The supreme confidence of the freshmen forced the leadership to stick to a confrontational strategy. Gingrich had been so successful in establishing himself as Washington's supreme figure that he and his party were blamed for the shutdowns.

"The government shutdown sent shivers through the party and that created more doubt among anti-government Republicans because they were so confident when they pushed the shutdown that it would work," said Peter Wehner, policy director for Empower America, a conservative advocacy organization. "The confidence grew from a belief that government was so unpopular that people would cheer. And they didn't."

If anyone seemed to learn from the failure, it was Gingrich himself, who regularly lectures all who will listen on the distinction among tactics, strategy and long-term objectives. If confrontation didn't work, then victory would have to come more slowly and by other means.

Republicans who missed an opportunity to make a deal with Clinton in 1995 wouldn't miss it again in 1997. Who could complain if Republicans won Clinton's blessing for some of their most cherished goals -- tax cuts, especially in capital gains, and a balanced budget?

This view, says Rep. Christopher Shays (R-Conn.), a Gingrich ally, is simply common sense. "We only have a margin of 11 votes in a body where 435 people vote," he said. "We still want to reduce the size of government and cut taxes,

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but we can't move as quickly as we want to because we don't have the White House and the Senate is more cautious."

One person's compromise, however, is another's sell-out. GOP dissidents speak of Gingrich as liberal Democrats speak of Clinton: Each side worries its leader is too ready to cave.

Here is where tactics and strategy collide with vision. Some Republicans, such as Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Tex.), thought the budget didn't include enough spending cuts and falsely promised balance. Advocates of radical tax reform, such as former GOP presidential candidate Steve Forbes, saw the tax cuts as penny ante.

Within the House, McIntosh said, conservatives would at least like to see the Republicans "fight and fight and fight" and then "compromise at the very last minute." There is nothing wrong, in McIntosh's view, with standing up for principle by sending Clinton a budget bill even if it is absolutely clear he will veto it.

But Republican revolutionaries aren't as fashionable as they used to be. "A lot of the people who are going after Newt Gingrich are the same people who would have had him go further in the government shutdown," said Fabrizio. "Where would they have left the party? The revolutionaries thought when they were elected that they were given Superman uniforms and they were impervious to pain. They're not."

"Some believed they were especially anointed to define what the righteous course was for the party," said Rep. Rick Lazio (R-N.Y.). Lazio sees the recent attempted coup as stemming in part in Gingrich's break with other Republican leaders in opposing the strategy that turned the Disaster Relief Bill into the Republican Political Disaster Act of 1997. Republicans tacked on their ideological extras, courting Clinton's veto. Clinton vetoed and won the public-relations fight almost exactly as he did in 1995.

If the recent leadership struggle were simply an internecine House matter -- power politics mixed with pungent personalities -- it might not mean much. And some of the objections to Gingrich have nothing to do with ideology. Even his supporters worry that his unpopularity will harm Republicans in 1998. Some complain of his taking decisions and deals without consultation. And it says something that every one of Gingrich's top lieutenants was sufficiently dissatisfied with him that they were either complicit in the effort to topple him, or willing to entertain that possibility. It says something about them, but also about him.

But the Gingrich coup fiasco is also a symptom of the Republican idea vacuum described by Klug and others. "It's hard for our generals to maintain leadership when they can't point a direction, when they can't say what to fight for," said Alex Castellanos, a Republican consultant.

"It's not the lack of an agenda -- there are a lot of items on the agenda," said Wehner. "The problem is that there isn't a lot of passion about two or three items on the agenda."

But there is passion in the inside-the-party battles over what those two or three items will be. The divide between libertarians and social conservatives

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has never gone away, and Clinton gave it a new opportunity to play out when he nominated Republican Gov. William Weld of Massachusetts to be ambassador to Mexico. Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), as conservative on social issues as Weld is not, has vowed to block Weld's appointment. Odds are Helms will win, but not before Weld has a chance to expose divisions on issues such as abortion that Republicans keep trying to bury. "In plain language, I am not Senator Helms's kind of Republican," Weld said earlier this month. "I do not pass his litmus test on social policy. Nor do I want to."

Those divisions aside, even the Republican standbys that Gingrich emphasizes, such as smaller government, don't pack the same punch they did three years ago. Adam Meyerson, editor of the Heritage Foundation's magazine, Policy Review, thinks that conservatives are in better shape than they seem and that Americans appreciate the "general direction" of the small government agenda. But "they aren't necessarily on board with the steps for getting there," he said. In other words, Americans like "small government" as an idea and many government programs as a fact.

This problem has been aggravated by Clinton, who stole Republican rhetoric ("the era of big government is over") while defending popular programs -- against Republicans. The result, says Castellanos, is that the perceptions of Republicans are pushed "ever farther to the right and we fall off the edge."

Gingrich weathered the storm for now because most Republicans accept, if often grudgingly, that a party hemmed in by Clinton and a small majority can only do so much. And Republicans showed signs of toughening their negotiating stance on the budget, which makes rebels such as McIntosh happy. That's why the GOP's clear-the-air meeting last week turned into a teary, self-help session.

But this strategy -- summarized by Klug as "not making waves so we can win re-election in 1998" -- ultimately won't satisfy Republicans who thought they had a big idea with the Contract With America, and knew they had one when Ronald Reagan talked about the struggles of the Cold War.

McIntosh still points to the unfinished contract as a model and wants to push deregulation, legal reform and popular items such as an end to the marriage penalty in the tax code.

But Kristol sees the contract as "kind of thin" and lacking in "an underlying thesis the way Progressives had a thesis or Roosevelt had a thesis or Reagan in his way had a thesis."

Kristol's thesis is "a call to national greatness," described in a manifesto written by his Weekly Standard colleague, David Brooks. Brooks criticizes the Republicans' "blanket hostility to government" and even takes on the devolution of power from Washington to the states. "Certain government services may be delivered more efficiently from Albany, Harrisburg or Sacramento," Brooks wrote, "but ultimately, America's purpose can find its voice only in Washington." Turning to Teddy Roosevelt for inspiration, the greatness enthusiasts would have the United States pursue an expansive foreign policy, including more a critical approach to China.

The Roosevelt aroma of some of these ideas may make them more appealing to Democrats than Republicans. Kristol acknowledges that the greatness theme rankles two of the most important groups of Republicans trying to impart a

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vision to the party. Libertarians (activist Grover Norquist's "leave us alone" coalition) see the idea as a conservative rationale for big government. A group that might be called Civil Society Republicans -- they tout the value of local community and voluntary, church-based action against poverty -- rejects the brand of nationalism Brooks extols. McIntosh and Castellanos think the Republicans' big idea will ultimately arise from a synthesis of the anti-government and civil society views.

In a speech last week, Gingrich described the thrill that Barry Goldwater's classic, "The Conscience of a Conservative," sent through the ranks of the conservative movement. It may be comforting to Republicans that Goldwater's thesis was as divisive for the party in his day as any of the ideas now floating around. Republican infighting didn't start with the move to bring down Gingrich.

But Republicans thought they had settled their ideological battles, thanks first to Reagan and then the contract. In fact, neither settlement endured. The Republicans can't live without a big idea, and can't seem to find one. And so they feud.

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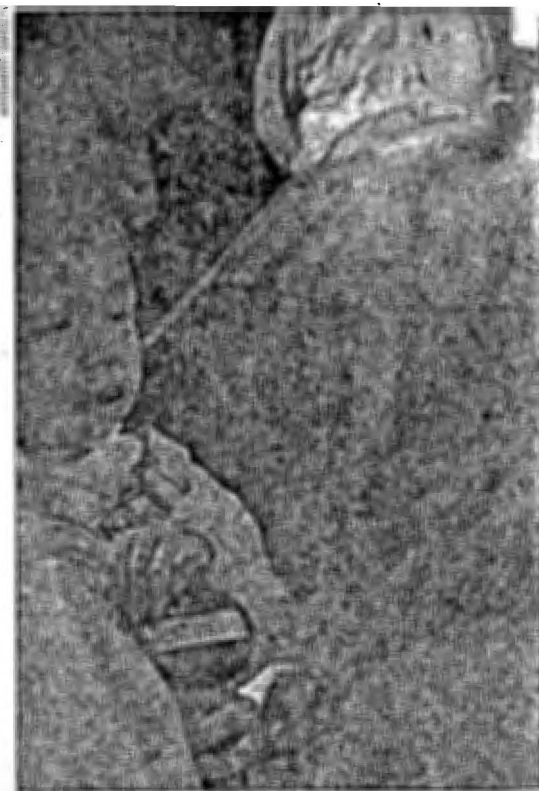
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REPUBLICANS AND DEMOCRATS
ARE STRUGGLING TO COME UP
WITH GALVANIZING ISSUES FOR
THIS YEAR'S CAMPAIGNS.

The Parties Adrift

BY RICHARD E. COHEN AND JAMES A. BARNES ■

It's a few days after Easter, and the inner sanctums of the Capitol are quiet. House and Senate members will soon return from recess. Sitting in his office, a top House Republican aide is blunt as he talks about the upcoming November elections. "I don't think we have a strategy," says the staffer, whose assignment is to help come up with one. "We have no program. And we don't have our act together." Nearby in the Capitol, another senior aide—this one a Democrat—says much the same thing about his own party. "No one here is engaged on issues like international trade, welfare reform and the budget. Candidates can decide on their own which way to go."



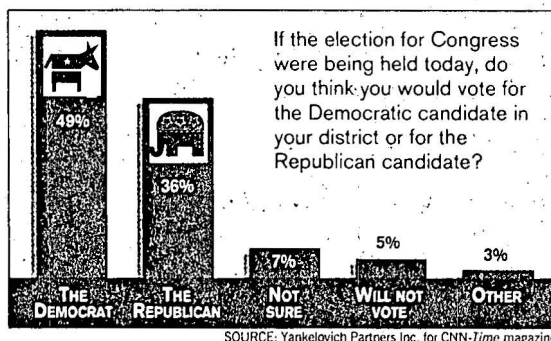
With the midterm elections a little more than six months away, both parties in Congress are adrift. Republicans lack their old revolutionary zeal. Democrats have had trouble articulating a unifying agenda. Neither party has settled on a formula for November. Republicans, with their attacks on tobacco companies and health insurers, sound like Democrats. Democrats, taking a cue from President Clinton, have moved to the center and sometimes sound like Republicans. And the public, heartened by the booming economy, record stock market gains and declining crime rates, seems indifferent.

Compared with the political turbulence of recent years, these calm seas make for uncharted territory.

Consider the contrast to other election years: in 1992, Democrats capitalized on the Bush-era recession; in 1994, Republicans won control of Congress by attacking Clinton's early stumbles, notably his big-government health reform plan; in 1996, Democrats fought back by railing against the government shutdown and other missteps of the overly ambitious Republican revolution.

This year, there's nothing comparable—no galvanizing issues. That may not be bad for governance. But for politics, it can be unsettling.

Republicans, with their 227-205 advantage in the House and 55-45 advantage in the Senate, have the most at stake. Thus far, they've opted for a play-it-safe strategy that appears to put a higher premium on avoiding mistakes than on pushing new initia-



tives. The assumption is that voters have little reason to throw out incumbents—and won't. "Congress reflects the country," said Rep. John A. Boehner of Ohio, the chairman of the House Republican Conference. "Most Americans are tuned out of Washington. Things are good, so they want us to leave them alone. . . . Plus, the President is AWOL with his own problems."

But there are risks. "If the objective is 'Don't rock the boat, let's all get reelected on our [poll] numbers,' that's not the way Republicans usually campaign," said Don Fierce, a veteran GOP strategist and lobbyist. "We like to run more on principles and issues, and right now, the out-

candidates. Much of the Democrats' liberal base is still rankled by Clinton's decision last year to work with Republicans on the budget and on fast-track trade legislation.

Until just recently, the coming congressional elections seemed destined to yield the status quo in both chambers. But now even Republicans acknowledge that the stakes are higher and that control of the House could well be up for grabs. Still, some insiders caution that the hand-wringing within both parties is an inside-the-Beltway phenomenon, irrelevant to the fat-and-happy public—and to most candidates.

"There is an echo chamber here, which includes Republican insiders, media consultants and the leadership of



side-the-Beltway Republican activists are saying. "What's the program, what's the agenda?"

Leaders of the Religious Right have threatened to bolt the Republican coalition if the party does not fight more vigorously for their agenda, which stresses social and family issues. GOP White House hopefuls echo those gripes in hopes of winning the support of the Religious Right in 2000. "There is no question that the conservative-base wants us to do more," said Rep. John Linder of Georgia, chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee (NRCC). "If we don't act, they will be grumpy."

Democrats have done a slightly better job of muffling their internal differences, but some wonder whether their campaign message will be heard. Already the sex scandal swirling around Clinton has "sucked a lot of attention" away from Democratic efforts over the past three months to communicate a strong agenda, noted one senior Senate Democratic aide.

Democrats also remain worried that Clinton again will strike bipartisan legislative deals that undercut Democratic

organizations," said Mary Crawford, the NRCC's communications

director. "It matters because it affects the press and campaign contributors. . . . But there always has been a huge disconnect between Washington and the real world."

UNCERTAIN TIMES

The hesitant prelude to the campaign should be no surprise to those who have been watching Congress during the past 18 months. In the House, the Republicans can exercise their slender majority only if various GOP factions go along. "We don't have the majority to do anything on our terms," said a senior Republican aide.

And party discipline is weak because the Speaker was wounded by ethics violations and a subsequent GOP insurrection. "When all of your top leaders hate each other, it's a real problem to reach agreement" on political strategy, said a top aide to House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt, D-Mo.

In the Senate, where the Republicans' majority is a bit more comfortable and their ranks are less divided, low-profile GOP leaders have done little to advance their chief priorities. Even modest Republican initiatives have been blocked by the 45 Senate Democrats, who band together to gain maximum leverage under the Senate rules.

Republicans also have been cautious because of the investigation of Clinton by independent counsel Kenneth W. Starr. Because Clinton has held on to his sky-high poll rating despite the scandal, GOP lawmakers worry that criticism of the President could backfire. But they'll be forced out into the open if and when Starr presents his report to the House. The political stakes will soar if the evidence supports an impeachment inquiry.

In this uncertain environment, each party finds itself falling back on the tried-and-true in crafting its national campaign themes. "The message of 'Less government and more freedom' succeeds," said Linder, the House GOP campaign boss. "It's instinctively the conservative message." Republican Rep. Bob Inglis, who is challenging Sen. Ernest F. Hollings, D-S.C., is one candidate who's using conservative talking points: "Most government problems stem from people's reluctance to take responsibility," Inglis said during a recess appearance in his home state.

The Democrats also have seized upon some old strategies. Take Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., who first won election in 1992 by selling herself as just a regular "mom in tennis shoes" who wanted to help out "real people." She's sounding a similar theme in her reelection bid this year. "That mom in tennis shoes is still taking on the powerful," Murray said on a recent campaign swing.

Sometimes, though, the old rhetoric doesn't match current reality. Consider one familiar battleground: the budget. With a balanced budget deal passed last year and no deficit to fret over, the GOP is now struggling to figure out what its new budget priorities are. (See related story, p. 922.) Republicans are in general agreement about taxes—they

want them lower and simpler—but they have yet to agree on what exactly to push for in 1998. Some Republicans have talked about funding tax cuts out of the budget surplus, while others want to pay for cuts with money raised from a tobacco settlement. Some advocate flat tax rates as a way to simplify the code, while others want to scrap the current system and institute a national sales tax. "There's no consensus internally in the party on what direction to take on that," said GOP pollster Glen Bolger. "It's hard to draw distinctions with the Democrats, when internally we don't know, as a party, how to be unified on the issue."

Blurring the lines between the parties even more is the calculation of many Republicans that they can profit politically by co-opting some traditionally Democratic themes and making them their own. The public, for instance, seems to be disenchanted with managed care health insurance companies and with Big Tobacco, and many GOP lawmakers are pursuing legislation to impose tougher regulations on both—even though Republicans in the past have been allies of those industries. (See related stories, pp. 924-25.) And even though most Republicans oppose major campaign finance reform, GOP leaders have been forced to schedule Senate and House debate this year.

Republicans acknowledge that they must work harder to stay consistently "on message." A House GOP leadership aide said: "Dick Gephardt is like an automaton who has kept saying the same thing for 10 years. We don't operate the same way as Democrats. . . . We are afraid of repeating ourselves. But our essential message is valid, and voters are looking for it."

Democrats, for the most part, are touting the themes that Clinton outlined in his State of the Union message in late January, including a minimum-wage increase and expanded Medicare coverage. Even though the legislative prospects appear dim for many of the President's proposals, party strategists see the agenda as a psychological boost for recruiting candidates and raising money.

Democrats, who have been able to set aside some of their own internal differences on issues such as trade and welfare reform, have rallied around a mostly moderate message for the fall campaign. I don't think we're all New Democrats, but I think that the surplus and the economic growth that we've enjoyed has actually bridged much of the gap between the Democrats and the New Democrats, said Democratic media consultant Anita Dunn.

But just as Republicans are frustrated by their lack of cutting campaign themes, Democrats face the same problem. "Issues become hotton issues when there is heat, and you get heat with friction," said Democratic pollster Fred Yang. "If the Republicans are on [an issue like legislation regulating managed care], what kind of friction is there? You can criticize them for coming on board late, but they are there."

Consider the Senate race in New York. Republican Sen. Alfonse M. D'Amato is a leading sponsor of the health care legislation. While the Democratic hopefuls, Rep. Charles E. Schumer and Geraldine A. Ferraro, can try to portray them-



Sen. Alfonse M. D'Amato, R-N.Y., is a leading sponsor of the health care legislation. While the Democratic hopefuls, Rep. Charles E. Schumer and Geraldine A. Ferraro, can try to portray them-

selves as more vigorous than D'Amato in championing patient rights, their ability to use the issue is muted.

Although some Democrats privately concede that the Monica Lewinsky scandal has turned the spotlight away from the Democratic legislative agenda, Rep. Martin Frost, D-Texas, sees it differently. "Quite frankly, I'm surprised [the Lewinsky story] has had no impact on the political things we're doing," said Frost, chairman of the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee. "People are interested in Washington as it relates to their daily lives."

COMPROMISE V. STALEMATE

How Republicans manage their challenge on Capitol Hill in the next two months will be crucial to how the campaign plays out. One option for the GOP would be to cut deals with Clinton on some key issues. That could deprive rank-and-file Democrats of some campaign talking points. But the blurring of distinctions between the parties could dampen voter turnout, among Republicans as well as Democrats.

In the wake of the federal government shutdowns of 1995-96, Republicans tried to polish their image by agreeing to Democratic health care and minimum-wage proposals. This year, House Speaker Newt Gingrich, R-Ga., and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., are contending they will not truckle to the Democratic agenda. But some rank-and-file Republicans seem to be taking a different approach. The bill by Rep. Charlie Norwood, R-Ga., mandating more rights for managed care patients, is the most notable example.

Complicating matters for Republicans are the political ambitions of their leaders. With Gingrich exploring a presidential bid and various senior House Republicans jockeying for the leadership posts that would open up with his departure, concessions to the opposition camp could alienate GOP stalwarts.

Democratic incumbents, meanwhile, also face conflicts when deciding whether it is wise to barter with the Republicans. On the one hand, passing bills lets them brag about legislative accomplishments. On the other, these accomplishments can make it harder for Democrats to argue that they need to regain control of the House in order to advance their agenda.

Clinton, for his part, doesn't face the reelection pressures that in 1996 motivated him to compromise on legislation like the welfare reform bill. Despite occasional rhetorical bursts, his preoccupation with his legacy may prevail over political hardball in propelling him to cooperate with the GOP Congress. "You're not dealing with LBJ. He's not interested in partisan wars," said a senior West Wing official who requested anonymity. "The best for the legacy is to get stuff done."

Another possibility is legislative stalemate, which could produce finger-pointing that energizes the base in each party, but also increases the volatility of the election. Boehner, for example, contends that recent White House attacks on House Republicans over the tobacco legislation



show that "they don't want a resolution of the problem, they want a political issue."

On several key issues pending in Congress, it might seem that agreements are within reach. Last year's historic tobacco settlement, for example, seemed to open the door to broad legislation in that area; the recent slew of bank mergers appeared to bode well for the enactment of a long-sought banking deregulation effort; and the continuing surge of revenue to the federal Treasury ought to make it easier for Congress to agree on fiscal priorities. But legislating often doesn't work so easily, and there are plenty of opportunities for gridlock on each measure.

POLL-WATCHING

As Republican Hill leaders plot their 1998 campaign strategy, have they been too complacent in assuming that the growing economy and the public's upbeat mood will keep them in control of Congress? Some GOP strategists are beginning to worry that the answer is yes.

While polls find Congress receiving a high job-approval rating, some recent surveys also show voters generally favoring Democratic congressional candidates in the midterm elections. "There is a mismatch between the Republicans' strategic assumption and what the polls are showing," said GOP pollster Frederick T. Steeper.

A March 25-29 survey for the Pew Research Center for The People & The Press showed Democrats with a 52-40 per cent advantage over Republicans, while an April 8-9 CNN-Time magazine poll by Yankelovich Partners Inc. gave

Democrats a 49-36 per cent lead. But the polls are not uniform on this point: An April 17-19 CNN-USA *Today* poll, conducted by the Gallup Organization Inc., gave Democrats only a 46-44 per cent edge.

Steeper, whose own national survey gives Democrats a 39-34 per cent advantage, said, "Any campaign, even when things are going its way in terms of the general mood, tries to identify one—or a few—winning issues that it can take the offensive on." He added: "Republicans are running as though they are resting on their laurels, therefore begging for an upset."

Steeper said he's advising his own clients to be "very proactive" on issues. Sen. Christopher S. (Kit) Bond, R-Mo., for instance, plans to highlight proposals to improve welfare reform and deter juvenile crime.

GOP strategist Fierce was optimistic that the Republican majority can regain its standing among the party faithful with a few legislative maneuvers. "The only thing we need are votes on 'partial-birth' abortion, tax cuts and IRS reform, and that will put us right where we need to be," he said.

Even if Republican lawmakers are overwhelmingly returned to Washington, party strategists worry that the historical midterm election patterns that should assist the GOP's nonincumbent candidates may elude them. "We are imitating, rather than innovating," said Republican pollster Steve Lombardo. "It's hard for voters to make a choice between the two parties, and in swing districts held by Democrats, I don't think they are going to switch."

One Republican political consultant, who requested anonymity, said that in this climate, Democrats had a "decent chance" to retake the House. "You do a seat-by-seat analysis, and you could see where Democrats could come a long way toward retaking control," he said. "And with a few things breaking their way, they're in."

Normally, a change in control in Congress is precipitated by one party's making a broad case that the other should be tossed out of power. That message would run counter to the public's current mood and to its satisfaction with divided control of government. It would also run counter to Clinton's aversion to making party-centric appeals for Democratic candidates.

But because the GOP's majority is so narrow, the Democrats don't need to push an overtly partisan argument this fall. "With a five or six net increase in open seats, only a few [Republican] incumbents would have to lose," said a Democratic party strategist, "and voters wouldn't even realize they are throwing out the Republicans."

What Democratic strategists worry about most in the election is the shortage of financial resources that party campaign committees will be able to spend on candidates. "The

big variable will be the extent and magnitude of independent and party-related expenditures in the course of the campaign," said Democratic media consultant Tad Devine. "The question is whether we can compete on that turf, or at least hold [the Republican money machine] in check."

And just as Republicans are worried about motivating their base, Democrats fear that in a historically low-turnout election, some of their core constituencies may not be excited enough about their agenda to march to the polls. "What

are we talking about to the Hispanic community, blacks and non-college-educated women?" said Democratic pollster Celinda C. Lake.

In the past, Democrats have made gains in midterms by rallying older voters, most notably in the 1986 campaign when they retook the Senate. That may not work this year. "We give mixed signals when we say the surplus is going to go for Social Security

and then we say we'll have a commission on entitlement reform," said Lake.

In 1996, Clinton's positive agenda was also modest and centrist, as his party's is now, but the Democrats spurred their base to the polls

by demonizing Gingrich, who now comes across as less threatening. "You don't have the fear factor," said Harold M. Ickes, the former White House deputy chief of staff who was a principal architect of the President's reelection campaign. "There are people afraid in the abstract, but whether there's enough of that to motivate people to come out in record levels—probably not, on a national basis. That will depend on individual races and candidates."

A congressional race in Indiana could be a bellwether. Evansville city councilwoman Gail Riecken—a Democrat who is taking on sophomore GOP Rep. John N. Hostettler in a swing district—contends: "Voters look to Washington for leadership for average working people. If the Republicans in Congress fail to get the job done, it's a mandate for my campaign." If Riecken's right, Republicans could be in trouble this year. If she's wrong, Republicans will stay in control.

According to Connecticut state Sen. Mark Nielson—the likely Republican challenger to first-term Democratic Rep. James H. Maloney—the national message may not be so important. "Are there things that Congress could do that would be a better foundation for my campaign? Yes," Nielson said. "But people in my district understand the difference between the performance of this Congress and what came before it, when Democrats were in control."

In the end, this election year may be one that bears out the maxim of Thomas P. (Tip) O'Neill, the late Speaker of the House, that "All politics is local." In a year in which neither party is charting a course for candidates to follow, they are all on their own as they try to navigate the placid political currents.

LEONATI



REPS. LINDER & FROST

"The conservative base wants us to do more," says Linder (l), who, like Frost, is a chief House campaign boss.

RICHARD A. BLOOM



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SECTION: OUTLOOK; Pg. C02

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HEADLINE: Dobson's Choice; Why the Conservative Outsider's Agenda Worries GOP Leaders

BYLINE: Benjamin Domenech.

BODY:

There is an emerging force within the Republican Party, a man who, as he attempts to alter the party's entire focus, has managed to escape the attention of many inside the Beltway. His strength is drawn from social conservative activists. His cause is abortion. And his words these days -- about unkept promises -- are making Republican leaders in Congress extremely nervous.

The man is James Dobson.

Dobson's friends and staffers say the recent whirlwind of meetings he held with top party leaders here was designed, in the words of an associate, "to give the Republicans an opportunity" to change his mind about the failure of the leadership. But "the Republicans blew their chance."

Dobson, 62, is president of Focus on the Family, a nonprofit Christian ministry organization based in Colorado Springs. He is a child psychologist, author, father of two, and arguably the most respected man in the social conservative movement -- more than Pat Robertson, the televangelist founder of the Christian Coalition, whom many conservative lobbyists view as weak and inept.

Although Dobson's international radio program reaches nearly 6 million listeners every day, his 14 books on child rearing and discipline have sold several million copies, and his film series "A Focus on the Family" was watched by more than 70 million viewers; his image remains that of an outsider in Washington.

Indeed, until recently he was regarded among many on Capitol Hill as a bumpkin who imagines himself a political leader.

Conservatives know otherwise. Republicans such as Reps. Steve Largent of Oklahoma, Mark Neumann of Wisconsin and Jim Ryun of Kansas are big Dobson fans. Others, such as Republican Sens. John Ashcroft of Missouri, Jesse Helms of North Carolina and Rick Santorum of Pennsylvania closely follow what Dobson says.

And they were listening earlier this year in Arizona when Dobson began to preach hellfire about the future of the Republican Party. "[The Republicans] laid the foundation for revolt, and I don't even think they know it because they're so out of touch with the people I'm talking about," said Dobson, his fine-tuned radio voice resonating from the podium at the closed-door meeting of around 300 members of the Council for National Policy, a group of conservative

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leaders.

He railed against the GOP congressional leadership, saying that its avoidance of key issues such as abortion was "unconscionable. . . . If they want our votes every two years and then say 'Don't call me, I'll call you,' then I will take the next step," said Dobson, adding "If I go, I'll take as many people with me as possible."

Although the Republican leadership has heard this kind of talk from other conservatives for a long time, it is listening, too. And already the ramifications of Dobson's speech are being felt. Dobson has been organizing, planning and meeting with leading political activists on the right, such as Phyllis Schlafly, Michael Farris and Paul Weyrich, who share his views on the Republican Party's inadequacy.

Late last month, Dobson made his tour of Washington, meeting with congressional leaders, with activists both in and out of Congress, sending his staffers or his deputy, Family Research Council President Gary Bauer, to the meetings he couldn't make.

Dobson's concerns and demands were summarized in a letter to Rep. Tom Coburn (R-Okla.). Included were: cutting off funds for Planned Parenthood and "other pro-abortion organizations," eliminating "so-called safe-sex and condom distribution programs," passing legislation requiring parental consent for abortion and for contraceptives within all federal programs, banning human cloning, stopping federal funding of fetal tissue experimentation and "defunding" the National Endowment for the Arts.

The Dobson letter also cited an array of educational issues, including school choice, opposition to national testing and to "Goals 2000," eliminating the Department of Education and other issues "that are so obvious that they require no elaboration, such as a ban on partial-birth abortion, the defense of traditional marriage, and opposition to any legislation that would add 'sexual orientation' to any civil rights law, educational program, or any congressional appropriation."

Dobson's choice of issues provides some insights into his motivations. He is essentially demanding that the Republican leadership take an open stand on extremely controversial matters, which could easily prompt a backlash from more moderate members of the party.

The list also underscores his outsider status and political inexperience. Most politically savvy activists know that Republican leaders dare not tamper with the Department of Education because it would be viewed as an anti-education move close to an election.

In any case, his list stands to become the broadsword with which the activists intend to strike the GOP. In essence, if their demands are not met, Dobson and his disciples are threatening to lead a revolt that could spell disaster for the party in the 1998 elections (which most Republican lobbyists presently see as "clinched" on their behalf), and if not that, in the presidential election of 2000.

On the morning of Friday, March 20, Republican National Committee Chairman Jim Nicholson called together a meeting of the head lobbyists for the

The Washington Post, April 19, 1998.

so-called "pro-family" groups, including representatives of the Family Research Council, Eagle Forum and the National Right to Life Committee. Nicholson was tense. This meeting was an "emergency" response to what Dobson had been saying, Nicholson's chance to see how much power he had lost, and how much strength his party could retain. Dobson can and will sway the voter bloc Nicholson needs to keep his party under control.

Unfortunately for the Republicans, Nicholson's concern is not shared by all within the GOP. Dobson received different messages from separate meetings he had with Majority Whip Tom DeLay of Texas and with his own conservative supporters in Congress.

Dobson's supporters told him that he needed to focus on attacking the GOP leadership in his speeches, rather than merely the party, reasoning that most of those outside the Beltway have trouble differentiating between the two. DeLay told him to stop talking, period.

Dobson wrote in a March 24 letter addressed to his "Congressional Friends," which was sent out after his visit to Washington, that DeLay was "argumentative, defensive and accusatory" and that "instead of grappling with Republican failures . . . [DeLay] denied that a paralysis had occurred and trumpeted the meager accomplishments of the Party."

Now, Dobson is marshaling his forces. He wields the power to significantly damage the Republican Party's chances of success in November.

"I'm sure some of you would prefer to maintain the status quo and hope for gradual change in congressional leadership, especially since your own seats may be jeopardized by voter rebellion," Dobson wrote to his cadre of congressional supporters. "To stay the course, however, is to support those who have ridden to power on a wave of hypocrisy -- promising that which they had no intention of delivering. It is time to call them on it."

Benjamin Domenech is a freelance writer whose work has appeared in the American Conservative and Human Events.

GRAPHIC: Photo, focus on the family; Photo, michael williamson; Photo, ray lustig; Photo, robert a. feeder, What do these GOP movers and shakers (from left, Jim Ryun, John D. Ashcroft, Rick Santorum, Steve Largent and Jesse Helms) have in common? When James Dobson, pictured below, weighs in on the future of the Republican Party, they listen.

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HEADLINE: GOP's House Divided; In Move to Oust Gingrich, Leaders' Shifting
Allegiances Generated Layers of Deception and Misunderstanding

BYLINE: Ceci Connolly; David S. Broder; Dan Balz, Washington Post Staff Writers

BODY:

The question hung in the air like a thundercloud.

"If we moved to vacate the chair," thereby removing Newt Gingrich as speaker,
"what would you guys do?"

Tom DeLay, the House Republican whip -- the man who is the speaker's enforcer
-- paused for what seemed endless moments.

"I can't speak for anyone else," he said to the roomful of Republican
dissidents, jammed into Rep. Lindsey Graham's office near midnight on Thursday,
July 10.

Another long pause.

"I think I'd be ready to do it," DeLay said.

Then he added: "And I think the others would too."

"The others" were the leaders DeLay had just left in order to sound out the
seriousness of the rebellion: Majority Leader Richard K. Armey, his fellow
Texan, and Bill Paxon of New York, appointed by Gingrich as chairman of his
leadership team as a reward for running the campaigns that brought the GOP into
power. A fourth member of the leadership, Conference Chairman John A. Boehner of
Ohio, was out of the loop that night, but his disillusionment with Gingrich was
even more public than the others.

That was the moment that precipitated the latest -- if not necessarily the
last -- act in the ongoing struggle of House Republicans to rescue a
self-proclaimed revolution that has spun out of control.

The two-week drama concluded Wednesday night in a candid, three-hour,
closed-door caucus that salved many of the wounds and revived Republicans' hopes
that finally, Gingrich and his lieutenants would be more sensitive to the wishes
of the rank-and-file members and firmer in fighting for their views.

It is a story full of misunderstandings and deceptions, what one member of
the leadership described as "Kafkaesque." DeLay, for example, now attributes his
provocative responses to fatigue from a long, nerve-racking day. Key rebels
insist until they heard him on that Thursday night, they had no intention of

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forcing Gingrich's hand right at that moment.

The individual motivations remain a matter of dispute today, even among the principals. All four of them had given vent privately to their despair at the vagaries of Gingrich's leadership. But all of them recognized without Gingrich's vision they would still be a minority party. And with their own rival ambitions, each had a reason to remain in the speaker's good graces.

Although this latest crisis has passed, those conditions remain. The tensions that spilled over had been building for a long time. After the euphoria of the first hundred days of 1995, when the first GOP majority in 40 years whipped bill after bill through the House, fulfilling the "Contract With America," few things had gone right -- for Gingrich or his charges.

The shutdown of government in the winter of 1995-96 cost Republicans public support. The 1996 election pared the GOP majority to 228 seats, leaving it vulnerable to defection by any 11 members. Gingrich began the new year fighting off ethics charges that brought him a formal reprimand and a \$ 300,000 penalty. While all but a handful of Republicans remained loyal through this crisis, Gingrich's continuing low poll ratings -- below 30 percent job approval -- caused many of the members to believe he was too weak to lead the battle against the president. In his leadership circle, there were also complaints he made too many decisions impulsively and without consultation.

Early in the year, 11 conservatives displayed their pique by helping Democrats stop action on a routine bill to finance House committee operations. They became the hard core of the dump-Gingrich movement, privately disdained by Gingrich as "unruly children." But they were not alone. More conservatives were upset when Gingrich joined President Clinton in an April budget agreement that cut taxes and spending less than they had hoped. In June, despite private misgivings, Gingrich approved a plan to attach two amendments -- one affecting future government shutdowns and the other the conduct of the 2000 census -- to a bill containing emergency relief for Midwest flood victims.

When Clinton vetoed the bill because of those GOP riders, Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott of Mississippi immediately surrendered, and rumbles of dissent grew much louder. Arney complained Gingrich was "operating unilaterally," and on June 12 all of Gingrich's lieutenants voted against his decision to give Clinton the stripped-down bill.

A week later, the leaders met without Gingrich in Boehner's office, a meeting that quickly degenerated into a gripe session about the speaker's inadequacies. Later, at dinner with Gingrich in the Capitol, they confronted him, urging he make changes in the way he ran the House.

But instead of improvements, GOP lawmakers saw more troubling signs. With Clinton's poll numbers soaring, House Republicans returned from the July 4 recess to read a news report that unnamed House GOP leaders were ready to give in to Clinton on a key provision of the tax bill. Gingrich was not named in the story, but many members were suspicious that the speaker was about to pull the rug from under their feet. "That caused everybody to go ballistic," said one disillusioned Gingrich supporter.

A Gathering of Lieutenants

The Washington Post, July 28, 1997.

There is a line somewhere between talk and treason. How far beyond that line Gingrich's top lieutenants strayed depends on the perspective of the storyteller. But when Armey, DeLay, Boehner and Paxon gathered in DeLay's Capitol office on July 9, they set in motion forces that soon spun out of control.

They were an odd lot who had reached their positions of power in very different ways. Roughly the same age, all four arrived in the House in the same decade and are rivals for succession.

Armey, 57, a former economics professor, is the most doctrinaire of Gingrich's leaders. Gingrich conceived of the party's "Contract With America," but it was Armey who put the ideological flesh on the bones. A folksy country and western music fan who often walks the halls of Congress in armadillo-skin cowboy boots, Armey is uncompromising in his beliefs. He has occasionally voiced doubts about Gingrich's allegiance to the conservative movement and in recent months has passed up public opportunities to defend the speaker. Gingrich, in turn, has described Armey as "clumsy" in his personal relations.

DeLay, 50, is a former exterminator with an appearance that fits his title as whip -- a muscular physique, hard eyes and a motionless hairstyle. He got off on the wrong foot with Gingrich by backing Gingrich's opponent for minority whip in 1989. But Gingrich has learned to trust DeLay's head counts and to acknowledge his conservative following in the House.

Boehner, 47, a chain-smoking Ohioan who paces restlessly on and off the House floor, built a constituency among business lobbyists during the honeymoon days of the "Contract With America." But at the beginning of this year, Gingrich removed his portfolio as the communications czar for the House GOP, a move that Boehner bitterly resented.

Paxon, the youngest of the four at 43, was personally closest to the speaker. A telegenic, pragmatic politician unburdened by ideology, Paxon was viewed as a rising star. Gingrich installed him as chairman of the National Republican Congressional Committee and together they charted a course to victory in 1994. But he also had bonded with the members of the class of 1994 -- who were at the heart of the rebellion -- and he privately shared many of their criticisms of Gingrich. He was perhaps the most conflicted of the leadership quartet.

Boehner was the first of the four to meet with the dissidents July 9. Reps. Tom Coburn of Oklahoma and Sue Myrick of North Carolina among others vented their frustrations and revealed they had asked one of their allies -- later identified as California Rep. Tom Campbell -- to prepare a resolution to depose the speaker.

Boehner's report produced an agitated discussion among the four leaders; others had heard similar complaints and feared a floor revolt was at hand. Some were dispatched to gauge the strength of the dissidents. Armey ordered his floor assistant to investigate the parliamentary process for dealing with such a motion to vacate the speakership. According to two accounts, Armey told his colleagues he would "not lift a finger" to save Gingrich, although he has denied ever making that statement.

The discussion then moved to the question of succession, should Gingrich be driven out. Armey, an imposing Texan who has spoken of his deep faith, walked

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over to a table where DeLay keeps a copy of the Ten Commandments. He pointed at two to underscore what he was about to say. The first begins, "Thou shalt not covet. . . .," the second, "Thou shalt not bear false witness. . . ."

"I do not not covet the speakership," he told his colleagues, and would do nothing to undermine Gingrich. But in candor, he added, if something happens to Gingrich, he would run to succeed him. "I intend to call [House Judiciary Committee chairman] Henry Hyde [of Illinois] and ask him to nominate me," Arney said. Then, turning toward Paxon, he added: "I would call Bill to ask him to second the nomination."

DeLay, knowing the odds were against two Texans at the top, said he had no intention of trying to move up the leadership ladder. Boehner said he did not know what he would do, but he bluntly told Arney he doubted the majority leader could muster the votes to become speaker. Paxon was silent.

The four men left DeLay's office shaken by the conversation. One person who encountered Paxon described him as "ashen." All of them had been shaped by Gingrich's leadership. Now, they seriously were entertaining life in a post-Gingrich era. Their political structure was unraveling, and they did not know how to respond.

Warning the Speaker

Early the next morning, July 10, Gingrich walked a treadmill in the House gym unaware of the storm about to engulf him. Even so, he knew it would be a challenging day. His disgruntled troops were again divided -- this time over money for the arts. It took Gingrich all day to eke out a one-vote victory.

But the real drama began as night fell.

About 5 p.m., Arney met in his office with three dissidents who reiterated their list of grievances. Arney concluded the prospect of an overthrow had grown serious and he asked his top aide, Kerry Knott, to alert Gingrich's chief of staff, Arne Christenson.

Less than two hours later, Rep. Steve Largent, a former football star from Oklahoma and one of the most brazen Republican renegades, approached Rep. Christopher Shays on the House floor. The rebels were ready to move -- "next week or the week after. We're going to replace the speaker," Largent said. "Are you with us?"

It proved to be a huge miscalculation on the part of the dissidents. Although Shays, a mainstream Connecticut Republican, has been a consistent critic of leadership, he is intensely loyal to Gingrich and has no stomach for the internecine warfare that has consumed his party. An emotional Shays raced first to Ohio Rep. David L. Hobson, another Gingrich ally, and then to Rep. Mike Parker, a Democrat-turned-Republican from Mississippi. They walked to Gingrich's office to warn him "something is up."

"He seemed stunned," recalled one participant. Gingrich dispatched Shays and Parker to meet with Paxon, the one man on the leadership team who owed his job to the speaker. They found him at 9 p.m. and recounted what they had learned. Shays, alarmed that Paxon appeared so indifferent to the threat, tried an analogy, mentioning Paxon's wife, Rep. Susan Molinari. "If I call Susan and

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say, 'Why don't you leave Bill and run away with me,' is Susan going to say, 'This is not the right time,' or is Susan going to say, 'You traitor! You have no right to suggest that.' "

Parker implored Paxon: "You've got to stop this." Paxon, saying he had a meeting, hastily departed.

As buzzers summoned lawmakers to the floor for votes, Shays and Parker hunted for Gingrich. They were told he was downstairs in the Capitol and they mistakenly concluded he was meeting with the other leaders in Paxon's office. But soon they learned he was dining with friends, including former GOP representative Robert S. Walker of Pennsylvania and strategist Joe Gaylord.

It was Hobson who sounded the alarm bells. He located Walker and told him Paxon was involved with the dissidents.

"That can't be," Walker exclaimed.

"Et tu, Brute," Hobson replied.

It was close to 11 p.m. when the vote on arts funding finally occurred. At DeLay's request, the renegades assembled in Graham's office. Characterizing himself as the emissary for the other leaders, DeLay urged them not to force a confrontation. According to the dissidents, they never had such a plan. "We had decided to sit back and wait" until the budget and tax package was approved, one recalled.

But in short order, DeLay let them know the leaders shared their frustrations over Gingrich's management. They knew, he said, they must "put Newt in a box" to minimize the speaker's irksome off-the-cuff remarks. Then he asked: "How far are you guys going to push this?" They, in turn, pressed DeLay, asking what he would do if they moved against the speaker.

It was DeLay's response of support that convinced the rebels that they had turned a critical corner. DeLay, the No. 3 in the House, was with them and so, they believed, was the rest of leadership. "The expectation was that Tom would take it back to leadership and they would talk to Newt the next day," said one participant. "They would talk to Newt and try to give him a graceful way out."

As the night wore on, Paxon and Armey waited anxiously in Paxon's Capitol office uncertain whether they should be preparing to salvage Gingrich's speakership or build a new regime. When DeLay returned at 1:30 a.m., he delivered a blunt report: The rebel group had grown in size and diversity; some sort of action appeared to be imminent. And there was a third bit of intelligence he had gleaned from the dissidents: They did not believe Armey had the votes to become speaker; Paxon had more support.

Near panic, the jittery lieutenants left the Capitol at 2 a.m. knowing only that within a few hours they would have to inform Gingrich of the turn of events.

A Decision to Support

Armey returned to the Capitol later Friday morning after "a night of praying with my wife." If he had ever been tempted to support the effort to topple the

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speaker, that notion was gone now. He called Gingrich's office to request a meeting, then reached the other four leaders asking them to join him.

Gingrich arrived at the Capitol about 9:30 a.m. and went to the majority leader's office. Armey assured Gingrich that despite engaging in "what if" scenarios, he was now moving to thwart the insurrection. But his rush to portray himself as the speaker's lone protector and raise questions about the motives of the other leaders only increased the level of distrust.

About 10 a.m., the leadership convened in Gingrich's office. "Oh, I hear we have a problem," Gingrich said, half-smiling, according to one in the room.

DeLay then described the late-night meeting with the 17 renegades and warned they might make a move on the floor that day. Gingrich's demeanor quickly changed to anger and agitation. He was furious at his lieutenants for not informing him sooner and told them he was prepared to force a vote of confidence in the GOP conference.

The group decided to summon the dissidents for a dressing down. At 1 p.m., Gingrich's five deputies sat down in Armey's conference room with five of the rebels: Graham, Largent, Coburn, Myrick and Van Hilleary of Tennessee. Armey told them their behavior had been "immoral" and "irresponsible."

DeLay echoed Armey. What about what you said last night; was any of that true, the rebels asked. "They were dumbfounded" by the precipitous retreat, recalled one. "They were laughing at what buffoons the leaders were." Some speculated that once Armey realized he would not become speaker, he decided to oppose the coup.

For their parts, Armey, Paxon and Boehner believed the storm had passed -- at least for now. "Another grass fire put out," one leader thought to himself.

Plotting Leaks Out

Any hope that the plotting would remain secret evaporated on Sunday. Some GOP leaders knew that Sandy Hume, a reporter for The Hill, a newspaper that covers Congress, was working on the story. On Sunday morning, DeLay appeared on "Fox News Sunday." Brit Hume, Sandy's father, asked about the resolution to declare the speakership vacant.

"I'm not aware," DeLay began. Pressed by Hume, he admitted: "I have heard rumors. . . ." DeLay's tortured response fed the speculation on Capitol Hill. On Wednesday morning, July 16, when the story appeared, rank-and-file lawmakers were shocked. At a private meeting of House Republicans, Gingrich attempted to brush off the report with a joking reference to the movie "Men in Black" in which he is compared to a space alien. "It's time to move forward," he said.

But Rep. James T. Walsh of New York wanted answers. "If the leadership was involved in this, they owe us and the speaker an apology."

Armey denounced the story as "trash" and vehemently denied the leaders had any involvement.

Graham, incensed by what he believed was a blatant lie by Armey, leaped from his seat, knocking over several chairs in the Cannon Caucus room as he dived

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for a microphone, but was restrained by colleagues.

That afternoon, the staff of each of the leaders worked furiously to put the best gloss on their boss's behavior while suggesting the others had been scheming.

When DeLay summoned eight deputy whips later that day, he was told: "Somebody's gotta be proven a liar here today."

By nightfall, the divisions among the leaders were wide open. Gingrich and Armey huddled in the speaker's office, while Paxon, DeLay and Illinois Rep. J. Dennis Hastert, who had been brought in by the leaders because he is in touch with the rank and file, sent in a message begging for a chance to speak to Gingrich. He rebuffed them, but when he and Armey left the office, they were met by the other three.

The group moved into a side office, where the simmering suspicions exploded in an angry burst of accusations. Paxon and DeLay believed Armey was setting them up in news reports that suggested he alone decided to put down the coup. They demanded Armey set the record straight, but he balked. Paxon knew he was the only member of the leadership team who was appointed and he knew the situation around him had grown untenable. "Maybe I should resign," he said. Before Gingrich could reply, Armey blurted out: "I accept."

The next morning, rather than rescue his protege, Gingrich sent Christenson, his chief of staff, to tell Paxon he was out.

"The speaker wanted to give Paxon a face-saving way out," explained one leadership aide, "but he also wanted to send a signal."

Later, Gingrich informed Armey, DeLay, Boehner and Hastert he would be speaker until 2002 unless he voluntarily stepped aside. "If you support me," he told them, "I will support you."

Damage Control

After Paxon's pressured resignation, everyone else in the leadership circle ran for cover. DeLay maintained public silence, but gave his version of events to every Republican he could collar. Armey wrote a "Dear Colleague" letter implicitly critical of DeLay but exonerating himself from the charges of ambitious scheming and dissembling that were being leveled against him. "At this point," he wrote, "I couldn't care less whether I'll be speaker, majority leader or dogcatcher, but I'll be damned if I'll let my name and honor be destroyed."

Gingrich was hearing from some of those whose allegiance had never wavered that he ought to clean house and make everyone understand that even the appearance of complicity in the conspiracy would not be tolerated. But when it came to Armey, DeLay and Boehner, he listened to those who said he was safer with them inside the tent than he would be casting them out.

It was in this overheated atmosphere that House Republicans gathered last Wednesday night in the basement of the Capitol. Instead of the anticipated bloodletting, it turned into a group therapy session. As rebel Matt Salmon of Arizona put it: "We took off our masks . . . and were honest with each other." Gingrich and the other leaders all confessed to errors of judgment. Members

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who were not part of the fateful July 10 meeting stepped to the microphone to say they shared the frustrations with the party's lost sense of purpose, even if they disapproved of the move to dump Gingrich.

Toward the end of the meeting, moderate Rep. Sherwood L. Boehlert of New York demanded an explanation from the dissidents.

It was Graham, one of the ringleaders, who stood. He had learned the value of loyalty in the Air Force, he said, but the political reality is that Gingrich is even less popular in his conservative South Carolina district than Clinton. "If I do well in my district, it is in spite of Newt Gingrich," he said. "But I am willing to work with the speaker to try to get through these problems."

How long will the goodwill last? At the end of the week, Boehner put it best: "It's clear to all the members of the leadership that some changes have to occur."

Staff writers Kevin Merida and John E. Yang contributed to this report.

CORRECTION-DATE: July 31, 1997

CORRECTION:

An article on Monday about efforts to depose House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) implied that Rep. Sue Myrick (R-N.C.) was one of a group of dissidents who were preparing a resolution to vacate the speakership. Myrick participated in a number of discussions between dissidents and other House leaders, but said yesterday she was not involved in promoting or advancing such a resolution.

GRAPHIC: Photo, robert a. reeder; Photo, ray lustig; Photo, dayna smith, Tensions over House Speaker Newt Gingrich's leadership had been slowly building. Rep. John A. Boehner was the first of Gingrich's lieutenants to meet with dissidents in the House. House Majority Leader Richard Armey, Speaker Newt Gingrich and Rep. John Kasich leave a closed meeting on June 18. Rep. Bill Paxon stands in the hall outside the House Chamber after announcing his resignation as a member of Gingrich's House leadership team on July 17. House Majority Whip Tom DeLay let the Republican dissidents know the leaders shared their frustrations over the speaker's management style.

LANGUAGE: ENGLISH

LOAD-DATE: July 28, 1997