

Re: D. Was Bush bashed early on.

Experts see no honeymoon for Bush with Democratic Congress

By David Espo
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — There they go again, as President Reagan might say before he turns out the lights in the Oval Office on his way back to the ranch.

The same people who said Mario Cuomo would defeat Bob Dole for the White House this fall are making odds on how quickly President-elect Bush will have his legislative agenda chewed up by an implacably hostile Democratic Congress.

The argument goes this way: Bush was elected after a campaign based largely on distortions of Michael Dukakis' record, was extremely skimpy on the specifics and he doesn't have much of a chance against congressional leaders who won just as big at the polls as he did.

"His problem is going to be that there's going to be virtually no honeymoon," says David Keene, a well-known conservative who worked for Dole.

It might turn out that way, and it is worth noting that 1988 is the first election in 28 years in which a president of one party was elected while

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the opposition party gained seats in the House.

One of the lines best remembered — read my lips, no new taxes — will be put to the test, no doubt.

But the conventional wisdom turned out to be wrong in the crunch as often as not during the campaign that ended on Tuesday.

Among the reasons Bush won the White House this year, as campaign manager Lee Atwater is fond of saying, is that his enemies consistently underestimated him. Also, his inner circle was far superior to anyone else's. The same team that patiently plotted the post-convention political blitz that sent Bush surging past Dukakis now has 10 weeks to plan a fast getaway from the new administration.

There's no reason to think it won't be done.

For all the talk of a mandate for the Democratic Congress, the senators and representatives also know that Bush won 40 states, many of

them by substantial margins.

Bush already has signalled his hopes for a constructive relationship with Congress:

■ He conspicuously avoided saying he had a mandate when he fielded questions from reporters on Wednesday.

■ Secretary of State-designate James A. Baker III, the first appointee, is highly regarded by congressional leaders who know him as Reagan's first-term chief of staff and then as treasury secretary.

■ Bush is widely expected to ask Nicholas Brady to stay on as treasury secretary in the new government. Brady, who served several months as an appointed senator, was swiftly confirmed for his Cabinet post.

■ Asked at his news conference whether his injunction against taxes included all so-called revenue enhancements, Bush ducked. He noted that Dukakis had criticized him for supporting an increase in the Medicare premiums to finance catastrophic health care coverage. "You'll have to define what you mean," he added.

With all eyes on Bush, team planning for smooth transition

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The clock is quickly running out on Ronald Reagan's presidency, so Congress, the federal bureaucracy and foreign governments are searching for clues about what the next man will do.

West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher will be at the White House this week for farewell meetings with Reagan. They also want to see President-elect George Bush.

Meanwhile, a transition team named by the newly elected Bush is developing legislative strategy and priorities for the first 100 days of his presidency, a period regarded as crucial for setting the right tone for a new administration.

"The president-elect gets all the attention," said Chase Untermeyer, newly named personnel chief for the Bush transition team. "The incumbent president is the one that people have to be reminded of."

Some senior members of Reagan's administration already have quit. Reagan's Cabinet and more than 500 top political appointees are being asked to submit their resignations, effective at the pleasure of the president. That will spare Bush the unpleasantness of having to ask them to leave when he takes over Jan. 20.

With \$3.25 million provided by taxpayers, Bush's transition team set up shop on 3½ floors of an office building in Dupont Circle.

NEWS

In brief

From wire reports

Calif. police seek landlord in deaths of 4 elderly people buried in yard

SACRAMENTO — The bodies of four elderly people were unearthed near a boardinghouse and police said the victims' Social Security checks had been stolen and cashed regularly.

Police were looking for the manager of the boarding home, Dorthea Montalvo Puente, late Saturday, said police Lt. Joe Enloe. He said Montalvo, 71, was not prevented from leaving the house earlier in the day, but police later had evidence to arrest her. "We do not believe she acted alone," Enloe said.

Montalvo was convicted in 1982 of grand theft, stemming from charges she drugged and robbed three elderly people after meeting them in bars.

John Mitchell buried in Arlington National Cemetery

WASHINGTON — John Mitchell was eulogized Saturday as "not one who attracted fair-weather friends" in a gathering of friends that included former President Richard Nixon, his former law partner and boss, and others from the Nixon administration.

The former attorney general, who had won the Silver Star for gallantry for his World War II Navy service, was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Mitchell died Wednesday at 75 after a heart attack. A neighboring grave holds the remains of Gregory "Pappy" Boyington, a Medal of Honor winner whose life Mitchell is credited with saving.

About 200 anti-abortion protesters arrested in rallies

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