

Texas voters could decide election

By Steve Harris
Staff Writer

Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton and Sen. Al Gore wound up their bus tour through Texas last week, ending a vigorous campaign to win votes in the state President Bush calls home.

Texas is a prize state with 32 of the electoral votes that both campaigns must secure in order to win the Nov. 3 election. Although the Democrats have not won in Texas since Jimmy Carter's victory there in 1976, this year, with a popular Southern governor on the ticket, they may have a good chance of taking the state.

Unlike the 1988 campaign, in which he easily won Texas against former Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, Bush is struggling to hold on to the Lone Star State.

The sluggish economy and the popularity of fellow Texan H. Ross Perot have presented Bush with a difficult challenge.

"(The Republican National Convention) had no sticking power for Bush," said Gary Nordlinger, president of Nordlinger Associates, a Washington, D.C., political thinktank.

Nordlinger said that Democrats who voted for Reagan in the 1980s were a pivotal group in the election. "Reagan Democrats are about 11 percent of the electorate and could decide the election since both candidates are hovering

around 40 percent in present polls," he said.

Nordlinger also said that Bush suffered from an image problem in Texas.

"Clinton and Gore are Democratic candidates that people can vote for ... whereas Bush is often perceived as a blood-blue, patrician Yalie," Nordlinger said.

While touring Texas, the Clinton campaign attacked Bush primarily on the economy, the issue most political experts say is the most important to Texans.

The Bush campaign struck back at



Bush



Clinton

Clinton, claiming he raised taxes 128 times as governor of Arkansas. Some experts say such charges will have little effect in Clinton's home state whose six electoral votes he probably will win.

Diane Blair, a professor of political science at the University of Arkansas presently working for the Clinton-Gore campaign, said that the issue of the 128 tax increases was resurrected from Arkansas' last gubernatorial race and at the time was "dismissed as complete nonsense by (Arkansas') leading newspaper."

Blair said that the increases the Bush campaign listed included such measures as "increasing fees for DWT" offenses.

Bush faces another threat in the battle for Texas — Ross Perot.

Although he pulled out of the race in July, Perot's popularity still poses problems for the Bush campaign in Texas.

Robert Stein, a political science professor at Rice University in Houston, Texas, said an August poll showed more Perot supporters are favoring Clinton than Bush.

The Rice University poll showed 44 percent of Perot's original supporters now back Clinton, 16 percent favor Bush, and 33 percent remain loyal to Perot.

"With Perot and other fringe candidates in the race, the candidate that wins the (electoral votes in Texas) will not likely win the popular vote," said Stein.



World Briefs

Kurds and Turks battle over southern province

HAKKARI, Turkey — Security forces and Kurdish guerrillas fought for 10 hours Sunday in a battle that killed at least 43 guerrillas and 10 soldiers, the regional governor's office in Diyarbakir announced.

The fighting was the biggest single clash between soldiers and guerrillas in this southeastern province since the Kurdish rebels began fighting in 1984 to seek self-rule in the region.

The governor's office said the guerrillas' death toll was believed to be higher because the rebels were seen carrying some bodies back to their hideouts in Iran. Twelve Turkish soldiers were wounded in the clash.

Turkey made two retaliatory air strikes last week inside northern Iraq, where Kurds also have bases.

The fighting Sunday began when the rebels infiltrated into Turkey from Iran and attacked a military post near the border village of Alan with automatic weapons and rocket launchers, the governor's office said.

The Kurdish Labor Party rebels have dramatically intensified their attacks in recent weeks.

Palestinian prisoners to be released in Israel

JERUSALEM — Israel will begin releasing 600 Palestinian prisoners this week as a conciliatory measure in the ongoing peace talks, the army said Sunday.

The prisoners will be released starting Monday, an army statement said. They will be bused from the Ansar III prison in the Negev desert to the border with the occupied Gaza Strip.

Israel promised to release up to 800 detainees when peace talks resumed in Washington last week. The talks are the first since the left-leaning Labor government led by Yitzhak Rabin succeeded the hard-line Likud party in June.

Most of the Palestinians to be freed are held for what Israel calls security reasons. The army statement cited Israel's "decision to ease conditions" in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip as the reason for the prisoners' release.

The army says 7,400 Palestinians are held in Israeli military detention centers. Of those, 4,660 have been convicted of anti-Israel activity. Some have been imprisoned without charges under emergency regulations in the occupied territories.

Jewish residents fight to keep Golan Heights

JERUSALEM — Jewish settlers in the Golan Heights, nervous about peace negotiations with Syria, stepped up demands Sunday that Israel refuse to give up any of the strategic plateau.

The settlers met with Parliament members in the Golan town of Katzrin, and some urged a general strike to make the rest of Israel take notice.

Settlers and politicians began voicing concern last week when Israel's delegation to the peace talks announced that U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 — which calls for trading land for peace — applied to the Golan.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told parliament members a day later that Israel would not come down off the heights but need not "hold onto every centimeter" of the territory.

He said he would not follow the precedent set by the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt, in which Israel pledged to return all Egyptian territory it had seized. Syria says it won't make peace unless Israel returns the 444-square-mile piece of land, captured in the 1967 Six Day War.

Faced with the possibility of peace with Syria — Israel's most powerful enemy — liberals and conservatives have been arguing whether the country can afford to give back all or part of the territory in a treaty.

Israel declared the Golan annexed in 1981, but the move has not been recognized by most countries, including the United States.

— The Associated Press

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