

Major changes ahead for Bush's Cabinet and others

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Now that one of the most antagonistic and historical elections in recent memory has passed, many issues remain for the newly re-elected President George W. Bush to resolve, such as the war in Iraq and the future of the Supreme Court.

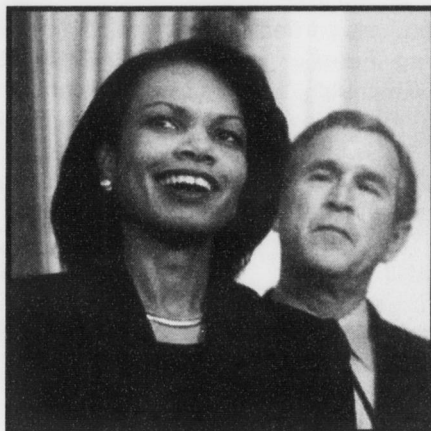
According to a Nov. 3 CNN poll, 57 percent of U.S. adults believe that Bush will reunite the country in his second term, while 39 percent believe he will divide the country even further (621 people were polled).

Bush's administration has recently seen the turnover typical of the beginning of a second term. On Nov. 10, Bush nominated White House legal counsel Alberto Gonzales to replace John Ashcroft, whose resignation from the Attorney General post was made public Nov. 9.

"(Gonzales) always gives me his frank opinion; he is a calm and steady voice in times of crisis," Bush said, according to CNN.com. "He has an unwavering principle of respect for the law."

Some prominent Democrats such as Sen. Charles Schumer (D - N.Y.) were not disappointed by Bush's choice.

"It's encouraging that the president



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Condoleezza Rice will succeed Colin Powell as Secretary of State

has chosen someone less polarizing," Schumer said. "We will have to review his record very carefully, but I can tell you already he's a better candidate than John Ashcroft."

Gonzales's record is not without controversy, however. In the wake of revelations of abuse at Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq, *Newsweek* reported that Bush, with guidance from Gonzales, had decided that the Geneva conventions did not apply to members of Al Qaeda or the Taliban.

In a memo written by Gonzales to the president in January 2002, Gonzales also recommended that the Bush administration loosen restrictions on the conduct of CIA interroga-

tors and U.S. soldiers.

"As you have said, the war against terrorism is a new kind of war," Gonzales wrote to Bush. "The nature of the new war places a high premium on other factors, such as the ability to quickly obtain information from captured terrorists and their sponsors in order to avoid further atrocities against

American civilians.

"In my judgment, this new paradigm renders obsolete Geneva's strict limitations on questioning of enemy prisoners and renders quaint some of its provisions," he concludes.

Newsweek also reported that Gonzales pushed the president to drop Geneva in order to "preserve his flexibility" in the war on terror, lest U.S. officials be prosecuted for war crimes under a 1996 U.S. law barring "war crimes," including "any grave breach" of the Geneva Conventions.

Bush's nomination of Gonzales is part of an effort to bolster Gonzales's credential for an eventual Supreme Court nomination, *The New York Times* reported.

Due to the likelihood that one or more Supreme Court justices may retire during the next four years - Chief Justice William Rehnquist is battling thyroid cancer, and only one of the nine justices is under age 65 - it is likely that Bush will have an opportunity to name at least one new justice to the court, according to *U.S. News & World Report*.

At a press conference Nov. 4, Bush said he would only choose "strict constructionists" if he were to have the opportunity to appoint new justices, the *Times* reported.

Secretary of State Colin Powell announced his resignation Nov. 15. Bush has tapped National Security Condoleezza Rice to take Powell's place. Commerce Secretary Don Evans, Energy Secretary Spencer Abraham, Education Secretary Rod Paige, and Agriculture Secretary Ann

Veneman have also resigned. Bush has yet to name their replacements.

Sen. John Kerry (D - Mass.) has returned to the Senate after spending the greater part of the last two years on the campaign trail.

Kerry has already mentioned a possible run for president in 2008.

The Washington Post reported that he reminded a crowd of 400 of his aides and supporters at a recent dinner that Ronald Reagan ran for president twice before finally winning in 1980.

Bob Shrum, Kerry's chief campaign consultant, has said that Kerry will not disappear from politics the way Al Gore did after the 2000 election, according to the *Post*.

"He will be active and vocal," Shrum said. According to his aides, Kerry will fight Bush's proposed plan to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. ☿

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