

Clinton, GOP resolve budget deal conflicts

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Clinton administration and congressional leaders neared a handshake Monday on balancing the budget by 2002 while slicing taxes for millions of families, students and investors. Both sides began promoting the pact to ensure they could muscle it through Congress this week.

After months of bargaining, the final shape of the package solidified. Assured were a tax credit for many children, a big effort to expand health-care coverage for many of the 10 million uninsured American children, and a phased-in boost in the 24-cent-per-pack cigarette tax.

Many disputes were resolved with an everyone-wins approach. Underlining this, the five-year, \$85 billion net price tag for tax cuts set by the May balanced-budget agreement seemed likely to grow by about \$10 billion.

As it emerged, the accord put leaders of both parties in position to claim credit for the broadest tax cut since 1981 and, if achieved, the first federal surplus since 1969.

"This is an historic opportunity. It can be the achievement of a generation," President Clinton told the nation's governors at a Las Vegas convention, hoping to also spur lawmakers back at the Capitol. "It can only happen with big majorities of people in both houses and both parties com-

ing together and I believe we're on the verge of achieving it." "Both sides have had to give in one category or another," Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, R-Miss., told reporters. "I think on balance the combination is worth having."

House Democrats, Congress' largest pocket of resistance, planned to meet Monday evening with administration officials to learn about the plan. House Republicans were considering a separate session of their own.

Even as both sides smelled victory, still they circled each other on some issues.

The GOP acceded to Clinton's demands for a \$24 billion, five-year effort to expand health-care coverage for many of the country's 10 million uninsured children. That amount was \$8 billion beyond what many Republicans preferred, but there was a catch. They were insisting that Clinton let states have leeway in deciding which services would be provided, such as mental health and dental coverage.

In addition, the GOP wanted welfare recipients taking subsidized jobs in the public and nonprofit sectors to be ex-



Clinton

empted from minimum wage and other worker protections. They argued that such requirements would make it harder to find such slots and hurt state efforts to trim welfare rolls. Clinton was resisting.

The continuing snags were clearly annoying GOP leaders, who were within reach of two of their party's biggest legislative achievements in years. Lott said the administration's bargaining tactics were "like the boa constrictor that continues to squeeze."

In a triumph claimed by both sides, there would be a \$400-per-child tax credit in 1998, rising to \$500 the next year, for children 16 and under. It would apply to many families whose earnings are so low that they owe little or no income tax, a victory for Clinton. But it would also go to single parents making as much as \$75,000 and couples making \$110,000, which Republicans wanted.

The package was on track to include \$35 billion or more in education tax breaks, a key Clinton demand to which lawmakers added their own ideas. Clinton said it would contain his treasured "Hope scholarship" of \$1,500 tax credits for the first two years of college. Also included were special savings incentives for education and other reductions.

GALVESTON

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Kemp has served as head of biology department at A&M and interim dean of the College of Science. He also was executive director of research within the Office of the President for Research and Graduate Studies.

A&M President Dr. Ray Bost said Kemp will serve as a strong leader at Galveston.

"Dr. Kemp has the exact combination of skills and experience need in the Galveston CEO," Bost said. "He's a versatile administrator, an outstanding educator and a rate scientist."

The A&M-Galveston campus also receive an increase in funding. Dr. Barry Thompson, chairman of the Texas A&M System, said \$440 million total general revenue appropriation for the next two years for A&M will play a part in helping A&M-Galveston improve its marine and science program.

"The Galveston campus and other campuses will receive a part of that funding," Thompson said. "It will pay for preliminary expenses in faculty and the programs."

Thompson said the Galveston campus has eight marine programs with a budget of \$858,000.

The dominant majors at A&M Galveston are biological sciences and [marine] life sciences.

A&M-Galveston also offers programs such as the Galveston Island Adventure, which offers sessions during the summer. Participants get a closer look at the marine world and get hands-on experience with marine life.

Other research programs include the Sea Turtle Research program, Marine Mammal program and Institute of Oceanography.

Israeli, Palestinian negotiators say talks will resume

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israelis and Palestinians, weary of months of sporadic violence and mutual recriminations, announced Monday they would return to the negotiating table within days to resume their quest for peace.

"We are deciding to return to the talks ... out of a desire to restore mutual trust," Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said after a meeting in Jerusalem with Palestinian Planning Minister Nabil Shaath.

It was not clear why the two sides were able to come together now, after a four-month impasse, but they have stepped up contacts in recent weeks. In addition, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's opposition to a new Jewish housing project in east Jerusalem appears to have reduced tensions.

There was no indication the sides resolved the key issues that have kept them apart since March: the Palestinians' de-

mand for a halt to Israeli building in disputed territories, and Israel's demand for a renewal of intelligence-sharing to prevent attacks by militant Palestinians.

Shaath said he assured Levy the Palestinian Authority would work to prevent "all acts that would injure, harm or create violence against Israelis and against Palestinians."

Israeli sources said Israel was pleased about improved security cooperation with the Palestinians, noting the recent arrests of Palestinian officers Israel accused of planning attacks on Israelis and the discovery of a bomb factory in Bethlehem.

Levy and Shaath said bilateral committees would resume work "in the next few days" on how to implement so-far unfulfilled promises from previous Israel-Palestinian peace agreements.

Those issues include the opening of a Palestinian airport and sea port in the Gaza Strip, establishment of a "safe passage" for

travel between the West Bank and Gaza, and the release of Palestinian prisoners.

"We are deciding to return to the talks ... out of a desire to restore mutual trust."

David Levy
Israeli Foreign Minister

There was no mention of a settlement freeze by Israel.

Talks broke down in March when Israel started work on a Jewish housing project in Har Homa, an area of Jerusalem the Pales-

tinians want as a future capital, setting off weeks of rioting in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Periodic diplomatic initiatives to end the impasse have failed.

Further clashes between Palestinians and Israeli troops have broken out sporadically in recent weeks after a Jewish settler put up posters last month depicting the Muslim prophet Mohammed as a pig.

Even as the breakthrough in the stalled peace process was announced, Israel closed Arab-owned shops in downtown Hebron after three homemade bombs were hurled at soldiers there over the weekend.

Israeli troops detained about 20 Palestinians in the search for the bomb throwers.

Monday's announcement appeared unrelated to American efforts to restart the talks, although officials from both sides had traveled to Washington in recent days and U.S. envoy Dennis Ross is expected back in the region within two weeks.

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