

# Speaker Accuses Media of Aiding Clinton

*'Passive Conspiracy' Allows President to Mislead Public, Gingrich Says*

By John E. Yang

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House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) charged yesterday that the news media are engaged in a "passive conspiracy" to aid President Clinton in his efforts to "misuse the office of the presidency to mislead instead of lead."

Despite lagging poll numbers, Gingrich told a breakfast meeting of a Republican women's group that Senate Majority Leader Robert J. Dole (R-Kan.) would defeat Clinton this fall "by creating a tidal wave of communications, which allows us both to undo \$60 million of false advertising [by Democrats and their allies], to undo the bias of the elite media and to unmask the systematic misleading by the president of the United States. . . ."

"It's going to take all of us, working together, to get this across," he told the group.

Even as Gingrich spoke, though, cracks appeared to be widening in the Republican front. Sen. Alfonse M. D'Amato (R-N.Y.), who blasted Gingrich last week as too extreme, told ABC's "Good Morning America" that GOP leaders are narrowing the party's appeal by making opposition to abortion and a minimum wage increase "litmus tests."

"We don't need these philosophical ayatollahs telling people you have to believe my way or we have no room for you in our party," said D'Amato, a co-chairman of Dole's presidential campaign.

Asked about those comments, House Majority Leader Richard K. Arment (R-Tex.) said, "I would be thrilled if Al D'Amato would get in touch with the Republican message."

D'Amato said he mainly blamed Patrick J. Buchanan, who has threatened a convention fight over abortion, for the party's problems. Later yesterday, New York Gov. George E. Pataki (R) said his party's congressional leaders were responsible too, for pushing too much change too fast.

"The main force of this has been

Pat Buchanan, but certainly some of the rhetoric coming out of Congress, talking about a revolution" was to blame, Pataki told a news conference in the Bronx. "There's a big difference between having an intelligent devolution of authority to the states and having a traumatic quick change before the American people are ready for it."

In his appearance, Gingrich kept his attacks focused squarely on Clinton and his character. "As a child I was taught to believe the president of the United States should be a man of integrity, the president of the United States should be a man who tells the truth," he said.

Instead, he said, Clinton has made a "shameful performance of systematically misleading the American people," abetted by a "passive conspiracy [among the news media] of telling us how clever Bill Clinton is because he says things that are false with such elan and flair."

Gingrich's comments reflect his emerging effort to help frame the political debate before this year's presidential and congressional campaigns begin in earnest.

After refraining from appearing on television talk shows for several months, he has sparred with reporters on CNN's "Late Edition" and CBS's "Face the Nation" in recent days and sat down with columnists from the Wall Street Journal and the New York Times. In addition, he showed up on "The Tonight Show" with Jay Leno and held a squealing piglet.

The speaker had retreated from the public fray to think about the

campaign after protracted talks with Clinton about balancing the budget broke down early this year.

Gingrich has reemerged with a clear sense of what he expects the year ahead to be like, politically and legislatively, according to his spokesman Tony Blankley. "This is a logical point for Newt to be discussing the issues," Blankley said. "Newt has been the most effective explainer of what this party is about."

Arment said he welcomed Gingrich's return to a more public role. "He is still an excellent messenger," he said, "and will go out and deliver the Republican message."