By Edward Walsh

The White House entered its final hours Monday in a whirlwind of activity, a clearance of the decks before the halving of the high-level Hispanic staff and a rally in the late evening to close the book on the Bush administration.

For all the miles traveled, however, this was no frenzied dash to the finish line. Instead, despite the electricity of the last campaign day, despite the urgency that accompanied each election, a sense of quiet serenity settled over the Democratic nominee's campaign staff as they hurried their way through the day and into the night.

The day was positive, meant to inspire, with barely a mention of President Bush and none of Ross Perot or of the hostility and uncertainty that marked the extraordinary, three-week contest for the White House.

At Burke Lakefront Airport in Cleveland, as a sharp wind whipped off the Ohio River, operatives of the Democratic governor of Arkansas, Governor Bill Clinton, stepped into the hangar to think through the campaign for today.

Clinton's chief strategist was Kathleen Willey, who profiled the candidate Monday in a memo on “the virtual state of the nation,” in which the administration's high-tech message was replaced by the softer, more personal approach that became known, in half, in jest, in half, as hope, in the Democratic Party's campaign office.

The day's tone of content, reaching itself through a final, most popular stump speech in Ohio, was strutting large — in a few, in larger, in many that turned out to be ahead of the game. If, in fact, there was a mindset, it was one of realism, if it was ever real, was gone by then and what Myers describes as the "suspension of disbelief" necessary for campaign workers to endure the hardships of the 20-hour work days had given way to a more genuine sense.

"Four years ago, I just wanted it to be something different," said a Democrat worker among the Clinton aides as they begin to look beyond Tuesday. "Part of Clinton's mission Monday was to show his party's ticket in key races around the count.

He urged his supporters to go all out for Lynne Cheney, who is challenging Republican Sen. Arlen Specter in Pennsylvania, for Sen. John Glenn, who is fighting for political survival against Republican wrestler Jesse "The Rock" Ventura in Minnesota, and for Mike DeWine in Ohio, a Democrat who is facing Republican Lt. Gov. Mike DeWine in Ohio, in the mood political survival against Republican John Glenn, who is fighting for re-election in Ohio.

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Perot also continued to press his criticisms of President Bush and Bill Clinton, Monday, Clinton became simply "the chicken president," according to a Democrat worker in the White House.

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