Common Ground Emerging Amongst Health-Care Factions in Reform Plan

By Mark Goldberg and William Dreaul

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The administration's vow to concentrate order a generation ago.

reunification. With weak govern-

because of the draining costs of

recession. Germany has failed to

conflicts over trade and security

London and Rome, no country has

Europe, the goal of political and

importance, European and Ameri-

can alliances are under increasing:

confounded by increasingly grave

to coordinate their strategy on deal-

the initiative in rebuilding a devas-

tated continent, the Atlantic rela-

tions will go far toward determin-

ments and ideas, united groups of

others, into three contending groups.

Third, we need to be prudent. The

importance of health and money — to put all

our faith in one theory, model or

method. What a speed in a plan that

maximizes the chances of suc-

cess — that is, to borrow a term from

the computer industry, fault-

tolerance.

The basic building blocks of a fusion

plan — one that could suc-

cess — will be hybrid, something

in between the extremes, in the

same way that in the health-care

sector the politicians and the

public are juggling competing

models. The elements include:

- A requirement that employers

associate with workers and a

committment, with adequate

public financing and a firm sched-

ule, to extend coverage to those

outside the workforce.

Initi-

tive. The other nations of the

health-care consumers (the de-

velopment of purchasing consortia

and an end to "double dabbling"

about quality and prices to support

them.

- Incentives to create more, and

more efficient, provider groups,

so the public will keep spending in

bonds.

- To simplify health insurance, includ-

ing a standard benefi-

plan, a single claims form (instead of the thousands of differ-

ent forms now bedeviling providers), and

personal or electronic

billing (at least 20 percent of

what Americans spend on health care is paid with cash).

- Steps to improve the quality of

care and reduce the amount of

spending, perhaps through con-

tracting with providers to cap

medical expenses.

- None of this is to suggest that is the end. We must go beyond

these basics, to develop political

support for the plan (and its

implications) and to convince

the public.

The alternative, a protracted and
counterproductive squabble among

the factions, is surely less appeal-

ing.

Labor, Congressional Leaders

Signal Support of Clinton Plan
ton the Health-Care Reform

WASHINGTON

Organized labor Monday signaled its willingness to go along with higher taxes on the American worker as part of President Clinton's new economic program, as long as any sacrifices call for by the White House are distributed fairly throughout society.

"We believe that if we want programs from our government we ought to be willing to pay for them in a fair and orderly way," AFL-CIO President John Sweeney said after a meeting with top Democratic congressional leaders. "We are prepared to pay their fair share.

But Kirkland stopped short of giving Clinton a blank check of approval for his economic program. "I haven't seen it so far I can't offer any guarantees," he said.

The AFL-CIO Executive Council, gathered here for its annual mid-winter meeting, met in the meeting with Senate Majority Leader George J. Mitchell, D-Maine, House Speaker Thomas S. Foley, D-Wash., and House Majority Leader Richard A. Gephardt, D-Miss., to discuss labor's legislative agenda and the president's economic program.

Despite any reservations labor might have about individual parts of the program, however, the union leaders generally indicated they do not appear ready to cross their new friend in the White House.

Kirkland said that if Clinton can bring about health care reform, the president will guarantee his place in history. For organized labor, the health care issue is the number one legislative priori-
ty on the agenda.

After meeting with the union leaders, Foley, Mitchell and Gephardt emerged with the same basic message: Give the president's economic program a chance and judge it in its entirety, not on the basis of one or two issues.

The three congressional leaders also defended the need for a stimu-

lus package in the face of signs that the economy is improving and Republican claims that no further action is needed.

Bombs Rip Colombian Capital

BOGOTA, COLOMBIA

Two powerful car bombs rocked downtown Bogota Monday, leaving four dead and more than 20 injured. It was the fourth in a series of a terrorist campaign blamed on fugitive cocaine boss Pablo Escobar.

Scores of businesses, hotels and offices were badly damaged when the two bombs went off almost simultaneously at 8:30 a.m. in the heart of the business district, according to authorities.

The escalation in Escobar's terrorist marketer for President Cesar Gaviria, who has vowed to go after the leader of the wave of narco-terrorism buffeting Colombia at that time.

"The motive of the violence committed by the guerrillas is to plunge the country further into chaos," said a representative of the terrorist group."I believe we could recover our old cohesion," said a European ambassador in Bogota. "We probably could, but it would be a high price to pay to find out."