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An Undefined Bloomberg To Lead N.Y.

Novice Inherits Huge Task

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NEW YORK, Nov. 7—Michael Bloomberg, one of the two or three richest men in this richest of American cities, awoke today as the mayor-elect of this large and fragile metropolis.

He had upset Democrat Mark Green late Tuesday, after spending more money—at least \$55 million—on a mayoral race than anyone in history. He is a novice politician who has never held elected office, a 59-year-old businessman who must restore the city's confidence as he tries to slash billions of dollars from its budget. And he'd like to avoid decimating schools and libraries, parks and hospitals.

But his campaign rarely hinted at the specifics of his strategy, and in a cameo appearance at City Hall today he did little more than project his trademark self-confidence.

"We are going to go through a period where job retention is going to be a very serious problem," Bloomberg acknowledged. "I ... have a situation where we don't have the revenue to do the things I'd like to do."

Bloomberg ran as Rudolph W. Giuliani's surrogate and successor, mixing fiscal conservatism with social liberalism. But his is the antithesis of Giuliani's primal-scream style. Bloomberg is short and dapper, tasseled and gilded, and he shocked New York's political establishment by beating Green, the city's two-term public advocate.

Green's 12-point lead evaporated in the last two weeks, as Bloomberg ran hundreds of ads—including four \$100,000 spots during the World Series—on a dozen television stations. Many of the ads featured blistering attacks, portraying Green as an arrogant liberal who would defile Giuliani's city.

The Democratic Party itself was a kingdom divided into feuding ethnic and racial fiefdoms. Several leading Latino politicians simply sat out the general election after Green, who is white, defeated Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, who is of Puerto Rican descent, in a tough primary. "There is no party anymore," said Ed Ott, political director of the Central Labor Council. "The Democrats have to figure out what it means to belong to a party again."

Bloomberg, who is the founder and CEO of the business and media empire Bloomberg L.P., tapped New Yorkers' fears of economic collapse after the attack on the World Trade Center, offering himself as a captain in stormy seas. The pitch was perfect for New York, as the city has long been familiar with the mogul style.

"New York doesn't have a culture that looks down on money," said Mitchell Moss, director of the Taub Urban Research Center at New York University and an adviser to Bloomberg. "Unlike California, which is driven by glamour, we are driven by money. We like billionaires."

Media baron Randolph Hearst twice ran for mayor at the turn of the last century, and Govs. Nelson Rockefeller and Averill Harriman were men of considerable fortunes.

But none spent so prodigiously as Bloomberg, who was a lifelong Democrat who became a Republican shortly before announcing his mayoral bid. Waving off the city's campaign finance laws—which limit spending in exchange for giving candidates public funds—he lavished close to \$60 million on his campaign, paying more than the going rate for top campaign professionals.

He spent \$23 million on television ads and \$4.5 million more for the services of former president Bill Clinton's pollster, Doug Schoen. And he paid Moss and Columbia University's Ester Fuchs to advise him on policy.

Bloomberg's cash countered Green's seeming greatest advantage: an Election Day field operation. Every major labor union in the city endorsed Green, and they sent thousands of workers trooping into the streets. Bloomberg countered by opening his wallet and buying his own field operation, putting more than 1,000 workers out there, campaign operatives said.

Still, an air of mystery attends to Bloomberg.

Few mayors have taken office with a higher me-

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BY BETH A. KRISER—ASSOCIATED PRESS

New York Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg, left, takes the lectern as Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani, center, and Gov. George E. Pataki shake hands during a City Hall news conference yesterday.

dia profile—and, paradoxically, with less known about their views. Bloomberg's name is ubiquitous, on his stock tickers, on mugs and on election posters plastered on walls, buses and hundreds of television commercials. His rise from a family of modest means in Medford, Mass., to a partnership at Salomon Brothers (where he was shoved out with a \$10 million buyout in hand after 15 years) to the founding of one of the nation's most successful financial data companies, was business legend.

And he cuts an outsize figure socially. An active philanthropist (who also donated to Bill Clinton's presidential campaigns) and partygoer on Manhattan's Upper East Side, he is known as a ladies' man, and the sort who rarely bothers to zip his lip. He is, he told New York magazine, the "boy toy" for his matchmaking female friends. Asked if he had ever smoked marijuana, he responded: "You bet I did, and I enjoyed it."

He also possesses an unpolitic arrogance. Pressed about his refusal to abide by campaign spending limits, he puckered his face earlier this summer. "Look, I can't help it," he said, "if your problem is that you can't afford to do it yourself."

This Bloomberg was heard occasionally on the campaign trail. He suggested that sanitation workers have more dangerous jobs than police and firefighters, and he speculated that no harm would come from letting public school children, Jews and Muslims included, recite the Lord's Prayer.

But more often he flew below the news media radar. Bloomberg refused to attend dozens of mayoral forums and kept his street appearances short and disciplined. He rarely offered policy specifics. His election night soiree at B.B. King's blues bar was in keeping with his campaign.

A rope line kept away guests and journalists who were not on prearranged lists. Waiters in Bloomberg T-shirts circulated among the power-suited crowd with glowing trays stacked with crab puffs, shrimp, crudites and various fried-looking nibbles. Brownies and cakes were distributed for dessert.

Bloomberg takes the helm of a city that has lost close to 100,000 jobs, and he faces a \$4 billion to \$6 billion budget deficit next year. The teachers and police officers are working without contracts,

and the remaining union contracts come due next June. The city's pension funds have bled money as the stock market has slumped.

Experts say he has a couple of weeks to get up to speed.

"He's got to come to grips immediately with a huge budget gap and tell the world how he'll close it," said Diana Fortuna of the business-funded Citizens Budget Commission. "This could be worse than the budget crisis of the early 1990s. He has about a month to get this together."

Nor are many labor leaders familiar with the man in the silk ties and monogrammed shirts who will, metaphorically, sit across the bargaining table. He has said he supports pay raises for police and teachers, but he has not said how he would pay for them.

"He's really an unknown," said Ott of the Central Labor Council. "I have no idea how he plays out as mayor."

Bloomberg promises an expansive approach to governance, with concentric circles of advisers near and far. He talks of a style that owes more to his days as a corporate chieftain than to his new role as a city pol. Where Giuliani fought gloriously public and operatic battles with Gov. George E. Pataki (R), Bloomberg promises a buttoned-down regimen of private conversations and telephone calls.

"There will not be any friction you will ever see between the governor and I," Bloomberg said. "I've never worked by airing my differences with people through the press."

He often seems to regard himself with some ironic distance, and today he poked some subtle fun at the incongruity of his new life. Flanked at City Hall by Giuliani and Pataki, he recalled awakening this morning after a late, late election night.

The alarm jangled, it was a hideously early hour. For just a second or two, the billionaire pondered getting some more sleep. Then he recalled: He was to meet Ferrer, for ham and eggs, at 7 a.m. in the Bronx.

"I moaned a little bit and rolled over and thought to myself: 'You know, if I hadn't been so fortunate' [to win the election]," Bloomberg recalled, "I probably would have been able to sleep a little more."

With that he pulled himself off the silk sheet.

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