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BLOOMBERG VISITS HEADS OF 2 UNIONS OVER FISCAL FEARS

HE SIGNALS A NEW STYLE

Mayor-Elect Calls for Ending *Adversarial Relationship* — Dons a D.C. 37 T-Shirt

By ADAM NAGOURNEY and STEVEN GREENHOUSE

Mayor-elect Michael R. Bloomberg paid visits to the leaders of two of New York's most powerful municipal unions yesterday, moving quickly to build ties with officials who will be key players in dealing with the city's mounting budget problems and offering an early and sharp stylistic difference with the man he is succeeding.

"This should not be an adversarial relationship between the mayor and everyone else that works for the city," Mr. Bloomberg said, standing beside Lee Saunders, the administrator of District Council 37, the city's largest municipal union. Then, to underscore the point, the Republican mayor-elect slipped a green District Council 37 T-shirt Mr. Saunders had given him over his shirt and tie, then smiled in front of a mass of clicking cameras.

Mr. Bloomberg met for 20 minutes with Mr. Saunders and for 15 minutes with Randi Weingarten, the president of the United Federation of Teachers. Both unions had supported Mark Green, the Democrat, in the mayoral election that Mr. Bloomberg won Tuesday. Most unions did not back him, in part because his company, Bloomberg L.P., is nonunion.

His decision to meet with the union leaders — and to visit their headquarters rather than summon them to his offices — signaled the importance that the unions will play as Mr. Bloomberg confronts huge fiscal problems when he takes office.

Mr. Bloomberg said yesterday that he expected next year's budget deficit to be about $2.5 billion. But other fiscal experts said that the figure could be closer to $4 billion, the result of an economy that was already sliding downward before the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center.

Mr. Bloomberg declined to get drawn into contract negotiations yesterday, noting that Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani was still involved in them.

"At the moment, we have a mayor who's in office till Dec. 31, and Ms. Weingarten has to negotiate with Mayor Giuliani," Mr. Bloomberg said. "I'm not going to get in the way of those two — hopefully they'll come to a resolution."

But unless Mr. Giuliani reaches last-minute agreements in the next seven weeks on some seemingly intractable issues, Mr. Bloomberg will assume office immediately facing complicated contractual disputes with unions that are no strangers to dramatizing their demands with

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Bloomberg Visits 2 City Union Leaders Over Fiscal Issues

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street demonstrations. Mr. Bloomberg might have to bargain with unions representing 80,000 public schoolteachers, 28,000 police officers and 9,000 firefighters, all whose contracts expired last year.

The teachers and the police officers, seeking parity with surrounding suburbs, have pushed for raises of more than 20 percent, and were looking to whoever was elected to be more generous than Mr. Giuliani.

Beyond the potential pressure of negotiating a contract, if the fiscal situation becomes as bad as many experts think it will, Mr. Bloomberg may find himself returning to these unions to push for cost-cutting concessions that could help him balance New York's books.

The mere fact that the visits took place — and Mr. Bloomberg's easy-going banter with two labor leaders who just three days ago were working against his election — suggests, at least for now, a considerable change in tone in the way City Hall will be dealing with unions. Mr. Giuliani's relations with municipal unions, particularly with Ms. Weingarten, were often rocky.

Mr. Bloomberg steered clear of a question about whether his visit meant that he might have a lighter touch than Mr. Giuliani, the Republican mayor whose support helped lead to the mayor-elect's victory.

"I think he's been a very good mayor, and he's governed for the last eight years," the mayor-elect said of Mr Giuliani. "But I'm governing in the future, and my style is my style. And I would hope that I have access to the people that represent the municipal workers, namely the labor leaders. And I want them to make sure that they understand they will always have access to me."

With Mr. Saunders looking on, Mr. Bloomberg continued: "They may not get the answer they want, but I'm a believer in dialoguing. I'm a believer in inclusiveness. I'm a believer in being open."

At that, Mr. Saunders stepped in with warm words for the mayor-elect.

"Don't underestimate this: This is an extremely important signal that the mayor-elect is sending to us, in reaching out with us and sitting down and talking with us," Mr. Saunders said.



Andrea Mohin/The New York Times

Michael R. Bloomberg, the Republican mayor-elect, with Randi Weingarten, the president of the United Federation of Teachers, in her office yesterday. Her union represents 80,000 public school teachers.

Ms. Weingarten, in an interview after Mr. Bloomberg left, said: "The real breath of fresh air is, he is talking about working with, not *working against, the people who* work for the city and work for the schools."

Mr. Bloomberg made the visit on what was his second day as New York's mayor-elect. From the union headquarters, he went downtown to tour the 14th-floor transition offices set up by Mr. Giuliani across Broadway from City Hall.

The sweeping offices, filled with desks and computers, offered an enviable view of City Hall and the Brooklyn Bridge. But they are decorated in an austere municipal style quite unlike Mr. Bloomberg's campaign and corporate offices. Mr. Bloomberg seemed somewhat hesitant when asked if he planned to spend much time there.

"We'll use it for something," he promised. "There are plenty of things to do." An aide later said that Mr. Bloomberg might find it easier to work out of his opulent campaign headquarters off Park Avenue.

Still, Mr. Bloomberg enjoyed the moment, standing at the entrance and jingling a key ring for the photographers, including his daughter, Emma, who was on hand to record this step in her father's life.

As he left, Mr. Bloomberg and his aides took note of the new sign over the door that announced it as the offices of "Mayor-elect Michael R. Bloomberg."

Mr. Bloomberg's press secretary, Edward Skyler, sighed as he took it in. "After all the press releases I sent out that said 'Mike, Mike, Mike,' they do this?" he said with a laugh.

Last night, Mr. Bloomberg attended a dinner of *100 Black Men*, where he shook hands with the Rev. Al Sharpton. Mr. Sharpton declined to endorse Mr. Green in the election.

Mr. Bloomberg is facing conflicting pressures as he seeks to deal with labor demands and a potential budgetary crisis next year. As Mr. Bloomberg has repeatedly noted, personnel costs represent the largest area of discretionary spending — in other words, spending a mayor can cut — in the budget, and thus he will be looking to reduce labor costs as a way to balance the budget.

But Mr. Bloomberg will also be under pressure to provide teachers and police officers sufficiently large raises to deal with the problems the city faces in retaining and recruiting teachers and police officers, who have been tempted to leave by larger salaries outside New York.

During the campaign, Mr. Bloomberg said he would prefer to increase salaries for teachers, rather than hire more teachers, as a means of retaining experienced teachers in school.

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Michael R. Bloomberg, In His Own Words

ON MEASURING HIS SUCCESS AS A MAYOR

"If reading and math scores aren't significantly better, I will look in the mirror and say 'I've failed,' and I've never failed at anything in my life."

NEWS CONFERENCE IN RIDGEWOOD, QUEENS, JUNE 6, 2001

ON HIS FAVORITE HOBBIES

"Theater, dining and chasing women. Let me put it this way. I'm a single, straight billionaire in Manhattan. What do you think?"

INTERVIEW WITH THE GUARDIAN, DEC. 28, 1996

ON HIS FAME AND PERSONAL WEALTH

"That's money talking. It's what got us the publicity — made Bloomberg, if not a household name, at least a synonym for success — and ensures that some day I'll have a long obituary in The New York Times."

IN HIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY, "BLOOMBERG BY BLOOMBERG," 1997

ON TAKING ADVICE

"Stubborn isn't a word I'd use to describe myself; pigheaded is more appropriate. To a contrarian like me, constant advice not to do something almost always starts me quickly down the risky, *unpopular path.*"

"BLOOMBERG BY BLOOMBERG," 1997

ON THE CHAUFFEURED LIFE

"One of the problems is that everybody acknowledges that it is nice to sit in an air-conditioned car, sipping a cup of coffee and having a little bit of down time by yourself. That unfortunately is a luxury that, if everybody does it, the city can't afford."

CHINATOWN NEWS CONFERENCE, JULY 11, 2001

ON MIKE BLOOMBERG, THE MOVIE

"Harrison Ford could play modern day. Brad Pitt a little bit younger and DiCaprio for when I was a kid. I assume all of those guys will be in contention."

INTERVIEW WITH MAUREEN DOWD, THE NEW YORK TIMES, JULY 1, 2001

ON CRIME IN THE CITY

"People leave their doors open in New York. You don't leave your doors open in lots of other cities."

CAMPAIGN APPEARANCE IN WASHINGTON HEIGHTS, OCT. 22, 2001

ON MIKE BLOOMBERG, THE MUSICAL

"I'd have to go buy Disney."

CAMPAIGN APPEARANCE AT SWING 46 IN MIDTOWN, AUG. 13, 2001

ON SCHOOL PRAYER

"I think it is an excellent idea. It is the way I grew up and I didn't turn out so bad."

NEWS CONFERENCE IN SUFFOLK COUNTY, JULY 19, 2001

THE NEW YORK TIMES, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2001

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