

## US MIDTERM ELECTION

# Republicans roar back to take US House

### Democrats cling to Senate majority

BBC ONLINE

US Republicans have seized the House of Representatives in mid-term elections, dealing a severe blow to President Barack Obama's ability to pass laws.

On a tide of economic unease, they won at least 60 seats from the Democrats.

However, Obama's Democrats narrowly retained control of the Senate, despite losing six seats, including some to candidates backed by the Tea Party.

In Nevada, one of the most dramatic contests of the night, the Democrats' leader in the Senate, Harry Reid, fought off Tea Party challenger Sharron Angle. US Senator John Kerry reacted with delight: "Harry Reid isn't just Dracula, he isn't just Lazarus, he's our leader and our whole caucus is thrilled that he's unbreakable and unbeatable."

While some of the Tea Party's most eccentric candidates lost their races, the conservative wing of the Republican Party is now a power in the land.

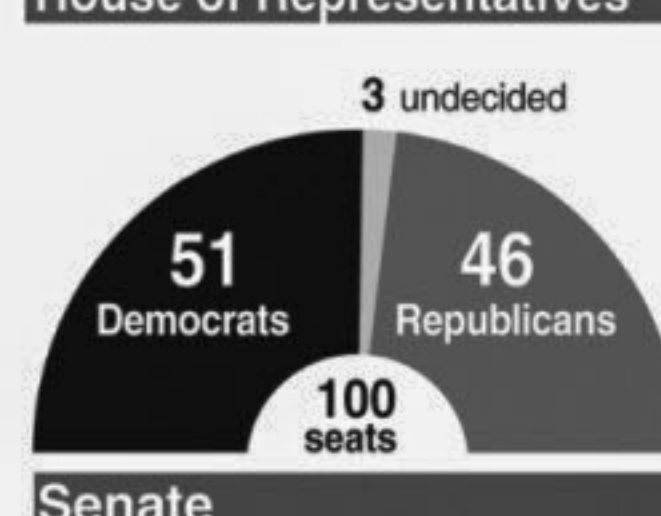
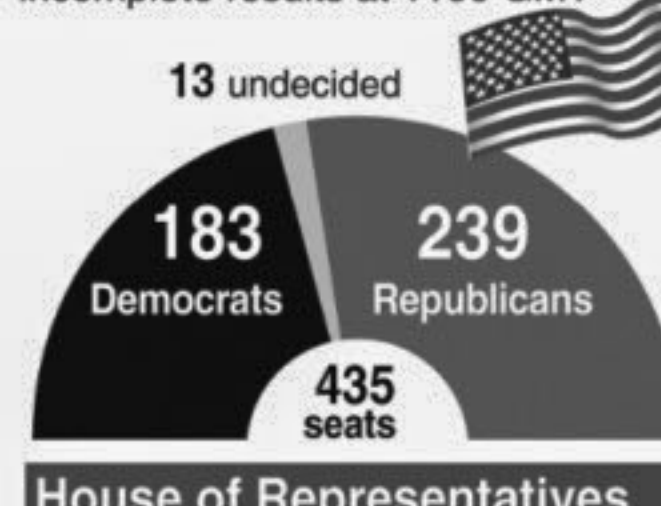
This is hugely difficult for the president. While there will be much talk of compromise and reaching deals, many Tea Party supporters' explicit aim is to block and undo Obama's agenda.

Up for election were all 435 seats in the House (the lower chamber of Congress), 37 of the 100 seats in the Senate, governorships of 37 of the 50 states and all but four state legislatures.

With some counts still to be completed, projections suggested the Republicans had obtained a net gain of 60 seats in the House, more than in the tumultuous 1994 mid-terms.

### Republicans score mid-term gains

Congress post-election incomplete results at 1100 GMT



Source: New York Times

Senate results from Washington State, Alaska and Colorado have still to be called, as well as the race for governor of Florida.

And among various local referendums, an attempt to legalise marijuana in California was defeated, while Oklahoma backed a measure banning judges from using Islamic law in rulings.

'TEAWAVE' As well as Illinois, Republicans took Senate seats from Democrats in Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Arkansas, North Dakota and Indiana.

In Arkansas, John Boozman defeated incumbent Blanche Lincoln in a historic reverse for the Democrats.

Rand Paul, a favourite with the anti-establishment Tea Party movement, held Kentucky for the Republicans.



House Republican Leader John Boehner (C), R-Ohio, speaks during a press conference in Washington, DC yesterday. Next picture shows, US Senator-elect Mark Kirk, who defeated democratic rival Alexi Giannoulias to win the Senate seat vacated by US President Barack Obama.



PHOTO: AFP

### Highlights of election

- Up for election were all 435 seats in the Lower House, 37 of the 100 seats in the Senate, governorships of 37 of the 50 states and all but four state legislatures
- Democrats narrowly maintained their grip on Senate by winning 51 seats, while Republicans got 46
- Democrats lost their stronghold in Lower House. Previously they held 255 (now 183) seats and Republicans 178 (now 239) seats
- For majority in the House, 217 seats were required
- Economic unease was the main factor for Democrats' defeat in Lower House
- Republicans won at least 61 seats from the Democrats
- Republican John Boehner is the probable speaker of the US House
- Obama's old Senate seat also captured by Republicans
- Democrat Harry Reid wins Nevada Senate's seat

SOURCE: BBC ONLINE

## Republicans to fight Obama's agenda

BBC ONLINE

A top Republican has urged Barack Obama to change course after the president suffered a severe setback in mid-term elections.

John Boehner said Americans had voted for "limited government", and pledged to roll back Obama's healthcare reform "monstrosity".

Republicans took advantage of voters' discontent to win 60 seats in the House of Representatives from the Democrats.

Boehner, who as the new majority leader in the House is likely to become its next speaker, said the electorate had turned against the president and the previous House speaker, Democrat Nancy Pelosi.

"It's pretty clear the Obama-Pelosi agenda has been rejected. They want the president to change course. Change course we will," he said.

"I think that it's a mandate for Washington to reduce the size of government and continue our fight for smaller, less costly and more accountable government," he said.

The Republicans made a net gain of at least

six Senate seats, leaving the Democrats with a slim majority.

Dozens of those House seats and several Senate ones went to candidates backed by the Tea Party conservative anti-tax movement.

The election result is a stinging setback for the president, who was elected only two years ago with so much hope and so much exuberance, says the BBC's North America editor Mark Mardell.

While there will be much talk of compromise and reaching deals, many Tea Party supporters' explicit aim is to block and undo Obama's agenda, our editor says.

Up for election were all 435 seats in the House (the lower chamber of Congress), 37 of the 100 seats in the Senate, governorships of 37 of the 50 states and all but four state legislatures.

With some counts still to be completed, projections suggested the Republicans had obtained a net gain of 60 seats in the House, more than the 54 they won in the landmark 1994 mid-terms, and the biggest exchange of seats since the Democrats won 75 in 1948.

### Democrat replaces Schwarzenegger

AFP, Los Angeles

Democrat Jerry Brown won on Tuesday his bid to return as California governor and will succeed Republican Arnold Schwarzenegger, US media forecast.

Brown, who was governor here from 1975-83, beat his Republican opponent Meg Whitman, the billionaire former chief executive of eBay, to take the state by a margin of 49 percent to 46, CNN said, citing exit polls.

Whitman had reportedly spent over 140 million dollars of her own fortune in a bid to take the governorship of the most populous state in the United States.

Brown was the youngest California governor since the 1850s when first elected at the age of 36, and will be the oldest ever to hold the post this time, at the age of 72, according to the Los Angeles Times.

### OBAMA TO REPUBLICANS He wants 'common ground'

AFP, Washington

US President Barack Obama told Republican congressional leaders that he wanted to find common ground after their crushing wins in mid-term elections, the White House said early yesterday.

Obama called John Boehner, widely expected to take over as speaker of the new Republican House of Representatives in January, and Mitch McConnell, the top Republican in the Senate, the White House said in a statement.

The president told the two he was "looking forward to working with him and the Republicans to find common ground, move the country forward, and get things done for the American people," the statement said.

### Seven rebels killed in Kashmir

AP, Srinagar

Government forces have killed seven suspected Muslim rebels in four gun battles in Indian-controlled Kashmir, police said yesterday, just days before President Barack Obama visits India.

Officials fear the rebels could step up attacks to draw attention to the unrest in the disputed Himalayan region while Obama is visiting this week.

"They're also trying to create a situation where they may blame security forces for their actions," senior police officer Shiv Murari Sahai said.

Indian paramilitary troops were on alert. "We are in constant touch with the state police, and all necessary arrangements have been made to maintain law and order and to combat militancy," said Anirudh Uppal, the force chief in Kashmir.

Anti-India sentiment runs deep in the majority Muslim region, where more than a dozen rebel groups have been fighting for Kashmir's independence or its merger with neighbouring Pakistan since 1989.



Afghan President Hamid Karzai (2L) is escorted by security personnel as he arrives to deliver a speech in Paktika province on Tuesday.

## US to spend \$500m on embassy in Afghanistan

AFP, Kabul

The United States is bolstering its presence in Afghanistan with a 500 million dollar expansion of its Kabul embassy and the construction of two consulates, it announced yesterday.

Washington's Kabul embassy is already its biggest in the world, with about 1,100 employees, projected to rise to 1,200 by the end of the year, officials said.

Hundreds have arrived over the course of this year as part of a "civilian surge" bringing development experts into the country to complement the military effort already in its 10th year.

The United States and Nato have 150,000 troops in Afghanistan fighting the Taliban-led insurgency, following a military surge aimed at speeding an end to the war.

The embassy expansion contract was worth 511 million dollars and had been awarded under US law to an American company, Caddell Construction Inc., ambassador Karl Eikenberry said.

Another two contracts, worth 20 million dollars each, have been awarded for the construction of consulates in Herat, the main city in western Afghanistan, and Mazar-I-Sharif in the north, he said.

Speaking to a gathering of Afghan officials, Eikenberry said the expansion would enable the United States "to carry out its pledge to maintain into the future its very significant security, government, economic and civil society programmes".

He said the projects currently employed 500 Afghans and that "once construction gets underway more than 1,500 Afghan workers will be employed through the completion of the project in summer 2014".

The embassy project includes an office building with 302 desks, two apartment buildings with 433 beds and a parking garage with capacity for 300 vehicles, it said.

### Japan anti-terrorism data leaked on internet

BBC ONLINE

Sensitive police documents in Japan related to international terrorism have been leaked online, Japanese media say.

More than 100 documents give personal details of people co-operating with terrorism inquiries, and foreigners in Japan apparently under investigation.

The documents, which also include intelligence believed to have come from the FBI, are thought to have been published via file-sharing software.

Tokyo's Metropolitan Police Department (MPD) says an inquiry is underway.

There are concerns that the leak could affect security at the Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (Apec) summit on 13 and 14 November.

Japan is preparing to host the leaders of 21 countries and regions, including US President Barack Obama.

## UN raises winter fund alarm in flood-hit Pakistan

AFP, Islamabad

The United Nations yesterday expressed increasing alarm over sluggish funds for Pakistan's 21 million flood victims, appealing to donors to act swiftly to stave off a new winter emergency.

"We are getting more concerned that the funding is slowing down," UN spokeswoman Stacey Winston told a press conference in Islamabad.

Only 39 percent of a record appeal for nearly two billion dollars -- about 760 million dollars -- has been received and almost another eight million pledged, UN statistics show.

Unprecedented monsoon rains triggered catastrophic flooding across Pakistan in July and August, ravaging an area roughly the size of England and affecting 21 million people in the poverty-stricken country's worst natural disaster.

The World Bank and Asian Development Bank estimate the damage at 9.7 billion dollars and the Red Cross warned this week that millions of Pakistanis affected by the calamity will need humanitarian assistance for the next two years.

Winston said large tracts of land were still under water in Sindh province in southern Pakistan and warned the emergency was far from over.

"We are very grateful for everybody's gener-

osity but it is simply not enough," she said.

Winston said latest imagery from certain areas of Sindh showed 20-kilometre (12-mile) stretches of land still under water.

She said the displaced were unable to return to homes inundated by waters three or even six feet deep that could linger for at least three months.

"It is still a serious emergency and that is what we have to convey to the world -- that Pakistan cannot be forgotten, that people are still very much suffering."

"We need the funds and the support and resources to reach people in need so that they can go home and they can rebuild their lives."

Winston said the onset of winter threatened a new crisis.

"We are looking at another emergency in the north with winter coming. We do not want the people to be left out in the cold. We want to provide them with the housing and with the materials they need to rebuild their homes."

Fresh data from the government showed that the number of damaged houses had risen to more than 1.7 million in Sindh and the north-western province of Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, she said.

### OBAMA'S MUMBAI VISIT US to spend \$200m a day

PTI, Mumbai

The US would be spending a whopping \$200 million (Rs 900 crore approx) per day on President Barack Obama's visit to the city.

"The huge amount of around \$200 million would be spent on security, stay and other aspects of the Presidential visit," a top official of the Maharashtra Government privy to the arrangements for the high-profile visit said.

About 3,000 people including Secret Service agents, US government officials and journalists would accompany the President. Several officials from the White House and US security agencies are already here for the past one-week with helicopters, a ship and high-end security instruments.

"Except for personnel providing immediate security to the President, the US officials may not be allowed to carry weapons. The state police is competent to take care of the security measures and they would be piloting the Presidential convoy, the official said on condition of anonymity.

### Full security rehearsal in Mumbai today

PTI, New Delhi

An intense security drill involving US secret service agents, Indian intelligence agencies and NSG commandos will take place tomorrow in Mumbai ahead of US President Barack Obama's visit.

The full security dress rehearsal in Mumbai will see participation of US agents, NSG commandos, officials of different Indian intelligence agencies, Mumbai Police, Indian Navy and Indian Air Force. American Air Traffic Control personnel are also expected to take part in it.

A similar exercise will also be carried out in Delhi on Friday to fine-tune the security arrangements in the national capital during Obama's visit here.

On a three-day visit to India, the US President will arrive in Mumbai on November 6 and in Delhi a day after. All high-rise buildings in the vicinity of Mumbai's Taj Mahal hotel and Delhi's Maurya Sheraton hotel, where the US President will stay, will be sanitised and security personnel will guard them from rooftop to prevent any air-borne attack. The Mumbai coastline will be guarded by Indian Navy personnel while the skies of both the cities will be protected by IAF fighter jets and helicopters.

The Ridge area -- opposite Delhi's Maurya Sheraton hotel -- has been illuminated by floodlights as part of the heightened security drill.

The Home Ministry has already issued an alert for Mumbai and Delhi asking authorities to take extra precautions during Obama's visit as well as on Diwali on Friday.

### Indian completes 10 years on hunger strike

AFP, Guwahati

A human rights activist in northeast India who is dubbed the "Iron Lady of Manipur" has completed 10 years on hunger strike and vowed to continue her protest, her supporters said yesterday.

Irom Chanu Sharmila, from the remote state of Manipur, which borders Myanmar, began her fast on November 2, 2000 after witnessing the killing of 10 people by the army at a bus stop near her home.

Now 38, she was arrested shortly after beginning her protest -- on charges of attempted suicide -- and was sent to a prison hospital where ever since she has been force-fed vitamins and nutrients via a nasal drip three times a day.

Sharmila is frequently set free by local courts, but once outside the hospital prison she resumes her hunger strike and is rearrested.