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The Upshot
WEIGHING THE ODDS

A Government Shutdown Suddenly Looks Far Less Likely

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John Boehner's decision to resign as House Speaker is seen as sharply decreasing the likelihood that House Republicans will force a government shutdown to defund Planned Parenthood.

Over recent weeks, analysts had become increasingly convinced that Congress was on a path that would lead to a government shutdown. Indeed, Stan Collender, an expert on the congressional budget process, recently suggested that the likelihood of a shutdown was as high as 75 percent. Traders at PredictIt, a small-scale political prediction market, had put the chances in the 30 to 50 percent range — not likely, but a very significant threat.

In the wake of Mr. Boehner's announcement, though, traders have

substantially revised their views, and the latest betting at PredictIt as of Friday afternoon suggests that the odds of an Oct. 1 shutdown are now closer to 7 percent.

The underlying logic appears to be that Mr. Boehner has announced that he will resign shortly after the new fiscal year begins in October, and so in the interim, he will be free to use his remaining political capital to push some sort of continuing resolution through the House. Moreover, he may feel less constrained than his successor to cut a deal with House Democrats.

Of course, this tells us only that the chances of an Oct. 1 shutdown have declined considerably. What happens under the next House Speaker remains an open question. The congressional Republicans most likely to vote for a future shutdown look stronger than ever. After all, they've just claimed Mr. Boehner's scalp, and his successor may conclude that there's a very real political cost to be paid for negotiating with Democrats, even if it is just to keep the government open.

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