

Bush pulls punches on Clinton draft issue

SALT LAKE CITY — President Bush told a military group Tuesday that Bill Clinton's draft record matters because any president "might have to decide if our sons and daughters should knock early on death's door." Clinton steered clear of the draft issue while telling the group he was ready to lead the military as commander in chief.

The candidates addressed the National Guard Association an hour apart in appearances that had been seen as a chance for a hard-hitting exchange on Clinton's descriptions of how he avoided the Vietnam draft.

Bush spoke of "controversy swirling around" the issue, but his references were brief and indirect.

Aides said Clinton had prepared a response in case Bush attacked directly on the draft issue, but decided it was unnecessary after hearing Bush's speech.

"National security begins with economic security," Clinton told the group.

"There's been a lot of controversy swirling around about service to country and influence to avoid the military, and I've read a great deal of speculation that I was going to come out here and use this forum to attack Gov. Clinton," Bush said.

"I didn't come here to attack him," Bush told the group. Still, "I want to tell you I feel very strongly about certain aspects of the controversy swirling around Gov. Clinton."

"Despite all our problems at home, we can never forget that we ask our presidents to lead the military," he said.

Bush, a Navy flyer shot down in World War II, said, "Does this mean that if you've never seen the awful horror of battle that you can never be commander in chief?"

"Of course not. Not at all," said Bush. "But it does mean that we must hold our presidents to the highest standard."

"I will never allow a hollow army," Clinton vowed. "We still must have the best-equipped and best-trained military to meet today's threats," he said, almost echoing Bush's own remarks about the importance of the military in a still-dangerous world.

Clinton said he would not shrink from his responsibilities as commander in chief with a goal that "when we fight, always to win."

The Arkansas governor acknowledged in April that he received an induction notice in 1969 but was allowed to finish his first year of graduate school because the letter arrived late. That summer, he pledged to join an ROTC program to avoid the draft, but he later backed out of that agreement and made himself available to be drafted. By then, a lottery system was in effect and Clinton drew a high number and never was called.

New U.N. General Assembly faces post-Cold War world

UNITED NATIONS — The 47th General Assembly opened Tuesday facing new world disorder: a power vacuum left by the end of the Cold War, and famine, ethnic tension and environmental threats.

With a full menu of 145 issues on the assembly's plate, Yugoslavia was to be the bitter appetizer. The United States, European and Islamic nations are pressing to suspend or expel what remains of Yugoslavia from the United Nations.

In its first act, the assembly endorsed by acclamation Stoyan Ganev, the foreign minister of Bulgaria, as its new president.

Ganev is a symbol of the end of the Cold War. A 37-year-old lawyer, he was named last November to the first Bulgarian government since 1944 without Communists or Socialists.

Next Tuesday, Foreign Minister Celso Lafer of Brazil begins a parade of about 40 world leaders speaking before the assembly.

During the session, which lasts until mid-

December, the General Assembly is expected to consider the establishment of a revolving fund for peacekeeping, famine in Somalia and other African countries, and payments to a fund to protect the environment.

The United States wants Yugoslavia expelled outright from the United Nations, but might settle for suspension as a compromise, diplomats said. Muslim countries also favored expulsion.

Russia opposed suspending Yugoslavia, saying isolation would hamper communications leading to peace in the Balkans. China reportedly shared Russia's view.

The matter was to be decided by the 15-member Security Council later this week, then be taken up by the 179-member General Assembly. Russia and China have veto power in the Security Council, and could block a move toward suspending Yugoslavia.

Things That Make You Go Mmm...



Russian joblessness jump predicted by senior official

MOSCOW — Russian unemployment could jump nearly 20-fold to more than 5 million people next year as cuts in subsidies drive more businesses into bankruptcy, a senior official said in remarks published Tuesday.

Farmers picketed in cities across Russia on Tuesday, protesting that reforms have driven up the prices they must pay at a faster rate than prices they receive for their produce.

Inflation has skyrocketed since President Boris Yeltsin accelerated reform by freeing prices last January. So far his government has balked at cutting subsidies to unprofitable state-owned businesses for fear of sinking them and throwing millions out of work.

Yeltsin vowed last week to fight hyperinflation by slashing subsidies. A wide-scale privatization program he promised to launch Oct. 1 is expected to cause bankruptcies and social hardship.

Economics Minister Andrei Netchayev said the number of people needing work next year could rise to about 7 million people, or 8 percent of the work force.

Netchayev, quoted in the government's Rossiskiy Vesti (Russian News), said about 5 million of the 7 million would be officially 'jobless,' of which about 4.7 million will receive unemployment relief.

The number of people now registered as jobless is 248,000, the daily Moskovsky Komsomolets reported.

Authorities have said the real jobless figure may be twice the official one.

Officials from the International Monetary Fund and World Bank have made loans to Russia conditional on efforts to reduce the budget deficit, forcing Moscow to curb subsidies to the state-owned businesses and factories that still dominate the economy.

Yeltsin and other Russian officials have told Western authorities that

“The government has promised us a lot, and it still keeps making promises, but the result is zilch.”

V.P. Pantykin
Russian farmer

subsidies cannot be cut abruptly for fear of forcing too many people out of work and causing a social explosion.

Pressure from powerful factory managers has forced Yeltsin to continue to subsidize them and to postpone plans to privatize the defense industry.

Many Russians fear privatization of government-owned businesses and Western levels of joblessness.

Those fears are so great that Russian lawmakers have balked at allowing private ownership of land, a keystone of market reform.

Protests could spread if Yeltsin's government goes ahead with plans to stop bankrolling inefficient factories and businesses.

Farmer demonstrations were held in Moscow and six other cities Tuesday, the ITAR-Tass news agency said. They demanded help paying higher fuel prices.

Several hundred demonstrators gathered on Moscow's Old Square, outside a government office building. Their demands included more investment in agriculture, higher farm prices, lower taxes and greater redistribution of land.

Farmers "have finally lost patience," protester V.P. Pantykin told Commonwealth Television. "The government has promised us a lot, and it still keeps making promises, but the result is zilch."



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FAX NUMBER 472-1761
The Daily Nebraskan (USPS 144-080) is published by the UNL Publications Board, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE, Monday through Friday during the academic year; weekly during summer sessions.
Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by phoning 472-1763 between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. The public also has access to the Publications Board. For information, contact Tom Massey, 488-8761.
Subscription price is \$50 for one year.
Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Second-class postage paid at Lincoln, NE.
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