

# Clinton, Yeltsin trade praise, play down gaps

MOSCOW (AP)—With hugs and handshakes, President Clinton and Boris Yeltsin traded warm compliments and played down nagging differences Sunday, insisting that their election-year summit was not influenced by presidential politics.

Both leaders facing re-election battles, Clinton and Yeltsin would not even entertain the possibility of a Communist comeback in Russia. "I am sure that I will be victorious," Yeltsin boomed at a Kremlin news conference with Clinton.

"That makes my answer irrelevant, doesn't it," Clinton said with a smile. With Yeltsin under fire for the bloody fighting in the breakaway republic of Chechnya, Clinton expressed sympathy with Russia's position and compared the situation with America's Civil War.

Clinton said Abraham Lincoln gave his life for the proposition "that no state had a right to withdraw from our union. And so, the United States has taken the position that Chechnya is a part of Russia."

As to whether the summit would help politically, Clinton said, "It's a great mistake to put too much of a political spin on this since typically foreign policy does not play that big a

role in voting patterns."

After five hours of talks, Clinton and Yeltsin reported progress in resolving a dispute over the deployment of Russian troops under a 30-nation treaty on conventional forces in Europe.

They also said they set the stage to clear up Russia's objections to development of American theater missile defenses under the 1972 Antiballistic Missile Treaty. Formal negotiations resume in Geneva in June.

While the presidents met, about 300 Communists protested on Red Square, laying flowers at Lenin's tomb. One of their banners read, "Lenin lives and will be victorious."

It was Clinton's third trip to Moscow in three years and his 10th meeting with Yeltsin, the final stop on a trip that began with visits to South Korea and Japan. The trip came at a time of doubt about Russia's continued transition from communism to democracy.

Before returning to Washington, Clinton met with Yeltsin's chief political rival, Communist candidate Gennady Zyuganov, who is leading in the polls, and other opposition leaders. Once again, Clinton insisted he was neutral in Russia's elections.

"I spent two days staying out of it,"

*"Thanks to President Yeltsin's leadership ... democracy is taking hold."*

**BILL CLINTON**  
U.S. President

Clinton declared, "I'm not going to get into it now just before I leave town."

Back home, Clinton has been criticized for not taking a firmer stand about Chechnya and insisting that the fighting stop.

Clinton said Yeltsin—sponsor of a battered peace plan—assured him that he wanted a diplomatic solution and "asked me to do a thing or two" to help secure a settlement. U.S. officials said later Yeltsin had asked Clinton to try to get King Hassan II of Morocco to use his influence with separatist leader Dzhokhar Dudayev to agree to negotiations on Yeltsin's peace plan.

"Thanks to President Yeltsin's leadership, 60 percent of Russia's economy is now in the hands of its people, not the state; inflation has been cut, democracy is taking hold," Clinton said.

## Berringer

Continued from Page 1  
Berringer, who was expected to be selected in the weekend draft.

A Brook Berringer Memorial Fund has been established at the University of Nebraska Foundation and can be

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The NU athletic department will donate all money from unreturned "Night of Champions" tickets to a memorial in Berringer's honor, as determined by the family.

A joint funeral service for Berringer and Lake will begin at noon today at Goodland High School's Max Jones Field House.

## Lebanon fighting eases as diplomats negotiate

BEIRUT, Lebanon (AP)—Israeli gunboats and warplanes pounded south Lebanon and Hezbollah guerrillas fired more rockets into northern Israel Sunday. But the intensity of the 11-day-old Israel offensive diminished as diplomats strove for a cease-fire.

Police said four people were wounded in the hostilities, which were comparatively less fiery than over the previous 10 days—perhaps because of the diplomatic efforts or just the rainy weather.

At least 137 people have been killed and 312 wounded on both sides since Israel launched "Operation Grapes of Wrath" on April 11 to stop the Iranian-backed Hezbollah from rocketing northern Israel. Most of the casualties were Lebanese civilians.

Hezbollah, or Party of God, has repeatedly fired Katyusha rockets on northern Israel from the region, where the guerrillas' supply bases are located. It fired 20 Katyushas on Sunday, the officers reported, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Israel lifted a week-old naval blockade on Beirut Port on Sunday, but Israeli gunboats fired intermittently on the 50-mile-long coastal highway, blocking the main supply

artery from Beirut to the south for the fourth day.

Two civilians, a policeman and a Lebanese soldier were wounded by the naval fire, police said.

International mediators and the main players held marathon week-end negotiations to end the bloodiest flare up in nearly three years, in which 400,000 people in south Lebanon and thousands more in northern Israel have been displaced.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher shuttled between Damascus and Jerusalem. The foreign ministers of Russia, France and Italy, which currently holds the rotating presidency of the European Union, converged on Beirut after talks in Syria, the main power in Lebanon.

There were differences over which plan to adopt and who should mediate.

Israel turned down the Europeans and the Russians. Prime Minister Shimon Peres said after meeting Christopher on Sunday that he felt only the United States has the authority to mediate.

Christopher said there was "common ground" among the peacemakers, but the United States felt a "special responsibility" to take the lead.

## Palestinian authority uncovers plot to assassinate Arafat

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—Palestinian police said Sunday they had uncovered plots by Islamic militants to assassinate PLO chief Yasser Arafat and carry out more suicide bombings in Israel.

The attack on Arafat was to take place during a scheduled visit to a Gaza City cemetery on April 28, said Col. Tawfiq Jaber, head of Palestinian intelligence in southern Gaza.

"Two explosive parcels and two mines were prepared for assassinating Arafat," Jaber said at a news conference where he presented six of the

seven members of the Islamic militant group Hamas who were arrested in connection with the plot.

Jaber said two of the men had been cooperating with police and have identified 16 underground Hamas cells, leading to an undisclosed number of arrests and the prevention of six planned suicide bombings in Israel. He said the two will be released.

Islamic militants opposed to Arafat's peacemaking with Israel have claimed responsibility for a series of suicide bombings that killed 63 people between Feb. 25 and March 4.

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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 68588-0448, 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 Tim Hedegaard, 436-9253, 9 a.m.-11 p.m.

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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