

News Digest

PAGE 2

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10, 1997

Officials find fault with Serbian elections

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — Serbia's three presidential votes were all "fundamentally flawed" by widespread potential for vote rigging and state media coverage that favored the ruling Socialists, international officials said Tuesday.

The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, the 54-nation group that oversaw the three ballots since September, said the Socialists denied other parties full access to the vote count, dominated election commissions and failed to publish detailed results.

State TV did improve its coverage of opposition candidates, but its newscasts remained significantly biased toward Slobodan

Milosevic's Socialists, an OSCE report said.

Ambassador Gerard Stoudmann, who heads the group's election monitoring office, also criticized state media for reporting that the OSCE had certified Sunday's vote as free and fair.

"We are disappointed," he said, noting that Tuesday's assessment was the group's first report on the presidential vote. "We would have ... expected more accurate reporting from state media."

Several irregularities were noted in the southern province of Kosovo, where the ethnic Albanians who form 90 percent of its population always boycott Serbian elections, but relatively high turnout was reported.

Polling stations in Kosovo either opened or

closed before the official hour, and non-Socialists "were discouraged" from taking part in local electoral commissions, the OSCE said.

"The overall election process was fundamentally flawed," the OSCE concluded, urging Serbian authorities to open a "genuine political dialogue" to encourage all citizens to vote.

Turnout has hovered around the 50-percent mark in all three votes, indicating many Serbs believe the elections will change little. Last winter, three months of daily protests against Milosevic failed to dislodge him. Although Milosevic was eventually forced to let the opposition take power in Belgrade and a dozen other cities, that democratic coalition has since dissolved, leaving many Serbs without hope in any

political party.

Final results announced Tuesday showed a Milosevic ally and an extreme nationalist were the front-runners in Sunday's vote. But neither secured the 50 percent of votes needed to win, so they face a Dec. 21 runoff.

Ultrationalist Vojislav Seselj won an October runoff against another Milosevic ally, but that vote was also invalid, attracting only about 48 percent of the 7.2 million eligible voters.

In Sunday's vote, Yugoslav Foreign Minister Milan Milutinovic, a Milosevic ally, won 43.7 percent of the vote. Seselj had 32.19 percent and Draskovic had 15.42. Turnout was 52.75 percent.

Iran leader condemns U.S.

TEHRAN, Iran (AP) — Before an audience of many Muslim leaders, Iran's spiritual leader delivered a rebuke of the West on Tuesday, echoing the tone of the Islamic revolution he helped lead while assuring wary Arab leaders that Iran posed no threat to its neighbors.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei also condemned the United States and urged Muslims to unite against Israel, but his promise that Iran would be a good neighbor was a striking departure from the government's standing pledge to export its Islamic revolution.

"Right now, we fear each other more than we fear the enemy," Khamenei said in opening a three-day summit of the 55-member Organization of the Islamic Conference. "The political designers of arrogance are breathing their poisonous breath to make our neighbors in the Persian Gulf fearful of Islamic Iran."

The summit at a gleaming conference center below the snow-capped Alborz Mountains drew 28 heads of state, prime ministers and crown princes. Many of them were making their first trip to a country they had feared since the 1979 Islamic revolution.

The opening ceremony offered a telling sign, too, of the political ferment in Iran, with Khamenei and President Mohammad Khatami offering strikingly different views of relations with the West and the way in which the Muslim world should deal with it.

Khamenei, who leads the faction opposed to reconciliation with the United States, said in the West, "money, gluttony and carnal desires are made the greatest aspirations."

But Khatami, whose landslide victory in May electrified the coun-

try, called for dialogue and respect for the West.

"Our era is an era of preponderance of the Western culture and civilization, whose understanding is imperative," he said in a speech that followed Khamenei's by just minutes.

In many ways, the contrast between the two highlights of the struggle going on inside Iran. Khatami's victory came from the many Iranians who resent the past two decades of suffocating control by Iran's conservative clergy, but government hard-liners have sought to tie his hands.

The summit itself was a remarkable sign of Iran's growing acceptance by its neighbors. Most surprising was the presence of the emir of Kuwait and crown prince of Saudi Arabia, two countries at odds with the Islamic republic since the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War.

Later Tuesday, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah met Khatami and Khamenei separately on the sidelines of the summit, ending nearly two decades of hostility between their nations.

Official Tehran radio quoted Khamenei as telling Abdullah, "The government of Iran has the will to expand ties with Saudi Arabia."

Abdullah responded: "We should not look to the past when it comes to bilateral ties. ... The climate exists to improve relations between the two countries."

Iranian officials said they would speak with Abdullah about the U.S. military presence in the Gulf, through which much of the world's oil passes.

He urged Muslim states "to bolster and strengthen our ranks."

Raising prices may curb smoking

WASHINGTON (AP) — Increasing the cost of cigarettes by \$1.50 a pack would reduce teen smoking only if combined with other anti-smoking measures, two of three specialists told a House subcommittee Tuesday.

"There is no single magic bullet," DePaul University psychology professor Leonard Jason told the House Commerce subcommittee on health and environment. "The best approach is a combination of tools, including restricting access and advertising, school-based programs and price increases."

Economic studies show that just a 10 percent price increase reduces overall smoking among adults by about 4 percent and teen smoking by 7 percent, said Michael Eriksen, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Office on Smoking and Health.

A third witness — Howard Beals, a George Washington University professor who's worked as a consultant for R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Co. — disagreed. He said the most effective approach would be educating teen-agers about the consequences of smoking and imposing penalties for tobacco use.

Several members of Congress have introduced bills that would raise prices by \$1.50 a pack, and anti-smoking groups have taken up the call in hopes that Congress will

act next year on the tobacco settlement reached between tobacco companies and state attorneys general in June.

Under the deal, tobacco companies would pay \$368 billion over 25 years, curb their advertising and pay fines of up to \$2 billion if teen smoking, which has increased through the 1990s, doesn't drop 30 percent in five years. In return, they would be protected against future lawsuits and win limits on government control of nicotine.

The \$1.50 increase was not part of the settlement. President Clinton has called for raising prices gradually if teen smoking doesn't drop significantly over 10 years. However, the tobacco industry has said the June agreement by itself would raise cigarette prices by a minimum of \$1.50 a pack over 10 years. The R.J. Tobacco Co., the Lorillard Tobacco Co., U.S. Tobacco, Brown & Williamson Tobacco Corp., and Phillip Morris Inc. released a financial analysis of the settlement in October.

Beals said the single most important factor in teens' decision to begin smoking is the behavior of their closest friends.

"The odds that a teen whose best friends of the same sex all smoke (will be a smoker) are more than six times higher than for a teen with no smoking friends," he said. "Teen-agers smoke because,

judged by their own preferences, the benefits of smoking exceed the costs. To discourage teen-age smoking, policies must seek to reduce the benefits that teens derive from smoking or they must seek to increase the costs that teens who smoke must bear."

Beals also said that his research has failed to show a link between teens' decision to smoke and tobacco advertising. Cigarette ads may influence a teen-ager's choice of brands, he said, but they don't appear to entice them to begin smoking.

But Eriksen said advertising plays an important role by affecting young people's perceptions of the pervasiveness, image and function of smoking.

CDC data show that teen-agers are nearly three times as likely as adults to smoke the most heavily advertised brands of cigarettes, and the glamorization of tobacco use in the media also appears to be a substantial influence, he said.

"Young people give the following reasons for smoking: to improve their image, specifically to impress peers and achieve a sense of identity," Eriksen said. "These themes are reinforced by the images of tobacco advertising that portray smoking as a popular part of a positive, active and fun lifestyle."

Reno defends decision to Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — Attorney General Janet Reno testily confronted Republican critics of her fund raising investigation Tuesday while the FBI director told lawmakers his recommendation for an independent prosecutor didn't mean he believed a specific person had committed a crime.

In a daylong congressional hearing designed to air Republican anger over the failure to name an independent prosecutor, Reno stood her ground.

"This has all the appearances of an attorney general protecting the president," charged Rep. Dan Burton, R-Ind., chairman of the House Government Reform and Oversight Committee.

Reno bristled at the suggestion she was hiding behind legal technicalities: "I'm not hiding ... I'm trying to do my duty."

"I will make the decisions based on the evidence and the law, and not on newspaper headlines, newspaper editorials, polls or threats," she said.

Freeh, who watched for hours as

Reno was grilled, addressed his own widely publicized disagreement with Reno. Freeh had advocated naming an independent counsel, but he told lawmakers that did "not imply that I believe any particular person has committed a crime."

Freeh refused to say the basis for his decision.

Freeh denied his disagreement had created any rift with Reno, who rejected his advice last week. He did not deny that concern that Reno may have a conflict of interest in investigating her boss, President Clinton, was among his reasons for advocating appointment of an independent counsel.

"That I made a recommendation different from the ultimate outcome in this instance does not mean there is a professional rift between us," he said.

Though Republicans refused to allow Reno and Freeh to testify together, the two law enforcement officers flashed solidarity by jointly refusing to give the House panel a copy of Freeh's memo outlining his

disagreements with her.

Both said they did not want to compromise the investigation by disclosing crucial evidence or investigative strategies.

Rep. John Mica, R-Fla., said he was ready to vote to cite Reno for contempt of Congress for refusing to honor the committee's subpoena for Freeh's memorandum. Reno responded with evident exasperation, "What do you want? All the details of the investigation?"

"I wish I could sit down and say, 'This is what we are doing,'" she added. "But laying out for people what you're going to do in an investigation is the dumbest thing you can do" because it tips off the targets. She repeated over and over that the independent counsel decisions did not end the investigation or exonerate anyone from the broad probe under way.

Reno also dismissed her disagreement with Freeh, calling it "healthy."

"It promotes good investigative work and clear thinking about the law," she said.

Daily Nebraskan

Editor: Paula Lavigne
Managing Editor: Julie Sobczyk
Associate News Editor: Rebecca Stone
Assistant News Editor: Jeff Randall
Assignment Editor: Chad Lorenz
Opinion Editor: Matthew Waite
Sports Editor: Mike Kluck
A&E Editor: Jim Goodwin
Copy Desk Chiefs: Nancy Zywioc
Kay Prauner
Photo Director: Ryan Soderlin
Design Chief: Joshua Gillin
Art Director: Aaron Steckelberg
Online Editor: Gregg Stearns

Questions? Comments? Ask for the appropriate section editor at (402) 472-2588 or e-mail dn@unlinfo.unl.edu.

Asst. Online Editor: Amy Pemberton
General Manager: Dan Shattil
Publications Board Chairwoman: Melissa Myles, (402) 476-2446
Professional Adviser: Don Walton, (402) 473-7301
Advertising Manager: Nick Patsch, (402) 472-2589
Assistant Ad Manager: Daniel Lam

Fax number: (402) 472-1761

World Wide Web: www.unl.edu/DailyNeb

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 the summer sessions. The public has access to the Publications Board.

Readers are encouraged to submit story ideas and comments to the Daily Nebraskan by calling (402) 472-2588.

Subscriptions are \$55 for one year.

Postmaster: Send address changes to the Daily Nebraskan, Nebraska Union 34, 1400 R St., Lincoln, NE 68588-0448. Periodical postage paid at Lincoln, NE.

ALL MATERIAL COPYRIGHT 1997

THE DAILY NEBRASKAN