

# News Digest

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## Milosevic, NATO talks reach no conclusion

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — A U.S. envoy gave Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic another chance Wednesday to bow to international demands and avoid NATO airstrikes. But Milosevic remained defiant.

Following his meeting with envoy Richard Holbrooke, Milosevic's office said "attempts were made to overcome the differences" over the crisis in the Kosovo province.

Referring to the possibility of NATO airstrikes, the Yugoslav statement said "the threats which are delivered to our country jeopardize the continuation of the political process."

It accused foreign governments of waging "a media campaign against our country" through "one-sided and fabricated reports."

U.S. officials refused comment

on the talks, and Holbrooke left for Brussels, Belgium, to meet Secretary of State Madeleine Albright today.

Before the talks ended, President Clinton reiterated that Milosevic has to end his crackdown in Kosovo, pull out his special police force and resume negotiations. Kosovo is a province of Serbia, the main republic of Yugoslavia.

But 90 percent of its 2 million inhabitants are ethnic Albanians and most favor independence or substantial self-rule.

Milosevic launched his crackdown Feb. 28 against the ethnic Albanian Kosovo Liberation Army, which is fighting for independence for Kosovo.

Hundreds have been killed, and more than 270,000 people have been driven from their homes.

Despite mounting evidence of

Milosevic's non-compliance and a U.N. declaration confirming it, Washington seemed to lack the international consensus needed to bomb Milosevic into compliance.

The United States is trying to get Milosevic and the ethnic Albanians to agree on a deal that would defer for two or three years a decision on whether to separate Kosovo from Serbia.

"We are continuing to push for military action against the Serbs," State Department spokesman James Rubin said. "NATO is not there yet."

U.S. officials also face strong opposition from Russia, whose Defense Minister Igor Sergeyev warned Wednesday the move could lead to even more bloodshed in Kosovo.

"This is not a penalty or punishment of an isolated country but

"*We are continuing to push for military action against the Serbs.*"

**JAMES RUBIN**  
State Department spokesman

almost a real war," Marshal Sergeyev said in Athens, Greece.

Preparations for intervention continued in Yugoslavia and abroad.

Britain, France and Germany all recommended that their citizens leave Yugoslavia. Canada already has evacuated all nonessential diplomatic staff and their families from its Belgrade embassy, and U.S. officials said dependents of its embassy employees would soon be evacuated.

In Belgrade, the city government

said it was making preparations for possible strikes. Warning sirens blared in some Serbian towns. Some opposition parties said mobilization of air defense reservists was under way.

Meanwhile, Milosevic tried to show that he was working to settle the Kosovo crisis by dispatching Serbian premier Mirko Marjanovic to the province and inviting the 54-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe to the area.

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## Clinton asks for votes 'of principle, conscience'

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Clinton said Wednesday that members of the House should cast "a vote of principle and conscience" on whether to approve a broad, Republican-written impeachment inquiry against him. He denied he was trying to pressure lawmakers.

"It's up to others to decide what happens to me, and ultimately it's going to be up to the American people to make a clear statement there," the president told reporters in the Oval Office. "More important than anything else to me is they do the people's work and then let the people decide where we go from here."

In return, Sen. Robert Byrd of West Virginia, the senior Democrat in the Senate, offered "friendly advice" to the White House: "Don't tamper with this jury." Senators would be the jury if impeachment resolutions were approved by the House and a Senate trial was convened.

A day before the House is set to approve the impeachment inquiry, Democrats were searching for an alternative that would satisfy both liberals and conservatives in the party, as well as those with tough re-election races.

Meanwhile, first lady Hillary Rodham Clinton met with a group of freshman House Democrats to urge them to "vote their conscience" and to

### Clinton under fire

argue on behalf of the Democratic alternative, said her spokeswoman, Marsha Berry.

"She made clear she thought the Democratic alternative that puts the standards first was the right way to proceed," Berry said.

White House spokesman Joe Lockhart denied that the first lady was trying to help twist arms on the president's behalf. "She made a case for the Democratic alternative because it's an alternative that's more fair," Lockhart said.

After a House Democratic caucus, it was clear that a number of lawmakers — especially conservatives and those in tough races — would vote for the Republican resolution.

"This cannot be a vote where you try to defend the president of your own party," Rep. Tim Roemer, D-Ind., told reporters in expressing support for the GOP proposal.

But most Democrats who spoke at the meeting said they would show strong party unity by voting first for a more limited inquiry — even though it's destined to fail.

"We're a party, and we have to start thinking like a party," Rep. Gary Ackerman, D-N.Y., told reporters.

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