

# Serb leader refuses to comply with NATO

BELGRADE, Yugoslavia (AP) — President Slobodan Milosevic defied a renewed threat of NATO attack Wednesday, rejecting deployment of foreign troops in Kosovo to police a peace deal.

The statement after a four-hour meeting Tuesday night with U.S. envoy Christopher Hill, who arrived in from Kosovo talks in Rambouillet, France, left the status of those negotiations in more doubt than ever.

Western sources at the talks in France said Hill flew in to tell Milosevic that if he doesn't accept a Kosovo agreement by noon Saturday that calls for foreign troops in Kosovo, he will suffer NATO airstrikes.

But Milosevic, who has been known to bow to diplomatic pressure at the last moment, showed no signs of doing so yet.

In a statement issued early Wednesday by the official Tanjug news agency, Milosevic said "our negative stand on the presence of foreign troops is not only the attitude of the leadership, but also of all citizens of our country."

The deployment of an international force is a take-it-or-leave-it deal proposed by the United States and backed by other powers at the conference outside Paris. As many as 30,000 NATO troops, including some 4,000 American soldiers, would be sent to Kosovo immediately to police the agreement.

Hill was dispatched to Belgrade after U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright telephoned Milosevic to warn him to accept the peace deal, including the troops' deployment, or face NATO strikes.

But Milosevic showed no more willingness to do so than the Serbian officials at the talks, which opened in the 14th-century French chateau Feb. 6. His negotiators have said NATO troops would jeopardize the sovereignty of their country and vowed to fight against the foreign "aggression."

In his statement, Milosevic reiterated the Serb stand that there can be no independence for Kosovo and that all ethnic communities in the province

should have the same rights, although ethnic Albanians make up 90 percent of the population.

"Our delegation in Rambouillet is negotiating in good faith," declared Milosevic in a statement that seemed to offer little hope the Serb delegation would back down and sign the peace deal.

International mediators, led by the United States, have brought Serbs and secessionist Albanians to the negotiating table to end a conflict that has cost an estimated 2,000 lives and left hundreds of thousands homeless in Kosovo, in southern Serbia, the dominant of two Yugoslav republics.

The Serbs were counting on Russia to back up their rejection of foreign troops, but a NATO source, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the Russians have told the 16-nation military alliance they are willing to go along with a NATO deployment as part of a three-year interim peace deal.

The source also said Russians may eventually participate in a peacekeeping operation, as they do in the NATO-led force in Bosnia. The Russia-NATO Permanent Joint Council is meeting in Brussels, Belgium, on Wednesday to discuss the issue.

Russian officials still oppose NATO airstrikes against Yugoslavia in the event the peace talks fail.

Meanwhile, NATO military planning for deployment is virtually complete.

Advance troops could be in place in Kosovo in a matter of hours with 6,000 to 8,000 more troops quickly following, officials said. The first forces to arrive will probably be 2,200 U.S. Marines currently in the Mediterranean.

Plans for the deployment of the main 28,000-man force are expected to be finished by the end of the week.

Any American peacekeepers sent to Kosovo would remain until a system of self-rule is "up and running" and stability is restored, the Clinton administration said Tuesday. However, other administration officials said the aim is to get the job done within three years.

# 72 Vietnamese refugees take oath to become U.S. citizens

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After that, everyone in the auditorium was asked to stand and say the Pledge of Allegiance along with the new citizens.

Lincoln High Principal Mike Wortman, who also spoke, told the newly inducted citizens that the location of the ceremony was uncommonly appropriate.

"It is fitting that this ceremony is held in school, because as a citizen of the United States, you will have a great opportunity to receive an excellent education."

Celine Roberson, a Lincoln High

faculty member who became a U.S. citizen in 1972 and is originally from China, told the group, "Let us work together to make our chosen country a better place for everyone."

A reception followed the ceremony in the high school cafeteria, where new citizens could register to vote.

UNL sophomore Sang Van Nguyen, was one of the 72 new U.S. citizens.

Nguyen said he was happy that he and his family were now U.S. citizens.

Now that he is a citizen, he said he was going to immediately register to vote and apply for a U.S. passport.

# Police see surge of drivers failing to register vehicles

BY SHANE ANTHONY  
Staff writer

Lincoln police issued 805 more citations in 1998 for improper vehicle registration than they did last year.

At a press conference Tuesday, Police Chief Tom Casady said police issued 9,008 citations in 1998, compared to 8,203 in 1997. The "epidemic" of improperly registered vehicles is aggravating for taxpayers, he said, but some motorists may find the risk of getting caught less troublesome than paying for registration.

"It's expensive, obviously, to register a car," he said. But fines for improper registration are usually very small, he said. "It takes an awful lot of \$25 tickets" to make registration look like a better idea, he said.

Susan Ross, the assistant motor vehicle supervisor for Lancaster County, said the lowest fee a person living in Lincoln could pay to register and license a car this year is \$67, plus a \$3 fee for new license plates. For trucks weighing fewer than five tons, she said, the lowest amount would be \$87.50 plus the new license fee.

Those figures apply only if the

"If you stopped every vehicle with no plates, you wouldn't get very far."

TOM CASADY  
Lincoln police chief

vehicle is old enough to have no property tax on it and it was not newly purchased, she said. Anyone purchasing a vehicle has to pay sales tax, she said, and that number sometimes shocks the new owner.

"I think there are a lot of people these days who are buying vehicles who don't realize they're going to have to pay that much sales tax," she said.

Motorists living outside Lincoln pay 4.5 percent sales tax, she said. For those living in Lincoln, the rate is 6 percent. Lincoln residents must also pay a \$39 yearly wheel tax — \$58.50 for most trucks — that other Lancaster County residents don't have to pay.

Ross said some people try to avoid the higher sales tax rate and the wheel tax by registering their vehicle as if they lived in other counties, or outside Lincoln.

Casady said police investigated

392 such cases last year. Other people never bother registering their vehicles to avoid paying anything, he said.

"If you stopped every vehicle with no plates, you wouldn't get very far," he said.

Casady encouraged people to report drivers who have no licenses or improper in transit signs.

"It would bother me to think my neighbor avoided paying taxes," he said.

Ross said a vehicle must be registered wherever it is stored 51 percent of the time — "where the car sleeps." But full-time students and active military personnel can register their vehicles at their permanent addresses.

Vehicle registration is located at 625 N. 46th St. The building is open from 7:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. For estimates or questions, call (402) 441-7497.

# Wesely makes moves to mayor's office

■ The 20-year veteran of the Legislature received \$7,500 in donations and promised to open City Hall to all citizens.

BY ERIC RINEER  
Staff writer

Don Wesely officially kicked off his mayoral campaign Tuesday, calling for City Hall to be opened to the average citizen — not just an exclusive few.

Wesely, who retired a 20-year veteran of the Nebraska Legislature last year, said he was excited about the support he's seen for his campaign to represent the common person in the mayoral office.

"We're going to open up City Hall and invite all the people," said Wesely, the lone Democrat in the race.

While Wesely addressed supporters about his platform, several sponsors handed him checks to show their support.

## City Elections

Donations included a \$3,000 check by the Communications Workers of America, a \$500 check from the Lincoln Central Labor Union and a \$4,000 check from the local chapter of a firefighters union.

Wesely said he was encouraged by the donations to his campaign.

"What a great start to the campaign," he said. "It's inspiring to have that strong of support."

Republican City Councilwoman Cindy Johnson — Wesely's main opponent in the race — collected \$10,000 from the Lincoln Chamber of Commerce two months ago to help begin her own campaign.

Wesely said one of his goals, if elected, was to give firefighters stronger support in order to ensure better public safety.

Mike Spadt, President of the International Association of Firefighters in Lincoln, presented the donation to Wesely.

"He's the only one that has the vision and the ability to guide the city into the future," Spadt said of Wesely. "He's a fair person, and all people will have a voice when he's in office."

The temporary change of P Street to a two-way thoroughfare, he said, was an example of a select few people in City Hall making an irrational decision.

"You shouldn't have to wait for people to do a petition drive before the city does something to change things," Wesely said.

Wesely also spoke about various proposals by the city to develop in areas such as Wilderness Park, Steven's Creek and Antelope Valley. He called for a more thorough study of those areas before moving forward with development.

"We don't want growth at any cost," Wesely said. "If we do it right, the city will not only grow bigger — it will grow better."

Wesely said his campaign kickoff was long anticipated.

"I spent 20 years in the Legislature waiting for this moment," he said. "It's time to bring the city together and move it toward its future."

# Malcolm X museum may become reality

OMAHA (AP) — Construction on a museum and learning center to honor slain civil-rights leader Malcolm X at the site of his parents' home in Omaha could begin this spring.

The project is under the direction of Johnny Rodgers, president of the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation and a former Nebraska football star who won the 1972 Heisman Trophy.

A builder has agreed to develop financing for a geodesic dome to house the memorial if the foundation raises \$25,000 to lay the base for the dome, Rodgers said.

Rodgers said formal fund-raising will begin after plans are better organized. He hopes the museum can be completed by May 19, 2000, the 75th anniversary of Malcolm X's birthday.

"It's really dependent upon the people," Rodgers said. "If people come together, they can make things happen."

The project has been planned for

almost 30 years.

The foundation owns about 10 acres near Malcolm X's birth site, a vacant lot identified by a historical marker erected in 1987. It was the first Nebraska state historical marker to honor a black person.

Rodgers said the timing is good for a memorial to Malcolm X because most people now recognize him as an important leader in the civil-rights movement and a role model for youths.

Rodgers noted that the U.S. Postal Service recently released a stamp honoring Malcolm X. The 33-cent stamp, the 22nd in the Postal Service's Black Heritage Series, went on sale Jan. 21.

"We need to show some appreciation for our heroes, and he's one of them," Rodgers said.

Malcolm X, also known as El-Haji Malik El-Shabazz, was born Malcolm Little at University Hospital in Omaha on May 19, 1925.

At the time, his parents — the Rev.

"We need to show some appreciation for our heroes, and he's one of them."

JOHNNY RODGERS  
President of the Malcolm X Memorial Foundation

Earl and Louise Little — lived at the site of the planned memorial. The home was condemned and torn down in 1965, the same year Malcolm X was assassinated in New York.

The family moved to Milwaukee when Malcolm X was 3 years old.

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