

Hard-liners win key races in Bosnia

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina — Hard-line Serbs and Croats claimed victory Sunday in key races in the parts of Bosnia they control, clouding prospects for change despite an apparent strong showing in Muslim areas by parties calling for ethnic tolerance and reform.

Official results from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, which supervised Saturday's nationwide election, were not expected before Monday. The final count could take weeks.

However, partial, unofficial returns released by major parties indicated a strong showing in

Muslim areas by political groups advocating ethnic tolerance. Hard-line Bosnian Serb and Croat parties appeared to be leading in areas controlled by those two ethnic groups.

The party founded by indicted war crimes suspect Radovan Karadzic claimed a strong lead Sunday over the Western-backed candidate for leader of the Bosnian Serb part of the country.

If the final count shows a victory for ethnic tolerance in Muslim areas, that could produce a backlash among Serb and Croat hard-liners, who told voters that ethnically based parties were their only protection against losing their cultural and religious identity in this multiethnic coun-

try.

That in turn could complicate efforts to foster regional cooperation and forge a sense of nationhood among people who fought a bitter war only a few years ago.

The 1995 Dayton Peace Agreement that ended the Bosnian war divided the country into a Muslim-Croat Federation and a Serb republic loosely tied together by a federal parliament, a three-member presidency and other federal institutions.

Voters in the two mini-states chose members of the federal parliament Saturday. Additionally, those in the Muslim-Croat Federation selected their own regional legislature and officials of 10 regional can-

try.

Bosnian Serbs also voted for a president and vice president of their half of Bosnia.

In the Bosnian Serb area, known as Republika Srpska, the Serb Democratic Party claimed its candidate, Mirko Sarovic, was "almost certain" to defeat Western-backed Bosnian Serb Prime Minister Milorad Dodik for the presidency of the Serb mini-state.

With about half the Serb votes counted, Sarovic was leading with 59.3 percent, or 203,833 votes, to Dodik's 29.7 percent, or 100,159 votes, according to the Serb Democratic Party. A third Party of Democratic Progress accounted for the rest.

Hillary for president? Experts say perhaps

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NEW YORK — When Hillary Clinton was growing up, she wrote to NASA about becoming an astronaut. The letter back said girls need not apply.

Clinton made it into the history books anyway, not as the first female astronaut, but as the only first lady to ever win elective office.

Now the question is: Might she someday become the first female presidential candidate for a major party?

"No," she declared at her first post-election news conference. "I'm going to serve my six years as junior senator from New York."

Of course, the first lady and her husband are famous for choosing their words carefully. That "six years" clause does not rule out the possibility of a presidential run in 2008, or even 2012, when she will be 65.

But many experts think the "Hillary haters" who fueled Senate opponent Rick Lazio's campaign with \$33 million would make it impossible for her to do nationally what she did here.

"I think it's unlikely she could get elected president," said Nelson Warfield, a Republican consultant and Bob Dole's former press secretary. "She's just such a polarizing candidate. I think her future is she becomes Ted Kennedy in a pantsuit. She becomes a very useful devil figure for the hard right. And her celebrity starts to wane as soon as she becomes one of 100."

Glenna Matthews, co-author of "Running As a Woman," a book about female politicians, agreed that Clinton "probably is hated too much" to become president. "But who knows? I don't want to rule out the possibility. She's too hard-working and has too impressive a work ethic."

And even if Clinton never runs for president, Matthews added, "she's paving the way for the first woman president."

Clinton has already started to make her presence felt. On Friday, she proposed abolishing the Electoral College. Considering that she has not even been sworn in yet, a proposal to amend the Constitution seemed like a relatively bold way to launch her tenure.

On the other hand, with Vice President Al Gore's future in doubt, "clearly her national role is carved out," said Lee Miringoff, who heads the Marist Institute for Public Opinion in Poughkeepsie. "With the Senate and House remaining in

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Judith Hope
New York Democratic Party chairwoman

Republican hands, she immediately emerges as the most prominent Democrat in the nation. If she is not, it's unclear who pushes her aside."

Clinton beat Lazio by 12 points, but in a national race, she'd lose the advantage she had in New York, where Democrats outnumber Republicans 5-3. Yet Clinton also did well in traditionally conservative upstate New York. By making its lagging economy a theme of her campaign and repeatedly visiting regions where Democrats usually fare poorly, she captured 47 percent of the upstate vote.

Clinton also won 60 percent of female voters and two-thirds of working women. A similar female following nationwide could neutralize opposition from Hillary-haters.

"Obviously there is national potential for her," said Judith Hope, chair of the state Democratic Party. "She has the ability to galvanize and motivate the troops, the way Bill Clinton does."

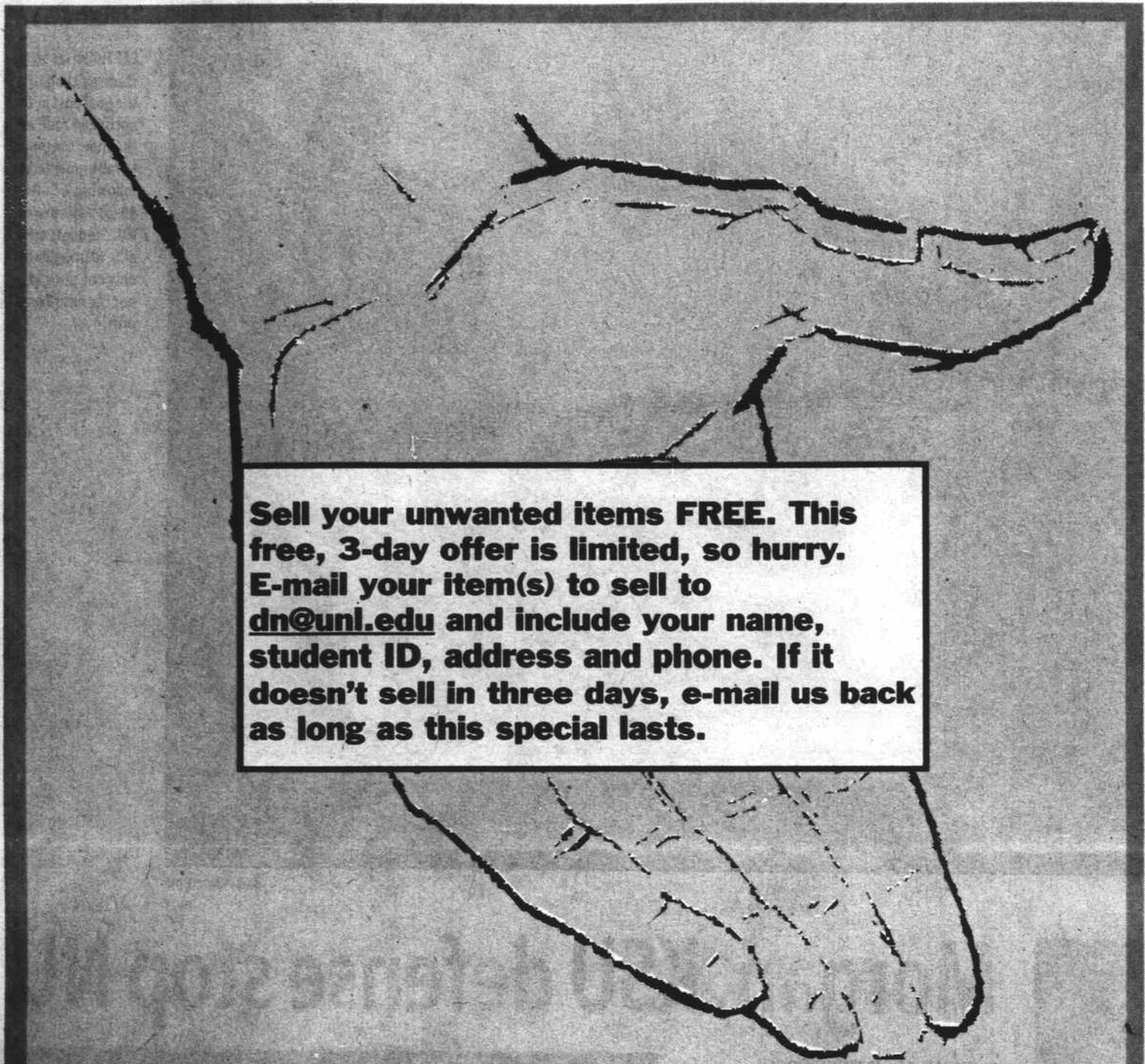
In the Senate, Clinton will serve side-by-side with senators who helped kill her ambitious health care plan, voted to remove her husband from office and held highly partisan hearings on her ill-fated Whitewater land deal.

Sen. Trent Lott, R-Miss., the Senate majority leader, has already set the tone for her reception, warning her to get used to the idea of being "one of 100 coequals. Getting a lot of attention and getting something done in the Senate don't always go hand-in-hand. If she's smart, she'll keep a pretty low profile."

But don't tell that to the voters back in New York.

"We need an intelligent woman who is not a puppet of the good old boys," said Anne Jorgensen, a teaching assistant who attended one of Clinton's last rallies before the election in upstate Binghamton.

Cora Olin, who heard Clinton speak in a Bronx church last month, agreed. "She is going to be the first woman president.



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