

# Walter Mondale will enter Senate race

**Tim Jones**  
Chicago Tribune (KRT)

MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. — Walter Mondale returned to center stage of Minnesota politics Wednesday night as a modern-day Rip Van Winkle, a former vice president, senator and ambassador called upon to run for a Senate seat in a state that has changed dramatically since his political prime.

But Mondale, 74, a revered public figure and Minnesota's elder statesman, is a good fit in many ways for

Democrats as they try to hold on to Sen. Paul Wellstone's Senate seat and control of the U.S. Senate.

His nomination Wednesday night is also a gamble, inviting Republican attacks that Mondale represents the past while Republican Norm Coleman, 53, is the man of the future.

"Tonight the nation — in fact, the whole world — is watching Minnesota, not just to see who will win, but how we conduct ourselves. If there was ever a time to put aside political dogfighting, now is the time," Mondale said moments after accepting the unanimous nomination from the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party delegates to replace Wellstone on Tuesday's ballot.

Joined by his wife, children and grandchildren, Mondale pledged to be "your voice and Paul Wellstone's voice."

Talk radio was sizzling Wednesday over sharply partisan remarks delivered by Rick Kahn, a Wellstone friend. Some Republicans demanded equal time to respond to what

they charged was a partisan rally for the Democrats.

Sensing a potential political backlash, Wellstone campaign manager Jeff Blodgett apologized Wednesday. "I was surprised ... and I deeply regret it," Blodgett said, adding that he did not know what Khan was going to say. Mike Erlandson, chairman of the Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party, also apologized.

Minnesota Governor Jesse Ventura, who was booed at the ceremony, said Wednesday he objected to the

tone of some of the remarks and, on a talk radio program, Ventura threatened to appoint an Independent to fill the remaining time of Wellstone's term in office.

Poll numbers released Wednesday showed Mondale, who had not yet announced his candidacy, with an 8 percentage-point lead over Coleman, 47 percent to 39 percent.

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# Labor Party resigns from Sharon's government

**Michael Matza and Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson**  
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

JERUSALEM — The Labor Party's resignation Wednesday from the government of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will force him to call early elections or form a coalition dominated by hard-liners who are unlikely to support resuming peace talks with Palestinians.

The resignations of Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and their La-

bor Party from Sharon's government threaten to prolong fighting between Palestinians and Israelis. Their conflict has killed more than 2,000 Palestinians and Israelis since September 2000. But analysts say Israel is unlikely to escalate its military response to the uprising. Sharon still faces pressure from the Bush administration to keep the region quiet as the United States prepares for a possible war against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"By and large the key here is not

what Israel is doing, or what the Palestinians are doing," said Eytan Gilboa, political science professor at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat Gan. "The key is what the U.S. is doing, and what they are going to do in Iraq."

Labor's move will likely lead to new elections within 90 days, well ahead of elections scheduled for next November.

Ben-Eliezer, who wants to challenge Sharon for the premiership, would prefer a date in early spring.

Labor quit Sharon's government in a dispute over funding of Jewish settlements, minutes before a parliamentary vote on the 2003 budget. The budget allocated \$145 million for Jewish settlements but cut services for the poor.

Ben-Eliezer and his Labor Party said more money should go to fund social programs for all Israelis instead of supporting settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

Israelis elected Sharon prime minister because he vowed to take a

hard line against Palestinian attacks, which have included dozens of suicide bombings, many directed against civilians. When he took office in February 2001, Sharon created a left-right coalition government that included Ben-Eliezer and Peres, a vocal proponent of peace talks with the Palestinians.

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# U.N. seems close to passing U.S. resolution on Iraq

**Diego Ibarguen**  
Knight Ridder Newspapers (KRT)

UNITED NATIONS — After seven weeks of diplomatic wrangling, the U.N. Security Council seems certain to approve a new resolution soon that will govern weapons inspections in Iraq. But precisely what it will say is still being debated.

Diplomats say few flashpoints remain in hammering out an agreement on a draft resolution that the United States and Britain presented

last week. The draft calls for stringent weapons inspections in Iraq and warns of consequences if Saddam Hussein does not comply.

The key questions are about the term "material breach." Some delegates think those words, which refer to a failure to comply with U.N. resolutions, are a "hidden trigger," meaning Washington could interpret them as a green light to attack Iraq.

"The triggers are buried deeper, but they are still there," a delegate

from China, speaking on condition of anonymity, said after Wednesday's Security Council meeting.

The draft resolution declares that Iraq has been in "material breach" of past U.N. resolutions for years.

Several nations, notably France, Russia and China, have said they worry that the United States might use the words as justification to start a war with Hussein, regardless of the work or findings of weapons inspectors. But their concerns appeared to

be lessening, and talk of a consensus was growing.

One British diplomat, who asked not to be identified, said the remaining negotiations essentially would "be about finding words or other ways to bridge a gap of trust."

Russian U.N. Ambassador Sergei Lavrov said, "We don't want automaticity in the use of force, and we believe that inspectors should be given the mandate, which is a help for them, not a burden for them."

A French delegate, who also spoke on condition of anonymity, said France would accept "material breach" if it is "put in the context in which we are sure that there will be a new decision, at least a new assessment, by the Security Council" if Iraq thwarts inspectors.

The United States has said it would not restrict its right to go to war without the council's approval.

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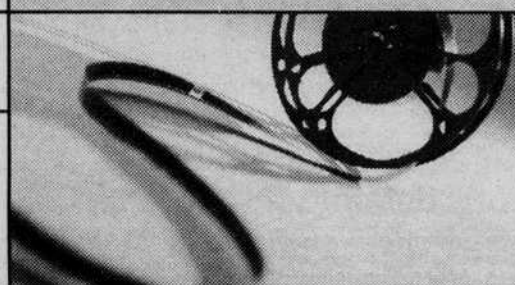
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