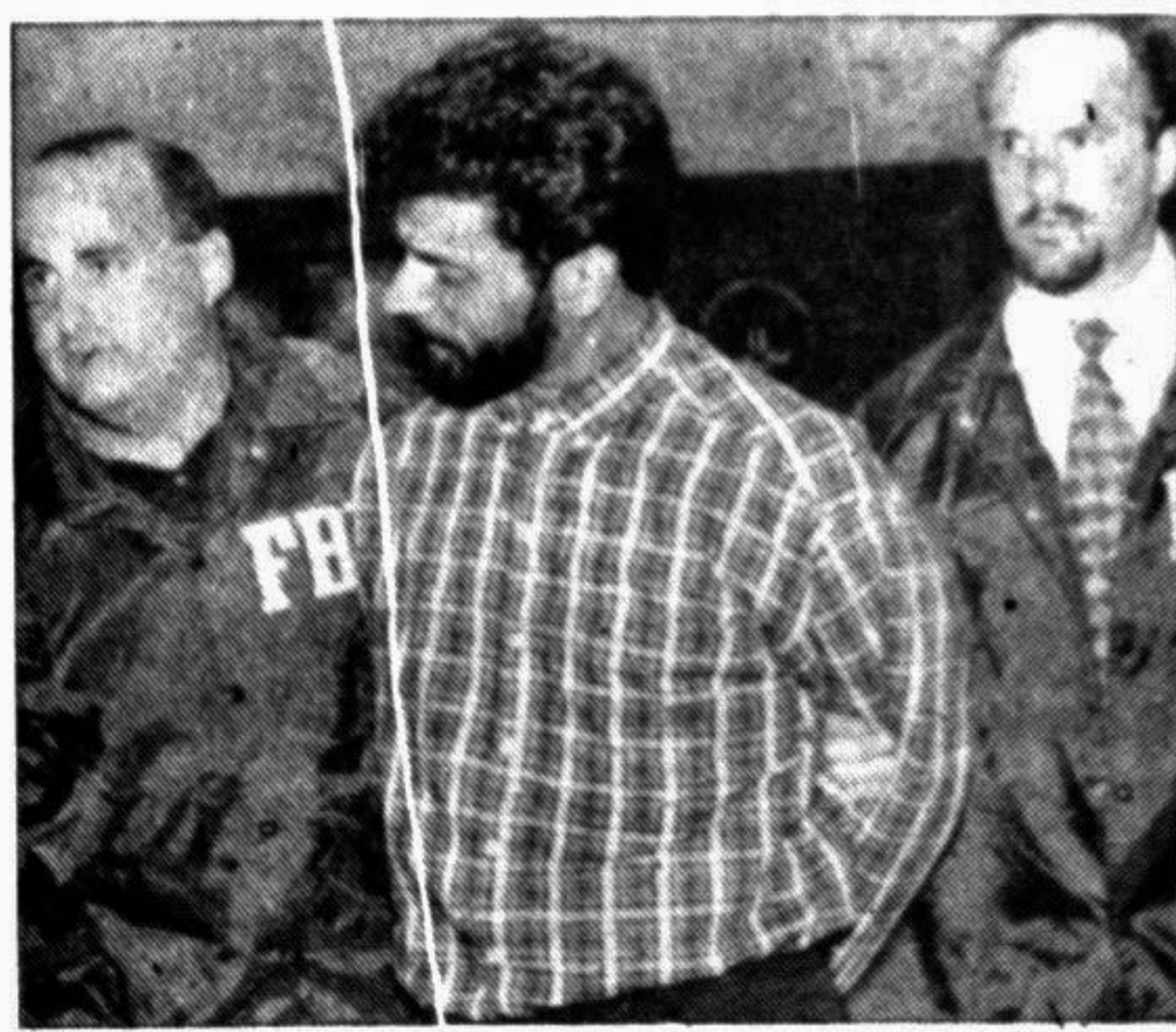


## International



Saad Mohamed Ibrahim (C) who is accused of hijacking Iberia Airlines flight 6621 while it was enroute to Havana from Madrid Friday, walks with two FBI agents after he was interrogated. Ibrahim who forced the plane to land in Miami after he claimed he had a bomb was taken to a detention centre.

## Iberian plane hijacker surrenders

MIAMI, July 27: A man claiming he had a bomb hijacked a Madrid-to-Havana flight Friday and demanded to be taken to Miami, where he surrendered to police. All 232 people aboard were taken off the plane safely, and the bomb turned out to be fake, reports AP.

Iberia Airlines Flight 6621 landed at Miami International Airport at 3 pm EDT (1900 GMT), and once the DC-10 taxied to an open area in the middle of the airport, police stormed the jet.

"He indicated he had an explosive device and he told an air stewardess that he wanted to go to Miami," Metro-Dade police Detective Ed Munn said. FBI spokesman Paul Philip in Miami gave the hijacker's name as Saad Ibrahim, about 28, from Lebanon.

Ibrahim was arrested on federal charges of air piracy and faces a minimum of 20 years in prison if convicted. He was tentatively scheduled to appear in court Monday.

A Spanish government

spokesman in Madrid, Francisco Garcia, said the Lebanese man left Beirut on Thursday and arrived in Madrid after a stop in Zurich, Switzerland. He had escaped from a refugee camp in southern Lebanon. Spanish Foreign Affairs Ministry spokesman Innocencio Arias said in Madrid.

The "bomb" he displayed to the crew was just a tape recorder covered with aluminum foil, with a couple of wires pulled out, Garcia said.

According to Garcia, Ibrahim said, "If I put these two wires together, this bomb will blow up." He also threatened the crew with a letter opener, Garcia said.

"There was never a bomb on board the plane," he said. The general manager of the Spanish airline in Miami, Salvador Humbert, said none of the 218 passengers or 14 crew members was injured. More than six hours later, they boarded the same plane and continued on to Havana. The plane arrived there about 45 minutes later.

## Opposition MPs demand Nepalese finance minister's resignation

KATHMANDU, July 27: Opposition lawmakers Friday demanded the resignation of the Nepal's Finance Minister, Ram Sharan Mahat, alleging he violated the Nepalese foreign exchange control act, a parliamentary source said, reports AP.

Nepal Communist Party-United Marxist and Leninist (NCP-UML) MP Krishna Gopal Shrestha presented to the house a photocopy of a bank document from New York's Worldwide Consumer Bank (WCB) showing Mahat deposited 46,846 dollars in a personal account with the bank.

NCP-UML chief whip Devi Prasad Ojha said "He has now been proved that Mahat has violated foreign exchange control act of 1963 by maintaining a personal account in a foreign bank."

The 1963 act prohibits Nepali nationals from opening accounts in foreign banks without written permission from the country's Central Bank.

## Sat's error on sea level rise

LOS ANGELES, July 27: Reports that ocean levels had risen nearly an inch (2.5 centimetres) since 1992 were inflated by an error in measurements from a satellite instrument, NASA scientists say, reports AP.

That means scientists will have to revise earlier statements based on the erroneous figures — that the dramatic rise could be evidence of global warming, climatic trouble ahead or possible danger to low-lying coastal areas.

A programming miscalculation with the TOPEX-Poseidon satellite was the reason for the exaggerated rise, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration says.

Over the next few months, papers with the real, final, scientifically peer-reviewed answer will come out in journals, Victor Zlotnicki, a research oceanographer at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California, said Friday.

Launched in 1992 as a joint project between France and the United States, the satellite was designed to probe climate changes such as drought and flooding.

## Burundian PM resigns

BUJUMBURA, July 27: Burundian Prime Minister Anotome Ndayoza resigned on Friday a day after former military ruler Pierre Buyoya seized power in a bloodless coup, reports AP.

Ndayoza, a Tutsi, who has been premier since February 1995, admitted he had failed in his attempt to "bring peace to the country."

Speaking on national radio, he said he had not succeeded in his peace mission because the partnership with the ousted president Sylvestre Ntibantunganya, a Hutu, was extremely difficult and as a consequence, inefficient.

I was bad boss on different and irreconcilable aims, he added.

"It is for this reason that my government has stood aside for a more unified team."

He said he hoped that Buyoya also a Tutsi, would achieve objectives which we have not been able to achieve, we will give him all our support in this weighty and noble task.

## 31 more bodies exhumed in east Bosnia

SARAJEVO, July 27: UN investigators digging for evidence of massacres of Muslim men have dug up a total of 31 bodies from four grave sites in east Bosnia, a UN official said Friday, reports AP.

The remains are believed to be of men fleeing the Muslim enclave of Srebrenica which fell to Bosnian Serb forces last year. Many thousands are still missing but believed to have been slaughtered by the Serbs.

The four sites are grouped close to a road just outside the Serb-held town of Nova Kasaba. The first corpses were discovered Monday by an expert team working for the UN international criminal tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague.

UN spokesman Alexander Ivanko said that 25 of the bodies discovered had their hands bound behind their backs.

## May his dream come true

CALCUTTA, July 27: An Indian man who lost both his legs in a boyhood accident said on Friday that he planned to swim across the English Channel in September, reports Reuter.

"I have been dreaming of crossing the English Channel and I have practised for months and months in the Bay of Bengal," 27-year-old Masad Rahman Baidya told Reuters.

Baidya lost his legs in a train accident in 1978 but just two years later became an avid swimmer, participating in long-distance river races in his home state of West Bengal.

The state government has donated 8,400 dollar to make his dream of crossing the icy waters between England and the European continent, come true.

## Campaign to force Benazir to quit

# Pak opposition plans to march on Islamabad

ISLAMABAD, July 27: Pakistani opposition parties plan to march on the capital Islamabad in a campaign to force Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto to quit office and make way for fresh elections, an opposition spokesman said today.

Senator Raja Zafarul Haq who heads an opposition 15 group action committee, told Reuters the committee agreed on a strategy on Friday for an anti-government movement.

"We have sent the plan to the heads of the competent parties of the alliance for their approval," he said adding that a meeting of party heads will be held in the first week of August to approve the strategy. Haq said opposition parties

would hold rallies across the country before marching on Islamabad. "It's a step-by-step approach to increase pressure on the government."

He said the date for the proposed march on the federal capital has not been fixed. "It will be the culmination of the movement."

The opposition move is an imitation of what Benazir herself did in 1993 when she climaxed a campaign against the government of the then prime minister Nawaz Sharif by planning a march on Islamabad. That march was cancelled after the then President Ghulam Ishaq Khan intervened and later sacked Sharif.

In a meeting in Islamabad on Wednesday the 15 opposi-

tion groups asked President Farooq Leghari to use his constitutional powers to sack Benazir for alleged corruption and misuse of powers denied by the government.

"Now the government will have to go home so a neutral interim government could be set up," Wednesday's joint declaration of opposition groups said.

Benazir has yet to respond to the latest opposition move, which follows widespread protests against harsh new taxes imposed in the state budget for fiscal 1996-97 (July-June).

Transport operators plan an indefinite strike to begin on Tuesday.



Police and rescue workers carry one of the seven victims killed in a building collapse in New Delhi on Friday. Seven people were killed and at least 15 injured when a three-storey building collapsed while undergoing construction. Rescuers continue to search for more than 20 people feared trapped in the rubble.

## Rumours, bomb scares grip Colombo

# Lankan Tigers putting up strong resistance to army offensive

COLOMBO, July 27: Tamil rebels are putting up strong resistance to an army offensive launched in retaliation for one of the government's worst setbacks in a long and bloody ethnic war, Sri Lankan army officers said today, reports Reuter.

They said at least 42 rebels were killed and more than 100 wounded in the army thrust from a major base at Elephant Point at the neck of the Jaffna Peninsula, the rebels' northern stronghold until the army overran it earlier this year.

A military statement said 17 soldiers were killed and 36 wounded as the army, backed by tanks and helicopter gunships, thrust south towards the

rebel-held town of Kilinochchi.

It said troops advanced about six km (four miles) on Friday, when the offensive was launched, as far as the small town of Paranthan.

The town is at a road junction, with one highway leading to the northeast coastal town of Mullaitivu, where Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) overran an army base in an attack launched from thick jungle on July 18.

Both sides say hundreds of fighters were killed in the battle for the base manned by some 1,200 soldiers.

Military sources said the army abandoned the base on Friday after finding it flattened with nothing to salvage, pulling

out under continued attack from Tiger rebels.

Earlier report says: Sri Lanka on Friday threatened to draft into military service people spreading bomb scares after the jittery capital Colombo was gripped by wild rumours, state radio said, re-

The Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation said rumour mongers would be forced to join the military, which is battling Tamil Tiger Guerrillas. The rebels were blamed for a deadly train bomb attack on Wednesday which killed 70 people.

Meanwhile, more than 100 Buddhist monks staged a peaceful demonstration in the Sri Lankan capital Friday.



US Secretary of State Warren Christopher (L) and US Defence Secretary William Perry (R) poses with their host Australian Prime Minister John Howard on Friday. The Americans are in town for the annual Australia-United States ministerial consultations focusing on defence and security. More than 20,000 personnel will take part next year in one of the biggest military exercises since World War II as part of expanded defence ties announced by the US and Australia.

# Hutus don't expect army coup to end three years of violence

BUJUMBURA, Burundi, July 27: Tutsi soldiers hold target practice in the field outside a filthy, abandoned psychiatric hospital, inside, thousands of Hutus take refuge after losing relatives in the ethnic slaughter, reports AP.

Jean-Claude Kashinda and his sister would rather stay inside the stuffy building, where flies swarm and tattered sheets are strung for privacy, than venture into the mostly Tutsi capital.

Despite promises from Burundi's new Tutsi president, Pierre Buyoya, Kashinda and other Hutus don't expect the bloodless army coup to end three years of violence that has killed 150,000 people.

"Buyoya won't bring us peace," said Kashinda, 20, who arrived five months ago from the nearby Kamenge neighbourhood after his parents died in ethnic violence. "We are afraid of being killed."

inated FRODEBU party — the largest of 12 parties in the government that was overthrown Thursday — also feared violence would increase in the tiny central African country.

Jean Minani, in a statement from his exile in Kenya, urged members of his party to "forcefully reject" Buyoya and called for an international force to protect Hutus.

Western leaders have condemned the coup, fearing it could inspire ethnic warfare on par with neighbouring Rwanda's 1994 genocide, when half a million people, mostly Tutsis, were slaughtered. So far, the West has said nothing about sending troops to restore President Sylvestre Ntibantunganya.

A day after the coup, soldiers removed roadblocks in Burundi's capital, businesses reopened, and the mostly Hutu women who live in surrounding foothills returned to the

central market to sell fruits and vegetables.

The borders and airport were to reopen Saturday morning, state-run Burundi Radio said.

No violence has been reported in the rest of the country since the new president was named Thursday, a UN spokesman said on condition of anonymity.

Buyoya, a 46-year-old army major, said the military installed him as president Thursday to stop the killing.

"The change is not a classic coup," Buyoya said Friday at a news conference. "It is an action to save a people in distress and stop repeated massacres and killings all over the country."

## Letter to UNSC President

# Gaddafi to travel by air despite UN sanctions

UNITED NATIONS, July 27: Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi has served notice on the Security Council he will travel by air to any country he wishes despite UN sanctions, reports Reuter.

Libya has been subject to air embargo, and arms ban and downgraded diplomatic relations since 1992 for refusing to extradite two men indicted in Britain and the United States for planting a bomb on Panam flight 103 which exploded over the Scottish village of Lockerbie in 1988 killing 270 people.

In a letter to the Security Council President circulated on Friday Gaddafi said he had not flown in an aircraft since the unjust embargo was placed on Libya except to attend an Arab Summit in Cairo last month.

For your information, however, if I consider for my own

part that some matter requires that I should travel by air to any country in the world, then I shall borrow an aircraft from Libyan Arab Airways for that purpose, he wrote.

The Security Council's sanctions committee issued a statement on July 5 saying Gaddafi's flights to and from Cairo last month were a violation of sanctions.

The Libyan leader said he could not "discontinue my country's participation in the international community or suspend the performance of my duties towards my country, my Arab nation, my African continent and my Islamic community or in connection with the membership of my country in the movement of non-aligned countries and the United Nations."

He also said many heads of state suffered hardship when visiting Libya.

# Indonesian police raid opposition PDI HQs

JAKARTA, July 27: The Dutch colonial bungalow housing the headquarters of Indonesia's opposition Democratic Party (PDI) was a shambles today after police raided the building to oust political activists entrenched inside, reports Reuter.

The windows of the sprawling single-storey building were smashed when members of a government-backed rival PDI faction hurled stones at the headquarters under the eye of hundreds of riot police who surrounded it at dawn.

Inside, the building was defended by supporters of Megawati Sukarnoputri, daughter of Indonesia's late founding president Sukarno, who was ousted last month by PDI rebels at a government-backed Congress.

Witnesses said the defenders hurled small fire bombs and stones from within during a standoff that lasted more than two hours.

In nearby lanes, police battled with stone-throwing ac-

tivists trying to break liens to reach the building. Soldiers fired one or two tear gas canisters when a small group of demonstrators broke away from the main crowd and ran down a side street throwing stones at gathering troops.

A bus which brought members of the rival anti-Megawati faction to the site in a central Jakarta residential district was set on fire, sending plumes of black smoke billowing into the sky.

AP adds: At least 1,000 riot policemen stormed the headquarters of an opposition party Saturday, flushing out hundreds of supporters of pro-democracy leader Megawati Sukarnoputri holed up inside.

A reporter on the scene said dozens of people were injured as the activists fought back. One bus was set on fire.

Two armoured cars stood by. "There were pitched battles. There were lots of people injured," said the reporter from the British Broadcasting Corp.

## Off the Record

## Ring for his beloved possibly a signal

LONDON: Heir to the throne Prince Charles has bought his friend, Camilla Parker Bowles, a 25,000 pound (38,860 dollars) ring possibly signalling the couple plan to become engaged, a British tabloid reported yesterday, reports Reuter.

The Daily Star said there would now be speculation about which finger Parker Bowles would put it on when the Prince gives it to her on August 28, the day his divorce from Princess Diana is due to become final.

A spokesman for Prince Charles was not immediately available for comment on the report.

British media has been speculating on whether the Prince will marry Parker Bowles ever since it became clear that his 15-year marriage to Diana was on the rocks.

Any such move would be deeply unpopular among Britons and could undermine his chances of succeeding his mother, Queen Elizabeth on the throne opinion polls have showed.

The royally-obsessed Star reported that the Prince bought the Ruby and Diamond ring from the traditional London jewellers Aspreys.

## What a mess!

GRAND ISLAND, Nebraska: A woman who had stockpiled so much trash in her house that she had to go in and out through a bedroom window was ordered on Friday to clean up her act, reports Reuter.

For 15 years, officials in this South-Central Nebraska city have been locked in a legal battle with Bonnie Gilpin over her habit of amassing garbage in her one-storey bungalow.

All country district Judge Teresa Luther ruled on Friday that Gilpin's home was "hazardous and unsanitary" and ordered her to clear it out by August 26 or face the prospect of having it cleaned for her.

"She has literally filled the house to the ceiling with this stuff," Grand Island city attorney Charles Cuypers said. "Anything from literally rotting food, vegetables."

## Stunning pictures of solar system's largest moon

PASADENA, Calif: The unmanned Galileo space probe has sent back "stunning" close-up pictures of Jupiter's huge moon Ganymede, NASA officials said on Wednesday, reports Reuter.

The high-resolution images were taken by an on-board camera that can capture features as small as 33 feet (10 metres) across. Galileo passed within 524 miles (840 km) of Ganymede's surface last month.

"They're stunning," Galileo project manager Bill O'Neil said before a briefing here. "They show tremendous structure on the surface that is just mind-boggling."

Scientists believe Ganymede has an earth-like crust, but ridges and craters on the moon indicate the surface pulls apart and fills with flowing rock.

Ganymede is the largest moon in the solar system, with a diameter of 3,269 miles (5,230 km). Earth's moon is 2,155 miles (3,448 km) across.

sure them that the country is in good hands," said psychologist Charles Nditje.

Buyoya is believed to belong to the moderate wing of the Tutsi-dominated, 12,000-strong military and said Friday coup leaders' goal is to restore democracy. "That could take 12 or 18 months. We cannot speculate," he said.

Buyoya staged a coup in 1987 and ruled Burundi until June 1993, when he was defeated in the country's first free and fair elections in June 1993 by Melchior Ndadaye.

Ndadaye was killed four months later by Tutsi paratroopers in a failed coup. Since late 1993, at least 150,000 people, most of them civilians, have died in spiralling violence as Hutus, outraged at being robbed of their chance at power, have steadily taken up arms against the Tutsi military.

Hutus make up 85 percent of Burundi's 6 million people, Tutsis 14 percent. Ntibantunganya (pronounced en-tee-bahn-toon-gan-yah) has been at the US ambassador's residence since paratroopers surrounded the administration buildings in the capital Tuesday night. Embassy spokeswoman Judith Kaula said he had not resigned.

The German Foreign Ministry said its ambassador in Bujumbura was sheltering 18 Hutus, including several prominent political leaders.

US State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said Friday in Washington that the administration is reviewing its \$13 million in humanitarian aid for Burundi and a \$150,000 program for training military officers.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali and the Organisation of African Unity said the international community would not recognise a Burundian government installed by force.

# US Australia forge new defence pact

SYDNEY, July 27: Australia and the United States today forged a new defence pact to boost joint combat capabilities for regional conflicts and which they said underpinned regional security, reports Reuter.

Australian Defence Minister Ian McLachlan, in a shift from Australia's previous policy of territorial defence said stronger security ties between Canberra and Washington would see their armed forces build a capacity to fight together off shore.

"Both within Australian and outside Australia we will be promoting this budgetary constraints as much (force) mobility as we possibly can," he told reporters. McLachlan, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, US Defence Secretary William Perry, US Secretary of State

Warren Christopher and military chiefs from both countries wound up two days of annual security talks today.

They reaffirmed a commitment to stronger relations and pledged to help safeguard regional security.

"Both sides agreed to explore ways to enhance cooperative activities and deployments in the Asia-Pacific which are intended to support regional peace and security," said the communiqué issued at the end of the talks.

The two countries made a separate security declaration, similar to the agreement boosting security cooperation between Japan and the United States signed earlier this year.

Both nations stressed their determination that the Australia-US alliance make an important contribution to a stable and peaceful Asia-Pacific.