

International

Chinese welcome US president at Tiananmen Square

Beijing, Washington must cooperate: Clinton  
We're partners, not adversaries: Jiang

BEIJING, June 27: After a Tiananmen Square welcoming heavy with symbolism, President Bill Clinton chided China about its human rights record today but said Beijing and Washington must cooperate despite differences. President Jiang Zemin declared the two nations were "partners, not adversaries", reports AP.

"Our friendship may never be perfect," Clinton said. "No friendship is. But I hope it will last forever."

After a morning of talks, the two leaders announced an agreement not to aim nuclear-tipped missiles at one another's nation. It was a largely symbolic accord, since the missiles could be retargeted in minutes.

They met in the Maoist-era Great Hall of the People after a welcoming ceremony in Tiananmen Square, the sprawling plaza haunted with memories of China's bloody crackdown against freedom nine years ago.

For nearly an hour, Clinton and Jiang engaged in a friendly debate in a news conference touching on differences on ev-

erything from human rights and Tibet to the first use of nuclear weapons.

Directly addressing China's squelching of demonstrators at Tiananmen in 1989, Clinton said, "For all of our agreements, we still disagree about the meaning of what happened then."

"The use of force and the tragic loss of life was wrong," he said.

Jiang offered the same explanation he has given in the past for the crackdown: "Had the Chinese government not taken the resolute measures, we would not have enjoyed the stability that we are enjoying today."

Earlier, Clinton walked side by side with Jiang to review an honour guard of the People's Liberation Army at Tiananmen Square. More than 30 advocacy groups in the United States, as well as the House of Representatives, had urged Clinton not to go to Tiananmen because of its symbolism of China's repression.

Clinton said it was vital to look beyond the past. "It is im-

portant that whatever our disagreements over past actions, China and the United States must go forward on the right side of history for the future sake of the world. The forces of history have brought us to a new age of human possibility. But our dreams can only be recognised by nations whose citizens are both responsible and free."

Even without being asked, Jiang addressed allegations that the Chinese government tried to influence American policy with illegal campaign contributions.

"I really think it's very absurd and ridiculous and I think they are sheer fabrications," Jiang said. "China can never do such a thing."

Both leaders stressed the importance of strengthening ties. Pointing to their agreement not to target missiles at each other's country, Jiang declared, "This demonstrates the United States and China are partners, not adversaries."

Jiang dismissed charges that China had cracked down on dissidents as Clinton arrived.

He said that "any lawbreaking activity must be dealt with according to law."

Clinton said: "There are legitimate and honest differences in the way we look at this. But I believe we are making progress and I believe we will make more."

At the welcoming ceremony that featured a 21-gun salute, Clinton and Jiang under a hazy sun had walked side by side to review an honour guard of the People's Liberation Army at the edge of the historic Tiananmen Square. The two leaders appeared at ease, chatting and smiling as troops marched by.

It was a sweltering morning and the normally busy square was cleared for the ceremony.

Thousands of Chinese massed on the northern edge of the square to see Clinton being formally greeted by Jiang. The crowds would have been larger — even though their view was blocked by trees — but police maintained an intimidating presence, sealing off streets and sidewalks leading to the square an hour before Clinton's arrival.

Hillary tells Chinese women

No society can succeed if women not empowered

BEIJING, June 27: Hillary Rodham Clinton, an accomplished public speaker, is unlikely to be struck by a loss for words — but neither were the women she joined Saturday for a lively discussion on women in China, reports AP.

The group of six panelists were so eager to tell Mrs. Clinton about their work in education, legal issues and health that at times they all seemed to be speaking at once — barely allowing the First Lady to slip a word in.

"I don't think I have ever been in such a lively, energetic, well informed discussion as this one," Mrs. Clinton said in concluding remarks to the gathering of members of the All China Women's Federation at Beijing's newest and fanciest hotel.

Several panelists noted that in the countryside, traditional attitudes hold that men work outside the home, women inside.

"There are lots of challenges, lots of difficulties. Attitudes must change," said Feng Cui, a leading member of the government-backed women's federation.

The panelists told many stories of hope: of impoverished mothers sacrificing to send their daughters to school, of women escaping abusive husbands after learning their legal rights, and of handicapped women achieving economic self-sufficiency through small business loans. Mrs. Clinton listened intently, frequently nodding her head in agreement.

"American and Chinese women have very much in common in terms of the issues and problems we face," Mrs. Clinton said.

"No society will be successful that does not empower women," she added. "I've always liked your saying that 'women hold up half the sky,' but we can't do it if we are not educated, not healthy... not respected by the men in our lives."

"The President and I feel that, since we have a daughter, that daughters are just as important as sons."

Xie Lihua, editor-in-chief of the magazine Rural Women Knowing All, noted that while the situation of rural Chinese women might appear quite difficult by American standards.

BRIEFLY

**ROK halts cattle shipment to DPRK:** South Korea yesterday put on hold a plan to send a further 500 head of cattle to the famine-stricken North Korea after capturing a northern submarine in its waters, officials said, AFP reports from Seoul.

The supply of more cattle to the north will be delayed because of the submarine intrusion and other constraints, a senior unification ministry official told reporters.

**Thai police arrest 4 Pakistanis:** Thai police have arrested four Pakistanis suspected of being members of an extremist group involved in the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Centre building in New York, a newspaper said yesterday. AP reports from Bangkok.

The four were seized in Bangkok in a raid by Thai Immigration Police and agents of the US Federal Bureau of Investigation, the English-language The Nation said.

**Train accident kills 4 in Bangkok:** At least four people were killed and 35 others injured when five passenger cars of a Bangkok-bound train jumped the tracks while rounding a curve, newspapers said yesterday. AP reports from Bangkok.

The accident occurred Friday night in rugged jungle about 150 kilometres south of Chiang Mai, according to the English-language The Nation.

**US-Peru base to combat drugs starts:** A joint US-Peru base to be used in the fight against drug trafficking under a bilateral agreement opened Friday near Iquitos, Peru, AFP says from Peru.

The floating base — which sits on the Nanay river, 30 kilometres from Iquitos — aims to increase pressure on international drug traffickers who operate in the area. The US government paid 1.4 million dollars towards building the base.



Cuban President Fidel Castro and Colombian President Ernesto Samper attend an official welcoming ceremony at the Palace of the Revolution in Havana, Friday. Samper is combining a state visit with the inauguration of a meeting of health officials of countries who are part of the Non-Aligned Movement. — AP/UNB photo

After nerve gas report  
Washington, Baghdad face tough choices

UNITED NATIONS, June 27: Baghdad and Washington face tough choices now that Army scientists have found traces of nerve gas in Iraqi warheads, the most significant discovery by UN inspectors since 1995, reports AP.

Chief UN weapons inspector Richard Butler told the Security Council on Wednesday that there is "no doubt" the finding is accurate, although he has asked Swiss and French laboratories for confirmation.

If they confirm the US military lab's findings, Iraq must decide whether to admit to years of denying that it weaponized deadly VX nerve gas and provide detailed information about the program.

Otherwise, the United States and Britain will have a strong case against any move by the Security Council to lift economic sanctions imposed in 1990 after Saddam invaded Kuwait, touching off the Gulf War.

Washington faces hard choices, too, with Iraq insisting sanctions be removed and given the trouble the United States had garnering support the last time Iraq challenged the United Nations. The next opportunity for the Security Council to review — and theoretically lift — the sanctions will come in October after Butler files his next six-month report.

"If it doesn't look at any point the sanctions will be lifted, Iraq will be reconsidering its policy," Hamdoun told PBS' NewsHour with Jim Lehrer. "In a worst case scenario, that could mean ordering the UN inspectors out of Iraq and hoping fellow Arabs would ignore the sanctions."

Iraq also could gamble that a new crisis would force the international community to negotiate a new deal more favourable to Baghdad.

That tactic was used last year when the Iraqis threw out American arms inspectors and barred the rest from visiting Saddam's palaces, prompting US President Bill Clinton to send US forces to the gulf and threaten airstrikes.

Turkey hindering resolution to Cyprus problem

ATHENS, June 27: US envoy Richard Holbrooke blamed Turkey yesterday for hindering a resolution to the Cyprus problem, one of the many issues that divide Ankara and Athens, reports AP.

The Turkish side's pre-conditions make difficulties, he said here during a tour of the Balkans aimed essentially at resolving the crisis in Kosovo.

Ankara and Turkish Cypriot authorities insist on recognition for breakaway northern Cyprus, occupied by Turkey in 1974 following a Greek Cypriot coup in Nicosia aimed at uniting the island with Greece, for the success of talks on ending the division.

Holbrooke reiterated the US position that "we cannot recognise northern Cyprus," but he did express support for Turkey joining the European Union.

Clinton visits clay warriors in forbidden pit

XI'AN, China, June 27: Making his way among the terra cotta warriors buried two millennia ago to protect a Chinese emperor in the afterlife, US President Bill Clinton wondered aloud about mortality, reports AP.

He reached out and touched the face of one clay bodyguard, whose fierce expression was unlike all the others. Each of the roughly 7,000 ancient soldiers and officers — life-size and so carefully crafted they appear ready for battle — were modeled after real warriors, according to legend.

"Whenever I experience something like this I feel a little more humble," Clinton said Friday while touring the excavation site. "And I also feel reminded that you have this limited amount of time on Earth and you have to do what you can to try to help people make the most of it."

After a day of sightseeing in and around Xi'an, the president went to Beijing on Friday night to prepare for a meeting Saturday with Chinese President Jiang Zemin. Clinton's nine-day tour of China is the first visit to the nation by an American president this decade.

The Clinton family, including wife Hillary, daughter Chelsea and mother-in-law Dorothy Rodham, were allowed into the excavation pit for a close look that few tourists are allowed.

Later, in a museum gift shop, Clinton and Chelsea couldn't resist buying a replica warrior head, but only after bargaining down the price from about 225 dollars to 45 dollars.

Highlights of news confce by Clinton, Jiang

UNDATED, June 27: Highlights of the news conference Saturday by President Clinton and Chinese President Jiang Zemin:

— Detargeting nuclear missiles: "This demonstrates to the entire world that China and the United States are partners, not adversaries," Jiang said. Clinton said the agreement would enhance global stability and prevent accidental launches.

— Weapons of mass destruction: Clinton welcomed their joint agreement not to provide assistance to ballistic missile programmes in South Asia, and China's commitment to tighten nuclear export controls, to strengthen controls on the export of chemicals that can be turned into weapons, and to work with the United States to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention. Jiang emphasised that "since the very first day when China came into possession of nuclear weapons, China has undertaken not to be the first to use nuclear weapons under any circumstances". Clinton reiterated long-standing US policy not to make such a pledge.

— The 1989 Tiananmen Square crackdown: "For all of our agreements, we still disagree about the meaning of what happened then," Clinton said. "I believe and the American people believe the use of force and the tragic loss of life was wrong," Jiang countered. "Had the Chinese government not taken the resolute measures, then we could not have enjoyed the stability that we are enjoying today."

— On fresh dissident arrests: since Clinton's arrival, Jiang said local officials had taken steps to handle activities that were "detrimental" to security.

"In China we have our laws," he said. Clinton acknowledged progress in the release of Chinese dissidents but noted that others were still incarcerated. "I think you should at least appreciate the fact that we now have an atmosphere in which it is possible for us to be honest, and honest in great detail about this," he said.

— The Dalai Lama: Clinton pressed Jiang to start a dialogue with the Dalai Lama "in return for the recognition that Tibet is a part of China and a recognition of the unique cultural and religious heritage of that region." Jiang said Chinese control had enhanced conditions in Tibet and, as long as the Dalai Lama was willing to acknowledge that Tibet and the island of Taiwan are both part of China, then "the door to dialogue and negotiation is open."

— Allegations of China funneling illegal donations to Democrats in the 1996 campaign: Jiang said his government conducted a "very earnest investigation" and concluded "there was never such a thing." He called the allegations "very absurd... sheer fabrications."

— Taiwan: Clinton reaffirmed US policy of opposing independence for Taiwan, and Jiang said the United States must stick to that policy "in the interest of a smooth growth" in US-China relations.

— Asian financial crisis: Clinton saluted China for showing "great statesmanship and strength in making a strong contribution to the stability not only of the Chinese people and their economy but the entire region by maintaining the value of its currency." Jiang did not comment, but signed a joint statement pledging to continue US-China discussions on the crisis.

US sanctions on India, Pakistan  
Special Senate panel to study effectiveness

WASHINGTON, June 27: A special Senate task force will study whether US economic sanctions against India and Pakistan are working, then consider the larger issue of how effective sanctions are in influencing the behaviour of nations, reports AP.

"I confess to being inconsistent myself, having supported sanctions in South Africa and opposed them in China," said Sen. Mitch McConnell, chairman of the new 18-member task force announced Friday by Senate leaders.

McConnell said in a Senate floor speech he would try to "see whether there's some kind of coherent way to go forward in this field."

The short-term goal of the panel "is to examine what can and should be done about the sanctions on India and Pakistan as a result of their nuclear programme," said Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott.

The panel was set up by Lott and his democratic counterpart, Minority Leader Tom Daschle of South Dakota. "With the recent series of nuclear tests in India and Pakistan, it's critical that we look at US sanctions law and how it affects our ability to de-escalate the arms race in South Asia," Daschle said.

The United States has imposed sanctions nearly 70 times in the past five years — more than half the total of all sanctions imposed since World War II. Many members of Congress now are calling for sanctions against China. And legislation that passed the House last month, called the Freedom

From Religious Persecution Act, could result in new sanctions on as many as 75 countries.

"There's a feeling on both sides of the aisle that perhaps the proclivity to place economic sanctions on countries around the world and with not a clear way of ending those has become a problem," Lott said.

Nuclear tests by India and Pakistan last month raised new questions about the effectiveness of US sanctions or the threat of them. The United States imposed economic sanctions on India after its nuclear tests. The threat of imposing the same sanctions on Pakistan did not stop it from conducting its own tests soon afterward.

Lott and Daschle said the task force would make recommendations to the Senate by July 15 on sanctions policies relating to India and Pakistan, and report by September 1 on the larger issue of sanctions.

President Bill Clinton last week vetoed a bill that would have imposed sanctions on countries that sell nuclear technology to Iran, a sanction aimed mainly at Russia.

The United States maintains a ban on trade with Cuba. A 1996 law authorizes US penalties on foreign companies that benefit from property of US individuals and companies seized by Fidel Castro's regime — a sanctions law deplored by European allies.

Sanctions also remain in place against Iraq, Iran, Syria, Libya, North Korea, Yugoslavia, Sudan, Myanmar and nearly a dozen other countries.



Youths run away with looted items after a group of Berbers smashed windows and damaged cars in angry protests Friday in Tizi Ouzou, eastern Algeria, following the slaying Thursday of the popular Algerian singer Lounes Matoub, 42, who was an outspoken critic of Algeria's violent six-year insurgency. — AP/UNB photo

'UN to step in if int'l efforts to stop Kosovo violence fail'

LONDON, June 27: Secretary-General Kofi Annan said Friday that the United Nations would carry out its "grave responsibility" in Kosovo if the present intense international efforts to halt the violence there should fail, reports AP.

"All our professions of regret, all our expressions of determination to never again permit another Bosnia, all our hopes for a peaceful future for the Balkans will be cruelly mocked if we allow Kosovo to become another killing field," Annan told a think tank in Oxfordshire county.

UN envoy Richard Holbrooke had just completed four days of diplomatic efforts in Yugoslavia, but said they yielded no peace formula and warned that NATO has stepped up plans for intervention in secessionist Kosovo province, where Serb security forces have been fighting Albanian militants. More than 300 people have been killed since March.

Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Nikolai Afanasyevsky also concluded his efforts in Belgrade where he met with Yugoslav President Slobodan Milosevic.

If international efforts failed to stop the killing, Annan told the Ditchley Foundation, the Security Council "will not be slow to assume its grave responsibility."

Ten days ago, the Security Council approved a one-year extension for the 34,000-member NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia and the separate UN civilian mission there. Security Council approval provides a legal basis for the operation under international law.

Annan also spoke of his support for a UN rapid reaction force, saying such a unit might have prevented many deaths in Rwanda in 1994.

"I believe that if we are to avert further such disasters in the future, we need such a capacity, that member states must have appropriately trained standby forces immediately available, and must be willing to send them quickly when the Security Council requests it," he said.

Led by Canada and the Netherlands, the United Nations agreed two years ago to establish a small elite headquarters unit to plan and command peacekeeping missions. The 4,000-member international rapid reaction force is training and is to be ready by 1999.

Earlier in the day Britain announced it was giving one million pounds (£1.6 million dollars) to help refugees in Kosovo and reiterated its commitment to maintain fighter aircraft in the Balkans. The aid money will be divided between the United Nations High Commission for Refugees and the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Meanwhile, after four days of meetings with Serbian and ethnic Albanian leaders, US envoy Richard Holbrooke Friday repeated his concern that tension in the Serbian province of Kosovo could spread to neighboring countries.

"If a peaceful solution is not found, the fighting that has already occurred could easily escalate into an international war that could easily cross borders and spread to Albania, Greece, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia," Holbrooke told a rowdy crowd during a university commencement address at the American College of Greece in Athens.

Holbrooke's comments came hours after he left Kosovo following four days of meetings with Serbian leaders and ethnic Albanians seeking independence in the southern province. The talks failed to produce any settlement.

Another major clash between Serbian military forces and ethnic Albanians could have tragic consequences, he said, reiterating statements he made in Kosovo's capital, Pristina, earlier Friday.

"We seek a peaceful solution to an explosive situation," Holbrooke said.

British envoy meets Abubakar  
Nigeria's military ruler attempts to break isolation

ABUJA, Nigeria, June 27: In a sign that years of Nigerian isolation is eroding, a British envoy met Friday with this West African country's new military leader, with the men discussing possible ways for Nigeria to return to the world community, officials said, reports AP.

Gen. Abdulsalam Abubakar, said he would do everything possible to end the unfavourable view of Nigeria, the general's press secretary, David Aitah, said in a statement. He also said that Abubakar "renewed his appeal to the international community generally to focus greater attention on the opportunities in Nigeria than on problems."

For years, those problems have dominated headlines about Nigeria, which became an international pariah during the five-year rule of Gen. Sani Abacha, who died earlier in June. The oil-rich country, which was once known for its comparative wealth amid the poverty of West and Central Africa, instead became known for its abysmal human rights record and its rampant corruption.

Abubakar appears intent on changing that, freeing dozens of political prisoners and meeting with opposition figures and diplomats.

On Thursday, 17 prisoners were granted amnesty by military authorities, although Moshood Abiola, 60, a former multimillionaire and apparent winner of 1993's presidential elections, was not among them. Nigerian officials have said he will probably be released in the coming weeks.

The viagra frenzy has taken the world by storm

WASHINGTON, June 27: From Rio to Beirut to Taipei, Viagra has taken the world by storm by giving renewed hope to millions of men suffering from impotence, reports AP.

But Pfizer's little blue "miracle pill," available in the United States since March 27, has also been a soft target for late-night comics and, more seriously, has stirred concerns about safety.

At least 16 men have died after taking viagra, and while the drug was not blamed the company and authorities have warned heart patients about its use and called on others to exercise caution and heed label warnings.

Even as it becomes one of the most recognised products in the world, viagra has been linked to heart-attack deaths, violent lovers' quarrels and a smuggling boom to meet frenzied global demand.

And governments worldwide have struggled to come to grips with the phenomenon, some banning sales of the drug — including internet marketing — and in some cases warning that viagra threatens families.

So far, the United States, Morocco, Mexico, Colombia, South Africa, Thailand and Switzerland, have approved the drug, which should go on sale in the latter four nations around mid-July.

A Pfizer spokeswoman told AFP by telephone. The European Union is considering a medical panel's recommendation to approve the drug.

Some 2.56 million viagra prescriptions have been written to date, spokeswoman Pamela Gemmel said, adding total revenues could not be revealed until Pfizer releases earnings results in mid-July.

But safety concerns have not stopped the deluge of stories linked to the little blue pill that could:

— In Carson city, Nevada, viagra-fueled 70-year-olds are enthusiastically rediscovering sexual pleasure, bringing boom-

ing business for the state's brothels.

— Elcio Bertti, Mayor of the tiny Brazilian town of Bocaiuva d Sul, has reportedly said he will be handing out viagra in hopes of spurring population growth.

— Four of eight viagra pills a doctor brought to a meeting of the science committee of Israel's parliament disappeared suspiciously during a debate on the drug.

— The worldwide fund for nature said the drug would not help save the rhinoceros from extinction by providing an alternative to rhino horn to boost male sexual performance.

— Viagra headlined fathers day pitches from Venezuelan pharmacies doctors' offices, and pedlers in Caracas crowded streets, some of whom fooled customers by selling aspirin coloured blue.

— A Lebanese woman sued her husband for assault after he took three viagra pills at once and savagely attacked her in a state of excitation she says she had never before seen in him.

— A 31-year-old Taiwanese claimed self-defense after stabbing to death a 70-year-old client for being too demanding after taking viagra, then beating her when she would not agree to a second round of sexual intercourse.

— A 63-year-old woman is reportedly suing her common-law husband, 70, claiming he left her for another woman after the drug turned him into a "stud," and considering charges against Pfizer for failing to warn, she said, that viagra can be dangerous to marriages.

— Visitors to the tourist region of Lecco in northern Italy can buy "viagra" by the pound after a days' sightseeing. But this viagra is a cheese named after the drug. The Invernizzi family of Maggio Di Cremenza near Lake Como changed the cheese's name from "cheese of the forest" to cash in on viagra fever.

Ethiopian, Eritrean govts accuse each other

ADDIS ABABA, June 27: The Ethiopian and Eritrean governments, embroiled in a border conflict, accused each other yesterday of ill-treating their opponent's citizens, reports AP.

"Ever since the Eritrean regime unleashed the unprovoked aggression against Ethiopia the Eritrean forces have deliberately chosen to strike at civilian targets, an Ethiopian government statement said."

"The Eritrean forces have brutally expelled well over 4,000 Ethiopian civilians from Eritrea after depriving them of their property and subjecting many of them to beatings and torture."