

China demands US apology for spy plane row

AP, Haikou

President Jiang Zemin demanded yesterday an American apology for a collision between a US Navy spy plane and a Chinese fighter jet. China didn't respond to President George W. Bush's urging to release the plane and its 24 crewmembers.

Washington "should bear all responsibilities for the collision incident," Jiang said, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. "The US side should apologise to the Chinese people."

Jiang, speaking before leaving on an official tour of Latin America, demanded that the United States "do something favourable to the smooth development of China-US relations, rather than make remarks that confuse right and wrong and are harmful to the relations," Xinhua said.

US diplomats were allowed to see the crew for the first time late Tuesday on Hainan island in the South China Sea, where they made an emergency landing after the collision Sunday. The diplomats said there was no indication when they could see the 21 men and three women again.

The diplomats were preparing for a long stay on the tropical island, a popular tourist destination. They visited local stores to buy the crew soap, laundry detergent, underwear and other supplies. But they said there was no

indication when they could deliver them.

"Nothing scheduled today," said Mark Canning, one of four American diplomats waiting on Hainan.

Jiang on Tuesday demanded that the United States end its surveillance flights off China's coast.

The US military says that EP-3E was flying in international airspace when it collided with one of two Chinese F-8 fighters sent up to track it.

A Pentagon spokesman, Rear Adm. Craig Quigley, said in Washington that the United States was unlikely to stop such flights. They are meant to gather information on China's military by recording radio, radar and other signals.

Bush warned Tuesday in Washington that ties with Beijing could suffer unless it quickly releases the EP-3E and its crew. China has been unsettled by the new Bush administration's cooler approach to relations, but had held out hope of productive ties.

"This accident has the potential of undermining our hopes for a fruitful and productive relationship between our two countries," Bush said. "To keep that from happening, our servicemen and women need to come home."

Bush said he wanted to give China time to respond in order to prevent the stalemate from escalating into a full-blown crisis. But the president said a grace period was quickly running out.



PHOTO AFP

US Ambassador to China Admiral Joseph Preueher is helped into his car by his Chinese driver as a Chinese military policeman stands guard in front of the US embassy in Beijing yesterday. Preueher was on his way for more talks with Chinese officials about how to resolve the worsening Sino-US ties due to the spy plane crisis. The standoff over a US spy plane stranded in China deepened on Wednesday as both sides adopted rigid positions and the 24-member crew started their fourth day in custody with no talks scheduled for their release.



PHOTO AFP

This Xinhua handout shows the damaged US EP-3 electronic reconnaissance plane at Lingshui Airport in Hainan province on Tuesday. The plane, packed with top-secret high-tech monitoring equipment, was forced to land on Hainan island on April 1 after a collision with one of two Chinese fighter jets which has intercepted it over international waters. The photos show damage on the nose (3), propeller (2) and wing (1).

Israel, Palestinians renew contacts as violence flares

AFP, Jerusalem

Israeli and Palestinian security officials are expected to meet within two days amid a flurry of renewed contacts aimed at halting the escalating spiral of deadly violence, Israeli officials said Wednesday.

"The security coordination committee will meet within a day or two," said an Israeli official who requested anonymity.

Israeli radio reported that the meeting was brokered by US Secretary of State Colin Powell during telephone conversations with both Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat following Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip for the second time in less than a week.

Meanwhile, Israeli Foreign Minister and Palestinian international cooperation minister met separately in Athens with EU foreign policy chief Javier Solana, who urged the two sides to resume dialogue.

On Tuesday, Israeli helicopter gunships and tanks pounded towns in the northern and southern Gaza Strip following a mortar bomb attack against a Jewish settlement that critically wounded a baby boy and injured his mother.

At least 60 Palestinians were wounded in the attacks, aimed largely at positions of Arafat's elite Force 17 bodyguard, drawing renewed Palestinian calls for international protection and warnings of a further escalation in violence.

The headline Sharon said Israel had no choice but to act to protect its citizens, charging that Arafat was not doing enough to prevent anti-Israeli attacks during the spiral of violence that has gripped the region for more than six months.

"The Palestinian Authority is not working to prevent attacks and is leaving Israel with no choice but to act tenaciously and vigorously to frustrate terrorist attacks and protect Israeli citizens' security," he said in a statement.

But Peres, on a four-nation European tour, said he still saw light at the end of the tunnel in the conflict.

"I think that all sides are quite tired of the current situation. I think that the violence and terror have reached a peak. It's an impossible situation for all of us."

Palestinian information minister Yasser Abed Rabbo also said that a high-level delegation may visit Washington in the coming days for

talks with officials in the US administration of George W. Bush.

"It is also possible that we could witness some Palestinian-Israeli meetings with American participation," he told Al-Ayyam newspaper.

Abed Rabbo launched a stinging attack on the United States on Monday, calling on Washington to resume its role as the leading mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to abandon its policy of "unconditional support" for Sharon.

Separately, the Israeli newspaper Maariv reported that Omri Sharon, the prime minister's son, met with Arafat in Ramallah on Sunday, accompanied by businessman Yossi Ginosar, a former official in the Israeli internal security service Shin Bet who in the past has led security contacts with the Palestinians.

Omri Sharon has refused to confirm or deny the report, said Maariv, which did not say what was discussed at the meeting.

On the ground, further violence was reported.

An Israeli military source said Palestinians fired four mortar shells early Wednesday at the Nezarim Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip but no one was hurt.

For a puff of Cuban cigar

REUTERS, London

Former US President Bill Clinton succumbed to temptation at London's Heathrow airport for a rare puff of a Cuban cigar.

Clinton, who kept up the tough US trade embargo against Cuba during his eight years in office, bought a six-inch long (15 cm) Cuban cigar during a stopover on Tuesday while flying from America to India, the Times reported.

"I was surprised and pleased to see him, and told him many of my American customers wished they could get Cuban cigars at home," shop assistant Jagjit Gill was quoted as saying.

"I asked him if he could do something about it, but Mr Clinton said he had once looked into the matter, but events had prevented any action being taken."

Flanked by half a dozen security agents, Clinton bought the cigar for eight pounds (\$11.40).

Staff at another shop said he bought two silk ties for 58.73 pounds (\$83.70) each.

"He bought one for himself and another as a gift for a friend. His one was lime-green with frogs on it," an unidentified shop worker was quoted as saying.

"He liked it so much that right there and then he took his old tie off and put on the new one."

Clinton fuels hopes among Indian quake victims

AFP, Anjar, India

Former US president Bill Clinton arrived in India's quake-hit Gujarat state yesterday, fuelling hopes and expectations among angry local residents who say their plight has been forgotten.

Clinton, who flew in to New Delhi late Tuesday, arrived in Gujarat's Bhuj district by special plane shortly before 1:00 pm to visit some of the areas worst hit by the January 26 quake that claimed more than 20,000 lives.

He brought with him the keys to a 50-million-dollar fund put together by the America India Foundation, which was set up in the wake of the Gujarat quake with the former president as chairman.

Soon after landing, Clinton left Bhuj by road for the devastated town of Anjar, where locals voiced disappointment at a lack of official help in rebuilding their shattered lives.

"We know that Clinton is bringing aid, but how much will reach us is difficult to say," said secondary school teacher Ishwar Nathani.

"Nobody has visited us for the past two and a half months. We are still living in squalor and dirt. The debris still hasn't been removed and we don't have any permanent place to stay," Nathani said.

Clinton has said the fund will be used for short- and long-term reconstruction in Gujarat, with the foundation working in collaboration with selected aid agencies.

Several hundred locals had gathered in Anjar for a glimpse of their guest, who was scheduled to lay a wreath at a memorial, commissioned by his foundation, to 200 schoolchildren buried by the quake.

The memorial has proved something of an embarrassment, with the owner of the plot where it was built insisting that it be removed.

"We have heard a lot about Clinton, about the sort of person he is," said local artisan Ramu Bhai Shankardas.

Anwar attends mother's funeral

AFP, Kuala Lumpur

Jailed Malaysian politician Anwar Ibrahim attended his mother's funeral under armed guard yesterday as an estimated one thousand supporters packed the Muslim cemetery in a show of sympathy.

Shouts of "Reformasi" (Reform) and "Allahu Akbar" (God is Great) rang out as Anwar -- a symbol of opposition to Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad -- left the graveside after the brief service.

Che Yan Binti Hamid Hussin, 74, died in hospital late Tuesday after suffering a heart attack earlier in the day.

Anwar was at her bedside when she died after prison officials authorised his visit.

The ex-deputy premier, who is serving a 15-year jail term for abuse of power and sodomy but considers himself a political prisoner, has himself been in a separate hospital since last November with acute back pain.

He was brought by ambulance Wednesday morning to his family home in the smart suburb of Damansara Heights for prayers beside his mother's coffin. The coffin was then carried out of the house.

Hundreds of people -- packed into the front yard or perched precariously on walls -- shouted support as Anwar was brought from the house in a wheelchair for the journey by ambulance to the cemetery.



PHOTO AFP

Jailed ex-Malaysian deputy premier Anwar Ibrahim (C), along with his wife Wan Azizah (L) and his daughters, Nurul Hana (R) and Nurul Iman (behind Anwar), attend the funeral ceremony of his mother at a cemetery in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Anwar was allowed to attend his mother's funeral with hundreds of supporters showing up for the event.

Battle lines drawn over Milosevic

AFP, Belgrade

Battle lines over the fate of jailed former Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic seemed to be drawn yesterday, with the Serbian premier saying he would be tried "first in Serbia" but the prosecutor of the international war crimes court insisting he be handed over.

Both sides went out of their way to be conciliatory, with Serbian Prime Minister Zoran Djindjic stressing in Athens that the laws in his country were "very severe" while court prosecutor Carla del Ponte said handing Milosevic over would not constitute extradition.

Djindjic declared that Milosevic "will be tried first in Serbia. If meanwhile or after his trial new evidence is brought against him for crimes against humanity, it is possible to widen the charges."

"The laws in Serbia are very severe" for those kind of crimes, he added.

Milosevic has been indicted by the war crimes court in The Hague on charges of crimes against humanity and war crimes during the 1999 crisis in the Serbian province of Kosovo. Belgrade is facing international pressure to hand him over.

Prosecutor Del Ponte said Tuesday during a visit to Kigali: "International law obliges member states of the United Nations to transfer people against whom the International Criminal Tribunal for former Yugoslavia (ICTY) has issued an arrest warrant."



Milosevic for crimes other than corruption.

But he did say that there such evidence found. "Slobodan Milosevic could be implicated in serious crimes for which capital punishment is applicable."

In Belgrade, it emerged that Milosevic, who was arrested on Sunday, had been given no guarantees that he would not be sent to the ICTY.

Cedomir Jovanovic, who negotiated Milosevic's surrender, said the former president had been promised to be "taken solely to the central prison and not to the Belgrade airport."

But he said this did not amount to a guarantee that he would never be sent to The Hague.

"It was clear to Milosevic that he can neither count on any absolute guarantee, nor did I think of giving him any such guarantee, which could bring problems for our country," he added.

Milosevic was locked up in a Belgrade prison after his arrest early Sunday, as investigators probe him on charges of stealing public funds to prop up his authoritarian regime, which was isolated by the international community and then bombed by NATO over its Kosovo policies in 1999.

A judicial board rejected Milosevic's appeal to be released from 30 days investigative custody. He was detained after a gun battle with police outside his residence which left four officers injured.

Asia urges quick resolution of US-China crisis

AFP, Hong Kong

Asian nations yesterday urged China and the United States to settle a spy plane incident "quickly and smoothly" for the sake of regional peace and stability.

Japan took the lead, stressing that good Sino-US relations were vital to Asia's future.

"It is extremely important that China and the United States maintain good relations," Foreign Minister Yohsei Kono said during a 20-minute phone-call with US Secretary of State Colin Powell.

"Japan strongly hopes that China secures the safety of the (US) crew and the two sides resolve this incident quickly and smoothly," Kono said, according to a foreign ministry statement.

The standoff deepened on Wednesday with both sides adopting rigid positions as the 24-

member crew started their fourth day in custody with no talks scheduled for their release.

The crew have been held on the southern Chinese island of Hainan since Sunday when their E-P3 Aries plane made an emergency landing after a collision with one of two Chinese jets which had intercepted it over international waters.

In Canberra, Australian Prime Minister John Howard urged China to agree to Washington's requests.

"It's not unreasonable that the Americans ask that their personnel be returned," said Howard, a key US ally and significant potential contributor to US regional security efforts.

"There's no suggestion other than it was an accident and that it was the result of a collision in the course of the Chinese aircraft buzzing the alleged spy plane."

Thailand said it hoped the two

sides would consider their actions carefully.

"The two sides realise the sensitivity (of the situation) and we hope they will consider this carefully," said Foreign Minister Surakiat Satirathai.

While the Singapore government made no comment it has warned twice recently that a stable relationship between Washington and Beijing is vital to Asia.

In a recent parliamentary debate Singapore's Defence Minister Tony Tan said "how relations between the new US administration and Beijing work out will determine the climate for the whole Asia-Pacific."

In Seoul, the Chosun Ilbo newspaper warned "the world is watching."

"The question of whether this leads to a new Cold War is at the top of everyone's mind. Both countries are being put to the test."

Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh

Directorate of Architecture
Purto Bhaban, Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000

Notice

Invitation to contest for installation of "Atandra Prahari" sculpture to be erected at "Bangabandhu Toran" main gate of Mujibnagar Complex at Meherpur.

Sub: Regarding invitation to contest for installation of sculpture "Atandra Prahari" at two ends of seven columns at entrance of the under construction main gate "Bangabandhu Toran" at the Bangabandhu Complex & Monument Junction in Meherpur district.

Background: The height of the highest centre column among the seven different height columns of the main gate "Bangabandhu Toran" which is a symbol of self-sacrifice of three million martyred freedom fighters of the great War of Independence & Liberation to free the motherland of enemies which will remind their contribution to the Bengalee nation forever. At the last two ends of the seven columns of the said main gate will be erected the sculpture "Atandra Prahari" of two life size freedom fighters in action (with real resemblance) with grey colour cement casting/cast iron/plaster of Paris which will remind the nation & the coming generations the war of liberation & valor of Freedom Fighters as well as the history & spirit of liberation war for all time to come.

Any one holding graduation degree in sculpture from any recognised five arts institute/from among the members (sculptor) of Bangladesh Charushilpi Sangsad, individually, in a group or on behalf of any firm can participate in the contest.

3 (three) best prizes selected by the board of jury will be given:
Value of prizes: 1st prize Tk 25,000/= (twenty-five thousand) only
2nd prize Tk 15,000/= (fifteen thousand only)
3rd prize Tk 10,000/= (ten thousand) only
Time table for contest:

a) Distribution of papers on requisite and rules & regulations for registration for sculpture contest: From the date of publication of advertisement up to 8-4-2001 Sunday from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm, office of the Deputy Chief Architect Circle-3 (Directorate of Architecture), Housing Settlement Building (5th Floor), Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000.

b) Date of submitting 1'-0"=4" scale life size freedom fighter sample sculpture model with necessary drawings and financial proposal in sealed cover is 15-4-2001 Sunday from 10:00 am to 3:30 pm, at the office of the Deputy Chief Architect, Circle-3 (Directorate of Architecture), Housing Settlement Building (5th Floor), Segunbagicha, Dhaka-1000.

Published as per decision of the meeting of the committee constituted by the Ministry of Housing & Public Works for construction & selection of sculpture.

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DFP-8396-1/4
G-623

Directorate General Defence Purchase
Ministry of Defence
New Airport Road, Tejgaon, Dhaka-1215

Re-Tender

1. Sealed tenders in local/foreign currency are invited from bonafide manufactures/dealers/suppliers/indentors (enlisted firms in DGDP) for supply of the following items for Bangladesh "Army":

Sl No	Nomenclature	Date of Selling		Date of Opening	Currency	Tender No
		From	To			
a.	Various Colour of Saree (1,535 Nos)	11-4-2001	29-4-2001	30-4-2001	Local	2276/P-6
b.	Chevron Universal Naik (2 Bar). (18,000 Nos).	-do-	-do-	-do-	-do-	2259/P-6

2. Tender schedule with detailed specifications/conditions will be available on payment as per I/T selling rate (not refundable) during office hours between 0800 hours to 1300 hours. The tender can be dropped latest by 1000 hrs and opened at 1005 hours on the specified date of opening in presence of all tenderers (if present).

ISPR/Misc/2001/291
DFP-8474-1/4
G-622

Major
For Director General