

## US challenged by France, Russia on UN resolution

### Paris claims support for its Iraq plan

REUTERS, United Nations

Russia and France challenged a US push for a UN Security Council vote on Iraq by presenting rival draft resolutions they hoped could avoid a possible American-British military strike against Baghdad.

Both nations fear some of the tough language in the US text could be interpreted as a hidden trigger for military action against Iraq before UN arms inspectors had a chance to account for any of Baghdad's weapons of mass destruction.

But President Bush, at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, with Chinese President Jiang Zemin, on Friday insisted the new resolution had to contain real threats.

"Let me put it bluntly: There must be consequences in order to be effective," Bush said.

In response to the Russian and French moves, James Cunningham, the deputy US ambassador, formally introduced

the US draft resolution to the 15-member Security Council, thereby ensuring it would be voted on first.

Cunningham told council members he wants to bring his draft resolution to a vote by the end of next week.

A resolution in the 15-member council needs nine "yes" votes for adoption and no veto from its five permanent members, the United States, France, Russia, China and Britain.

France and Russia are not expected to use their veto power against the US draft. But they are trying to put pressure on Washington to make changes in its text by garnering support from the 10 elected rotating council members, whose votes are crucial, diplomats said.

According to smiling French diplomats, after nearly five hours of council consultations on Friday, their draft obtained varying degrees of support from Mexico, Ireland, Cameroon, Guinea, Mauritius and Syria as well as Russia and China.

The US draft was backed by Britain, Colombia, Bulgaria,

Norway and Singapore, diplomats said, but added that no head count was certain at this point.

AP adds: France claimed a first-round victory over the United States in the battle over a UN resolution on Iraq, saying its new proposal has more support because it eliminates tough US language that many fear could trigger a military attack.

But the United States countered that its draft has equal backing if not more.

The decision by France and Russia to introduce their own proposals Friday and challenge the new US draft resolution suddenly put three documents into the hands of the 15 Security Council nations, setting the stage for tense negotiations.

The rival documents reflect the division among the five veto-wielding permanent council members, who could not resolve their differences over a new approach to Iraq during six weeks of negotiations.



PHOTO: AFP

The body of a hostage is seen on Saturday on a stretcher at Moscow's hospital 13, where many hostages were brought after Russian special forces successfully stormed the theatre building captured by Chechen separatists. Sixty-seven hostages and rebels were killed in the storming while some 349 were severely wounded.

### 'The Last Blues' wins Golden Pyramid

AFP, Cairo

Hungarian director Peter Gardos's "The Last Blues" was awarded the Golden Pyramid for best film at the Cairo Film Festival on Friday night.

The film set over a 24-hour period tells the story of how a 35-year-old man's double life - as a happily married father and businessman in Poland, and as a passionate artist with a beautiful lover in Hungary - goes awry.

The joint Palestinian and Dutch production "A Ticket to Jerusalem" directed by Palestinian Rashid Masharawi took the Silver Pyramid. "Hejar" by Turkey's Handan Ipekci rounded out the top three, but also was awarded best screenplay.

Best director went to India's Mrinal Sen for "This My Land."



PHOTO: AFP

Indian director Mrinal Sen (R), winner of the best director award for his film "This My Land" at the Cairo International Film Festival, chats with Spanish director Carlos Saura on Friday in Cairo.

### Pressure on Indonesia to plug security holes

AFP, Jakarta

Indonesian investigators said Saturday there is evidence of foreign involvement in the Bali bombings, as Jakarta came under pressure to plug security holes and the radical Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) was put on a UN blacklist.

But police were still unable to question the accused JI spiritual leader Abu Bakar Bashir who remained in hospital after collapsing eight days ago.

The October 12 Bali terror attack bore the hallmarks of previous JI operations, but no firm link has been established.

"We have not found any direct or indirect relations but we are looking at any possibility," national police

spokesman Brigadier General Edward Aritonang said.

At a summit of Asia-Pacific leaders in Mexico, Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri was pressed to maintain the pace of an anti-terror campaign launched following the Bali devastation.

"I put very strongly to President Megawati the need for the strongest possible measures to be taken against terrorism in Indonesia," Australian Prime Minister John Howard said.

Howard, one of several foreign leaders to single out the JI, offered Megawati 10 million Australian dollars (5.5 million US) to boost anti-terrorist surveillance and security at airports and customs services.

## 57 hours in hell

AFP, Moscow

More than 800 audience and cast at a Moscow theatre endured 57 hours of hell at the hands of some 50 Chechen separatist hostage-takers before Russian special forces launched an operation to release them Saturday.

Terrorised adult captives were kept in the theatre's stalls with large home-made bombs set in their midst, while their children were taken away from them and taken up to the balcony, surviving hostages said following their release.

"We were all expecting to die. We knew the hostage-takers would not be let go alive even if their demands for a Russian withdrawal from Chechnya were met," said journalist Olga Chernyak, a correspondent with the Interfax news agency who

was among the hostages.

"The terrorists, and in particular one woman among them, told us that they had come to die. 'We all want to go to Allah, and you will go with us,' she told us," Chernyak said.

Female Chechen suicide commandos clad in black robes and strapped with explosives sat among the adults, their robes filled with ball-bearings to kill even more people should they blow themselves up.

They were the first to be gunned down by Russian sharpshooters as the assault began, to prevent them from detonating their explosives, released hostages said.

Doctors and negotiators admitted to the theatre before the bloody showdown noted that the captives were suffering from acute stress.

The Chechen separatists had

threatened to shoot the hostages and blow up the theatre if their demands to end the war in Chechnya were not met, and frightened captives using their mobile phones repeatedly implored the authorities not to storm the building.

For a full 57 hours, hostages were not permitted to leave the theatre's main room and, while they were brought water, fruit juice and drugs from outside, Chechen guerrillas barred Red Cross officials from giving them any food, except for a few scanty bits of chocolate.

Captives were not even allowed to go to the toilets and had to use the orchestra pit instead, prompting fears for their health.

## Bush, Jiang echo tone on DPRK

AFP, Crawford

US President George W. Bush and Chinese President Jiang Zemin pledged Friday to work together to end North Korea's nuclear arms programme by peaceful means, but differed on how to disarm Iraq.

"Both sides will continue to work toward a nuclear weapons-free Korean Peninsula and a peaceful resolution of this issue," Bush said at a joint news conference after talks at his nearby Texas ranch with the Chinese leader.

Jiang said Beijing, a major aid donor to North Korea, was "completely in the dark" about

Pyongyang's atomic weapons program, which violated the nuclear nonproliferation treaty and a US-brokered 1994 accord.

But "China has all along been a supporter of a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula and wants peace and stability there," said the Chinese leader. "President Bush and I agreed that the problem should be resolved peacefully."

The US president said he hoped to win similar support from Japan, South Korea and Russia on North Korea, which he has branded part of an "axis of evil" with Iran and Iraq.

Aides said Washington was also courting European allies.

Bush pursues the diplomatic initiative when he meets Saturday with Japanese Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi and South Korean President Kim Dae-Jung in Mexico on the sidelines of the annual Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum.

A senior US official who declined to be named said no specific measures were currently contemplated to bring North Korea to heel beyond mobilising international opinion against the Stalinist regime.

On Iraq, the US leader said he had courted Jiang's support for a US-authored resolution before the United Nations, aimed at disarming

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein by military force if needed. Jiang kept mum on the subject.

And, in an apparent message to Russia and France, who have pushed a watered-down version of the initiative, Bush stressed that any language must warn of consequences - potentially military action - for Iraqi noncompliance.

"We won't accept a resolution which prevents us from doing exactly what I have told the American people is going to happen, that is, if the UN won't act and if Saddam won't disarm, we will lead a coalition to disarm him," he said.

### US senator dies in plane crash

AFP, Virginia

US Senator Paul Wellstone was killed Friday in a plane crash in his home state of Minnesota, stepping up pressure on Democrats battling to retain a wafer-thin US Senate majority in elections next month.

The two-term lawmaker, fighting off a close Republican challenge, was killed with his wife Sheila, daughter Marcia, three of his staffers and two pilots when their twin-engine turboprop plane crashed near Eveleth-Virginia Municipal Airport in northern Minnesota, authorities said.

## Israel reoccupies Jenin

REUTERS, Jerusalem

Israel tightened its grip on Jenin Saturday, scouring the battered West Bank city for militants behind suicide bombings as a US mission to contain two years' Middle East violence wound down indecisively.

Hundreds of troops backed by heavy armour rolled into Jenin Friday, commandeering buildings, searching homes and imposing curfews. The army drew fire from local gunmen and, on the diplomatic front, the European Union, which urged restraint. Israeli military chiefs said the Jenin operation - dubbed "Vanguard" - would last as

long as necessary to flush out militants waging a Palestinian uprising for independence with suicide bombings such as one which killed 14 Israelis Monday.

Palestinian medics said six people were seriously wounded in clashes with the army - violence which overshadowed the end of a two-day visit to Israel and the Palestinian territories by US envoy William Burns.

Burns came with a "roadmap" for peace based on the Middle East vision of President Bush, and the widely anticipated American offensive on Iraq lent his mission urgency. Washington is keen to

preserve good relations with the Arab world.

Israel initially held back retaliation for Monday's bombing, carried out by two Jenin teenagers belonging to the militant group Islamic Jihad, apparently under US pressure.

The were no apologies after the army incursion Friday.

"Jenin has become the capital of terror," Israeli Defence Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer said. "When I speak of men and women suicide bombers, this is where they come from."

### Washington snipers face serial killing charges

AFP, Washington

Prosecutors issued six murder charges against two accused snipers Friday and will seek the death penalty as life in the Washington area slowly returned to normal after a three-week shooting spree.

"These two men terrorised and instilled fear into the very marrow of our communities," said Montgomery County, Maryland, prosecutor Douglas Gansler, who will seek the death penalty for one of them.

Schools let children play outside for the first time since the shooting spree that killed 10 people and wounded three began October 2.

John Allen Muhammad, a 41-year-old Gulf War veteran, and John Lee Malvo, 17, a Jamaican, were

caught after a huge nationwide hunt. Both could face the death penalty once authorities sort out what charges to file.

Investigators said ballistics tests showed a rifle found in their car was used in at least 11 of the 13 sniper-style shootings.

"Clearly, this is a case that, I believe, where the death penalty is appropriate," said Mark Warner, governor of Virginia, where three were killed.

Maryland Governor Parris Glendening, in whose state six sniper victims died, said his state's moratorium on the death penalty expires in April and would not interfere with the case against the two accused shooters.

## APEC leaders call for anti-terrorism drive

REUTERS, Los Cabos

Leaders from across the Pacific Rim called for tough action against Islamic extremists on Friday as they flew into this luxury beach resort for a summit focused on finding new ways to counter militant attacks.

Anti-terrorism measures were always expected to top the agenda at the 21-member Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, but the recent bomb attacks that killed 180 people on Indonesia's holiday island of Bali and this week's hostage crisis at a Moscow theatre simply increased the pressure for action.

Stung by the deaths of about 90

fellow Australians in the Bali blasts on Oct. 12, Prime Minister John Howard challenged other APEC nations to fight terrorism with strong international agreements and, more important, on their own turf.

"No amount of international exhortations can substitute for the determination of individual governments who know they have a terrorist problem within their borders to do something about it," Howard said in a speech to businessmen.

Indonesia, an APEC member, had been criticised in the United States and elsewhere for allegedly dragging its feet in the effort to clamp down on militant Islamic groups, but it has apparently been

galvanised into action by the Bali attacks.

President Bush was to join the summit early on Saturday, arguing for strict new security measures at airports and ports as well as demanding that South Korea scrap its nuclear weapons program and that the United Nations pass a tough resolution on Iraqi disarmament.

While Russia is at odds with the Bush administration over the Iraq crisis, Prime Minister Mikhail Sopyanov had strong words in support of an international push against terrorism.

### Laden's will at hand

AP, Cairo

A London-based Arabic magazine said it has obtained the will of Osama bin Laden in which he accuses fellow Muslim leaders of betraying him in the face of the American campaign to destroy his al-Qaida movement.

The weekly magazine Al-Majallah said the typed will was dated Dec. 14, 2001, and signed by bin Laden. At that time, US forces were bombing the al-Qaida stronghold at Tora Bora where bin Laden was believed to have fled after the collapse of rule by the Taliban.

The Associated Press obtained an advance copy of the article in the Saudi-owned magazine, which was to be published Saturday. The copy had what the magazine said was a photo of one page of the four-page will with bin Laden's supposed signature. There was a second enlarged photo of the signature.

In the purported will, bin Laden accuses Muslim leaders of betraying him and "the students of religion," meaning the Taliban, the magazine said. Bin Laden and

Taliban leaders complained during the American attack that other Muslims had ignored pleas to come to their aid.

"Without treason the situation would have been different today and the outcome would have been different," the text of the copy says.

"The situation has reversed. We saw the cowardly crusaders (the United States) and the humiliated Jews stand up while the soldiers of our nation raise the white flag and surrender to the enemies like women," it says.

A US intelligence official in Washington, speaking on condition of anonymity, said American officials have not verified the authenticity of the will.

Issam Abdel Allah, a member of Al-Majallah's editorial board, said the will was received from sources in Afghanistan, but he declined to give further details.

He said the magazine double-checked the document's validity with other sources, adding: "If we wouldn't have confirmed it, we would not have published it."



PHOTO: AFP

The show must go on despite possible terrorist threats to Bangkok as Thai women dressed in traditional royal dance costumes wait for their turn on stage during a Thai culture celebration on the streets of Patpong, Bangkok on Saturday. Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra said Saturday there was no clear threat of a terrorist attack in Thailand, but his government was taking highest level precautionary measures.