

Obama's security strategy dumps Bush doctrine

AFP, Washington

President Barack Obama yesterday rejected George W Bush's doctrine that made a "war on terror" the driving force of US power, framing a pragmatic foreign policy for a world bristling with threats.

Under a new national security strategy, Obama also steps back from the former president's concept of pre-emptive war to head off looming danger, and cites national security implications of economic meltdowns and global warming.

The doctrine, to be unveiled later Thursday, also holds warnings for Iran and North Korea, focuses on home-grown extremists who turn to Islamic radicalism in America and warns of the dangers of nuclear proliferation.

The document, obtained by AFP, contains an evolution of Obama's pro-engagement policies after 16 months in power, a period that brought the idealism of his campaign into conflict with harsh realities of geopolitics.

It describes a world thick with evolving threats and seeks to reframe US foreign policy after two bloody wars and a crippling global financial crisis.

It projects a tough, hard nosed assessment of American interests and the use of US power, and lays out a dizzying array of threats from cyber warfare to health epidemics to ethnic wars to inequality.

"To succeed, we must face the world as it is," the document states, turning the page on Bush-era dreams of remaking the global order in America's image and recognizing the rise of new global powers.

The document lays out a sweeping new paradigm for US foreign policy, using the tools of diplomacy, economic renewal, development aid, military might and education.

It calls for tough engagement "without illusion" with US foes like Iran and North Korea, but warns they face deepening isolation if they continue to spurn US advances and do not bow to pressure to throw open their nuclear programs.

The document also preserves the US right to launch unilateral military action, but does so in more restrictive terms than those used by the former Bush administration.

It also seeks to widen the scope of US foreign policy, which became dominated

by a doctrine "war on terror" following the September 11 attacks in 2001, and led to the war in Iraq, after the invasion of Afghanistan.

"We will always seek to delegitimize the use of terrorism and to isolate those who carry it out," said the document, the product of intense internal deliberations during the 16 months of the Obama administration.

"Yet this is not a global war against a tactic -- terrorism or a religion -- Islam.

"We are at war with a specific network, Al-Qaeda, and its terrorist affiliates who support efforts to attack the United States, our allies, and partners."

The plan notes that for more than a decade, Washington has been involved in a struggle against a "far-reaching network of violence and hatred."

It says Washington must now help Pakistan fight extremism, strengthen Afghanistan and complete a responsible exit from Iraq.

In his last national security strategy in 2006, Bush targeted terrorism as a concept much more specifically, declaring boldly "the war on terror is not over."

UK's coalition partners in last polls race

AFP, London

Britain's ruling coalition partners went head-to-head again yesterday in a last poll race left over from May 6 ballots, which produced their historic power-sharing government.

Prime Minister David Cameron's Conservative party is fighting to keep out its junior coalition ally the Liberal Democrats in the northern English constituency of Thirsk and Malton.

Cameron and Lib Dem leader Nick Clegg have struck a close bond in national power, Britain's first coalition government since World War II, after the Tories won most votes on May 6 but failed to get an absolute majority.

But their parties' candidates have fought a no-holds-barred campaign in Thirsk, delayed because a candidate died.

Moscow wants '100pc proof' on Korea ship sinking

AFP, Moscow

Russia will not support efforts to punish North Korea's role in the sinking of the corvette, a foreign ministry spokesman said yesterday.

"We need to receive 100 percent proof of North Korea's role in the sinking of the corvette," the spokesman, Igor Lyakin-Frolov, was quoted as saying by the Interfax news agency.

"Our specialists are currently studying the materials of the investigation. We need to draw our own conclusions about what happened. Everything will depend on the situation and the body of evidence."

The comments came a day after Russia announced that it was sending a team of experts to South Korea to assess the evidence about North Korea's involvement in the sinking of the warship, which left 46 sailors dead.

In a separate report, a senior source in Russia's navy suggested that Moscow was unhappy about being excluded from the lengthy multinational investigation into the sinking of the Cheonan, a 1,200-tonne corvette.



- March 26: Explosion hits naval corvette near disputed maritime border, killing 46 on board
- May 20: Independent investigators produce proof North Korean torpedo struck vessel
- May 24: South Korea declares trade with North frozen, demands apology
- May 25: North Korea announces it is severing all ties with South

12 dead after ferry sinks in Peru

AFP, Lima

At least 12 people have drowned after a ferry sank in the Amazon River near Peru's border with Colombia, but officials warned the toll would likely rise when recovery efforts restart at dawn yesterday.

The ship Camila carrying more than 140 passengers from the river port city of Iquitos in northwest Peru sank early Wednesday morning, and the toll rose steadily through the day as bodies were recovered from the boat and river.

"The death toll rose from five to 12, but tomorrow there could be more deaths (recorded) because there are still many missing," Robert Falcon, head of the region's civil defence force, told reporters.

The Peruvian Navy has joined Coast Guard operations in the search for at least 30 people who remain missing, according to local media reports.

Russia on alert after blast kills 7

AFP, Moscow

Russian authorities yesterday vowed to strike back after a bomb blast killed seven people and wounded dozens in the southern city of Stavropol minutes before a Chechen dance concert.

A bomb packed with steel pellets hidden in a juice carton went off near a cultural centre on Wednesday evening as locals were gathering for the performance of a renowned Chechen folk group.

The attack came just days before a Russia-EU summit is due to meet in the town of Rostov-on-Don in a neighbouring region next week.

By Thursday morning, the death toll had risen to seven, including a 12-year-old girl, and 33 people remained hospitalised, many in critical condition, officials said.

Mudalif Tambiyev, a youth injured in the explosion, said he had escaped with light injuries thanks to his friend.

"There was a blast. My friend covered me," he said in televised remarks

speaking from his hospital bed. As a result, Tambiyev received light injuries, while his friend was in intensive care, he said.

So far no group has claimed responsibility but officials said those who did not want peace in the Caucasus would not succeed.

Stavropol, which lies on the northern edge of the Caucasus, has until now rarely seen the bloody attacks that characterize the simmering guerrilla war between Russian forces and separatist rebels.

"This is an audacious provocation," said regional governor Valery Gayevsky.

"Someone wants to shake loose the friendly relations between the peoples and republics. These forces do not want peace in the Caucasus. But we will put them in their place," he said.

Gayevsky spoke by telephone with President Dmitry Medvedev late at night, telling the Kremlin chief about the situation with the injured and the investigation.



PHOTO: AFP
People demonstrate in the streets of the French city of Marseille during a nationwide day of strike called by unions to protest against the pension overhaul yesterday. The French government defended plans to raise the retirement age from the current 60 years as part of efforts to tackle its gaping welfare deficit.

2 Israeli-Arabs charged with spying for Hizbullah

BBC ONLINE

Israeli prosecutors have charged two Israeli Arab activists with spying for Hizbullah, it has been revealed.

Amir Makhoul and Omar Sayid confessed they passed information about Israeli bases to the Lebanese militant and political group, the charges say.

They sent information to their Lebanese contacts over the internet using sophisticated encryption programmes, prosecutors said.

Lawyers for the accused men say their confessions were made under duress.

The men were interrogated by Shin Bet, the Israeli secret service.

The case had been subject to an Israeli court gagging order which has now been lifted.

The charges say both men met Hizbullah agents in 2008.

Bashir sworn in as Sudan's president

BBC ONLINE

Sudanese President Omar al-Bashir has been sworn into office again, following his controversial win in last month's elections.

President Bashir is wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) for alleged war crimes in Darfur.

Many international leaders stayed away from the inauguration but at least five African presidents attended the event.

The UN said it was sending the heads of the two UN peacekeeping missions in the country to the ceremony.

Taking the oath of office, President Bashir addressed parliament in Khartoum for around 30 minutes.

Presidents from Ethiopia, Chad, Malawi, Mauritania, and Djibouti were in the audience.

But the international rights organisation Human Rights Watch (HRW) said governments committed to justice in Darfur should have stayed away from President Bashir's inauguration.

Ibrahim Ghandour, a senior figure in the president's National Congress Party, said HRW was wrong.

"The Sudanese people can see that Human Rights Watch is unfair to the Sudanese issues in general," he said ahead of the ceremony.

"I think that the first defeat is the fact that at least five presidents are attending the inauguration."



President Omar al-Bashir

"And the second defeat came when the UN declared that it would be present at the inauguration of the new presidency term."

Arroyo calls off sale of Marcos jewels

AFP, Manila

Philippine President Gloria Arroyo yesterday called off her administration's efforts to sell the seized jewels of former first lady Imelda Marcos, saying this decision should be left to her successor.

Aides of the president said that there was not enough time to sell off any of the jewels because Arroyo is due to step down on June 30 to make way for a successor, Benigno Aquino, son of two famous anti-Marcos leaders.

"Time has run out on the process and it is best left to the incoming administration," said Arroyo's chief aide, Leandro Mendoza.

A government official charged with recovering the Marcos's stolen wealth had in recent weeks been preparing for their auction, inviting major auction houses to appraise the value of the jewels.

Spanish politicians approve 15b-euro austerity plan

BBC ONLINE

The Spanish parliament has backed a 15bn-euro (\$18.4bn; £13bn) austerity package by one vote as the country strives to cut its budget deficit.

The vote saw 169 in favour of the Socialist government's austerity plan and 168 against, with 13 abstentions.

Spain announced the austerity package earlier this month. It includes wage cuts of 5% or more for civil servants and slashes public investment plans.

Spain hopes to rein in its deficit and ease fears of a Greek-style crisis.

A parliamentary defeat would have been a blow to the Socialist government of Prime Minister Jose Luis Rodriguez Zapatero.

Spain's programme is intended to reduce a deficit of 11% of GDP to 6% by 2011.

"The result is calming for the markets because a vote against would have been very worrying," said Jose Luis Martinez, a strategist at Citigroup.

"But the small margin is worrying considering what Spain is facing."

Many Spaniards fear the effect the cuts will have on the economy, where the unemployment rate exceeds 20% - twice the eurozone average.

The country moved out of recession in the first quarter of this year, with growth of 0.1%.

BP's 'top kill' attempt to plug leaking well still inconclusive

AFP, Washington

BP's "top kill" attempt to plug its leaking well in the Gulf of Mexico remained inconclusive yesterday, 15 hours into what a company official described as a "titanic arm wrestling match."

Heavy drilling mud was being slowly pumped into the well to try to overcome the flow of oil gushing from a ruptured pipe on the seabed nearly a mile under the surface.

"What you have is a titanic arm wrestling match between the well and the heavy mud we're driving into the well. Two flows going at each other with a stream that comes out of the well," Bob Dudley, BP's managing director, said on CNN.

In a series of television interviews, Dudley said the operation was proceeding as expected but it would take much of the day to say whether it was working or not.

US police chiefs pan Arizona law

BBC ONLINE

A group of US police chiefs has told US Attorney General Eric Holder that Arizona's controversial immigration law could increase crime.

The law requires police officers to question people about their immigration status during a "legal stop", if the officers have reasonable suspicion the person is in the US illegally.

The chiefs said it would take resources away from the fight against crime.

They warned it would break down trust between the police and the community.

In an hour-long meeting with the US attorney general, nine police chiefs expressed their concern over the controversial law due to come into effect in Arizona on 29 July.



Local residents push a boat with sand bags in a flooded street in Krosno Odrzanskie, Poland, near the German border yesterday. Torrential rain in Poland's mountainous south have caused rivers swell and as consequence, the flood warning level has risen in Germany.

Indonesia investigating on smoking toddler's case

AFP, Jakarta

The parents of a two-year-old boy seen smoking a cigarette in a clip that was posted on YouTube are to be investigated, Indonesian officials said yesterday, after the video drew worldwide attention.

The footage shows the chubby toddler laughing and responding to the adults around him as he takes long and frequent drags on a cigarette.

The little boy, who reportedly lives in a village on Sumatra island and is called Ardi Rizal, is said to smoke at least 40 a day and became addicted after his father gave him a cigarette when he was aged just 18 months.

"We'll investigate the parents and community of the toddler," said Heru Kasidi, from the Women's Empowerment and Child Protection Ministry.

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Invitation for Bids (IFB)
for Printing and Supply of Survey Form

Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) invites sealed bids from bonafide printing press for printing and supply of 1,25,000 copies of survey forms.

Bid has to be submitted in the prescribed Tender Schedule obtainable from the office of PKSF during office hours from 30/05/2010 to 06/06/2010.

Bid should be dropped in the tender box kept at the reception of PKSF by 12:00 noon on 06/06/2010, which will be opened at 12:15 pm on the same day in the presence of the bidders (or their representatives) who choose to attend at PKSF Bhaban. Bid must be accompanied by earnest money of 2.5% of the bid amount (refundable) in the form of Bank Draft or Pay Order in favour of Palli Karma-Sahayak Foundation (PKSF) from any scheduled bank in Bangladesh.

PKSF reserves all rights to accept or reject any or all the bids without showing any reason and is not bound to award work order to the lowest bidder.

General Manager (Administration)