

Police intercept parcel bomb addressed to Sarkozy

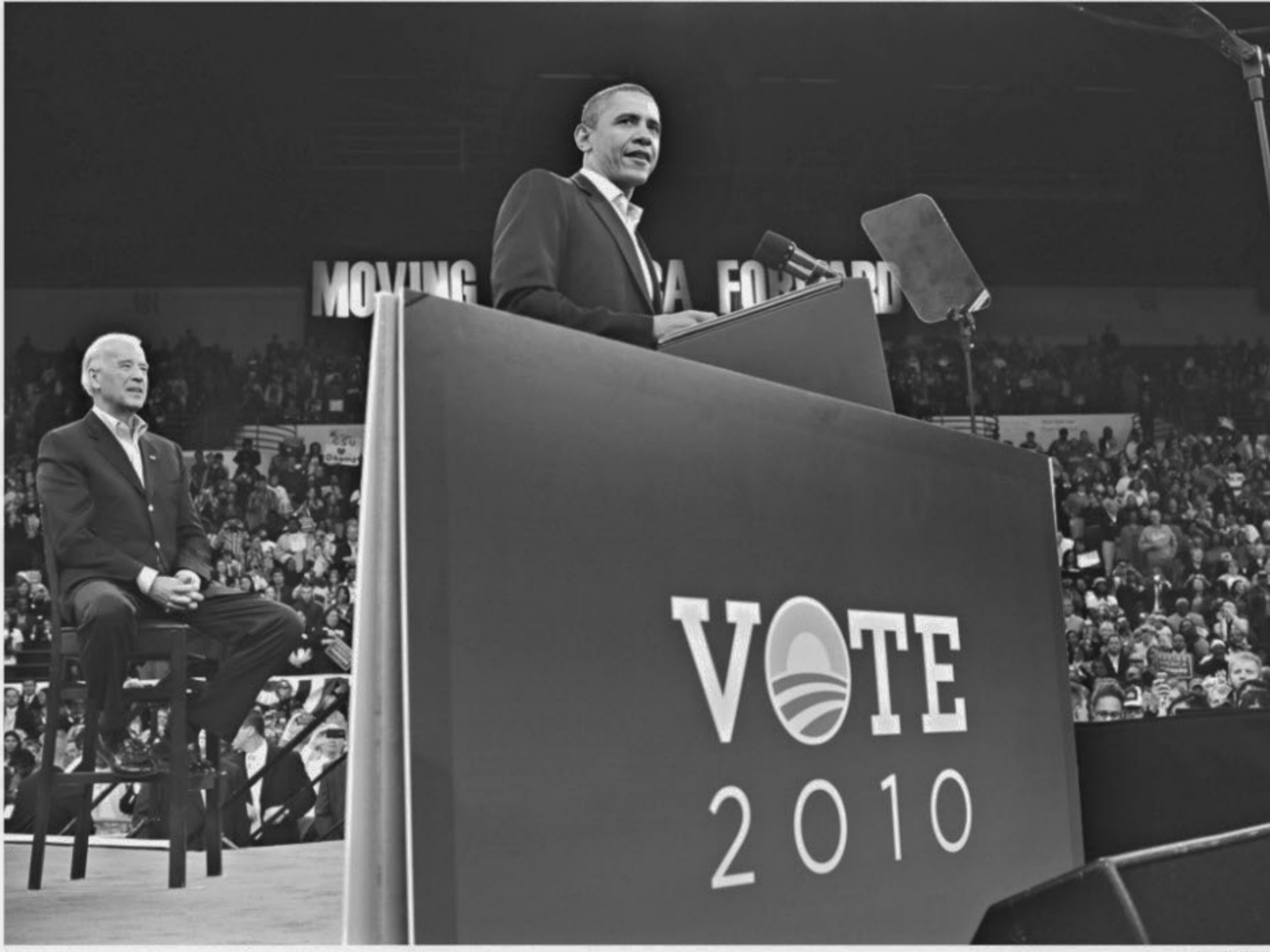
REUTERS, Athens

Greek police said it had intercepted yesterday a booby-trapped parcel addressed to French President Nicolas Sarkozy, after another package exploded at a courier company in Athens.

"One of the explosive devices that the suspects were carrying was addressed to the President of the French Republic, Nicolas Sarkozy," a police spokesman told Reuters.

He said the other parcels were addressed to the embassies of Belgium, Netherlands and Mexico. The latter one exploded earlier in Athens, slightly injuring one female employee at a courier company. The others were detonated by police.

"Police believes there is no link with al-Qaeda. We are still investigating," he said adding that the two men arrested were suspected to be linked to a Greek leftist guerrilla group.



US President Barack Obama speaks as Vice President Joe Biden looks on during "Moving America Forward" rally at Cleveland State University in Cleveland, Ohio yesterday. Obama is on a campaign trail for the November 2 midterm elections. PHOTO: AFP

Myanmar will keep power if voters abstain

REUTERS, Yangon

Myanmar's military rulers threatened yesterday to cling to power if the public abstained from voting in Sunday's long-awaited election and blamed foreign media for trying to derail the poll.

The military, which has run the country since a 1962 coup, said 13 foreign news organisations had colluded with opposition movements to discourage people from voting and create "great troubles" for the country.

"If the election is aborted (by voters) there will not be a government that's elected by vote of the people," all state-controlled newspapers, which serve as mouthpieces for the reclusive regime, said in a commentary.

"The ruling government would have no choice but to remain in charge of state security until it holds another election. If so, this will take a long time," they said, adding that Myanmar's plan to become a democracy took more than a decade to draft.

It was the first time the junta has made such a threat, or mentioned the possibility of a no-vote campaign ahead of the election, which critics say is a sham to cement the military's iron-fisted grip on power.

In the absence of any real opposition to two big parties backed by the military, activists and analysts say a significant boycott by voters would be the only means of expressing public

opposition to the election.

The commentary did not name the foreign news media it accused of trying to sabotage the poll. It said journalists were working closely with organisations that were "no longer political parties", a veiled reference to the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), which has boycotted the poll.

"Their intent is nothing more than to get the nation and the people into great troubles," the commentary said.

The NLD, led by detained Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, won the country's last election, in 1990, in a landslide, but the generals ignored the result.

The party, which was dissolved because of its boycott of this month's vote, says this election is "unfair and unjust" because of the detention of Suu Kyi and more than 2,100 other political prisoners, hundreds of which are party members.

Senior NLD member Aung Thein insisted the former party was not trying to disrupt the poll but was seeking only to remind people of their constitutional rights.

"Leaders have been explaining to the people in provinces and big cities that they have the right to boycott the election," he told Reuters.

"No one has taken action against us. We are just propagating a constitutional right of the people."

China embarks on first national census

BBC ONLINE

The Chinese authorities are about to begin the country's first national census in 10 years.

More than six million workers have been hired for the huge task in the world's most populous country.

The authorities hope the census will clarify the number of migrant workers, which by some estimates is said to be more than 200 million.

Earlier this year, in a keynote speech, Premier Wen Jiabao said migrant workers needed better treatment.

The census is a mammoth undertaking - to account for every individual in a country with a population of more than 1.3 billion.

But that is the task facing the millions of census workers as they fan out across China.

The biggest challenge will be documenting migrant workers, who often have no fixed address.

In recent years tens of millions of Chinese have moved from the countryside to the cities in search of work.

US midterm polls: Key races to watch in election

AFP, Washington

US voters head to the polls today for key elections that will decide whether President Barack Obama's Democratic allies or his Republican foes will control the Congress until 2012.

All 435 House of Representatives seats, 37 Senate spots, and three dozen governorships are up for grabs, as well as control over state legislatures.

Republicans, who need a net gain of 39 seats to retake the House and 10 seats to capture the Senate, are expected to swamp Democrats in a tidal wave of voter anger at the sour US economy and unemployment hovering near 10 percent.

The House currently comprises 255 Democrats, 178 Republicans, and two vacancies, while the Senate includes 57 Democrats, two Independents who typically vote with them, and 41 Republicans.

Seizing even one chamber would give Republicans broad control over what legislation comes to a vote, and when, likely bringing Obama's remaining big-ticket agenda items to a grinding halt or forcing major compromises.

It would also give Republicans committee chairmanships and with them sweeping powers to investigate the Obama administration.

If Republicans take the House, Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi - technically the third-highest US elected official - would lose her post to a Republican, most likely House Minority Leader John Boehner.

Historically, sitting US presidents have seen their party lose seats in elections halfway through their first term, though George W. Bush defied that trend in 2002.

Key governorships up for grabs include California, Florida, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Texas.

Winning governorships and state legislatures carries a special prize this year, as states redraw their political maps in response to the one-a-decade US population census wrapped up earlier this year.

AFP, Washington

All 435 House of Representatives seats, 37 of the Senate's 100 slots, and 37 governorships up for grabs.

Republicans need to capture 39 House seats to retake the chamber, and 10 seats to seize the Senate.

Here are some key races to watch:

■ **NEVADA SENATE**
Democratic Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, who shepherded much of Obama's ambitious agenda through the Congress, is fighting for his political life against upstart Tea Party conservative Sharron Angle in a race that is too close to call.

Republicans have made defeating Reid a top priority, but he has clawed back from polls showing him down by double digits earlier this year, and Democrats hope his robust get-out-the-vote machine can win the day.

■ **ILLINOIS SENATE**
The fight for Obama's old Senate seat has been a roller-coaster and now hurtles towards an uncertain outcome as Democratic candidate Alexi Giannoulias and Republican Representative Mark Kirk wage political war.

Giannoulias has highlighted Kirk's admission that he embellished his military record, while Kirk has highlighted that regulators seized the bank owned by his rival's family and that the institution lent money to criminals.

■ **CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR**
Who will replace Hollywood-superstar-turned-"Governator" Arnold Schwarzenegger?

Republicans hope it will be Meg Whitman, former boss of the online auction site eBay, who has spent an estimated 140 million dollars of her personal fortune on the race.

Democrats have picked Attorney General Jerry Brown, who governed the state from 1975-1983, and he has opened up a lead in recent polls.

■ **FLORIDA SENATE**
Republican candidate and Tea Party darling Marco Rubio is the odds-on favorite in this topsy-turvy race in the vote-rich state that ultimately decided the bizarre 2000 US presidential race.

In an odd turn, the race has been roiled by reports that former president Bill Clinton urged Democratic Representative Kendrick Meek to drop out and endorse Florida Governor Charlie Crist, who decided to seek the job as an independent when polls showed him losing the Republican primary to Rubio.

■ **WEST VIRGINIA SENATE**
Governor Joe Manchin is vastly popular, with approval ratings at 70 percent, but anger at Obama in a state where the president was never popular may scuttle Manchin's bid to replace the late Robert Byrd, who held the seat for 50 years.

Manchin has taken pains to divorce

himself from Obama and Washington Democrats, most memorably in a television ad in which he shoulders a rifle and literally shoots a hole in their legislation to battle climate change.

Republican businessman John Raese has warned voters Manchin would be a "rubber stamp" for Obama's agenda.

■ **PENNSYLVANIA, 8TH DISTRICT**
In 2006, a Democratic wave helped sweep Democrat Patrick Murphy past Republican incumbent Mike Fitzpatrick to become the first Iraq war veteran elected to the US Congress. They now face a rematch in what some predict will be a Republican wave year.

Murphy voted yes on three of Obama's major legislative initiatives: overhauling US health care, battling climate change, and stimulating the stalled US economy.

Fitzpatrick has accused the Democrat of being in lockstep with Democratic leaders and doing too little to help create jobs.

■ **ALASKA SENATE**
Republican incumbent Lisa Murkowski, who suffered a shock primary defeat at the hands of Tea Party favorite Joe Miller, is waging a write-in campaign for reelection.

The Murkowski-Miller duel will showcase the relative strengths of the arch-conservative Tea Party movement and establishment Republicans.

Democrat Scott McAdams trails them both.

Alcohol 'more harmful than heroin'

BBC ONLINE

Alcohol is more harmful than heroin or crack, according to a study published in medical journal the Lancet.

The report is co-authored by Professor David Nutt, the former UK chief drugs adviser who was sacked by the government in October 2009.

It ranks 20 drugs on 16 measures of harm to users and to wider society.

Gavin Partington, of the Wine and Spirit Trade Association, said alcohol abuse affected "a minority" who needed "education, treatment and enforcement".

The study also said tobacco and cocaine are judged to be equally harmful, while ecstasy and LSD are among the least damaging.

Prof Nutt refused to leave the drugs debate when he was sacked from his official post by the former Labour Home Secretary, Alan Johnson.

He went on to form the Independent Scientific Committee on Drugs, a body which aims to investigate the drug issue without any political interference.

Invitation for Bids (IFB)
The People's Republic of Bangladesh
Social Development Foundation (SDF)

Supply of three 4WD Cross-Country Vehicles with all accessories for Social Investment Program Project- Additional Financing II Flood 2007 [Contract Package G-1.0(F)] IDA. Grant H349-BD.
and
Supply of three 4WD Cross-Country Vehicles with all accessories for Additional Financing III Cyclone [Contract Package G-7 (NJ)] IDA. Cr. 4450-BD. under Social Development Foundation (SDF).

IFB NO. SDF/Proc/10/2010/ 333 Date 27/10/2010.

1. This Invitation for Bids follows the General Procurement Notice for this Project that appeared in Development Business, issued On-line publication Dated May 04, 2010

2. The People's Republic of Bangladesh has received a credit from the International Development Association toward the cost of Social Investment Program Project- Additional Financing II Flood 2007 and Additional Financing III Cyclone and it intends to apply part of the proceeds of this credit to payments under the Contract for Supply of 6 (Six) nos. 4WD Cross-Country Vehicles with all accessories for Social Development Foundation (SDF).

3. The Social Development Foundation (SDF) now invites sealed bids from eligible and qualified bidders for Supply of 6 (Six) 4WD Cross-Country Vehicles with all accessories for the following Contracts (Lots) individually.

Lot No.	Contract Package No.	Description of Procurement	Quantity of Vehicles
1.	G-1.0(F)	Supply of three 4WD Cross-Country Vehicles with all accessories for Social Investment Program Project- Additional Financing II Flood 2007 [Contract Package G-1.0(F)] IDA. Grant H349-BD.	03
2.	G-7 (NJ)	Supply of three 4WD Cross-Country Vehicles with all accessories for Additional Financing III Cyclone [Contract Package G-7 (NJ)]	03

4. Bidding will be conducted through the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures specified in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement under IBRD Loans and IDA Credits and are open to all bidders from Eligible Source Countries as defined in the Guidelines.

5. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from The Project Directors of Social Investment Program Project- Additional Financing II Flood 2007 and Additional Financing III Cyclone, Social Development Foundation (SDF), e-mail : faruque@sdfbd.org & drmpud@sdfbd.org respectively and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below from 9.00 a.m. to 5.00 p.m. (Local time).

6. Qualifications requirements include: The Bidder shall furnish documentary evidence to demonstrate that it meets the following experience requirement(s): The Bidder shall have a minimum of 5 years of overall experience in the supply of goods and related services. A margin of preference for certain goods manufactured domestically "shall" be applied. Additional details are provided in the Bidding Documents.

7. A complete set of Bidding Documents in English may be purchased by interested bidders on the submission of a written Application to the address below and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below and upon payment of a non refundable fee of Taka 2000.00 (Two Thousands) or in US\$ 30.00 (Thirty) only for each set of Bidding Documents of individual Contracts (Lots). The method of payment will be in Cash/Pay Order/Bank Draft in favor of The Managing Director, Social Development Foundation (SDF). The Bidding Documents will be sent by Post/Couriers Service.

8. Bids must be delivered to the address below at or before 3.00 PM (Local time), dated 20th December, 2010. Electronic bidding will not be permitted. Late bids will be rejected. Bids will be opened in the presence of the bidders' representatives who choose to attend in person or on-line at the address below at or before 3.30 PM (Local time), dated 20th December, 2010. All bids must be accompanied by a "Bid Security" in local currency or an equivalent amount in a freely convertible currency as follows:

Lot No	Contract Package No.	Bid Security
1	G-1.0(F)	Taka 10,00,000.00 (Ten lack) or US\$ 14,300.00 (US\$ fourteen thousand three hundred) only
2	G-7 (NJ)	Taka 10,00,000.00 (Ten lack) or US\$ 14,300.00 (US\$ fourteen thousand three hundred) only

9. The address referred to above is: Social Development Foundation (SDF), House # 4, Road # 21, Sector # 4, Uttara Model Town, Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh. E-mail: md@sdfbd.org.

(Md. Nurul Islam Sardar)
Managing Director
Social Development Foundation (SDF)
House # 4, Road # 21, Sector # 4, Uttara Model Town,
Dhaka-1230, Bangladesh. E-mail : md@sdfbd.org

Video shows China ship to blame for collisions

AFP, Tokyo

Japanese lawmakers yesterday said a coast guard video shows a Chinese trawler intentionally ramming Japanese vessels in an incident that sparked the worst row in years between the Asian powers.

About 30 lawmakers saw video footage of the September 7 collisions between the Chinese boat and Japanese patrol vessels after a high-speed chase near a disputed island chain called Senkaku in Japanese and Diaoyu in Chinese.

Prime Minister Naoto Kan also reiterated the island chain was Japanese territory.

"It showed the moments of collisions very clearly. It was the Chinese ship that bumped into (Japanese vessels)," said Hiroshi Nakai, chairman of the lower House of Representatives Budget Committee.

The footage confirmed the Japanese government's stand that the Chinese ship rammed into the Japanese ships intentionally, the ruling-party lawmaker said after seeing the edited video, whose total duration is less than seven minutes.

Brazil elects first female president

AFP, Brasilia

Dilma Rousseff celebrated victory yesterday after she was elected Brazil's first female president and vowed to uphold the legacy of her predecessor and mentor, Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva.

Rousseff, who served as Lula's cabinet chief before he hand-picked her to succeed him in the run-off, choked back emotion as she expressed her gratitude in a victory speech in Brasilia.

"The happiness I feel today for my win is mixed with sadness for his departure," she said Sunday.

"The task of succeeding him is difficult and challenging. But I know I will honor his legacy and extend his work," she said.

"I will knock on his door often, and I know it will always be open." Rousseff pledged to eradicate poverty at home, and lambasted the world's leading economies for devaluing their monies in a "currency war" that was threatening the exports of Brazil and other

countries.

A 62-year-old economist by training and a career bureaucrat, Rousseff was virtually unknown to Brazilians before Lula thrust her into the spotlight alongside him this year.

Thanks to his support, she quickly became the favourite in the race that pitted her against opposition rival Jose Serra, former state governor of Sao Paulo.

Although Lula's project to have her elected tottered in the October 3 first round, when she failed to win the expected majority needed to avert Sunday's run-off, it got back on track for the run-off.

Rousseff picked up 56 percent of the vote to Serra's 44 percent, according to an official tally of all ballots by the



Handout picture released yesterday shows Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva (L) kissing Brazilian President elect Dilma Rousseff as they celebrate her victory at Alvorada Palace. PHOTO: AFP

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