

# Hu wraps up historical US tour in Chicago

CNN, Washington

Chinese President Hu Jintao wraps up his U.S. visit yesterday in Chicago, Illinois, the hometown of his counterpart, President Barack Obama.

He is scheduled to visit a Chinese-owned auto parts firm, a Chinese wind energy company and the Confucius Institute -- a Chinese language and cultural education centre housed at Walter Payton College Preparatory High School.

Hu is expected to head back to Beijing around midday. The Chinese leader wrapped up his three-day visit to Washington, D.C., Thursday, telling an audience of American business leaders that Beijing is seeking closer ties and greater trust with the United States on a range of issues.

He sought to assuage concerns about China's rising economic and military power, declaring that his country "will never seek hegemony or pursue an expansionist policy."

The Chinese leader was unapologetic, however, about Beijing's position on the politically sensitive status of Tibet and Taiwan, calling it a matter of Chinese territorial integrity and a "core interest."

"We are building 'a socialist country under the rule of law,'" he asserted. He said relations between Washington and Beijing need to be governed by a belief in "equality" and "mutual respect."

Hu made his remarks at a luncheon hosted by the National Committee on US-China Relations, the U.S.-China Business Council, and several other organizations.



Chinese President Hu Jintao with former US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger (L), stands with Chicago Mayor Richard M. Daley and Maggie Daley (upper right) and walks with US Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (Lower right) before their meeting at the Hilton Hotel in Chicago. President Hu Jintao will wrap up the tour from Chicago.

PHOTO: AFP

## Obama asked Hu to put pressure on N Korea

AFP, Washington

President Barack Obama warned Chinese President Hu Jintao that Washington would have to redeploy forces in Asia unless Beijing stepped up pressure on North Korea, The New York Times reported yesterday.

The US "warning, first made in a phone call to Mr. Hu last month and repeated over a private dinner at the White House on Tuesday, persuaded China to take a harder line toward North Korea," the report said citing an unnamed US official.

It said the push seeking action from the visiting Chinese leader "opened the door to a resumption of dialogue between North and South Korea."

Just Thursday, Seoul said that it had agreed to hold defense talks with the North, the first engagement between the Koreans since a deadly North Korean artillery attack on a South Korean island in November. The strike lurched the peninsula seemingly to the brink of war.

While China has not condemned North Korea for torpedoing a South Korean warship, Hu on his visit did for the first time join the United States in voicing concern at "a new North Korean uranium-enrichment plant. But there were no immediate signs that it planned to punish the North for its defiance," the report added.

Pressure from the US president "reinforced by cabinet members like Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, moved China into much closer alignment with the United States in dealing with North Korea."

"Without help from China, which is the major supporter of the North Korean government, Mr. Obama told Mr. Hu that the United States would have to take long-term measures, like redeploying its forces, changing its defense posture or beefing up military exercises in Northeast Asia," the unnamed administration official told the Times.

"It was not meant to suggest pre-emption, but we were projecting that a North Korea that becomes a national security threat is going to get a response," the report quoted the unnamed official as saying. "That was attention-getting for the Chinese."

Washington irked Beijing last year when it sent the aircraft carrier George Washington to take part in joint drills with South Korea in the Yellow Sea after Pyongyang sunk a warship from the South.

South Korea meanwhile pressed North Korea yesterday to discuss its nuclear weapons programme, a day after the two nations agreed to hold high-level military dialogue to ease months of tensions.

Analysts were cautious about prospects for negotiations, which would be the first since the North sparked outrage in the South with a deadly bombardment of a border island last November.

## Hu urges US to ease high-tech export restrictions

AFP, Chicago

President Hu Jintao has urged the United States to ease restrictions on high-tech exports to China after Beijing and Washington signed \$45 billion in trade deals during his US visit.

"China wishes to work with the United States to fully tap our cooperation potential in fiscal, financial, energy, environmental, infrastructure development and other fields," Hu said in a speech to political and business leaders in Chicago Thursday.

"We hope the United States will work in the same spirit and relax its control on high-tech exports to China as soon as possible in order to boost its exports to China."

Hu flew to Chicago after meeting with President Barack Obama and political and business leaders in Washington and attending a lavish state dinner on Wednesday.

Obama stressed at a joint press conference the 45 billion dollars in trade deals would support 235,000 US jobs.

But he also insisted Wednesday on a "level playing field" for US companies, referring to disputes that have often bubbled to the surface as China's economic clout has grown. Hu echoed those words in his speech at a Chicago reception Thursday evening.

Hu also urged greater cooperation on trade.

## NEWS IN brief

### Chinese media declares Hu's US trip 'historic masterstroke'

AFP, Beijing

China's state media trumpeted President Hu Jintao's state visit to the United States as "a historic masterstroke" of "global significance" but ordinary Chinese seemed rather less enthusiastic.

The official Xinhua news agency gave the glowing praise after the elaborate welcome Hu received at the White House on Wednesday and his Oval Office talks with US President Barack Obama.

"History will remember this unusual day," the People's Daily, mouthpiece of the ruling Communist Party said.

### Obama to name General Electric chief as top jobs adviser

AFP, Washington

President Barack Obama will name the head of General Electric to lead his new Council on Jobs and Competitiveness, the White House announced yesterday.

Obama will name Jeffrey Immelt, the CEO and Chairman of General Electric, to the post yesterday in Schenectady, New York, it added.

The jobs-focused council effectively takes the place of an earlier external economic advisory council with a two-year time frame that had run its course. It was headed by former Federal Reserve chairman Paul Volcker.

### S Korea navy kills Somali pirates, saves crew

AFP, Seoul

South Korean navy commandos yesterday stormed a ship hijacked by Somali pirates in the Indian Ocean, rescuing all the 21 crew and killing eight pirates, military officials said.

The SEAL special forces boarded the South Korean ship before dawn, freeing all the hostages and killing the pirates in cabin-to-cabin battles, they said. Five other pirates were captured.

"This operation demonstrated our government's strong will that we won't tolerate illegal activities by pirates any more," Lieutenant-General Lee Sung-Ho of the Joint Chiefs of Staff told a news briefing.

### France 'determined' to keep troops in Afghanistan

AFP, Paris

France is "determined" to keep troops in Afghanistan despite a threat from Al-Qaeda chief Osama Bin Laden linking their mission to the fate of French hostages, the foreign ministry said yesterday.

"We are determined to pursue our action in favour of the Afghan people with our allies" in the NATO-led ISAF force that is fighting the ousted Taliban rulers in Afghanistan, ministry spokesman Bernard Valero told reporters.

### Gbagbo orders UN vehicles searched in Ivory Coast

AFP, Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Ivory Coast's incumbent leader Laurent Gbagbo is ordering the military to stop and search UN vehicles, the latest escalation of hostilities between the man who refuses to leave office and the global body that declared his rival the election winner.

The move comes after a series of attacks on UN vehicles and peacekeepers in the volatile West African nation. Last week, mobs and security forces allied to Gbagbo attacked at least six UN vehicles, setting some ablaze and wounding two people.

"I think it is pretty safe to say that it would not be legal to search (the vehicles)," UN spokeswoman Corinne Momal-Vanien in Geneva told The Associated Press yesterday.

## Invest more in women empowerment

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conference, attended by policymakers, experts and analysts from across the world.

David O'Rear, chief economist of Hong Kong General Chamber of Commerce, said there is a strong correlation between women empowerment and infant mortality and child welfare.

"Educated women can create educated children. Women earning more can help family better and afford more for their children. They don't pass poverty on their children," he noted.

He said the number of people living on less than two dollars a day has been decreasing.

"About one billion people across the world have come out of poverty trap since 1980. So, we know how to do it. But we have to do it faster and deeper."

O'Rear also said the government and legal system have to be transparent, efficient and honest, and services will have to be readily available to all to come out of the bracket of poor countries.

Kathy Matsui, managing director and chief strategist of Goldman Sachs Japan, said gender equality in education and employment is essential for

any country to grow, as women are the world's greatest under-utilised resource today.

"Gender parity is, however, improving at primary and secondary school levels, and young women are more literate than their male counterparts."

"These are all good news, but it remains to be seen how many women of the total population is participating in the workforce. Women's working potential has so far remained untapped," she said.

Matsui said women's participation in the workforce in many countries is shocking. "Men outrun women everywhere in the world, not only in the low income countries."

She said returns on investment for women are higher compared to their male counterparts. "They can contribute to building large workforce, strong human capital, higher productivity and more productive agriculture output."

Martin Wolf, associated editor of the Financial Times, said Asian countries are leading the way the whole world is transforming.

He, however, advised countries to be cautious, as prices of commodities are going to be a serious issue in the near future.

The financial analyst also said the new world order has brought opportunities for the latecomers to use technology available elsewhere. "They, however, have to be careful so that they can avoid mistakes made by others."

"There should be a frugal development. Countries must lessen reliance on fossil fuels and use less resource than they use today," he said.

Martin Rama, acting chief of the World Bank South Asia region, said countries must try to attract foreign direct investment (FDI) to spur domestic investment. "Not all developing countries, however, have benefited from the flow of FDI, which suggests that domestic conditions matter too."

He said Bangladesh has to correct its weak infrastructure such as acute power and gas crises to attract FDI.

Shoab Sultan Khan, chairperson of Pakistan-based Rural Support Programme, also spoke.

Established in 2008, AUW is a leading institution of higher education for women where students from 13 countries -- Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Cambodia, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Palestine, Sri Lanka, USA, and Vietnam -- are studying.

## Focus on govt left ruling party to suffer

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gap between the central leaders and the rank and file.

The relationship between AL and its allies in the grand alliance has apparently deteriorated because of what the allies say AL's neglect.

Senior leaders are divided on how the party has fared in energising the organisation and its workers.

"The party has become inactive after coming to power," said Obaaidul Quader, a member of the AL presidium adding, "the party lacks coordination at all levels because everything is centred around ministers and lawmakers."

"Huge communication gap" at different levels of the party is "hampering its activities," Quader told The Daily Star in an interview.

"It is the party which is finally accountable for the activities of the government," said Quader. "That's

why the party should be more active and work as a team in implementing the directives of the prime minister (also the party chief)."

Saber Hossain Chowdhury, former political secretary to the AL president said, "When we are in the opposition we know well what our responsibilities are. But when in government we don't know what is the role of the party."

Saber, also a lawmaker, told The Daily Star that there is no initiative from the centre to keep the party active. "This is why many of the workers find themselves disconnected from the party. The party has to ensure check and balance between the government and the organisation. If the government does anything wrong the party should point it out."

"If the party does not understand the issue and pulse of the common people, then the next general elections will be very tough for it," said Saber.

AL acting general secretary

Mahabubul Alam Hanif, however, does not agree.

He said the party has been quite active in promoting its cause. "When a party is in opposition, its activities become visible but when the party is in government it carries out only some routine programmes. This does not mean the party is inactive."

The party has directed its lawmakers to work with the grassroots leaders in carrying out the development activities, mentioned Hanif.

"Workers are the main force of the party and they will decide who gets nomination in the next elections. If the current lawmakers do not act accordingly, they won't get nomination next time," he said admitting that the lawmakers are ignoring the rank and file.

Hanif, also a special assistant to the prime minister, said party councils from union to metropolitan units will be held after the Union Parishad polls due in March.

"We will complete forming new committees at all grassroots levels by 2011."

Asked about the role the party has played in pushing the government to implement its electoral pledges, the AL leader said the central leaders are always on top of it.

Hanif denied that AL's relation with its allies is cold. "You see, the grand alliance is supporting the candidates jointly in the municipal elections."

In its major move since sweeping the last parliamentary elections the AL held its central council on July 24, 2009. Since then there has been no initiative to hold the lower level councils at metropolitan, district, upazila, thana, ward and union units and all associated bodies.

AL conducted a membership drive, but the outcome did not satisfy the high command, party sources said. AL organising secretaries along with a few senior lead-

ers conducted a countrywide organisational tour to prepare the grassroots committees for the next council.

The party held series of extended meetings of its different districts and upazila units during the last two years to get local leaders' views on the government and the party. At most of the meetings the local activists told the central leaders about a gap between them and the party's lawmakers. Families of MPs get more attention than the party leaders in many places, they alleged.

AL President Sheikh Hasina had planned to exchange views with the grassroots to learn firsthand about party's condition. But the process stopped just after her meeting with the leaders from Cox's Bazar district.

Hasina directed the central leaders to sit regularly at the AL offices to look after the party activities. But only a few of them heeded her advice.