

# China, US soften tone on sea dispute

## Agree to work on a mutual code; remain divided over Syria

AFP, Beijing

China and the United States yesterday stepped back from sparring over the tense South China Sea as the Asian power told Secretary of State Hillary Clinton it would work on a code to manage disputes.

China did not budge on its claims on the South China Sea, but both Beijing and Hillary took a conciliatory tone after weeks of escalating tensions in the strategic waters where Southeast Asian nations have been increasingly alarmed.

Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi said that China had "plentiful historical and jurisprudential evidence" for its claims to virtually all of the South China Sea, but sounded upbeat on Hillary's calls for a code of conduct.

Welcoming the US secretary of State in the imposing Great Hall of the People, Yang pointed to his recent tour of several Southeast Asian nations and said that China agreed on the need to "work towards an eventual adoption of a code of conduct" on the basis of consensus.

She denied charges that the growing US military and political focus on Asia was aimed at containing China, saying that President Barack Obama's administration did not want "unhealthy competition".

"Both President Obama and I have said frequently that the United States welcomes the rise of a strong, prosperous and peaceful China," said Hillary, who spoke with Yang on Tuesday at a dinner that stretched past midnight.

The Philippines and Vietnam have accused an increasingly assertive China of running a campaign of intimidation



PHOTO: AFP

**Chinese President Hu Jintao shakes hands with US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton during her visit to the Great Hall of the People in Beijing yesterday.**

to exert its claims in the South China Sea, through which around half of the world's cargo passes.

The United States has rallied behind the Southeast Asian nations and sharply criticised Beijing's recent establishment of a remote garrison in the South China Sea, through which

half of the world's cargo flows.

The show of conciliation stands in marked contrast to the tone of China's state-run press which has ripped into the United States almost daily ahead of Hillary's visit.

Just as Hillary was meeting Chinese leaders, the overseas edition of the People's Daily warned Wednesday against the United States "sowing discord" among China's neighbours, calling such a strategy "a counterproductive waste".

On the bloodshed in Syria, Yang said that China supported a "transition" and was not attached to President Bashar al-Assad but warned against outside interference and said that history will judge China's position positively.

Hillary repeated criticism of China, and Syria's main backer Russia, for vetoing UN draft resolutions that would have pressured Assad to end the conflict, which activists say has killed more than 26,000 people.

Hillary met President Hu Jintao and much of the top leadership but Vice President Xi Jinping -- who is expected to take power next year -- called off talks at the last minute.

While China has in the past used abrupt cancellations to show displeasure, the two sides played down the absence of Xi, who also called off other meetings, and had made friendly gestures during a visit to the United States this year.

Yang warned against "unnecessary speculation". Hillary later met with Vice Premier Li Keqiang, who is widely expected to become premier under Xi.

China scheduled the meeting with Li to ensure that Clinton meets with a key figure in the leadership transition, a US official said.

# Now is time for change in Syria

Egypt president tells Arabs

AFP, Cairo

Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi yesterday told a meeting of Arab League ministers it was time for the Syrian regime to step down and added that a resolution of the crisis was an Arab responsibility.

"I tell the Syrian regime 'there is still a chance to end the bloodshed'. Now is the time for change... no time to be wasted talking about reform," Morsi told the Cairo meeting.

"Don't take the right step at the wrong time... because that would be the wrong step," he said.

He urged President Bashar al-Assad to "take lessons from recent history" and step aside, in reference to Arab Spring revolts that overthrew the longtime dictators of Tunisia, Egypt and Libya.

Morsi, who in June was elected Egypt's first Islamist leader following an uprising that toppled Hosni Mubarak, urged the Arab diplomats to move quickly to resolve the Syrian conflict, which according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights has left 26,000 people dead since it erupted more than 17 months ago.

"The Syrian people have made their voice clear," Morsi said, and, in a message to the Assad regime, insisted: "You will not be around for long."

He told the ministers a resolution of the crisis is the responsibility of Arabs.

"I call on you, Arab foreign ministers, to work hard to find an urgent solution to the tragedy in Syria," Morsi said.

# Al-Senussi handed over to Libya

AFP, Nouakchott

Mauritanian authorities have handed over Muammar Gaddafi's ex-spy chief to Libya nearly five months after he was arrested for entering the country illegally, state television reported yesterday.

"Mauritanian authorities hand over ex-Libyan spy chief Abdullah al-Senussi to Libya," read a newsflash on the screen written in Arabic.

An official source speaking on condition of anonymity confirmed that Senussi had "effectively left Mauritania".

A delegation from Libya, including the defence minister and army chief of staff, were in Nouakchott on Tuesday for a visit which several official sources said was in connection with the extradition.

Senussi, a brother-in-law and feared former right-hand man of the slain Libyan dictator, was arrested in Mauritania in March and charged two months later for illegal entry and use of forged documents.

Libya has since pushed hard for the extradition of the man who is also wanted by France and the International Criminal Court (ICC) in The Hague.

Senussi "is wanted by the ICC on the basis of an arrest warrant issued by its pre-trial Chamber for alleged crimes against humanity on June 27," its public affairs unit said in a short email to AFP.



# SA strikers march at Marikana

REUTERS, Marikana

More than 3,000 striking South African miners marched through streets near Lonmin's Marikana mine yesterday, the largest protest at the hot spot since police shot dead 34 of their colleagues last month.

Police armed with tear gas and assault rifles deployed armoured vehicles and helicopters to keep an eye on the stick-waving protesters.

It was the strongest show of police force since the immediate aftermath of the August 16 shooting, the bloodiest security incident since the end of apartheid in 1994.

One man at the front of the column waved a placard reading "We want 12,500 or nothing else", a reference to the group's demand for a hike in base pay to 12,500 rand (\$1,500) a month, more than double their current salary.

# SECRET US-IRAN DEAL White House denies Israeli report

THE GUARDIAN ONLINE

The White House on Monday denied an Israeli newspaper report that accused Washington of secretly negotiating with Tehran to keep the United States out of a future Israel-Iran war.

"It's incorrect. Completely incorrect," White House spokesman Jay Carney told Reuters while accompanying President Barack Obama on a campaign trip in Ohio.

"The report is false, and we don't talk about hypotheticals."

Israel's most widely read newspaper, Yedioth Ahronoth, said Washington had approached Tehran through two unidentified European countries to convey the message that the United States would not be dragged into hostilities if Israel attacked Iran over its nuclear program.

The paper said the United States told Iran it expected Tehran, in return, to refrain from retaliating against US interests, including its military in the Gulf. The report did not disclose any source for its information.

The report followed Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu's call on world powers on Sunday to set a "clear red line" for Tehran's atomic program that would convince Iran they were determined to prevent it from obtaining nuclear arms.

Obama, seeking re-election in November, has insisted Washington is strongly committed to the security of close ally Israel and to preventing Iran from obtaining a nuclear weapon. But he has urged Israel to hold off any strikes on Iran's nuclear sites and to give sanctions and diplomacy more time to work.

# Morsi wants central Arab role for Egypt

AFP, Cairo

Egyptian President Mohamed Morsi yesterday told a gathering of Arab foreign ministers that he wanted to revive Egypt's pivotal role in the Arab region after the country had been "marginalised."

Morsi told ministers at the Arab League headquarters that he wanted Egypt to "regain its natural place in the Arab world, contributing to help its people build a bright Arab future."

He said that Egypt had "unfortunately been absent from Arab work for a while."

"We return from this marginalisation, where we have lived in recent decades, back to Egypt's natural historic role," Morsi said.

Since his election in June, Morsi has sought to redefine Egypt's diplomatic path, taking a strong stance on the Syria conflict and visiting Iran and China, both rivals of Egypt's traditional ally the United States.

Morsi lashed out at the Syrian regime during a speech at the summit of the Non-Aligned Movement (Nam) in Tehran last



week, calling it "oppressive" while publicly urging support for rebels seeking President Bashar al-Assad's ouster.

"Egypt's commitment to the Arab region is a historic commitment, renewed by the January 25 revolution" that toppled Hosni Mubarak and paved the way for Morsi to become the first Islamist leader of the Arab world's

most populous nation.

"Our ability as Arabs to face the challenges of the current phase is largely based on our ability to develop Arab cooperation," Morsi said.

"We must complete each other and be able to reform the mechanisms of Arab cooperation in order to revive, in all of us, the concept of Arab unity," he said.

"If the Arabs rise, the whole world will rise," Morsi said.

The Egyptian leader is set to embark on his first official trip to Europe next week, visiting Brussels and Rome before attending the UN General Assembly later this month.

# ISLAMISTS' INVASION

# Mali asks African forces to intervene

AFP, Ouagadougou

Mali's interim president Dioncounda Traore has formally asked West African forces to intervene to take back northern Mali from Islamist rebels, a senior French official said here Tuesday.

"President Traore formally sent a request to the Economic Community of West African States to provide a military contribution to stabilise the country and especially reconquer the north," said France's special representative for the Sahel region.

ECOWAS has said it is prepared to send a 3,300-strong force into Mali, but hopes to receive a UN mandate for the deployment, which would also require an official request from the Malian authorities.



**First Lady Michelle Obama speaks to the crowd at the Time Warner Cable Arena in Charlotte, North Carolina on the first day of the Democratic National Convention (DNC) Tuesday as her husband President Barack Obama and their daughters, Malia (left) and Sasha watch on television from the White House.**

PHOTO: AFP

# DEMOCRATS' CONVENTION First Lady electrifies supporters

AFP, Charlotte

Michelle Obama electrified Democrats on the opening night of the party's national convention with a powerful and unashamedly personal speech in which she invoked the future of her own children as she made the personal and political case for her husband's re-election.

Four years ago, Michelle Obama told skeptical voters that despite her husband's funny name, he was just like them. On Tuesday, she tried to convince them he was also an exceptional president.

It was before a stadium packed with supporters in Denver, Colorado four years ago that the Harvard and Princeton-trained lawyer made her political debut.

Then she sought to show Americans that the Obamas were indeed like them. On Tuesday she made the case that he was also a compassionate and diligent president.

"When people ask me whether being in the White House has changed my husband, I can honestly say that when it comes to his character, and his convictions, and his heart, Barack Obama is still the same man I fell in love with all those years ago."

"That's the man I see in those quiet moments late at night, hunched over his desk, poring over the letters people have sent him," she said portraying the soft side of President Obama.

Michelle worked in corporate law, as director of a community non-profit in some of Chicago's less moneyed neighborhoods, and at the University of Chicago and its medical center.

# ARAFAT DEATH CONTROVERSY French probe seeks West Bank trip

AFP, Paris

French judges investigating suspicions that Yasser Arafat was poisoned are seeking to travel to the West Bank and have the Palestinian leader's body exhumed, his widow said in a statement yesterday.

If the trip receives the go-ahead then "French scientific police could very soon take samples" from the body to further their investigations, Suha Arafat said in a statement released by her lawyer.

Suha Arafat called on the Arab League and the Palestinian Authority to suspend their own "initiatives" into her husband's death at a military hospital near Paris in 2004, to leave the way clear for the French probe.

Last month, French prosecutors opened a murder enquiry into Arafat's death aged 75, following claims he may have died of radioactive polonium poisoning and the launching of legal action in France by Arafat's family.

Suha Arafat said she was pleased that the three instructing magistrates had told her lawyer that they were making the necessary moves to gain access to the West Bank. No date was given for the trip.

# Japan to buy disputed islands, angering China

BBC ONLINE

Japan reached a deal to buy disputed islands in the East China Sea from their private owner, media reports said yesterday.

The government will pay 2.05bn yen (\$26m, £16.4m) to buy islands known as Senkaku in Japan and Diaoyu in China.

There was no confirmation from officials, but the reports were carried by major Japanese media outlets, citing government sources.

The outspoken Tokyo governor had also been seeking to buy the islands.

At a regular press conference, Chief Cabinet Secretary Osamu Fujimura said the



government and owner were in talks but would not comment on details of the discussion.

"We are negotiating with the owner while we try to grasp where the situation stands between [the central government] and the Tokyo metropolitan government," he said.

An announcement would be made "when we reach a result after completing the process", he said.

A Chinese foreign ministry spokesman said Beijing was watching the situation.

"The Chinese government is monitoring developments closely and will take necessary measures to defend its national territorial sovereignty," Hong Lei said.

sheltech-bd.com

**শেলটেক** **SHELTECH** Since 1988

Sheltech Tower : 55, Bir Uttam Gazi Nuruzzaman Road (West Panthapath), Dhaka-1205, Bangladesh

01713-091704 01713-091705 01713-091709  
01713-091710 01713-091713 01713-091724  
01713-091747 01713-091703 01713-091749

**Sheltech Afzal Neer**  
Banani, Dhaka  
Size : 1780 sft.

**Sheltech Krishnachura**  
Banani, Dhaka  
Size : 1685 sft.

**Sheltech Anamika**  
Uttara, Dhaka  
Size : 1230 sft.

**Sheltech Sagor Shaikat**  
Uttara, Dhaka  
Size : 1400-1420 sft.

**Sheltech Florence**  
Uttara, Dhaka  
Size : 1380 sft.

**Sheltech Grand Palace**  
Gandaria, Dhaka  
Size : 1105-1365 sft.