Attacks of int’l terrorism in Iraq directed at Bush

DUSHANBE, 19 Oct — Russian President Vladimir Putin, siding with George W Bush two weeks before the US presidential election, said on Monday that armed attacks in Iraq were staged by “international terrorism” out to block his re-election.

“The attacks of international terrorism in Iraq are directed not only at international coalition forces but at President Bush personally,” Putin, speaking in the Tajik capital, said.

“International terrorism has given itself the goal of causing maximum damage to Bush in the election battle, the goal of blocking the re-election of Bush for a second presidential term,” he told a news conference.

Putin’s comments, ahead of the November 2 election in which Democratic challenger John Kerry and Bush are fighting a close race, seemed a reward to the US President for his personal friendship and valuable support.

The strong support he enjoys from Bush quickly backing the US war on terrorism following the September 11 hijacked plane attacks in the United States has helped him withstand other criticism from the United States and the West over his democratic record at home.

Despite making clear he wanted to see Bush return to the White House, the pragmatic Putin carefully balanced his comments by adding: “We will, of course, respect any choice by the American people.”

MNA/Reuters

Malaysia’s stand on Iraq war proven right

KUALA LUMPUR, 19 Oct — Malaysia’s stand to oppose the US-led invasion on Iraq was proven to be right as no weapons of mass destruction have been found in the country till now, Deputy Prime Minister Najib Tun Razak said on Monday.

There was also no evidence to show that former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had links with the al-Qaeda terror network or had a hand in the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, the Deputy Prime Minister said while launching a book entitled “Between Blood and Bombs — A Journal of War, Iraq 2003” at Menara Star here.

“It’s very clear our stand is accurate and right,” he said.

The book, written by Assistant News Editor Shahanaz Habib of The Star, a local English-language daily, tells stories about the conflict in Iraq and also the post-war Iraq when she returned to the war-torn nation for the second time last year.

In her book, Shahanaz shared her experience and provided eye-witness account of how the people, including innocent civilians, soldiers and peacekeepers suffered and the bloody violence that erupted in the aftermath of the war.

Singapore’s private sector urged to fight against terrorism

SINGAPORE, 19 Oct — Singapore has urged private sector and communities to work together with the government to fight terrorism.

Speaking at a retail security conference here Monday, Senior Minister of State for Law and Home Affairs Ho Peng Kee stressed the importance of the involvement by the private sector and community in fighting terrorism.

“Here in Singapore, although the government has taken concrete steps to enhance our nation’s safety and security, we must recognize that counter-terrorism is a shared responsibility that also involves the private sector and the community,” he said.

Everyone of Singaporeans, including those in the retail industry, can play a part in countering terrorism, he said, adding that the damage of a terrorist attack on any of the business premises would be tremendous to the entire industry and to Singapore’s social-economic stability.

The minister called on retailers to periodically review the security of their premises, and take concrete steps to educate their employees on how they can be vigilant at all times.

He encouraged retailers to organize regular gatherings amongst their neighbouring business owners in a bid to know one another better.

“As neighbours, you should care for one another and keep a lookout for suspicious activities in your premises. Getting familiar with your neighbours will help you detect suspicious characters in your community,” the minister noted.

MNA/Xinhua

Australian journalist detained, released in Iraq

CANBERRA, 19 Oct — An Australian TV journalist has been released after being detained by unknown military group in Baghdad last weekend, SBS Television said in a statement on Monday.

John Martinkus, a freelancer, was seized near his hotel about 0700 GMT on Monday, the Tajik capital.

“Martinkus has been released,” Downer told Melbourne radio 3AW earlier Monday. — MNA/Xinhua

Putin satisfied with his visit to China

MOSCOW, 19 Oct — Russian President Vladimir Putin Monday described his visit to China as “an important step forward” in the bilateral relations, according to Interfax news agency.

“An important step forward has been made in cooperation with the People’s Republic of China. The same has happened (in relations) with Central Asia, especially with Tajikistan,” Putin said at a meeting with the Russian Government members in Moscow on Monday.

“It took us a long time to prepare these visits and documents that were signed during these visits,” Putin said.

“In both cases, we (I say we because it was the government that made a considerable contribution to laying the groundwork for these visits) have achieved our objectives,” the President said.

Putin had his official visit to China on October 14-16. During his stay in Beijing, Putin met with President Hu Jintao, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress Wu Bangguo, and Premier Wen Jiabao.

MNA/Xinhua

Irani men comfort each other as they sit beside the rubble of their destroyed house in Fallujah, outside Baghdad, on 18 Oct, 2004. — INTERNET
Iraq negotiating to use Iran’s, Kuwait’s ports for import

BAGHDAD, 19 Oct— Iraq is negotiating with Iran and Kuwait to use their Gulf ports to import one million tons of Australian wheat, Iraqi officials say.

The Australian Wheat Board was last month awarded a tender to sell one million tons of wheat for delivery through Iraq’s Um Qasr port during the first quarter of next year.

But congestion and a shortage of equipment at Um Qasr has prompted Iraq to seek help from Iran and Kuwait, the officials say.

"There is simply no way we could bring the shipments through Um Qasr. The situation there is a mess," a senior Iraqi Trade Ministry official told Reuters.

"A deal with Iran to use its Bandar al-Khomeini Gulf port is effectively sealed and the Kuwaitis have indicated no objection to use their Shouaikh port," said the official, who declined to be named.

Iraq has been upgrading its Gulf ports, unlike Iraq’s now defunct Coalition Provisional Authority has already paid Australia millions of dollars in demurrage payments for shipments delayed at Um Qasr, using Iraqi oil revenues.

Iraq imports three million tons of wheat a year, mostly from Australia, and distributes it to Iraqis as part of their food rations.

Turkey warns citizens not to travel to Iraq

ANKARA, 19 Oct— The Turkish Foreign Ministry on Monday warned the country’s citizens not to travel to neighbouring Iraq unless the trip is essential.

The ministry said in a statement that the advisory is issued since the ongoing unrest in Iraq is developing to very serious levels.

It also warned Turkish companies operating in Iraq and those who conduct transport services into Iraq that they should take all safety measures.

The statement said that Turkish citizens who still intend to travel to Iraq should get information from offices established at the border before crossing.

In recent months, Turkish truck drivers have been frequently targeted by guerillas in Iraq. At least six Turks have been killed by their captors so far.

Bangladesh sets target to cut population growth rate to 1%

DHAKA, 20 Oct — Bangladeshi Cabinet Monday approved the draft of the National Population Policy 2004 (NPP 2004) that focuses on bringing down population growth rate to 1 per cent by 2010 from the present 1.54 per cent.

According to the Daily Star on Tuesday, the new policy aims to stabilize Bangladesh’s population at 161 million by 2060, and to that end the net reproductive rate has to come down to 1 per cent by 2010.

First outlined in 1976 and revised by a nine-member committee since 2002, the draft NPP 2004 comprises 16 specific objectives that include bringing down maternal mortality rate (MMR) is estimated in the world with 320 women dying during childbirth out of every 1,000 live births. Infant mortality rate (IMR) is also quite high compared with that of any other developing country, as 70 infants die out of every 1,000.

In view of the high MMR, the new policy particularly emphasizes women’s reproductive health envisaging 100 per cent safe motherhood, and providing emergency obstetric services at all levels.

It also gives special attention to family planning services mainly to increase contraception prevalence rate, by offering choices to women, expanding clinical services from all static healthcare facilities and making home family planning services available.

Adolescent health is one of the priority areas of the policy, proposing school-based reproductive education for young people, and education of parents on the significance of reproductive health education for their children.

On adolescent health, the policy also focuses on late marriage for girls, spacing of childbirth and mass awareness on transmission of HIV/AIDS and other sexually transmitted diseases.

It also seeks to address high rates of malnutrition, decline in arable land, pollution of environment and water resources, poverty, fast urbanization and growing unemployment.

The draft NNP stresses equal rights of women and men, women’s participation in all spheres of policy-making, proper protection and shelter for the elder and minimum required calories for all growing children.

India, ASEAN to work for Regional Trade, Investment area

NEW DELHI, 20 Oct — Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said Tuesday India and Association of South East-Asian Nations (ASEAN) would work for creation of Regional Trade and Investment area to take the bilateral trade to 30 billion US dollars by 2007.

“This is to be achieved through progressive elimination of tariff and non-tariff barriers, progressive liberalization of trade in services and through liberal and competitive investment regime,” the Press Trust of India quoted Singh as saying at the third Indo-ASEAN business summit here.

Asserting that a balanced expansion of trade will boost industries, Singh said “we are working towards completion of Free Trade Area negotiations between India and ASEAN”.

The two sides have set a target to raise bilateral trade to 15 billion US dollars by 2005 and 30 billion US dollars by 2007, he said adding, “these are achievable if we focus on commodities which show a great potential for trade.”

He said the Early Har

Two Macedonian hostages killed in Iraq

DUBLIN, 19 Oct— A militant group in Iraq said it had killed two Macedonian hostages whom it accused of spying for the United States, Arabic television Al-Jazeera said Monday.

Al-Jazeera said it had received a videotape showing the killing of the men, accompanied by a statement from the Islamic Army in Iraq. It did not broadcast the killing.

It did not name the hostages and it was not clear whether they were among a group of three men.—Daily Star

Zoran Naskovski—who were seized by militants in Iraq in August. Al-Jazeera aired a segment of the video showing two men speaking to the camera and then another shot of what appeared to be their passports. Their speech was not audible.

Militants have kidnapped and killed several foreigners in Iraq to pressure their governments and private companies to end cooperation with the US-led forces. Macedonia has 32 soldiers in Iraq. The three Macedonians known to be hostage were builders for United Arab Emirates-based Soufan Engineering, catering to the needs of the US military and its private contractor firms.—MNA/Reuters


A woman looks after her vegetable patch close to an oil refinery on the outskirts of Basra recently. —INTERNET
As an agro-based country, Myanmar still remains highly reliant on agriculture, which constitutes the principal pillar and base for the country’s future all-round development. Although the State is trying to transform from traditional to mechanized agriculture, the draft cattle and buffaloes are still playing an important role in agricultural activities. The farmers also use these animals in rural transportations effectively. The dung manure of these animals are used by the majority of farmers as the best natural fertilizer in their fields. Therefore the health of the draft animals and development of the livestock sector will be very important for the agriculture sector and for the production of meat, milk and other animal products.

The Livestock Breeding and Veterinary Department (LBVD), Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries is striving to harmonize as an integrated regional control plan among the ASEAN countries for FMD control in the future. In August 2004, the Meeting on the progressive zoning approach to Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) control in the Union of Myanmar was held in Mandalay. The Working Group of the meeting agreed on four FMD zoning options to be emphasized in Myanmar. The zones will be in Rakhine, Sagaing Division, the Third and the Fourth Tri-state Commission Meetings have been held in Thailand, Indonesia, Laos and Malaysia respectively. The meetings were held at the border townships of the member countries. As the meetings are to be held by all the member countries in rotation, the Fifth meeting as observers. During the meeting, country reports for the activities relevant to FMD control programme in MTM (Myanmar-Thailand-Malaysia) area and future plan in detail will be discussed by the participants from Myanmar, Thailand and Malaysia.

As livestock and livestock products are important for the food security of the region, Myanmar is determined to eradicate FMD and other animal infectious diseases by co-operation and collaboration with other countries. Therefore we do hope the Fifth Tri-state Commission Meeting for Myanmar-Thailand-Malaysia Peninsular Campaign for FMD Freedom to be held in Myeik, Tanintharyi Division, will be a milestone for the creation of FMD free status in Myanmar as well as in Thailand and Malaysia.

Names of relevant states and districts in the MTM CZ, BS and surrounding areas.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Districts</th>
<th>States</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sagaing Division</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
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<td>BZ and CZ</td>
<td>Myanmar</td>
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Endeavours for Foot and Mouth Disease control in Myanmar

Dr Maung Maung Kyin

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12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions was held at the City Hall this afternoon.

Minister inspects cold storage, fish meal plants, prawn breeding in Myeik

YANGON, 20 Oct—Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Brig-Gen Maung Maung Thein, accompanied by Deputy Commander of Coastal Region Command Brig-Gen Hone Ngai, on 17 October inspected cold storage of Asanmaung Co in-cluding the fish meal plants of the company in the Industrial Zone in Myeik and crab breeding in Kyunsu Township.

The minister also inspected breeding of sea prawn in Laut Laut Village in Kyaukphyua Village-tract in Myeik Township being carried out by the Fisheries Department. Expert U Min Then reported on tasks being carried out and achievement.

Fifth cash donation for performing arts held

YANGON, 20 Oct—The fifth cash donation of Finance and Prize Presentation Subcommittee of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions was held at the City Hall this afternoon. Present were Chairman of Leading Committee of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions Chairman of Yangon Division Peace and Development Council Commander of Yangon Command Maj-Gen Myint Swe, Vice-Chairman of Yangon City Development Committee Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa, Secretary of Leading Committee of the 12th Myanmar Traditional Cultural Performing Arts Competitions Commander of No 3 Military Region Col Tin Soe, Chairman of Finance and Prize Presentation Subcommittee Joint Secretary of YCDC U Aung Soe and members, Commander of No 4 Military Region Col Yan Naing Oo, member of YCDC Col Tin Soe and wellwishers. Next, Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa presented K 3 million donated by YCDC to Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe.

Swe and Vice-Mayor Col Maung Pa accepted K 4.1 million including K 100,000 donated by the Ministry of Sports, K 200,000 by Internal Revenue Department, K 300,000 by Fisca PABX and K 100,000 donated by Ganhtawin Nandaw Construction. Commander Maj-Gen Myint Swe said the performing arts competitions are being held with the aims of restoration of Myanmar traditional culture and arts. He also thanked the donors for their cash donations. A total of K 31,754 million have been received so far.—MNA

Future tasks of sports federations, arrangements for camping of athletes coordinated

YANGON, 20 Oct—A coordination meeting on future tasks of sports federations and arrangements for camping of athletes who will participate in the XXIII South-East Asian Games was held at the National Indoor Stadium-1 yesterday. Present were Chairman of Myanmar Olympic Committee Minister for Sports Brig-Gen Thura Aye Myint, officials of the ministry, presidents and secretaries of sports federations. The minister spoke on start of camping programmes for winning more medals in the XXIII South-East Asian Games. Director-General of Sports and Physical Education Department U Thaung Htark reported on attendance of XXXII South-East Asian Games Federation Council Meeting and Director U Than Zaw on arrangements for matches and officials of sports federations on future tasks and camping programmes. The meeting came to a close in the evening.—MNA

Maung Soe Lin Kyaw and Daw Khaing Wai Lin of Ayeyawady Division taking part in the marionette contest.—MNA

Mu Nwe Darli Zaw of Mon State taking part in the basic education level (aged 5-10) girls’ old/modern song contest.—MNA

Daw Win Thanda Aung of Mon State participates in amateur level (women’s) solo orchestra contest.—MNA

Industry-2 Minister receives Japanese Ambassador

YANGON, 20 Oct—Minister for Industry-2 Maj-Gen Saw Lwin received the Japanese Ambassador to Myanmar Mr Nobutake Odano at his office on Kaba Aye Pagoda Road here this morning. Officials from the Ministry also attended the call. MNA