

We're masters of our destiny, says President

Herald Reporter

Zimbabwe's sovereignty is non-negotiable and outsiders will only be entertained as partners in exploiting its resources for the development of the nation, President Mugabe has said.

Speaking at the burial of national heroine Amai Sunny Ntombiyelanga Takawira at the National Heroes Acre in Harare yesterday, President Mugabe said Zimbabwe's destiny lies in Zimbabwean hands.

Amai Takawira was the widow of the late veteran nationalist and first Zanu vice president Cde Leopold Takawira.

"Her death comes at a time when the country is going through challenging moments both in terms of economic recovery and political stability.

"All those who lie buried here fought for one thing — an independent Zimbabwe whose destiny lies in the hands of its citizens.



President Robert Mugabe

"This is the enduring legacy that we the surviving ones should guard jealously and bequeath to future generations," President Mugabe said. The Head of State and Govern-

ment and Commander-in-Chief of the Zimbabwe Defence Forces said Zimbabwe's interests came first and the citizenry must be prepared to defend these.

"The country's sovereignty is non-negotiable, and the unity of our people remains paramount in all our endeavours.

"Equally, peace in our country must continue to prevail to ensure that development will occur uninterrupted.

"Let us honour our heroes by ensuring that each one of us, wherever we are, promotes unity, harmony and peace in our country."

Describing Mai Takawira as "a special woman", the President said her death had touched many Zimbabweans.

He said Mai Takawira had devoted her entire life to national service and raising her family.

"She executed her responsibilities and duties faithfully, humbly and with passion, but all the time avoiding drawing public attention to herself.

"Amai Takawira was publicity-shy and allowed her good works to speak eloquently for themselves.

"No wonder many people might ask, who this person is the

country has bestowed the honour of national heroine status."

President Mugabe's relationship with the Takawira family dates back to the time the late former Zanu vice president Takawira was at Kutama Mission

President Mugabe and Cde Takawira both worked as teachers before they joined hands in such political parties as the National Democratic Party, Zanu and Zanu.

"Cde Takawira started the NDP with others when I was in Ghana and when I came back, that is when I got to know her.

"She was looking after a big family in Highfield.

"Nekuti vanaVa Takawira vainge vasisashande, nekuti kana wapinda munyaya dzekusunungura vanhu, the people become your employer.

"She, however, looked after the family. She made sure that the family was fed and when we were arrested and detained, Amai Takawira suffered in the hands of the colonialists," he said. The President said Mai Takawira's legacy was a resolute and strong person who never looked back was admirable.

"Kushingirira kwavakaita kuchengeta mhuri pakasungwa murume wavo dzimwe mhuri dzichiparara.

"She remained morally straight and was respected by everyone. Although she was persecuted by the settler regime for providing information to political detainees, she never wavered.

"Asi musi wandinoona kuti vakarwadziwa chaizvo inguva iyo vanaSmith pavakafunga kuita UDI (Unilateral Declaration of Independence).

"Kuti isimbe (UDI) chaizvo iregere kuzunguzuka vakatora mhesva mikono yese yaiva mumadetention and put them in prison," he said.

President Mugabe said revolutionaries were taken to Harare Central Prison and when Cde Takawira became ill due to diabetes, he was refused medication.

"He was put in solitary confinement as the authorities accused him of trying to sneak out of prison to see his wife who worked at Harare Hospital.

"He was only discovered later when he had collapsed and was found lying on the floor of his cell.

"Asi chinhu chinorwadza kuti vakanonoka kuvapa mushonga, kuvatora nekuvaendesa kuchipatara.

"Kuna Amai Takawira chinhu chairwadza kuti havana kuziviswa kuti murume wavo airwara kana kuti akanga atofa.

"Amai Takawira havana kudzokera shure panyaya dzekurwira rusununguko kusvika tawana kuzvitonga," President Mugabe said.

After independence in 1980, President Mugabe said, Government recognised Mai Takawira's contribution to the struggle and honoured her with a Senate seat.

"As a senator, she continued to look after her family and today is a day to give her the respect she deserves.

"Vanhu vose vanoda kushandira nyika vanofanira kunge vaine chokwadi chokuda nyika yavo, kuishandira nyika vakashinga sekuita kwanga kwakaita Amai Takawira."

Amai Takawira was born on July 2, 1927 in Dube Village under Chief Madhuna in Filabusi, Matabeleland South Province.

A second child and the oldest girl in a family of seven, she grew up in Nkayi and was educated at Hope Fountain Mission.

She trained as a nurse at Mnene Mission Hospital in Mberengwa and on graduation worked at Gokwe Mission.

In 1955, she joined Harare Central Hospital and was among the pioneer nurses in the Casualty and Outpatients Department.

She married Cde Takawira that year and became a stepmother to his six children.

Amai Takawira had three children — Samuel Hamandishe, Leo Tafirenyika and Gertrude Ratidzo. Amai Takawira died on Wednesday from complications arising from a surgical operation.

She was 82. Amai Takawira is survived by two of her children — Samuel Hamandishe and Gertrude — and eight grandchildren.

Present at the funeral were the two Vice Presidents Joice Mujuru and John Nkomo, Prime Minister Morgan Tsvangirai and his deputies Arthur Mutambara and Thokozani Khupe, Chief Justice Godfrey Chidyausiku, Senate President Edna Madzongwe, Cabinet ministers, Zanu-PF Politburo members, parliamentarians, service chiefs and Deputy Harare Mayor Mr Emmanuel Chiroto.

Russia sends military satellite into space

MOSCOW, — A military satellite launched early Thursday has successfully entered orbit, the Defense Ministry said.

The satellite, aboard a Proton-M heavy carrier rocket,

was launched from Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan at 03:18 Moscow time (00:18 GMT). The satellite successfully separated from the rocket at around 12:19 Moscow time (09:19 GMT), said Space Forces

spokesman Alexei Zolotukhin.

"Contact is steady, and the onboard equipment operates well," he said.

The launch was Russia's first this year.

Space Forces Commander Oleg Ostapenko called the satellite "a new project that will help significantly increase the capabilities of the space communication system."

The RIA Novosti news agency reported that Russia runs a network of about 70 military satellites capable of reconnaissance and missile early warnings. (Xinhua)

Iran says not to attend London conference on Afghanistan

TEHRAN, — Iran's Foreign Ministry Spokesman Ramin Mehman-Parast said Wednesday that Iran will not attend the London conference on Afghanistan which will be held on Thursday, the semi-official Fars news agency reported.

"Since the approach of this conference is still towards increasing military actions in Afghanistan ... and since it does not take into consideration the root cause of the problems in Afghanistan and does not take advantage of the regional ca-

pacities to solve those problems, Iran does not consider it necessary to attend this conference," Mehman-Parast told Fars.

Iran's Foreign Minister Manouchehr Mottaki said on Jan. 21 that Tehran will take part in the conference on Afghanistan in London providing that its viewpoints are fully taken into consideration.

He did not elaborate the details of Iran's conditions, but Iran has already called on the NATO forces in Afghanistan to leave the country and allow the Afghan people to defend themselves with

the help of regional countries.

The international conference on Afghanistan will discuss a tentative timetable to switch security duties from foreign troops to Afghan government and work on efforts to persuade Taliban fighters to reconcile with the government, British ambassador to Kabul Mark Sedwill said on Jan. 20.

Foreign ministers of around 60 countries, including Iran, have been invited to the conference. (Xinhua)

from the locality.

Meanwhile, the troops in a statement confirmed the death of the civilian and regretted it.

"We can confirm one civilian was killed by ISAF forces this morning during an incident involving an ISAF convoy," the statement said.

The troops expressed regret in the statement and promised a thorough investigation in cooperation with authorities (Xinhua)

Obama calls Medvedev on START, talks nearly complete



President Dmitry Medvedev

WASHINGTON, — U.S. President Barack Obama called his Russian counterpart Dmitry Medvedev on Wednesday. The two presidents agreed the negotiations on a successor treaty for the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) are nearly complete, the White House said.

The White House made the announcement in a brief statement, saying Obama called Medvedev to thank him for his hard work and leadership on the negotiations, as the two sides have made steady progress in recent weeks.

The presidents agreed that negotiations are nearly complete, and pledged to continue the constructive contacts that have advanced U.S.-Russian relations over the last year.

The United States and Russia are to resume talks on the successor treaty for the START next Monday in Geneva. State Department spokesman P.J. Crowley said the talks "hopefully will arrive at a quality agreement that meets the needs and interests of both sides."

Medvedev said Sunday that "95 percent" of the new treaty was



President Barack Obama

agreed upon by Russia and the United States.

The United States and Russia have been working on a successor to the START that expired on Dec. 5, 2009. However, differences over verification and control arrangements prevented the two sides from producing such a document last year.

U.S. National Security Advisor James Jones and Mike Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, visited Moscow last week to meet with Russian officials. Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman Igor Lyakin-Frolov said earlier Wednesday the visit was successful, and it could take just a few weeks to work out a final document.

The START, signed in 1991 between the former Soviet Union and the United States, obliged both sides to reduce the number of their nuclear warheads to 6,000 and delivery vehicles to 1,600.

Medvedev and Obama agreed last July to slash each country's nuclear warheads to 1,500 and 1,675 and delivery vehicles to 500 and 1,000 respectively under a new START treaty. (Xinhua)

Afghans protest against killing of civilian by NATO-led troops

KABUL, — Scores of people in Paktiakot district in east of Afghan capital Kabul came to the street Thursday to protest at the killing of a

civilian by the NATO-led forces.

The protesters accused NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) of opening fire and killing a man