



BURMA REPORT

November 2011
မြန်မာ - မှတ်တမ်း

Issue N° 102

Free all political prisoners, free Burma.

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au>, [INLdmembrsnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News& Articles on Burma, 25.10.2011, 17:12:34

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL - OCTOBER 25, 2011- <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970203911804576651051732968950.html>>

Suu Kyi Sees a Shift in Myanmar

More Changes Are Needed, Dissident Says, Before She Can Support Easing Western Sanctions - By WSJ Staff Reporters



Associated Press Dissident Aung San Suu Kyi, shown greeting supporters in Yangon, Myanmar.

YANGON, Myanmar—Dissident Aung San Suu Kyi said a series of reforms under way in Myanmar represents the biggest opening in the repressive Southeast Asian country since the 1980s, but also said she wants to see more changes before she can support easing Western economic sanctions against the military-backed government.

The ex-political prisoner and Nobel laureate offered her strongest endorsement yet of steps by Myanmar's government in recent months to ease media restrictions, reform its state-dominated economy and pursue talks with the opposition. Ms. Suu Kyi's comments, in an interview with The Wall Street Journal at her party's ramshackle headquarters in Yangon, come as policy makers around the globe look to her for guidance on how to interpret the latest changes in the resource-rich, strategically important Southeast Asian nation, also known as Burma.

Although she had previously signaled some support for the government's moves, many of her recent public remarks have been brief, leaving followers uncertain as to how far she would be willing to back the current government or endorse easing sanctions.

Ms. Suu Kyi compared her latest talks with the government—which included an August meeting with President Thein Sein—to "where South Africa was in 1990" as it negotiated an end to apartheid, and had warm words for Mr. Thein Sein, whom she called "an honest, open kind of person" with a "sincere" desire to overhaul the country.

"I know we are not there yet, but we can see the way clear ahead more than we have ever been able to," said Ms. Suu Kyi, who said her recent talks with government officials "felt real to me," unlike previous talks in earlier decades. She suggested the government is close to meeting her conditions to officially register her political organization, a significant move that would signal her trust in the unfolding system and give Myanmar's leaders a level of legitimacy they crave. She didn't rule out the possibility of running for office in a national vote expected in 2015.

However, Ms. Suu Kyi said it was still too early to give up on sanctions for at least two reasons. Authorities continue to hold an undetermined number of political prisoners, she said, and have yet to fully restore relations with Myanmar's ethnic minority groups, some of which remain locked in violent armed conflicts with the government.

"Obviously now is not the time" to lift sanctions, she said, though she said she expects the government to release more political prisoners soon. It released about 200 people this month, in a move criticized by human-rights organizations as too limited.

Ms. Suu Kyi is walking an uncertain road toward reconciliation with leaders in Myanmar, whose strategic significance has increased in recent years as China, India and other nations compete for access to its minerals and trade.

Some dissidents and Western investors want Ms. Suu Kyi to end her longstanding support for sanctions, which block most U.S. companies from doing business here. The rules have been imposed in stages since the late 1990s—largely at her behest—to punish a regime accused of widespread human-rights violations.

U.S. officials have offered cautious support for the recent changes in Myanmar, which include plans to allow peaceful protests and the organization of labor unions, as well as steps to unblock websites such as the BBC and YouTube. But like Ms. Suu Kyi, U.S. officials have stopped short of advocating lifting sanctions until more progress is seen.

Signs of a thaw continued Monday, as U.S. special envoy to Myanmar Derek Mitchell arrived to meet with government leaders for the second time in two months, the Associated Press reported.

Ms. Suu Kyi also is facing pushback from dissidents who doubt the sincerity of the government's reform push, and fear easing sanctions now could rob the opposition of leverage. Some dissidents have criticized Ms. Suu Kyi for conducting meetings with the government in private—a move she justified as necessary to ensure the process stayed on track.

Myanmar officials have said repeatedly in recent months that they are serious about reform.

A government official declined Monday to comment on Ms. Suu Kyi's latest remarks, because he hadn't seen a full transcript

It is clear Ms. Suu Kyi will play a crucial role in determining when, and whether, sanctions are removed. After her release in November 2010 from her latest stint under house arrest, which lasted more than seven years, many experts expected Ms. Suu Kyi to take a tough line against the new government, which came to power after a late 2010 election that many Western leaders said was riddled with fraud and is dominated by allies of the military regime that controlled Myanmar since 1962. Instead, she has sounded increasingly conciliatory notes on the government, which is eager to win her backing to get sanctions removed.

"By playing her cards very well, she's put herself in a position she hasn't been in in a long time, of being the arbiter," said Sean Turnell, a Myanmar expert at Macquarie University in Sydney. He said he doubts the U.S. would lift sanctions without a clear sign from Ms. Suu Kyi. Given the uncertainties about whether Myanmar's government is serious about changing, "they're looking to her to say yes it is, or it isn't."

Ms. Suu Kyi said she was especially heartened by the easing of media restrictions, which she said is producing the most "open" environment since 1988, when student protests almost toppled the military government.

"People feel more relaxed about participating in politics. They aren't frightened as they used to be," she said, speaking forcefully to be heard over barking dogs and trucks rumbling outside her office, in an old building near a strip of furniture shops and weedy lots. Now, she said, activists can take part in the political process "without endangering themselves too much."

Ms. Suu Kyi signaled she may be close to registering her political party, the National League for Democracy, after it was officially disbanded last year for boycotting the country's first election in 20 years. Myanmar officials are eager to see the NLD register: Such a step would bring Ms. Suu Kyi more formally into the political process and, officials hope, provide a tacit endorsement of the current political system, people familiar with the government's thinking say.

The party refused to register last year, objecting to rules that, among other things, prevented political prisoners from being members. "They seem to be changing the bits that we said were not really acceptable in 2010," she said of a draft party-registration law under consideration.

Many of Ms. Suu Kyi's backers oppose registration, which could be tantamount to relinquishing their claim to power. Her party won 1990 elections, Myanmar's last before the 2010 vote, a result ignored by the military regime.

Ms. Suu Kyi said, however, that party leaders long ago gave up on any claim to power from the 1990 vote. "We are in fact not asking for a transfer of power as a lot of people seem to think," she said. "That would not be practical" because many NLD candidates who won office in 1990 are now dead or in exile, she added.

Ms. Suu Kyi appeared lukewarm on the idea of endorsing Myanmar's bid to serve as chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2014, a move that has split diplomats across Southeast Asia. Myanmar officials want to take over the rotating leadership seat at Asean, an increasingly influential regional grouping, to symbolize the country's re-entry into the international community. But some Southeast Asian leaders fear it could hurt the organization's reputation and jeopardize ties with the West.

"Assuming the chairmanship of Asean isn't going to do anything about improving the lives of people," she said.

Ms. Suu Kyi blasted the country's legal system, saying "everybody knows" the judiciary is not independent, and that there's too much "crony capitalism." She lamented that despite the relaxation of restrictions on the media, there remains a lack of transparency within the government.

For example, she said it isn't clear whether Senior Gen. Than Shwe, who was the country's paramount leader from the early 1990s until this year, is active in running the country behind the scenes despite his apparent retirement. "Because there is no freedom of information people have to depend on rumors."

But she said she thinks Mr. Thein Sein, who was a military commander before being appointed president earlier this year, wields considerable power, which could augur well for further change.

"People question how much support he has within not just the government but within the army, and that is important—I don't deny that," she said. "But I definitely get the feeling he is in charge, even if he is not in total charge."

—Celine Fernandez contributed to this article.

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au> INI DmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNI DnDASSK1 News & Articles on Burma, Fri, 30. Sep 2011

The Irrawaddy - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=22176>

Suu Kyi Welcomes Suspension of Myitsone Dam

By SAI ZOM HSENG Friday, September 30, 2011



Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi (L) stands with Labour Minister Aung Mye Thaw (R) after a meeting at the government house in Rangoon on September 30, 2011. (Photo: Reuters)

Emerging from a meeting with a senior government minister on Friday afternoon, Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi welcomed today's surprise announcement by President Thein Sein that he had suspended the controversial Myitsone dam project in Kachin State.

Suu Kyi met with Aung Mye Thaw, the minister of labor and minister of social welfare, relief and resettlement, for about one hour today at the Sane Lae Kan Thar state guesthouse in Rangoon. Among the issues discussed were an amnesty for political prisoners, cooperation on efforts to conserve the Irrawaddy River, and ways to achieve peace with Burma's ethnic armed groups.

"I've heard that the president sent a message about the suspension of the Myitsone project on the Irrawaddy River in

response to the public's concerns. It's very good that the government listens to the voice of the people, as that is what they should do," Suu Kyi said to reporters after the meeting.

Aung Kyi, a retired major general, told the reporters that both sides agreed to meet again to hold further discussions on the major issues raised in today's meeting. He also said that cooperation would increase after Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy, registered as a legal political organization.

When reporters asked Suu Kyi about Burma's next elections, to be held in 2015, she said, "We accept that elections are a part of democracy, but we will have to wait and see what form they take."

Suu Kyi and Aung Kyi previously met twice this year, once in July and again in August. Suu Kyi also met with Thein Sein for the first time in August. In statements issued after each meeting, both sides said they were satisfied with the discussions that took place.

While observers have generally welcomed the recent contact between the government and the iconic opposition leader, many still suspect that Naypyidaw's main aim is to ease international pressure and win approval of its bid to become chairman of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations in 2014, rather than to achieve national reconciliation.

On Tuesday, Burma's Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin addressed the issue of political prisoners at the 66th session of the UN General Assembly, saying that an early amnesty program is being considered. He also called for the lifting of Western sanctions on Burma.

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EUROPEAN UNION Brussels, 30 September 2011, A 393/11,

Statement by the Spokesperson of EU High Representative, Catherine Ashton on the Myitsone Dam project in Myanmar, (Burma).

The spokesman of Catherine Ashton, the High Representative of the European Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and Vice President of the Commission, made today the following statement.

We are encouraged by the news that the President of Myanmar (Burma) has decided to halt the controversial Myitsone Dam project in northern Kachin State. We welcome the Government's readiness to address the ecological and economic concerns about this project, and its willingness to listen to diverse voices on this subject following a strikingly open nationwide debate.

It is encouraging to see the leadership starting to put into practice its commitment to be a "Government of the people".

http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/EN/foraff/124858.pdf,

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Between - <<http://www.betweenonline.com/news-article/myanmar-investment-defended-by-china-paper>>

Myanmar Investment defended by China paper

October 8, 2011 - By [Between News](#)

Chinese state media said on Friday that Chinese projects in Myanmar spur economic growth and guarantee environmental protection and that public opinion had been hijacked by foreign press.

The \$3.6 billion Chinese-backed Myitsone dam, slammed because of forced relocation of residents and environmental damage should definitely be preserved as the gigantic dam project will displace people who rightfully own the land and presently occupy it. It is where their culture has flourished and where they get their livelihood. To pursue the project would violate the rights of the indigenous people and erase a culture.

The rich delta from which tons of rice are produced is already a great wealth for Myanmar. The abundant biodiversity can be a resource of diverse industries. The natural beauty of the Irrawaddy River can be a boost to tourism and beckon travelers from all around the world to come and enjoy its scenery.

Public opinion cannot be hijacked by foreign press. Information nowadays with the help of the fast internet can travel worldwide and any unlawful act done by a country spreads quickly. How can China insist on an immense project that was agreed on with them by a group who do not own the land on which the project will be located? The people who cherish



Irrawaddy river. @infoseekchina

their land can die for it and China could care less. So many have been unjustly divested of their land already and thousands roam elsewhere aimlessly.

China cannot be ignorant of these injustices because they are at the borders of Myanmar. The foregoing news is sourced from Reuters.

THE BURMANET NEWS, October 1 - 3, 2011, newsletter covering Burma, <editor=burmanet.org@mail82.us1.rsgsv.net>, www.burmanet.org

Aung San Suu Kyi cautious on Burma reform -

Rachel Harvey - October 3, 2011 - BBC News - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-15152767>

Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has urged the international community to monitor her country closely to see whether recent signs of possible reform are genuine.

Her comments came in a face-to-face interview with a reporter from the BBC's Burmese language service who was given rare official access to Burma.

Ms Suu Kyi said she believed President Thein Sein wanted to reform.

But she said she was not sure how far he was prepared to go. 'Wheels are moving'

There have been recent signs that the civilian-led, military-backed government of Burma is trying to soften its stance and improve its image at home and abroad.

Last week the president suspended work on a hydro-electric dam project, financed by China, to which public opposition had been growing.

Some previously blocked websites have been made available, and there have been a number of meetings between the government and Aung San Suu Kyi.

Some journalists based outside Burma have also been allowed in on official visas, including a reporter from the BBC Burmese service who managed to speak to the pro-democracy leader face to face.

How substantial, he asked her, were these recent moves?

"We are beginning to see the beginning of change," she said.

"And by that, I mean that I believe that the president wants to institute reforms, but how far these reforms will be able to go and how effective these will be, that still waits, still needs to be seen."



Ms Suu Kyi said she would watch and wait to see whether the reforms were genuine

Aung San Suu Kyi urged the international community to work together and to monitor events in Burma closely to see whether there was real and sustainable progress.

"I've always said that the more co-ordinated the efforts of the international community are, the better it will be for democracy in Burma. If different countries are doing different things, then it detracts from the effectiveness of their actions."

When asked whether she thought the wheels of democracy were turning, Aung San Suu Kyi, replied cautiously: "I think I'd like to see a few more turns before I decide whether or not the wheels are moving along."

The Irrawaddy Newsletter for Thursday, October 13, 2011, news@irrawaddy.org, www.irrawaddy.org

The Irrawaddy - EDITORIAL <http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion_story.php?art_id=22253>

'Burmese Spring' in Danger of Losing Momentum

Hope is a dangerous thing. In moments of darkness, it can bring light into the lives of those who need it most. But when hopes are dashed, they can throw a harsh light on reality and breed a deep determination to achieve real change, at whatever cost.

In recent weeks, the people of Burma have enjoyed a rare respite from decades of gloom. President Thein Sein's announcement that he would order a halt to construction of the Myitsone dam in response to popular opposition to the project was welcomed as a sign that Burma was about to enjoy its own version of the Arab Spring—a transition to democracy, without the chaos and bloodshed.

Now, however, it appears that government-led reforms are stalling. Reports that there were only 220 political detainees among the 6,359 prisoners slated to be released as part of an amnesty declared on Monday was a disappointing reminder that the current "civilian" administration is not so different from its predecessor—the brutal military junta that locked these prisoners up in the first place.

Zarganar, the celebrated comedian who was among those released yesterday, minced no words when asked what he thought about recent developments in Burma, which included a meeting between Thein Sein and pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi in August.

"I wanted to believe in these positive changes that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi spoke about. But since this morning, I lost belief in them because I found that the government does not have a true desire to release all political prisoners," he told The Irrawaddy hours after his return to Rangoon from Myitkyina Prison in Kachin State.

Zarganar said he wanted to see all political prisoners freed, from the four little-known Buddhist monks he met in prison to high-profile leaders such as Min Ko Naing and Ashin Gambira. He even called for the release of Khin Nyunt, the ousted intelligence chief who was the hated nemesis of Burmese democracy activists for more than a decade. news@irrawaddy.org

Compared to Zarganar's generosity of spirit, the government's display of "magnanimity" in releasing barely 10 percent of the nearly 2,000 political prisoners in Burma's gulag looked not only mean, but like a needlessly cruel slap in the face of people's expectations.

Politically, it could also prove to be profoundly stupid. Thein Sein has won accolades for his decision to call off the Chinese-backed Myitsone dam project, a bold move that came at the risk of angering Beijing, Burma's major ally, but now he appears to have given in to hardliners within his own administration who refuse to even acknowledge the existence of political prisoners. This could undermine his efforts to win greater support from the Burmese public and international community, which could in turn play into the hands of the reactionaries in his midst.

It is still too early to declare the end of the "Burmese Spring"—if, indeed, we can even say that it has truly started. But if Thein Sein is sincere about pursuing reforms, he needs to retake the high ground and respond positively to calls for the release of all political prisoners, without further delay.

The government may have missed its chance this time, but it can still regain some momentum if, as UN human rights envoy to Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana has urged, it releases all remaining prisoners by the time by-elections are held at the end of this year.

According to Quintana, who will submit his latest report on Burma's rights situation to the UN General Assembly next Wednesday, Burmese officials told him they were reluctant to release political prisoners because they were worried about public demonstrations.

What Burma's government should really fear, however, is the consequences of building up expectations that it cannot, or will not, meet. If recent signs of change prove to be no more substantial than the false promises of the past, they could

fuel the very unrest the government seeks to avoid.

In other words, releasing all of Burma's political prisoners is the only way forward for Thein Sein's government, because the alternative—undoing recent progress and inviting something akin to what the world has witnessed in the Arab world—is far worse.

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au>, [NLDmembersSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, 2011-10-05 18:21

The Irrawaddy - Newsletter for October 5, 2011, news@irrawaddy.org, www.irrawaddy.org, <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=22194>

US Remains Tough on Burma Sanctions

By LALIT K JHA

Wednesday, October 5, 2011



In this photo taken on Oct. 21, 2010, a member of the Guard of Honor toots as a new State Flag of Burma is hoisted outside the Rangoon town hall. (Photo: AP)

WASHINGTON—Although encouraged by the recent steps taken by the new Burmese government, the United States on Tuesday said that Burma needs to do more before the Obama administration can consider lifting economic sanctions.

“We are encouraged by some of the progress that we’ve seen in Burma, but we think that more needs to be done,” a US State Department spokesperson, Victoria Nuland, told reporters at her daily news conference.

The US government is continuing that dialogue with the Burmese government, she said referring to the two recent rounds of talks with the visiting Burmese foreign minister in New York and Washington.

During those meeting, the Burmese officials reportedly urged the State Department to lift US sanctions.

Meanwhile, speaking on the Senate floor, a prominent US senator noted recent developments in Burma, and said he hoped that a time would come when sanctions would not be needed against Burma.

“I am hopeful that the time will soon come when sanctions against the Burmese government will no longer be needed—that like South Africa in the early 1990s, the people of Burma will be able to free themselves from their own government,” Senator Mitch McConnell said.

Referring to a recent letter written by the Burmese Deputy Chief of Mission in Washington, who sought political asylum, McConnell said the letter to the US Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, indicated that the Burmese junta appears to maintain an iron grip on its people, and continues to carry out a foreign policy that is inimical to US interests.

“The United States must continue to deny this regime the legitimacy it craves by continuing sanctions, and these sanctions must remain in place until true democratic reform comes to the people of Burma,” he said.

Speaking on the Senate floor a week after the Senate passed a bill to extend sanctions against Burma by another year, McConnell said this overwhelming bipartisan support for sanctioning the junta reflects the clear view of the US Senate that the purportedly “new” Burmese regime that took office earlier this year so far appears little different from the “old” regime.

“The casual observer could be excused for thinking that things have changed dramatically for the better in Burma over

the past year," he said. "After all, elections were held last fall, a new regime took office earlier this year, and Aung San Suu Kyi was freed. However, as our experience with Burma has taught us, things there usually require a closer look."

The "new regime," he said, appears to be essentially the junta with only the thinnest democratic veneer. The Burmese Constitution, which places great power in the hands of the military, cannot be amended without the blessing of the armed forces. Furthermore, those in Parliament are limited in how they can criticize the regime.

"The only legitimately good news was Suu Kyi's release," McConnell said. "Yet the extent of her freedom to travel remains an open question. Moreover, despite her release, nearly 2,000 other political prisoners remain behind bars in Burma. They are no better off than before. Neither are the hundreds of thousands of refugees and displaced persons who are without a home due to the repressive policies of the junta."

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma,

Voice of America - <<http://bloas.voanews.com/breaking-news/2011/10/25/us-burma-envov-meets-aung-san-suu-kvi/>>

US Burma Envoy Meets Aung San Suu Kyi – October 25th, 2011

The new U.S. special envoy to Burma has met in Rangoon with pro-democracy opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, as Washington presses the new, nominally-civilian Burmese government to continue releasing political prisoners.

Tuesday's meeting comes on the second day of a two-day visit by Derek Mitchell, who met Monday with government officials in Burma's administrative capital, Naypyitaw.

Sources in Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy party told VOA that Mitchell and the Nobel laureate met for nearly two hours Tuesday. Details of the meeting were not disclosed.

Mitchell's visit is the second this month. It follows the new government's highly-touted prisoner amnesty earlier this month that failed to include most of the 2,000-plus political prisoners jailed by the country's former military junta.

Mitchell, speaking last week, praised the release of some 200 political prisoners. But he said the new government, which took office earlier this year, must deepen its commitment to political reforms if it wants Western governments to lift economic sanctions imposed on the Southeast Asian nation during the past decade.

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, Sat, 29. Oct 2011

REUTERS - <<http://www.reuters.com/article/2011/10/29/us-myanmar-suukyi-idUSTRE79S0QC20111029>>

Myanmar's Suu Kyi could seek parliament seat

YANGON | Sat Oct 29, 2011 2:40am EDT

(Reuters) - Myanmar democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi might stand for parliament in an upcoming by-election after her party re-registers itself to enter politics, a party spokesman said.



Aung San Suu Kyi

Suu Kyi has been blocked from politics and detained for long stretches of time since returning to her homeland from abroad in 1988.

But after holding the first election in 20 years last November, Myanmar's military nominally handed power in March to a civilian government and it has introduced some reforms and started a dialogue with Nobel Peace Prize laureate Suu Kyi.

Her National League for Democracy (NLD) party was officially disbanded for refusing to take part in last year's election although it has continued to function.

NLD spokesman Nyan Win said the party was likely to get re-registered under an amended party law that drops clauses the party had objected to.

Asked if Suu Kyi herself would stand in a by-election after the party's re-registration, Nyan Win said: "I think she will and I personally want her to."

Asked by Reuters a month ago if she would stand in a by-election if the law was amended, the 66-year old Suu Kyi said she would have to get the approval of her party's central executive committee.

A set of by-elections is expected late this year.

Analysts say the government's reforms, including the recent release of about 200 political prisoners, are aimed at shedding Myanmar's pariah status and giving it some legitimacy with the international community, particularly the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), of which Myanmar is a member.

Since coming to power this year, the new government has stopped criticizing Suu Kyi and issuing veiled threats and instead sent an envoy, Labor Minister Aung Kyi, to meet her on three occasions. They are due to meet again on Sunday, government and party officials said.

Suu Kyi also had a meeting with President Thein Sein in the capital, Naypyitaw, in August.

Well-informed sources close to the government said the government wanted Suu Kyi and members of her party in parliament to give it legitimacy.

"They think the participation of some NLD lawmakers including Suu Kyi would surely help improve their image and legitimacy," said a retired senior diplomat.

Under the amended political party law, a clause barring anyone convicted of a crime from joining a party has been dropped.

Another change requires political parties to "respect and obey" a 2008 constitution instead of "preserve and protect."

Suu Kyi and other democracy activists objected to the constitution, drafted by a military-appointed convention, because it effectively enshrined the supremacy of the military in politics.

(Reporting by Aung Hla Tun; Editing by Robert Birsell and Ron Popeski)

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK], Sun, 30. Oct 2011 16:37:15

The Associated Press - October 30th, 2011 - (October 30th, 2011 @ 6:14am)

Suu Kyi holds talks with Myanmar gov't minister

ktar.com <<http://www.620ktar.com/category/world-news-articles/20110812/Myanmar-government-urges-Suu-Kyi-to-register-party/>>

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) - Myanmar democracy movement leader Aung San Suu Kyi met Sunday with a Cabinet minister to discuss issues whose resolution could lead to a breakthrough in the country's long-running political deadlock.

Labor Minister Aung Kyi read a joint statement after their meeting that said the two had discussed an amnesty, peace talks with ethnic armed groups and economic and financial matters.

Some 200 of an estimated 2,000 political prisoners were released on Oct. 11 under an amnesty for 6,300 convicts.

An elected but military-backed government took power in March after decades of repressive army rule and its new president, Thein Sein, has moved to liberalize the political atmosphere. (October 30th, 2011 @ 6:14am)



Myanmar's democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi, left, and Labor and Social Welfare Minister Aung Kyi, right, listen questions from reporters during a press conference after their meeting at Seinleikanthar government guest house Sunday, Oct. 30, 2011, in Yangon, Myanmar. (AP Photo/Khin Maung Win)

In the past week, Parliament has amended a law to try to woo Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy into reregistering as a political party.

The government would like to see the United States and other Western nations lift political and economic sanctions imposed against the repressive former ruling junta. Without Suu Kyi's blessings they are unlikely to do much.

A recent visit by Washington's special envoy to Myanmar has raised expectations that major developments may come soon.

It was the fourth meeting between Aung Kyi- the government's designated liaison officer- and Suu Kyi since July after the nominally civilian government took over power from the military's junta regime in March.

Parliament's recent amendment of the 2010 political party registration law appeared to meet some objections from Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy that it discriminated against them. Her organization was delisted as a political party last year after it refused to register for the November 2010 election, claiming it was being held under undemocratic conditions.

A party set up as a proxy for the military won a resounding victory, giving credence to criticism that the military's roadmap to democracy is just a smoke screen for continued domination by the army.

The amendments, not yet signed into law by Thein Sein, are meant to encourage the NLD to reregister as a political party, which in turn would amount to giving at least tacit recognition to the legitimacy of Thein Sein's government.

Suu Kyi has not committed herself or her party to such a move.

Asked if the NLD would register, she said, "Once we see the law, then we will hold a party meeting and decide whether or not we will register."

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THE BURMANET NEWS, September 27, 2011 Issue #4277, BurmaNet News, Editor <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org
National League for Democracy, No 97/B West Shwegondaing Street, Bahan Township, Rangoon
<<http://www.nldburma.org/media-press-release/press-release/405-nld-statement-no-160911-released-on-its-23rd-anniversary.html>>

National League for Democracy Statement -

No-16/09/11 released on its 23rd anniversary - **27 September, 2011**



National League for Democracy, No 97/B West Shwegondaing Street, Bahan Township, Rangoon

During the unprecedented uprising in 1988, the monks, laity, students and other people of Burma, by sacrificing lives, blood and sweat, demanded human rights and democracy for the country and the people. It is now 23 years since the National League for Democracy (NLD) was formed according to the Political Parties Registration Act to fulfill those aspirations of the people.

During these years NLD struggled to overcome the obstacles along the way to its political objectives. The members of the League made innumerable sacrifices to withstand against severe restrictions, ruthless repressions, brutal harassments and illegal detentions and imprisonments.

While facing such onslaughts of the authorities, they stood firmly behind the flag of the NLD and under the leadership of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, its leader and General Secretary, without losing sight of national reconciliation through dialogue which is the means to the objectives.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader and General Secretary of NLD, looking for the future benefit of the country, is trying her utmost for the emergence of dialogue and national reconciliation in order to resolve peacefully the current problems

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

facing the country.

For this critical moment of the country and the people, guidance given by Bogyoke Aung San in his speech delivered on January 20, 1946 to the mass meeting held at middle terrace of Shwedagon Pagoda might be expedient. It is:

"We have reduced our demand to compromise not because we are getting softer. We did it because of our desire to get result for the country and the people as soon as possible"

At the Independence Day Celebration held on 4-1-03, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, leader and General Secretary of the NLD said:-

"Our desire for reconciliation, discussion and unification of the people of whole country has not been reduced. We hold no grudges against anybody. Resolving the problems is most important. We will not hesitate to cooperate with any organization, be it the State Peace and Development Council or the Tatmadaw. We can work hand in hand with anybody for the country and the people."

In her open letter to the President of the Union of Burma delivered on 28 July, 2011, the leader of NLD Daw Aung San Suu Kyi stressed the importance of the unity among all the nationalities of the Union at this delicate moment.

"There will only be losses to the both sides if those conflicts and problems are to be solved by using forces alone. National reconciliation cannot be achieved by military means. It must be built up through political dialogue and negotiations. Genuine solidarity of the nationalities that can guarantee the future of the Union can be achieved only through political solution."

Therefore it is declared that all the members of the NLD, holding firmly to their beliefs and convictions will stand unitedly under the League and the leadership of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi until our objectives are achieved, and that the NLD will constantly strive for the establishment of democracy and human rights for benefit of the country and the people.

As per the resolution of the CEC meeting of the NLD held on 19-9-11

Published by : Burma Buero e.V., P.O.Box 27 03 66, D-50509 Cologne Tel: + 49 (0) 221-9522450 Fax:+ 49(0) 221-9522470

e-Mail: <burmabureaugermany@t-online.de> - <http://www.burmabureaugermany.com> <http://www.burma-report.de>

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