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Free all political prisoners, free Burma.

Zin Linn <zinlinn@cscoms.com>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma
World News – Australia - <<http://www.sbs.com.au/news/article/1456051/Suu-Kyi-calls-for-reconciliation-push>>

Suu Kyi calls for reconciliation push

Burma's democracy champion Aung San Suu Kyi called for citizens of her country to rejuvenate their struggle for national reconciliation in 2011 in a New Year's message.

She asked the people of Burma "to struggle together with new strengths, new force and new words in the auspicious new year", in the message released by her National League for Democracy (NLD) party on Friday.

"We must struggle by establishing people's political and social networks to get national reconciliation as well as a truly united spirit," she added.

The 65-year-old was released from more than seven years' house arrest on November 13, days after Burma's widely criticised first election in 20 years, in which the junta-backed party has claimed overwhelming victory.

Suu Kyi was locked up for the poll, which her party boycotted. This led to a split in the opposition movement, with some NLD members leaving to form a new party to contest the election.

On Thursday the United States called again on Burma to free political prisoners and engage in dialogue to promote democracy, as the military-led country prepares for its 63rd independence anniversary on January 4.

THE BURMANET NEWS, Wed, 05. Jan 2011, Issue #4113, "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

The Irrawaddy - Newsletter for Wednesday, January 5, 2011, news@irrawaddy.org, 05.01.2011, <http://www.irrawaddy.org/>

NLD outlines four principles for foreign investment -



Fireworks burst above Rangoon's landmark Shwedagon pagoda as Burmese gather to welcome the New Year 2011 at Kandawgyi park in Rangoon late on December 31, 2010. (Photo: Getty Images)

Burma's leading democratic opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), has outlined four principles for foreign investment in the country and reaffirmed its stand on the need to review existing economic sanctions for the benefit of the people, according to a party policy statement.

"Consideration of environmental and social impacts on the people, respect for labor rights, the creation of job opportunities and technically advanced investments" are the four main priorities of the party's foreign investment policy, said the statement, which was titled "*Economic Analysis*" and released on Jan. 4, Burma's Independence Day.

The statement also highlighted the need to address rising commodity prices and increasing joblessness due to the unequal distribution of wealth in the country.

Asked whether the party has begun to consider welcoming foreign direct investment to the country based on these principles, Win Tin, the secretary of the NLD, told *The Irrawaddy*: "First we want to review the impact of the sanctions on ordinary citizens. We have already said that if we find that they negatively impact the people, we will consider calling for an end to sanctions."

He added that if the sanctions are lifted, "These four principles will be our guideline to decide whether which investments we should accept."

He further explained that the NLD set these four principles not only to reduce the negative impacts of foreign investments on the environment of the country but also to protect the people's social and economic life.

"An example is Chinese investment in the construction of the Myitsone dam at the confluence of the N'mai and Mali rivers, where the Irrawaddy River begins," said Win Tin. "The Irrawaddy is our country's main river and building such a dam could have negative environmental and social consequences for the country and the people."

Win Tin also expressed concern that China's investment in Burma did little to alleviate unemployment because Chinese companies often brought their own laborers to work on their projects. Another problem, he said, was that local people are often forced to relocate because of these projects, affecting their livelihoods.

The NLD's policy statement criticized most current investment in Burma for prioritizing short-term profit and failing to consider the sustainable development of the country.

The statement pointed out that building a lot of dams, reservoirs and river bridges without considering the environment and the livelihoods of local people often did more harm than good. In many cases, cultivated lands have been damaged by these projects and farmers have lost their capital because they are forced to grow crops that are not suitable in the land and weather.

The statement also highlighted the need to establish the rule of law and transparent, accountable governance in Burma. It said that the economy must be equally open to all citizens if Burma is to develop economically.

"To build an industrialized country, there must be investments which encourage a transfer of advanced technologies, but we get nothing from China's investments," said Win Tin.

Zin Linn <zinlinn@cscoms.com>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, 04.01.2011, 17:42:29
Asia-Pacific News - Jan 4, 2011, 7:55 GMT

Junta warns of "covetous" countries, Suu Kyi thanks foreigners

<http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/news/article_1609253.php/Junta-warns-of-covetous-countries-Suu-Kyi-thanks-foreigners>

Yangon - Myanmar's junta on Tuesday used the independence day anniversary to warn of 'covetous' countries bent on controlling the nation while opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi took the occasion to thank her foreign supporters.

'It is not strange (that) certain covetous, aggressive countries are anxious to gain political control over a geographically strategic country like Myanmar,' military supremo Senior General Than Shwe said in a speech marking the 63rd anniversary of independence from Britain.

Meanwhile, recently freed democracy icon Suu Kyi used the same occasion to thank her supporters, including 'national leaders, political leaders, Nobel peace laureates, United Nations, European Union, international amnesty organizations, people from America and Europe and our nationals from home and abroad.'

Suu Kyi, the winner of the 1990 Nobel Peace Prize, was released from a seven and a half years of house detention on November 13, six days after the country held its first general election in two decades.

'Successful victory for democracy is a must,' Suu Kyi said in a New Year's message. 'Political freedom, economy freedom and social freedom are linked together,' she said. 'We need to unite together to achieve those freedoms.'

Than Shwe, junta chief since 1992, made no mention of political freedoms in his independence anniversary day speech.

Instead he argued that Myanmar, also called Burma, fell to Britain in three wars between 1824 to 1885 'due to a lack of a strong army.'

Now Myanmar has a strong army but a weak everything else.

Ranked as South-East Asia's biggest economy in the pre-World-War II era, Myanmar is now on the list of the United Nations' least developed countries.

The country has been under military rule since 1962, when former strongman General Ne Win launched his disastrous 'Burmese Way to Socialism.'

Mass anti-military protests in 1988 put an end to the socialist system, but failed to install democracy.

The military cracked down on the demonstrators, killing an estimated 3,000 protestors.

It allowed an election in 1990, but then refused to pass over power to the victor - the National League for Democracy party, headed by Suu Kyi.

Although the junta staged a new general election on November 7, international observers criticized it for being unfree, unfair and non-inclusive.

The polls were won by the pro-junta Union Solidarity and Development Party, which is packed with ex-military men and current government ministers.

Than Shwe said the successful election was 'the pride of the nation and the people'.

THE BURMANET NEWS, January 6, 2011, Issue #4114, Thu, 06. Jan 2011, "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

The Irrawaddy – **EDITORIAL** - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion_story.php?art_id=20474&page=1>

The Dubious Benefits of Exposure to the West

One of the arguments that has been put forward for ending sanctions on Burma's ruling regime is that doing so would expose the country's generals to the West and encourage them to emulate the example of the world's liberal democracies, with their open market economies and rule of law.

It's a interesting idea, but unfortunately, there's no reason to believe that it would actually work. To see why not, we need only look at Burma's not-so-distant past.

Until 1988, Burma's rulers had no shortage of opportunities to learn from the West. During its 26 years in power, the Ne Win regime sought to isolate the country from the outside world, but maintained regular government-to-government ties with Western powers. The US, Britain, Germany and Israel, among others, all provided various forms of support, including financial and military assistance and overseas training for senior police and army officers.

Indeed, Ne Win himself was an inveterate globetrotter, making regular trips to Europe and the US for vacations and to receive medical treatment during his years as the chairman of the Burmese Socialist Programme Party (BSPP), the party he created when he seized power in 1962 and which ruled Burma until its collapse in 1988.

Throughout this period, however, Ne Win demonstrated little interest in opening up Burma to the influence of the West. On the contrary, he seemed determined to reserve the privilege of contact with the outside world for the chosen, trusted few.

Among those who went abroad to learn from the West were Brig-Gen Tin Oo, the feared intelligence chief who studied under the CIA and at the UK's Police Academy in the 1960s and 1970s. Upon his return to Burma, he helped to help create one of the world's most notorious police states.

Col Tun Tin, one of the army officers who played a key role in the earliest days of Burma's post-independence counter-insurgency efforts, including as the leader of Burmese army forces in the "Battle of Insein" in 1949, completed a Provost Marshal course in the UK. He took an especially keen interest in the "four cuts" strategy used by the British in Malaysia, discussing the subject with officers at the British War Office. Burma's army continues to use this strategy to this day, targeting ethnic civilians in its efforts to suppress armed groups operating in border areas.

Gen Kyaw Htin, Burma's longest-serving chief of staff (1976 to 1984), also studied abroad. Following a stint in the US, where he attended the Army Command and General Staff College at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas, Burma received two slots at this elite military college annually. Many Burmese army and police officers also regularly attended the Royal Police Academy in the UK.

While many now criticize China for providing weapons to the Burmese regime, it is worth noting that under Ne Win, it was the West that acted as Burma's main arms supplier. In the early 1960s, Germany's Fritz Warner Company built arms factories in Burma to produce weapons for use by the same army that overthrew the country's democratically elected government in 1962.

Did Burma benefit at all from being ruled by generals and former generals who enjoyed cozy relations with the West? The obvious answer is no. By 1988, when massive pro-democracy protests forced the BSPP out of power, only to be replaced by the current junta, Burma's was one of the world's poorest countries.

Many in the regime knew that the country's economy was falling apart, but rather than reform, they turned to their foreign friends for support. Tun Tin, who briefly served as Burma's prime minister in 1988, often traveled to Germany and Japan in the 1970s and 1980s to get soft loans and other forms of financial assistance, but never dared to propose following the advice of these more advanced countries, which was to open Burma up to foreign investment.

After the suppression of the 1988 pro-democracy uprising, the West suspended transfers of military technology to Burma and imposed economic sanctions. Now, however, some seem to regret taking this principled stand, which has left Burma wide open to exploitation by its wealthier neighbors while keeping Western companies, for the most part, shut out of the rush to claim a share of the country's resources.

This is wrong, say anti-sanctions advocates, because whereas countries like China and Thailand are completely unprincipled in their dealings with the regime, Western companies have higher standards of accountability. But people displaced by pipelines built by Total or Unocal may take little comfort in knowing that if they are mistreated by these companies' military partners in Burma, courts on the other side of the world are always ready to listen, as long as they're prepared to wait a decade or so to get a fair hearing.

Realistically, you can't expect dyed-in-the-wool dictators to change their ways just by giving them opportunities to shake hands and sign deals with European or American executives. Even Khin Nyunt, Maung Aye and many other past or present members of the current junta who traveled to the West many times before visa bans were imposed on them failed to pick up the "democracy bug" that is supposedly transmitted by contact with citizens of liberal democracies.

The same is true of many of Burma's neighbors, who despite their close ties with the US and other Western countries remain at best ambivalent about democracy. Thailand, a staunch American ally, is a good example of this. Many Thai armed forces leaders have received training in the West and ride F-16 jet fighters and use Western-made automatic rifles and tanks. But this hasn't stop them from turning their weapons on protesters when they deemed it necessary.

Further evidence of the fact that exposure to the West brings no guarantee of enlightened thinking can be found in the chorus of Western-educated Burmese who endorsed the farcical election held last November. After years of study in the West, they seem to have come to the conclusion that democracy is merely a matter of form. Unfortunately, these are the people that policy makers in the West seem to be listening to these days.

Ordinary Burmese with little or no education seem to understand better than many "Burma experts" that what their country needs is good governance, not a change of costumes by the ruling generals. In fact, what Burma lacks is not exposure to the West, but leaders who understand their own country and its people's needs. Until that day comes, no amount of contact with the outside world will help.

The Irrawaddy - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=20413>, <http://www.irrawaddy.org/>

Don't Try to 'Control' New Gov't, Regime Tells Opposition

By BA KAUNG

Saturday, December 25, 2010



Junta chief Snr-Gen Than Shwe, right in foreground, walks to attend the graduation parade of the No. 12 Intake of the Defense Services Medical Academy on Dec. 24 in Naypyidaw. (Photo: AP)

Burma's democratic opposition should stop calling for national reconciliation and instead ally itself with the country's newly elected government to achieve "national reconsolidation," according to a commentary published in the state-run *New Light of Myanmar* on Saturday.

In the Burmese regime's first apparent response to pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi's repeated calls for dialogue with the country's ruling generals, the commentary urged opposition groups to regard the junta-backed government that will be formed sometime early next year as a "democracy ally."

The commentary referred specifically to Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party and ethnic groups which boycotted last month's election. The junta's proxy party claimed a landslide victory in the polls, which were widely dismissed as a sham by international observers.

It also warned the NLD, which has tried in the past to pressure the regime to hold talks with the opposition, not to use similar tactics in the future.

"Any ways to achieve national reconsolidation through non-violent, violent, indirect and direct approaches designed to control the ruling government will never come to

fruition," it said.

Notably absent from the commentary was the phrase "national reconciliation," which is the stated aim of the NLD and its ethnic allies. Instead, it refers to "national reconsolidation"—a term more in line with the regime's goal of strengthening central control over the country's many minority groups.

"How can we reconsolidate before we can reconcile with each other?" said Chin Sian Than, a Chin ethnic leader who boycotted last month's election.

"This commentary indicates yet again that the regime will press ahead with its own plans," he said.

The front page of the *New Light of Myanmar* also highlighted the theme of national reconsolidation, in a speech given to the graduating class of a military medical academy in the capital Naypyidaw on Friday by junta chief Snr-Gen Than Shwe.

"I would like to urge you to build on the national reconsolidation that has been achieved and avoid all thoughts and notions that might lead to the disintegration of the Union," he was quoted as saying.

In the speech, Than Shwe also also claimed that Burma's ethnic minorities are now enjoying the fruit of development projects his regime has undertaken since it came into power in 1988. He added that coming governments would continue their efforts for the country based on these foundations.

In January, Burma is expected to hold its first parliament in more than two decades.

Zin Linn <zinlinn@cscoms.com>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma, 15 Jan 2011

The Telegraph -<<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8259551/China-strikes-deal-with-Burma-to-guarantee-oil-supply.html>>

China strikes deal with Burma to guarantee oil supply

By **Malcolm Moore**, Shanghai 9:00PM GMT 14 Jan 2011

China has put the final piece of its energy supply jigsaw in place, signing a deal with Burma that will make it impossible to choke off Beijing's oil supply.

By **Malcolm Moore**, Shanghai 9:00PM GMT 14 Jan 2011

In a move that was described as a "golden bridge of friendship", Burma's ruling junta has given Beijing permission to

build and operate a wharf on Burma's west coast to receive tankers arriving from Africa and the Middle East and then pump their cargo overland to southern China.

The new facility, at the deep sea port at Kyauk Phyu, is the culmination of decades of planning by Beijing to safeguard its energy supply.

Currently, as much as 80 per cent of China's imported oil and gas is forced to pass through the Strait of Malacca, a narrow bottleneck between Malaysia and Indonesia.

With an Indian naval base on the Andaman and Nicobar islands at the mouth of the straits, and with a large US Navy presence in the region, China has fretted for years that its trade and energy routes are vulnerable to a blockade.



Oilfield pumping units, China Photo: REUTERS

Hu Jintao, the Chinese president, warned in 2003 that some "big countries" were attempting to "control the transportation channel at Malacca".

In response, China has crafted a strategy known as the "string of pearls", a chain of naval bases across the Indian Ocean that could protect its tankers in case of emergency. These bases include Gwadar in Pakistan, Chittagong in Bangladesh and Hambantota in Sri Lanka.

In addition, China has patiently courted the Burmese junta, sending an estimated £800 million worth of tanks, fighter jets and weapons to its southern neighbour during the 1990s to prop up the regime.

After signing a trade agreement in 1988, China has also helped to rebuild Burma's roads and railways and even sent People's Liberation Army advisers to provide guidance and expertise.

Last year, Hu Jintao pledged unconditional support to the Burmese regime, telling Than Shwe, one of Burma's most senior generals, that China's policy "will remain unchanged regardless of changes of the international situation".

In return, the Burmese junta has granted access to its rich natural resources and is now allowing China to make use of Burma's key geographical position on the Indian Ocean.

After China's tankers reach the deep sea port at Kyauk Phyu, oil and gas will be pumped through twin 500-mile pipelines to the province of Yunnan. The station will be operated by China National Petroleum Corporation, the country's largest oil company, and Qingdao Port, the ninth-largest port operator in the world.

The pipelines, which are already under construction, should be able to carry a daily maximum of 440,000 barrels of oil and 400 billion cubic feet of gas when they are completed in 2013.

In addition, China plans to build thousands of miles of new railways to connect the southern Chinese city of Kunming with ports across Burma and South East Asia, including Yangon, the former Burmese capital. Not only will China's partnership with Burma help safeguard its own energy supply, but it will also give Beijing a key strategic advantage over Japan and South Korea, who also rely on the Strait of Malacca for part of their energy supplies.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/asia/china/8259551/China-strikes-deal-with-Burma-to-guarantee-oil-supply.html>>

Tin Kyi <mtinkyi7@yahoo.com>, 01.01.2011 - NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK@yahoogroups.com,

[abs-cbnnews.com](http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/global-philipino/world/12/30/10/us-calls-democratic-myanmar) - <<http://www.abs-cbnnews.com/global-philipino/world/12/30/10/us-calls-democratic-myanmar>>

Agence France-Presse - Posted at 12/30/2010 11:31 PM | Updated as of 12/30/2010 11:31 PM

US calls for democratic Myanmar

WASHINGTON - The United States called Thursday on Myanmar to free prisoners and engage in dialogue to promote democracy, as the military-led country prepared to mark its independence on January 4.

The State Department congratulated Myanmar, also known as Burma, on its 63rd independence anniversary but hoped for "the day when Burma's citizens will succeed in their peaceful efforts to exercise freely their universal human rights."

"We are unwavering in our support for an independent, peaceful, prosperous and democratic Burma," State Department spokesman Mark Toner said in a statement.

"The United States remains prepared to improve bilateral relations, but looks to the Burmese government to meet the aspirations of its diverse peoples by freeing all political prisoners and engaging in an inclusive and meaningful dialogue with all its citizens in pursuit of genuine national reconciliation."

The junta in November freed the leader of the democratic opposition, Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who had spent most of the past two decades under house arrest after her party won elections but was not allowed to take power.

But her release came only after the junta held new elections, which were widely denounced by Western nations and by opposition groups as a sham.

Human rights groups say that Myanmar is still holding more than 2,100 political prisoners who are less prominent than Suu Kyi.

President Barack Obama's administration in 2009 launched a dialogue with the regime aimed at ending Myanmar's isolation. US officials have voiced disappointment at the results but said engagement is the best way forward.

The Irrawaddy - Newsletter for Thursday, January 20, 2011, news@irrawaddy.org, www.irrawaddy.org

Clinton Calls Aung San Suu Kyi - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=20569>

By LALIT K JHA

Thursday, January 20, 2011

WASHINGTON — US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton spoke to Aung San Suu Kyi over the phone on Wednesday, in the first contact between the two leaders since the Burmese pro-democracy icon was released from years of house arrest last November.

"Secretary Clinton called Aung San Suu Kyi today and pledged to work with her to strengthen civil society and promote democracy in Burma," said PJ Crowley, the State Department spokesman, in a message on Twitter on Wednesday.

During the call, which lasted 10 minutes, the two leaders briefly talked about what Suu Kyi has been doing since her release.

Crowley told The Irrawaddy that Clinton's call followed up on a meeting late last year with the State Department's Deputy Assistant Secretary Joseph Yun.

"There will be further meetings in the coming weeks with the embassy staff in Rangoon and others to get into a more specific discussion," he said.

Clinton wrote a letter to Suu Kyi soon after her release on Nov. 13 of last year. This was followed by Yun's four-day visit to Burma in December, during which he met with Suu Kyi.

"During a lengthy meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi and members of the National League for Democracy, Deputy Assistant Secretary Yun underscored our overarching goal of a peaceful, prosperous, and democratic Burma and discussed ideas on promoting reconciliation and dialogue," an official US statement had then said.

Yun was the most senior US official to travel to Burma since Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell visited in May 2010.

Campbell, the Obama administration's point man on Burma, has so far had two meetings with Suu Kyi, both of them while she was still under house arrest.

TheIrrawaddy - Today's Newsletter for Wednesday, **January 26, 2011** <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=20610>

US Says 'No' to Lifting Sanctions on Junta

By THE IRRAWADDY Wednesday, January 26, 2011



Aung San Suu Kyi and Joseph Y. Yun shake hands following their meeting at Suu Kyi's home in Rangoon on Dec.10, 2010. (Photo: AP)

The United States will not consider lifting economic sanctions against Burma unless the country's military rulers recognize opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party and release political

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

prisoners, according to a senior US diplomat.

Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Joseph Y. Yun told *The Jakarta Post* on Tuesday that the Burmese regime should hold a dialogue with Suu Kyi, and release the more than 2,000 political prisoners held around the country—preconditions for the US to consider lifting economic sanctions imposed against the Burmese regime for its human rights violations.

His comment came more than a week after the foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) and an alliance of five ethnic political parties in Burma called for an end to Western economic sanctions against Burma.

During their recent meeting in Lombok, Indonesia, the Asean ministers referred to Burma's controversial parliamentary elections and the release of Suu Kyi as "developments," which they said the international community should positively respond to.

In their call for the lifting of Western economic sanctions, Asean foreign ministers voiced all the same requests to the Burmese regime as the US demands, Yun was quoted as saying.

"These are excellent demands from the Asean ministers, and I think the Myanmar authorities should really take them to heart and make them a reality," Yun said, adding that a positive US response would follow when the Burmese regime complies with the requests from the international community.

Last Friday in Washington, the State Department spokesman, P J Crowley, said that the Obama administration has no plan to lift sanctions as of now, and that its sanctions are specifically targeted against the leaders of the Burmese military junta, its cronies and business groups that support them—and not against the people of Burma.

"At this point, no," Crowley told reporters when asked if there is any move to lift the sanctions.

"This is an issue that we regularly discuss with stakeholders—the effectiveness and the impact of our sanctions. Our sanctions are specifically targeted against those most responsible for denying democracy and disregarding human rights in Burma," Crowley said.

"We have concerns about the people of Burma, but it is the Burmese regime that is fully responsible for the country's dire economic situation. They are the ones who have institutionalized corruption and they are the ones who have plundered natural resources," he said.

"We maintain sanctions in order to press authorities to take concrete actions on issues of core concern to the international community, including democratic reform, release of political prisoners, and initiating a genuine dialogue with the democratic opposition and ethnic minority leaders," Crowley said.

Yun's call to the regime for the recognition of Suu Kyi's NLD came amid her lawyers proceeding with an appeal against last year's dissolution of the party following its decision not to run in parliamentary elections held on Nov. 7.

On Monday, the lawyers presented their arguments to the Supreme Court in Naypyidaw, but no decision was made by the court about whether it would hear Suu Kyi's latest appeal against the disbanding of the party. In December, Suu Kyi met with Yun in Rangoon and discussed economic sanctions against Burma.

Since 2009, the Obama administration has initiated a senior-level diplomatic dialogue with the Burmese military leadership while continuing to keep sanctions as an important tool of US policy.

However, the Burmese regime has made no tangible positive response. As the country prepares to convene its first session of Parliament in 22 years at the end of this month, more than 2,000 political prisoners remain behind bars in Burma. The Parliament will be dominated by pro-military lawmakers who won in last year's controversial polls.

The Irrawaddy correspondent Lalit K. Jha contributed to this article from Washington.

Burma News - 26 January 2011 - "Burma_News" <burma_news@verizon.net> -

MCOT News – 23 January 2011 <http://www.mcot.net/cfcustom/cache_page/159608.html>

FM Kasit tells Suu Kyi of Thailand's support for reconciliation in Myanmar -

BANGKOK, Jan 23 -- Thai Foreign Affairs Minister Kasit Piromya has pledged Thai government support to Myanmar democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi for national reconciliation and the development of democracy in her country, according to reliable sources at the ministry.

In a one-hour meeting Friday at a hotel in Yangon, the sources said, Mr Kasit told Mrs Suu Kyi that the Thai government felt that her position as opposition leader who could also represent minority groups in Myanmar could play a significant and positive role in Myanmar.



According to the sources, Mr Kasit told Mrs Suu Kyi, who was released from house arrest after Myanmar's Nov 7 general election, the first in two decades, the election could be interpreted as a major stepping stone for promoting democracy in Myanmar and that Thailand was ready to help promote development in her country.

Mr Kasit also told Mrs Suu Kyi that the gathered foreign ministers of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) meeting on Indonesia's Lombok Island last week viewed that the US- and European Union-led international economic sanctions on Myanmar should be reviewed .

ASEAN has told Myanmar that it should follow up the elections and release of Mrs Suu Kyi with a reconciliation process.

Mrs Suu Kyi told Mr Kasit that she is prepared to discuss with military leaders on the national reconciliation process, and that compromise could be achieved on an agreement from both sides.

She said she would wait until a new government is formed which would enable herto know who is the real power holder in her country before talks could proceed, the sources said.

The Irrawaddy - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=20621>, Newsletter, January 27, 2011 - news@irrawaddy.org

Burmese Junta Defends Itself in Geneva

By THE IRRAWADDY Thursday, January 27, 2011



A man carries his child as refugees from Burma arrived in a temporary camp at the border town of Mae Sot in Thailand, to escape clashes between Burmese government troops and ethnic rebels on Nov. 9, 2010. (Photo: Getty Images)

Burma defended its human rights record at the Universal Periodic Review held by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCR), in Geneva on Thursday.

During a three-hour review, a number of UN member countries including Britain, France and the United States called on the Burmese military regime to end repression against ethnic minorities, free the more than 2,000 political prisoners, and stop forced labor, arbitrary arrests, and the torture of dissidents.

But Burma's delegation, led by Dr. Tun Shin, the country's Deputy Attorney General, responded that the Burma enjoys a free press, has committed no human rights violations, and cooperated with the UN Human Rights Special Envoy to Burma, Tomás Ojea Quintana.

"The Universal Periodic Review is an opportunity for the international community to place principled pressure on the government of Myanmar to comply with the universal human rights norms," said Phil Robertson, Deputy Director of Asia Human Rights Watch, in an interview with Al Jazeera.

"But the Burmese government has been very good at making promises in these kind of forums and then forgetting them as soon as the diplomats get on the plane and head back home," he said.

This week, Human Rights Watch released a report describing Burma's continued human rights violations. Meanwhile, the Burmese junta prepares to convene the first session of the parliament in the country in more than 22 years—a parliament which will be dominated by pro-military lawmakers of the junta's proxy Union Solidarity and Development Party.

On Thursday, elected representatives of political parties started gathering in Naypyidaw to attend the opening of Parliament on Monday



for Human Rights, Democracy
& Development in Burma

Letter dated 14th December 2010

Signed: **Anna Roberts**
Executive Director

23/2017971

14th December 2010

Dear Friends,

Thank you for supporting Burma Campaign UK during 2010 and I hope you enjoy the coming festive season.

In November, we saw the fantastic news from Burma of the release of Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi. With your support, we campaigned for her release for many years, ensuring the world did not forget her. There is no doubt that together our campaign helped secure her release. However, more than 2,200 other political prisoners are still suffering in Burma's jails, many tortured and denied access to medical care.

Aung San Suu Kyi's release made international headlines but while the media focused on events in Rangoon, the military dictatorship was launching new attacks against ethnic minorities in the east of the country. These attacks are still going on now and we have received distressing reports from villagers who have to flee the attacks.

On November 9th at 6.00 pm, army troops based in Kya Inn Seikkyi, Karen State, launched 30 artillery shells into surrounding villages. A Villager, 32 year old Myo Aung, was badly wounded.

The next day the army again launched 139 artillery shells. Tha Dar Paw, 17 years old, was killed in the attack. She was a student and was studying in eighth Grade. Her brother Too Too was badly wounded and is now in the hospital in Kya Inn Seikkyi.

Five mortars hit the school in Ta Ka Klo Village, and two houses were hit as well. The army also arrested Kyaw Myint, from the village of Noe Neh, and shot and killed him. Kyaw Mint was 60 years old when he died.

On November 27th Ma Wa, who is 53 years old and from Palu Poe village, was cooking and looking after her granddaughter. Ma Wa fled the Burmese army attack. She told my colleague:

"I feel like I have no hope. If the situation is like this, I have nothing to feed my granddaughter. I have no idea why they attacked us. We are just villagers."

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

These horrific attacks show how the fake elections and release of Aung San Suu Kyi do not signify change is coming to Burma. In fact, the dictatorship is increasing attacks against ethnic people.

We need your support to help us to stop human rights abuses in Burma. People are dying every day. If the Burmese Army were mortar-bombing civilians in Rangoon there would be international outrage. When it happens away from the capital it is ignored.

Patrons: Rt Hon Gordon Brown MP, Sinead Cusack, Clive James
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By mortar-bombing schools and attacking civilians the dictatorship is committing war crimes and crimes against humanity. The UN has accused the regime of breaking the Geneva Conventions by deliberately targeting civilians, but it is not doing anything to investigate or bring those responsible to justice.

Your support can, and does, make a difference. In January 2011 Burma Campaign UK will step up our campaign for an UN Commission of Inquiry to crimes against humanity. With your help, we have already succeeded in getting the UK, the US, Australia and several other EU governments to support an UN inquiry. Now we need your help to build on these successes and lobby other governments around the world to get enough support to make this happen.

Your support of Burma Campaign UK does result in positive action. That is why we need you to donate £30 today so that children won't have to suffer like Thar Dar Paw and her brother Too Too, but can live free from fear of death or injury, as children should, at Christmas or at any other time of year.

Thank you.

Anna Roberts
Executive Director

P.S. Any donation you feel able to give this Christmas helps us to work for freedom of all Burma's political prisoners and to help the people of Burma in their struggle for freedom.

Donation Form

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