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Free all political prisoners, free Aung San Suu Kyi, free Burma.

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UPI's Asia Online <http://www.upiasia.com/Human_Rights/2009/09/17/pinning_hope_on_burmas_hopeless_constitution/1829/>

Pinning hope on Burma's hopeless Constitution

By Awzar Thi - Column: Rule of Lords - Published: September 17, 2009

Hong Kong, China — Last year, amid the death and debris in the wake of Cyclone Nargis, Burma got a new Constitution. Now people inside and outside the country are readying themselves for a general election of some sort, followed by the opening of a new Parliament, which is when the charter will take effect.

The ballot is expected in 2010, although so far no details have emerged of how it will be run. The regime could yet give any number of excuses to postpone it if Senior General Than Shwe or his astrologers decide the time is not right.

Some analysts – including former diplomats and others who move in their circles – see hope for change in the 2008 Constitution and the anticipated elections. Their argument is that even though the parliamentary system will be under military control, it will still provide space for people that have not had a chance to participate in government for the last few decades.

One way or another, they say, power will be more diffused and that will create opportunities. And like it or not, they figure, the junta's electoral circus is the only one in town.

But, in a statement to the U.N. Human Rights Council this month, the Asian Legal Resource Center has given a starkly different opinion. The Hong Kong-based group has argued that in its current form the 2008 charter cannot be called a constitution at all, let alone one that will permit people in Burma to shape their future.

The center makes its point by highlighting five aspects of the Constitution. First, the document commits to separating the branches of government “to the extent possible.” The group observes that this is not a qualified guarantee of judicial independence, as some persons have misunderstood it, but exactly the opposite. It is a promise of non-independence. It is the inverting of a norm into a statement of fact: that Burma's courts are not and will not operate other than as appendages of the executive.

Second, the army, not the judiciary, is assigned primary responsibility for defense of the Constitution. Just how it is supposed to do this is not explained anywhere. Its relationship with a new constitutional tribunal, which has the role of interpreting the charter, also is not explained.

Third, the center notes that the armed forces, not the judiciary, are also assigned responsibility for upholding the rule of law in the country. Proponents of the Constitution appear to have overlooked or ignored the absurdity of this clause and what it implies.

Fourth, the Constitution sets up an executive president with power over the appointment and dismissal of senior judges, rather than an independent judicial body for that purpose, again with obvious consequences.

Fifth, not only are the statements of rights in the charter farcical and at every point qualified, but they also undermine rights established in the ordinary criminal law. For instance, the right to come before a judge within 24 hours of arrest is in the new Constitution perverted through a clause that this right does not apply in matters “on precautionary measures taken for the security of the Union or prevalence of law and order, peace and tranquility in accord with the law in the interest of the public.”

This type of ridiculous caveat again completely negates the supposed right to which it is attached.

The center concludes that the so-called 2008 Constitution fails as a supreme law because it neither provides the normative grounds for a coherent legal system nor protects the rights of citizens, let alone outlining the means to ensure that the charter's terms are effected.

Sri Lankan lawyer Basil Fernando has written that the passing in 1978 of a new Constitution in his country moved the state completely outside the orbit of constitutionalism and into a legal black hole in which anything became possible, and in which the conflicts that gripped the island for the last decades thrived.

Burma has been in its own black hole for even longer, most of the time without a constitution at all. In searching for a way out, some commentators have misled themselves into thinking that the mere existence of one will pull the country back into a constitutional orbit of some sort, no matter how distant. This is a mistake.

Whereas the charter's authors have allotted legislative seats to the army in mimicry of Soeharto's Indonesia, perhaps they copied its executive presidency from Sri Lanka, where since 1978 the dictatorial powers conferred upon the president have worked very well to destroy parliamentary democracy and undermine the courts.

In Burma democracy was destroyed and the courts defeated long ago, and so the Constitution's concern is not with how to achieve what has already been done but with how to set in place arrangements to keep things as they are while giving some appearance to the contrary.

This will require a certain amount of juggling and the making of some compromises. But there is little point in nursing naive hopes that within the Constitution's frame for the new government there will be some genuine opportunities for change. People with hope for Burma's future should go pin it elsewhere.

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(The full text of the ALRC statement is available online at: <http://www.alrc.net/doc/mainfile.php/alrc_st2009/575>)

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(Awzar Thi is the pen name of a member of the Asian Human Rights Commission with over 15 years of experience as an advocate of human rights and the rule of law in Thailand and Burma. His Rule of Lords blog can be read at <http://ratchasima.net>)

Aung Thu <aungthu@t-online.de>- Burma News - 09 September 2009 - "Burma_news" <burma_news@verizon.net>

The Washington Post - <<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/08/AR2009090802959.html>>

An 'Election' Burma's People Don't Need

By U Win Tin - Wednesday, September 9, 2009

Much attention has been focused on Sen. James Webb's recent visit to my country and his meetings with Senior Gen. Than Shwe and incarcerated Nobel Peace Prize recipient Aung San Suu Kyi. I understand Webb's desire to seek a meaningful dialogue with the Burmese ruling authorities. Unfortunately, his efforts have been damaging to our democracy movement and focus on the wrong issue -- the potential for an "election" that Webb wants us to consider participating in next year as part of a long-term political strategy. But the showcase election planned by the military regime makes a mockery of the freedom sought by our people and would make military dictatorship permanent.

In our last free election, the Burmese people rejected military rule in a landslide, awarding our National League for Democracy party more than 80 percent of the seats in parliament. Yet the military has refused to allow the NLD to form a government. In the 19 years since that election, Burmese democracy activists have faced imprisonment, intimidation, torture and death as they have peacefully voiced demands for justice, individual and ethnic rights, and a democratic form of government that is representative of all Burma's people.

While never ending our struggle for democracy, the NLD has continually sought to engage the regime and open a dialogue -- based on peace and mutual respect -- that could address Burma's critical political as well as social problems. Make no mistake -- these two issues are linked. Burma was once the rice bowl of Asia. Today, because of the regime's destructive economic policies and its use of oppression to maintain military rule, Burma is a shattered, poverty-stricken country.

The regime is seeking to place a veneer of legitimacy on itself through showcase "elections" and claiming that "disciplined democracy" will be instituted next year. Yet in May 2008, just days after a massive cyclone devastated Burma and killed more than 100,000 people, the regime used a farcical process to claim that 93 percent of voters chose to adopt a constitution that permanently enshrines military rule and prevents those with undefined "foreign ties" from holding public office -- catch-all provisions that would bar Suu Kyi and democracy activists from seeking office.

Some international observers view next year's planned elections as an opportunity. But under the circumstances imposed by the military's constitution, the election will be a sham. We will not sacrifice the democratic principles for which many millions of Burmese have marched, been arrested, been tortured and died to participate in a process that holds no hope whatsoever for bringing freedom to our country.

The demands of the NLD are reasonable. In April we issued another declaration to encourage engagement with the military that called for the release of all political prisoners, a full review of the constitution, reopening of all NLD offices and the right to freely organize. The regime's answer is the continued jailing of Suu Kyi and 2,000 other activists, massive military offensives against ethnic groups and the enforcement of rules to gag democracy.

How can the international community play a meaningful role? First, officials such as Webb should stop fear-mongering about China. His language about containing China, and working with Burma's regime to do so, is based on an outdated and unrealistic thesis. Suu Kyi rejected such notions by informing Webb that "we will not deal with anyone with fear and insecurity. We will deal with anyone, China, America, India, equally and friendly. As we can't choose our neighbors, we understand that

we need to have a good relationship with China." Second, the NLD encourages other countries and international organizations to engage with Burma's military leaders to persuade them to engage with us and Burma's ethnic groups. The United States and many other nations have imposed sanctions on Burma. That is their decision and in keeping with their justified solidarity with the democratic values that we all hold so dear. If the regime genuinely engages with the NLD and ethnic representatives, releases political prisoners, ceases attacks against ethnic minorities and takes additional steps to build a true democratic state, these sanctions will be repealed at the right time.

In the meantime, let no one doubt our resolve. The NLD is a reflection of Burmese society. We will not be cowed or coerced into participating in a fatally flawed political process that robs the Burmese people of the freedom for which we struggle. We stand ready to engage, but we are more than willing to continue our struggle for the democratic values that so many have given their lives and their freedom to achieve.

U Win Tin is a member of the Central Executive Committee and a founder of Burma's National League for Democracy party. He was a political prisoner from 1989 to 2008.

The Irrawaddy – Newsletter - September 14, 2009 - news@irrawaddy.org <http://www.irrawaddy.org/print_article.php?art_id=16783>

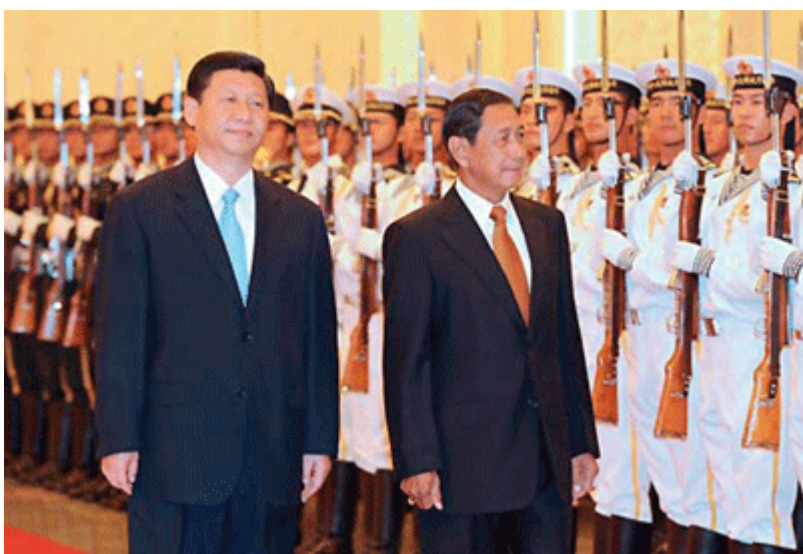
Beijing's Influence on Junta 'Overstated': ICG

By WAI MOE Monday, September 14, 2009

A leading political think tank, the International Crisis Group (ICG), said on Monday that although many believe China is the key to pushing the Burmese junta toward political reform, its influence is overstated.

In a new report covering Sino-Burmese relations, the Brussels-based NGO said that Beijing's influence on the Burmese junta is clearly limited, a fact highlighted by the Burmese government forces' invasion of the Kokang region, an act that caused some 37,000 refugees to flee to China.

Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping, left, holds a welcoming ceremony in honor of Gen Maung Aye, right, vice-chairman of Burma's ruling junta at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on June 16, 2009. (Photo: www.english.cpc.people.com.cn)



Chinese Vice President Xi Jinping, left, holds a welcoming ceremony in honor of Gen Maung Aye, right, vice-chairman of Burma's ruling junta at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing on June 16, 2009. (Photo: www.english.cpc.people.com.cn)

Titled "China's Myanmar Dilemma," the ICG report was written by ICG staffers in Beijing, Jakarta and Brussels.

"Simply calling on Beijing to apply more pressure is unlikely to result in change," the ICG report said. "The insular and nationalistic leaders in the military government do not take orders from anyone, including Beijing."

It said that "after two decades of failed international approaches to Myanmar [Burma], Western countries and China must find better ways to work together to push for change in the military-ruled nation."

The Kokang conflict highlighted the complexity of China's relationship with Burma, and that Beijing was unable to dissuade the Burmese generals from launching their bloody campaign, said the report.

It also noted that the relation between Beijing and Naypyidaw is "best characterized as a marriage of convenience rather than a love match."

ICG, which is frequently contracted to advise world bodies such as the UN, the EU and the World Bank, said that while China sees major problems with the status quo [in Burma], particularly with regard to economic policy and ethnic issues, Beijing's preferred solution is a gradual adjustment of policy by a strong central government, not federalism or liberal democracy, and certainly not regime change.

The ICG noted in its report that unstable Burmese factors on the Chinese border, such as insurgency, drugs and diseases, affect China's interests in the country.

It said that Beijing's interest in Burma was mainly economic.

However, to highlight the close ties, the report said that from 2003 to June 2009, leaders of the Chinese government and

the Burmese junta met 30 times, 15 of which were after the Burmese regime's brutal crackdown on peaceful demonstrators in September 2007.

ICG has published two reports regarding Burma within the last two months. A report titled, "Myanmar: Towards the Elections" was released on August 20. It said the 2010 elections are likely to create opportunities for generational and institutional changes despite major shortcomings.

However, it questioned whether the elections could solve the conflict in Burma, including the clashes at the Sino-Burmese border.

The Irrawaddy - Newsletter - September 14, 2009 - news@irrawaddy.org <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=16777>

Peng Jiasheng Breaks His Silence - By THE IRRAWADDY Monday, September 14, 2009

The ousted Kokang leader, Peng Jiasheng, has told The Irrawaddy that the Burmese military government attack on his headquarters in Laogai was an attempt by the junta to eliminate the Kokang and other armed ethnic groups and achieve a military-run "unified" country.

In his first interview since the fall of Laogai on August 24 and the subsequent exodus of more than 30,000 refugees to China, Peng claimed the Burmese government troops have killed and raped civilians, and have looted houses and shops in Laogai.

"Many people are still afraid to go back home," he said. "Most of the shops owned by Chinese businessmen have either been destroyed or looted. This is a calamity. The prosperous town we had a few months ago no longer exists. People are living in deep distress."

Last month, in a surprise move, the military regime broke its ceasefire with several ethnic groups by seizing the Kokang capital.

Since the attack, instability has been reverberating throughout Kachin and Shan states and the towns along the Sino-Burmese border in China's Yunnan Province.

Other ceasefire groups in northern and northeastern Burma—in particular, the United Wa State Army, the Kachin Independence Army and the National Democratic Alliance Army—have been digging in and building defenses against a potential attack by junta forces.

During the attack on Laogai, the regime said that it was searching for illegal drugs and weapons.

During a press briefing last week, Burma's Deputy Home Affairs Minister Brig-Gen Phone Swe said that government troops had seized a weapons factory near the Chinese border on August 8 after being informed about it during a ministerial meeting with China on combating transnational crime.

The junta earlier said the ethnic Kokang militia raided a police checkpoint and took 39 police officers hostage. Fifteen officers were later killed, leading to full-scale fighting that state media say left 11 soldiers and eight militia members dead.

In response to the regime's allegations that the Kokang leader was running an illegal weapons factory, Peng told The Irrawaddy: "Many of our weapons need repairing. It is reasonable to have a weapons-repair factory. This factory was well-known to all the SPDC [State Peace and Development Council] officials in Kokang. They have visited it before. Now they are using it as an excuse to take action against us.

"The Burmese national army is the strongest force in the country. They can crack down on whichever ethnic groups they want. They can accuse any ceasefire group of drugs or weapons or anything."

Despite a reputation for being one of the most prominent drug traffickers in the region, Peng hit back at Naypyidaw saying there is no poppy cultivation in any of the special regions of Shan State, and that investigations by international agencies have confirmed this.

"In SPDC-controlled areas, there are more than 250,000 mu [Chinese land unit, equivalent to 667 square meters] of cultivated poppy. This is the practice of the junta, and this is how they behave," he said.

Exclusive interview with Peng Jiasheng available at Irrawaddy.org.

Ben Rogers <brogers50@hotmail.com>- [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] Wall Street Journal - Burma and Japan-Thu, 24. Sep 2009
Wall Street Journal - Hatoyama's Burma Test - OPINION ASIA - SEPTEMBER 23, 2009, 5:14 P.M. ET

Hatoyama's Burma Test <<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB10001424052970204488304574427782507934914.html>>

Tokyo's policy toward the junta is ripe for review. - **By BENEDICT ROGERS AND YUKI AKIMOTO**

Prime Minister Yukio Hatoyama will have much on his agenda in his first few months in office in Tokyo. One particular area crying out for change is Japan's relationship with Burma.

No country has a bigger historical responsibility to Burma than Japan. Aung San, leader of the Burmese struggle for independence from British colonialism in the late 1930s and 1940s, was given military training by the Japanese. In World War II, Japan occupied Burma and cruelly oppressed the ethnic groups who sided with the British. More recently, Aung San's daughter, Aung San Suu Kyi, studied in Kyoto before returning to her country in 1988 to campaign for democracy. Yet Japan has extended political and financial support to Burma's military regime to protect its own short-term economic interests, safeguard relations with China and pursue a misguided view that appeasement will bear fruit.

This has tied Tokyo's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in moral and rhetorical knots. Officials defended the junta's sham referendum on a new constitution last year. One bureaucrat said with a straight face that the junta had introduced "due process" and that dissidents are put on trial before they are imprisoned. When 6,300 prisoners were released in February, Japan welcomed this as a "positive step"—even though most were ordinary criminals and only 30 were political prisoners.

Nor was Japan's previous government very forceful defending democracy in the face of elections due in 2010, even though Aung San Suu Kyi and other leading democrats will be excluded. "It's very difficult to know the meaning of 'free and fair,'" a foreign ministry official said earlier this year. Tokyo in May dismissed Ms. Suu Kyi's most recent trial as "a domestic issue." Last month, the former Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hirofumi Nakasone, held talks with Htay Oo, secretary-general of the regime's civilian militia, the Union Solidarity and Development Association. The USDA organized an alleged assassination attempt on Ms. Suu Kyi in 2003.

If Mr. Hatoyama is serious about change, Tokyo's entire approach must change. The first step is to modify Tokyo's rhetoric about next year's "elections." Rather than support the junta, Tokyo could call for a genuine process of democratization and refuse to verify sham elections.

Japan also has many options for unilateral action. Japan is the largest donor to Burma in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. Tokyo could end this financial flow, which ends up with the regime and its proxy organizations, and redirect that money to humanitarian aid administered through independent agencies. This would solve a major problem of Japanese aid subsidizing schemes such as scholarships for regime officials to study in Japan, or USDA-sponsored projects. Instead, Japanese aid in support of refugees, internally displaced peoples and human--rights and democracy projects should be increased. On the trade front, Japan could also ban the import of Burmese products such as natural gas, timber and gems. The Japanese government should also divest from Nippon Oil Exploration (Myanmar), which has stakes in natural gas development in Burma.

Then there are multilateral actions: Japan, the U.S. and Canada could work to impose targeted financial sanctions on the junta's leaders. Tokyo should begin by freezing any Japan-based bank accounts of the regime's top officials and their cronies that are already the target of such sanctions, as well as prohibiting any financial transactions involving these individuals or entities. As a member of the United Nations Security Council, Mr. Hatoyama's government also can play a more pro-active part in discussions on Burma. Japan has no arms trade, and so would have nothing to lose in leading a campaign for a universal arms embargo on the regime. Japan can also support a U.N. commission of inquiry to investigate crimes against humanity in Burma.

Mr. Hatoyama has been a long-time supporter of democracy in Burma. In 2007, just days after a Japanese journalist Kenji Nagai was shot dead at point-blank range in Rangoon as he filmed the Burmese military crushing the peaceful protests by Buddhist monks, Mr. Hatoyama posed a question to the then prime minister, saying: "The response by the Japanese government has been very slow. It is the Japanese government that should lead the international community, and demand now that the military regime control itself and release all those detained including Daw Suu Kyi, and make every effort so that democratization in [Burma] is realized." Now, he has the opportunity to pursue that approach.

Mr. Rogers is a human-rights activist at Christian Solidarity Worldwide, based in London. Ms. Akimoto is director of BurmaInfo, based in Tokyo.

The Irrawaddy - Thursday, September 24, 2009 – Newsletter <news@irrawaddy.org>

New US Policy to Include Engagement, Sanctions: Clinton

By LALIT K JHA Thursday, September 24, 2009 - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=16848>

WASHINGTON — Previewing the new US Burma policy with the 17-member UN Group of Friends on Burma in New York, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said the US will pursue a policy of "engagement" and "sanctions" simultaneously.

Clinton said on Wednesday the basic objectives of the US have not changed. She told reporters after the meeting:

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

“Engagement versus sanctions is a false choice, in our opinion. So going forward, we will be employing both of those tools, pursuing our same goals.”

The United States plans to engage diplomatically with military-ruled Burma in addition to pursuing sanctions, US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said. (Photo: AFP)

The US policy seeks credible, democratic reform, immediate release of all political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi and serious dialogue with opposition and minority ethnic groups, she said.

“To help achieve democratic reform, we will be engaging directly with Burmese authorities. This is a policy that has broad consensus across our government, and there will be more to report as we go forward,” Clinton said. “We believe that sanctions remain important as part of our policy, but by themselves, they have not produced the results that had been hoped for on behalf of the people of Burma.”

Referring to the new policy, Clinton said: “We will be offering more specifics about that. I wanted to preview this policy for our partners in the Friends of Burma group, and also to signal that the United States will be moving in a direction of both engagement and continued sanctions, to be sure that the Burmese leaders—some of whom, as you know, are in our country or about to come to our country—understand where we are in our policy review process.”

Clinton urged the members participating in the meeting to take a measured approach to Burma’s 2010 elections until, “We can assess electoral conditions and determine whether opposition and ethnic groups will participate.”

She said the Burmese election should not be dismissed at this time. “At the same time, we should continue discussions with the Burmese authorities to emphasize that the international community will only recognize the planned 2010 elections as a positive step to the extent that the Burmese authorities allow full participation by members of Burma’s opposition and ethnic minority groups.”

She said, “Any debate that pits sanctions against engagement creates a false choice. Going forward, we’ll need to employ both of these tools.

“Lifting sanctions now would send the wrong signal, and we will maintain our existing sanctions until we see concrete progress towards reform. But we will be willing to discuss the easing of sanctions in response to significant actions on the part of Burma’s generals that address the core human rights and democracy issues that are inhibiting Burma’s progress,” she said.

More engagement with the West will encourage new thinking, reform and participation in the work of the international community, she said: “To help Burma achieve genuine democratic reform, we must be willing to engage directly with the Burmese authorities.”

Clinton said the US Burma policy will draw on familiar themes and tools: engagement, appropriate sanctions and humanitarian assistance.

“The aim of the United States is not to impose its will on the Burmese people, but to ensure that they can live in a unified, peaceful, and prosperous country, led by a democratic government that respects the rights of its citizens,” she said.

“Our support for the country’s democratic opposition, including Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy, will not waver,” Clinton said.

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The Mizzia - <<http://www.mizzima.com/>>

Ban urges junta to create conditions for credible election

by **Mizzima News** - 24 September 2009 <<http://www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/2814-ban-urges-junta-to-create-conditions-for-credible-election-.html>>

New Delhi (Mizzima) – The United Nations Secretary General on Wednesday urged the Burmese government to create conditions for credible elections in 2010 and to allow the UN a role in the process of national reconciliation.

Ban Ki-moon made the appeal in the meeting of the ‘Group of Friends on Myanmar’, which was attended by foreign ministers of 14 countries, on Wednesday.

In a statement released after the meeting Ban said the meeting has given the ‘Group of Friends’ a chance to consolidate unity in their support on Burma and “called on the Friends, especially Myanmar’s [Burma] friends and neighbours, to do more in the best interests of Myanmar [Burma] and its people.”

Ban said the year 2010 is “critical” for Burma as the first elections in 20 years will be held. It must be “held in an inclusive and credible manner to advance prospects for stability, democracy and national development.”

The UN Chief also said he is encouraged by the participation of the 'Group of Friends' and the constructive discussions saying, "I welcome the willingness of the Friends to make joint efforts towards national reconciliation, a democratic transition and genuine respect for human rights in Myanmar."

The group of friends, formed in 2007 by the World Body leader, is made up of Australia, Britain, China, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Norway, Russia, Singapore, South Korea, Thailand, the United States and Vietnam, plus the European Union.

Zin Linn <zinlinn@cscoms.com> - [NLDmembrsnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] NCGUB: News & Articles on Burma - 29. Sep 2009 13:52:49

DECCAN HERALD - Washington, (PTI) Tuesday 29 September 2009 <<http://www.deccanherald.com/content/27766/us-consult-india-china-its.html>>

US to consult India, China on its Burma policy

Announcing its policy to enter into a dialogue with Myanmar's military junta, the Obama administration on Tuesday said it would actively consult and seek the help of countries like India and China as part of its new Burma policy.

"We will intensify our engagement with ASEAN, China, and India to press the Burmese leadership to reform and to participate responsibly in the international community," Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Public Affairs Kurt Campbell said.

Announcing that the Obama administration intends to begin a direct dialogue with Burmese authorities to lay out a path towards better relations, Campbell said: "The dialogue will include specific discussion of democracy and human rights inside Burma, cooperation on international security issues such as non-proliferation and compliance with 1874 and 1718, and areas that could be of mutual benefit such as counter-narcotics and recovery of World War II era remains."

At the same time, he insisted that US would not lift sanctions until it sees concrete progress towards reform. "Lifting sanctions now would send the wrong signal. We will tell the Burmese that we will discuss easing sanctions only if they take actions on our core concerns. We will reserve the option to apply additional targeted sanctions, if warranted, by events inside Burma," he said.

Reaffirming that its fundamental goals in Burma remain the same, Campbell said the Obama administration supports a unified, peaceful, prosperous and democratic Burma that respects the human rights of its citizens.

"To that end, we will continue to push for the immediate and unconditional release of Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, an end to conflicts with ethnic minorities and gross human rights violations and initiation of a credible internal political dialogue with the democratic opposition and ethnic minority leaders on elements of reconciliation and reform," he said.

"We will also press Burma to comply with its international obligations, including on non-proliferation, ending any prohibited military or proliferation-related cooperation with North Korea, and full compliance with United Nations 1874 and 1718," he said.

"If Burma makes meaningful progress towards these goals, it will be possible to improve the relationship with the United States in a step-by-step process. We recognise that this will likely be a long and difficult process, and we are prepared to sustain our efforts on this front," Campbell said.

zin linn <zinlinn@yahoo.com.au> <uzinlinn@hotmail.com> [NLDmembrsnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] NCGUB: News & Articles on Burma, 25. Sep 2009

Asia-Pacific News - Fri, 25. Sep 2009 <http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/asiapacific/news/article_1503184.php/Myanmar-opposition-leader-ready-to-talk-sanctions-with-junta>

Myanmar opposition leader ready to talk sanctions with junta

Sep 25, 2009, 12:33 GMT

Yangon - Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is ready to cooperate with the ruling junta in order to get the West to lift economic sanctions imposed on the country, as long as three conditions are met, a key spokesman said Friday.

'Daw (Madame) Aung San Suu Kyi has written a letter to Senior General Than Shwe regarding the sanctions issue,' said Nyan Win, a spokesman for Suu Kyi. Than Shwe is Myanmar's current military strongman.

Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize laureate, met with Nyan Win at her house-cum-prison in Yangon for an hour Friday to spell out her views on economic sanctions following indications that the administration of US President Barack Obama is seeking to 'engage' with the military regime.

Suu Kyi has indicated that she is not opposed to Western sanctions against Myanmar, one of her major bargaining

chips against the regime, be lifted, as long as there is 'engagement' on both sides.

In her letter to Than Shwe, Suu Kyi said it was necessary to discuss three points - which countries have imposed economic sanctions on Myanmar, the impact of the sanctions and why they were imposed.

Economic sanctions have been imposed on Myanmar since 1988, when the military brutally cracked down on pro-democracy demonstrations, leaving an estimated 3,000 people dead.

The US and European Union stepped up their sanctions over the years as the junta first refused to acknowledge Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) victory at the 1990 polls and then proceeded to arrest critics and squash all forms of dissent.

Suu Kyi has spent 14 of the past 20 years under house arrest, where she remains today.

Earlier this year, junta chief Than Shwe hinted that he would be willing to open a political dialogue with Suu Kyi if she agreed to cooperate in making the West lift the sanctions.

To date, Than Shwe has refused to talk to Suu Kyi. Discussing why the sanctions have been imposed on Myanmar, would amount to a discussion of NLD's demands.

Most western nations have demanded that Than Shwe release Suu Kyi and some 2,000 other political prisoners as a first step towards democratization in the country, which has been under military rule since 1962. Suu Kyi and the NLD demand the same thing.

On Wednesday US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton told journalists on the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly in New York that the US administration decided on a double-pronged approach of both engagement and continued sanctions.

'We believe that sanctions remain important as part of our policy, but by themselves, they have not produced the results that had been hoped for on behalf of the people of Burma,' Clinton said, referring to the South-East Asian country by its former name.

'Engagement versus sanctions is a false choice in our opinion,' she said.

Congress was to be informed about details of the planned talks on Thursday.

Washington has been calling on Myanmar's military, which has ruled the country since 1962, to improve its human rights record, allow democratic reforms and release political prisoners, among them Nobel Peace Prize winner and opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, ahead of a planned general election in 2010.

The Irrawaddy -Saturday, October 3, 2009 - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/highlight.php?art_id=16929>

Suu Kyi, Junta Liaison Officer Hold Meeting By WAI MOE -

Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi met with the ruling junta's liaison officer for the first time in nearly two years on Saturday, according to her party, the National League for Democracy (NLD).

Nyan Win, a spokesperson for the NLD, told *The Irrawaddy* today that Suu Kyi met with Aung Kyi, a retired major general who is also the regime's labor minister, for nearly an hour at a government guesthouse near her lakeside home.



Aung San Suu Kyi (left) and Aung Gyi meet in October 2007. (Photo: AFP)

It was the first time the two have met since January 2008.

"The meeting started at 1 pm and lasted about 45 minutes," said Nyan Win, who is also Suu Kyi's lawyer.

He added that it was unclear if the meeting was related to a letter she sent to regime leader Snr-Gen Than Shwe last week. "We still don't know if they [Suu Kyi and Aung Kyi] discussed the letter because we haven't heard any of the details of today's meeting yet," he said.

On Sept. 25, Suu Kyi sent a letter to the country's top general to say she wanted to cooperate with the junta to lift sanctions on

Burma. She also asked to meet with envoys from the United States, European Union and Australia to learn more about the sanctions.

NLD sources said that there has been no response to Suu Kyi's letter so far.

According to Nyan Win, Suu Kyi's family doctor, Tin Myo Win, was allowed to visit her on Friday from 2 pm to 4 pm. It was his first visit since Sept. 20, when he diagnosed Suu Kyi with low blood pressure.

"As far as I know, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is now well and in good spirits," said Nyan Win.

Aung Kyi was appointed "Minister for Relations" to coordinate contacts with the detained democracy leader in October 2007, after the junta came under intense international condemnation for its brutal crackdown on Buddhist monk-led mass demonstrations the previous month.

At a press conference held in December 2007, Aung Gyi said his talks with Suu Kyi were proceeding well.

"I have met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi three times. We have made progress at the meetings. The first meeting was aimed at gaining understanding between us. The second meeting was to discuss frameworks for the future. The third meeting was to discuss the facts that should be included in the framework," Aung Kyi said at the time.

Three more meetings were held after this, but the talks abruptly ended in January 2008, when Suu Kyi said that they were mostly spent discussing trivial subjects. She said that some of their hour-long meetings were almost entirely devoted to making semantic distinctions between words like "cooperation" and "collaboration."

Meanwhile, Rangoon remains under tight security today, as the authorities moved to prevent protests by monks demanding an apology from the junta for an incident that sparked outrage two years ago.

The All Burma Monks' Alliance set Oct. 3 as the deadline for the regime to apologize for violently suppressing a peaceful demonstration by monks in the city of Pakkoku in September 2007. It also demanded the release of all monks imprisoned since the crackdown on the massive uprising that grew out of the Pakokku protests, known as the Saffron Revolution.

"Riot police are position around Shwedagon Pagoda, all major monasteries and the downtown area," said a Rangoon resident.

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http://www.hurriyetdailynews.com/wires.php?id=3005997_un-myanmar-geneva-china-other-allies-of-myanmar-junta-join-call-for-aung-san-suu-kyis-release

China. other allies of Myanmar junta join call for Aung San Suu Kyi's release

GENEVA (AP) - China and other allies of the military government in Myanmar have joined an international call for the release of jailed opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

India and Russia also aligned themselves with European countries and the U.S. to demand that Myanmar release all political prisoners and allow them to take part in next year's elections.

The U.N. Human Rights Council's 47 members unanimously adopted the resolution in Geneva as a court in Myanmar rejected Suu Kyi's latest appeal for freedom Friday.

Beijing in particular has traditionally protected its southerly neighbor from criticism in the global body. Suu Kyi has been detained for about 14 of the last 20 years. 021239 oct 09GMT

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