



# BURMA REPORT

November 2009

မြန်မာ့ - မှတ်တမ်း

Issue N° 78

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

mtinkyi7@yahoo.com - [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] Burma Related News - Oct 26, 2009 . <[www.mizzima.com](http://www.mizzima.com)>  
THE BURMANET NEWS - October 24 - 26, 2009 Issue #3826 - <[editor@burmanet.org](mailto:editor@burmanet.org)> - [www.burmanet.org](http://www.burmanet.org)

The Mizzima – News – <<http://www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/2959-constitution-must-be-revised-before-election-opposition-leaders.html>>

## Constitution must be revised before election: opposition leaders - by Salai Pi Pi Monday, 26 October 2009

New Delhi (Mizzima) – Prominent Burmese opposition leaders say the junta's planned 2010 elections cannot be inclusive and broad-based unless the 2008 Constitution is first revised.

Win Tin, a veteran politician and senior member of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD) party, said in order to make the 2010 election inclusive the 2008 Constitution must be amended, as the document, which he asserts enshrines military-rule, will essentially bar all dissidents including Aung San Suu Kyi from participating in the poll.

"The constitution does not allow any political prisoners their electoral rights, and this will also include Aung San Suu Kyi," Win Tin clarified. "Therefore, it is necessary that the constitution is revised before the election."

Win Tin's comments came in response to a statement from the Burmese Prime Minister at the 15th Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit, concluded on Sunday.

The Burmese Premier, Thein Sein, reportedly ensured leaders of the 10-member ASEAN bloc meeting in Thailand that the 2010 elections would be free, fair and inclusive of all stakeholders.

Thein Sein also commented that Aung San Suu Kyi could be allowed to play a role in national reconciliation, further hinting that the regime may relax restrictions on the detained opposition leader if she maintains a "good attitude."

"He briefed us on some of the dialogue that is taking place and he feels optimistic that she can contribute to the process of national reconciliation," Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva told reporters.

"We welcomed the affirmation by the Prime Minister of Myanmar [Burma] that the general elections to be held in 2010 would be conducted in a free, fair and inclusive manner," Abhisit continued in his statement.

While cautiously welcoming Thein Sein's comments, Win Tin noted the Nobel Peace Laureate has been maintaining a soft stance towards the regime and urging national reconciliation for the last twenty years.

Meanwhile, Aye Thar Aung, Secretary of the Committee Representing Peoples' Parliament (CRPP), a coalition of political parties that won the 1990 election, on Monday echoed similar views to those of Win Tin, primarily that the junta's planned election next year cannot be inclusive unless the constitution, which he called "forcibly endorsed in 2008", is revised.

"Without revising the 2008 Constitution, the election will not be able to yield anything good for the people of Burma," Aye Thar Aung told Mizzima.

Aye Thar Aung added that Burma's generals only want Aung San Suu Kyi to contribute for their national reconciliation plan but are reluctant to change their overall stance in fear of losing power.

"Changes have to come from both sides. They [the junta] also must change their stance towards her," he elaborated.

He said the only way to build a genuine national reconciliation is to hold a tripartite dialogue between the Burmese generals, Aung San Suu Kyi and leaders of the ethnic groups.

Following the U.S. announcement of its new policy on Burma, Aung San Suu Kyi last month offered junta leader Senior General Than Shwe her willingness to cooperate in the easing of sanctions.

In response, Than Shwe allowed her and her party meetings with western diplomats.

In a statement at the end of the ASEAN summit in Thailand, leaders of the 16 countries encouraged Burma to ensure the implementation of their seven-step roadmap and to restore democracy in the country.

However, Win Tin emphasized the "NLD will not contest the upcoming election if the regime does not revise the constitution." The NLD has also consistently called on the junta to release all political prisoners, in addition to mandating free and fair elections, before they consider participating in any poll.

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ThaungN@aol.com -Leaders of 16 Asian nations meet in Thailand - Sun, 25. Oct 2009

**The Associated Press** - <<http://www.aodale.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALedM5iKGScetnevG9LndIMcz4Twi6Kt4iwD9B12BK00>>

## Leaders of 16 Asian nations meet in Thailand

By **GRANT PECK**

CHA-AM, Thailand -Leaders of 16 Asian countries gave high priority Sunday to finding a new economic growth model to free half the world's population from merely serving as producers for the West, the Thai prime minister said.

Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said the leaders gave such a search "the utmost importance" at the annual East Asian Summit, which concluded Sunday. He told a press conference that Asian nations would have to strengthen their domestic markets and further liberalize regional trade.

"The old growth model where, simply put, we have still to rely on consumption in the West for goods and services produced here will no longer serve us in the future," said Abhisit, who hosted the meeting.

Asian leaders, a conference document said, noted that the region has shown signs of recovery from the global crisis and "regained its pace of economic growth."

"East Asia could therefore play a crucial role in driving global economic recovery and in reforming the international financial architecture," it said, noting that the Asian Development Bank recently revised its forecasts for East Asian economic growth from 3.4 to 3.9 percent this year and 6 to 6.4 percent in 2010.

The East Asia Summit followed Saturday meetings of leaders from the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations with heads of government from China, Japan and South Korea. Sunday's expanded talks brought in Australia, New Zealand and India.

The 16 leaders represent almost half the world's population and more than a third of the global GDP, according to Australia's Prime Minister Kevin Rudd.

The three-day conference included the launch of Southeast Asia's first human rights watchdog, and talks on economic integration of ASEAN by the year 2015, disaster management, climate change and military-ruled Myanmar, an ASEAN member widely criticized internationally for its human rights violations.

Abhisit said Myanmar Prime Minister Gen. Thein Sein told other leaders that he welcomed signs of engagement from various regions, a reference to Washington's recent announcement that it would seek high-level dialogue rather than shunning the junta. Thein Sein also said that he was optimistic that democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, held in detention for 14 years, could contribute to reconciliation.

"ASEAN has always argued that engagement is the right approach. We feel that if everybody takes this approach we would be encouraging Myanmar in her successful implementation of her own roadmap (to democracy)," Abhisit said.

Southeast Asian leaders on Saturday called on Myanmar to conduct free and fair elections next year when the junta has promised to hold the first polls in two decades. Activists criticized the bloc for failing to take a tougher stand against one of the world's worst human rights offenders.

The conference signed or noted 43 documents, several focused on economic integration.

ASEAN countries have haltingly tried to integrate their economies, and are seeking to eliminate trade barriers within the bloc to bring about a European Union-style grouping by 2015.

"Over the past year we have proved that ASEAN continues to move forward. We have risen to theAsian leaders, a conference document said, noted that the region has shown signs of recovery from the global crisis and "regained its pace of economic growth."

The next summits have been scheduled for Hanoi in April and October next year, when Vietnam assumes the ASEAN chairmanship

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The Irrawaddy - Newsletter for October 10, 2009 - [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org) -

## Than Shwe Reaffirms Election Stance

By KO HTWE Saturday, October 10, 2009 - [http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=16972](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=16972)

Burma's military strongman, Snr-Gen Than Shwe, indicated in a speech on Friday that he would not yield to demands from domestic and international critics who say that the country's military-sponsored constitution should be revised ahead of next year's elections.

"The new State constitution has been approved by the great majority," Than Shwe said in an address to the Myanmar War Veterans Organization speech in Naypyidaw. "Elections will be systematically held in 2010 ... in accord with the constitution."

The constitution, drafted by delegates handpicked by the junta, was "approved" by more than 90 percent of eligible voters during a referendum in May 2008. The outcome of the referendum was widely dismissed as a sham.



Snr-Gen Than Shwe addresses the Myanmar War Veterans Organization. (Photo: The Mirror)

The regime has consistently ignored calls from the international community and Burma's main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), to review the constitution.

There are estimated to be 10 political parties in Burma, most of them inactive. The regime has yet to announce an electoral law that will allow new parties to form and register to contest in the election. The international community, led by the UN, has repeatedly demanded that the election be inclusive, free and fair.

In a recent announcement, the NLD set conditions for its participation in the 2010 general election. It requested an amendment of any provisions in the 2008 constitution "not in accord with democratic principles" and an

all-inclusive free and fair poll under international supervision.

Rights groups have also said that the regime must release all political prisoners, including NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi, if it wants the elections to be regarded as legitimate. About 2,100 political prisoners are languishing in prisons across the country.

In his speech, Than Shwe said that some powerful countries are using many ways to pressure and influence Burma under various pretexts.

"However, the Tatmadaw [armed forces] government does not get frightened whenever intimidated and will continue to work relentlessly for a better future of the State and the people by overcoming any difficulties," he said.

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**Taunggyi Time** [taunggyitime@gmail.com](mailto:taunggyitime@gmail.com) - [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] Civilians warned not to leak tunnel - 19. Oct 2009

**Democratic Voice of Burma** - <http://english.dvb.no/news.php?id=2966>

## Civilians warned not to leak tunnel information

Oct 19, 2009 (DVB)—Locals in a town in central Burma say they have been warned by government troops not to leak news about a tunnel being built by the military or their villages will be razed.

The 19-mile long tunnel is being built between the villages of Ywarmon and Phatthantaung in Magwe division, according to a local in the nearby town of Natmauk.

"Now even the village authorities are too scared to talk about it," he said. "Security is really tight in the area and taking photos is also prohibited."

Another local in Magwe division said that four years ago the army contacted his son, a graduate of the Government Technological College, and persuaded him to work in a weapons factory being built underground in Ngaphe town near to

Magwe city.

The man said that an official from the army had offered his son 35,000 kyat (\$US35) per month to work on the project. "The man said he would not be able to visit home after started working in the tunnel," he said.

In June *DVB* released a series of reports compiled from leaked government documents that outlined the junta's plans to develop a network of tunnels underneath Burma that would accommodate troop battalions and armoury in the event of an invasion.

Some 800 tunnels are thought to be under construction, with sections of the project dating back as far as 1996.

The project has been clouded in secrecy, but appears to be part of a longer-term strategy to bolster Burma's defence capabilities.

The junta is using North Korean advisors for its tunnel system, after a senior government delegation visited Pyongyang in November 2008 and took a tour round military tunnels there.

The majority of tunneling and construction equipment for the project has been bought from North Korea in a series of deals over the last three years which total at least \$US9 billion, according to two purchase orders received by *DVB*.

The Bangladesh-based Narinjara news agency last week quoted a military source as saying that a tunnel had been dug into a mountain in Burma's western Arakan state to store fighter jets. The tunnel is thought to be connected to a nearby air base in Ann township.

Arakan state lies alongside Burma's border with Bangladesh, which in recent weeks has become the site of a military build-up from both sides following a dispute over ownership of gas blocks in the Bay of Bengal.

*Reporting by Aye Nai*

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**Democratic Voice of Burma - NEWS – <[www.dvb.no](http://www.dvb.no)>** Oct 30, 2009 (DVB)

## **Arrests of Burmese journalists on the rise**

<<http://www.dvb.no/english/news.php?id=3006>>

Oct 30, 2009 (DVB)—Around 20 journalists and entertainers have been arrested in the past month while many more have gone into hiding, a reporter at a Rangoon-based news journal said.

Burmese government authorities appear to have targeted relief workers and journalists involved with the Lin Latt Kyae ('Shining Star') relief programme for cyclone Nargis victims.

"About 20 people, including entertainers, writers and press workers, have been arrested so far," said the reporter, speaking under condition of anonymity.

He said that 12 people were arrested on Wednesday, including staff members from *The Voice*, *Foreign News*, *Favourite*, *Pyi Myanmar* and *Kandarawaddy* journals.

Fear of further arrests has shaken Burma's media community, which is often targeted during government crackdowns on dissent.

Now is a particular sensitive time in Burma as the ruling junta prepares for elections next year, despite pressure from the international community to release all political prisoners prior to polling.

"These people were not involved in any political activity," said the reporter.

"There are many more missing but it is not confirmed that they have been arrested. Three junior journalists from my publication are in hiding."

A wider investigation by the government into post-cyclone relief work appears to be underway, with people involved in unofficial financial brokering also being called in for interrogation.

The investigations being conducted may be linked to overseas donations and relief work in cyclone hit areas, the reporter said.

"They are trying to trace where and how the money came to the relief teams," he said. "They want to know if the money came from the opposition groups overseas."

The New York-based Committee for the Protection of Journalists (CPJ) today "strongly condemned" the arrest on Wednesday of freelance journalist and blogger Pai Soe Oo, reportedly a member of Lin Latt Kyae.

"Burma's military government claims to be moving toward democracy, yet it continues to routinely arrest and detain

journalists," said Shawn W. Crispin, CPJ's senior Southeast Asia representative. "Reducing international pressure should require demonstrable improvements in press freedom."

San Moe Wei, secretary of the Burma Media Association, said that the numbers of journalists being arrested in the run-up to elections would likely increase.

"The government doesn't like its operations exposed to foreign media so I'm sure we'll see many more," he said.

Reporting by Than Win Htut and Francis Wade

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Zin Linn <zinlinn@cscoms.com>[NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] NCGUB: News & Articles 09. Oct 2009

## Myanmar opposition leader holds rare talks with diplomats

**Summary By : dpa** <<http://www.earthtimes.org/articles/show/289371,myanmar-opposition-leader-holds-rare-talks-with-diplomats--summary.html>>

Yangon - Myanmar pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi on Friday held a rare meeting with foreign diplomats, presumably to discuss Western sanctions imposed on the pariah state, sources said. Suu Kyi was escorted from her home-cum-prison Friday morning to the state-owned Seinle Kantha Guesthouse where she met with US acting Charge d'Affaires Thomas Vajda, British Ambassador Andrew Heyn, who represented the European Union, and Australian Deputy Head of Mission Simon Christopher Starr, government sources said.

The surprise meeting followed two sessions of talks between Suu Kyi and junta liaison Relations Minister Aung Kyi earlier this month to discuss her proposal to help end sanctions against the regime that has kept her under house arrest for 14 years.

"While we welcome the opportunity to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi, we continue to urge Burmese authorities to release her and all other political prisoners from detention immediately and without condition," said US embassy spokesman Drake A Weisert following the one-hour meeting.

Details on the talks were not immediately available.

Government sources confirmed, however, that the meetings were about Suu Kyi's September 25 letter to junta leader Senior General Than Shwe, offering to help persuade Western democracies to lift their economic sanctions.

Suu Kyi, 64, the leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) opposition party, has spent 14 of the past 20 years under house arrest and is currently serving another 18-month sentence in her family compound.

In her letter, Suu Kyi asked permission to meet with Western diplomats and expressed willingness to cooperate with the junta regarding the sanctions issue if three points were discussed: which countries imposed economic sanctions, their impact and the reason why they were imposed.

International 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 the European Union have increased their sanctions as the junta first refused to acknowledge the NLD's victory in the 1990 elections, and then arrested critics and suppressed all forms of dissent. Many of the sanctions target the top generals specifically.

Earlier this year, Than Shwe hinted that he would be willing to open a political dialogue with Suu Kyi if she agreed to cooperate on the sanctions issue.

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.

Washington recently announced a new policy of greater "engagement" with Myanmar. It is calling on the military to improve its human rights record, allow democratic reforms and release political prisoners ahead of a planned general election in 2010.

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"Burma\_news" <[burma\\_news@verizon.net](mailto:burma_news@verizon.net)> - „EBO“ euro-burma-office - Fri, 30. Oct 2009 05:04:43

**Associated Press – 29 October 2009**

## Myanmar opposition head unhappy with restrictions

YANGON, Myanmar – Detained Myanmar opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi is unhappy about restrictions on the visitors she is allowed under house arrest, including members of her legal team and an architect needed to help repair her dilapidated lakeside home.

Nyan Win, one of her lawyers, said after meeting with her Thursday that she complained that the ruling military junta is infringing upon her rights.

Suu Kyi "has asked us to send a letter to the authorities to allow all four lawyers to meet her at once and to meet the architect," said Nyan Win, who along with fellow lawyer Kyi Win met with her to discuss an appeal of her most recent sentence of house arrest.

"She said this is her personal right and authorities had no right to limit them," he said.

Suu Kyi said she would prefer to listen to the views of more lawyers and that she needs an architect to help repair the two-story house where she is confined, Nyan Win said.

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The Irrawaddy - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/highlight.php?art\\_id=17107](http://www.irrawaddy.org/highlight.php?art_id=17107)> - <[www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org)>

## US Officials to Meet Junta, Opposition Leaders

By LAWI WENG      Saturday, October 31, 2009 - [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org)

A US delegation led by two senior officials will meet Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other executive members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) next week, a spokesperson for the party confirmed.

The US State Department reported on Friday that Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell and his deputy, Scot Marciel, will be in Burma on Tuesday and Wednesday to meet Burmese junta officials, detained Nobel laureate Suu Kyi and ethnic leaders.



US Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell (Photo: Getty Images)

"Our executive committee members have already prepared what to discuss when they come. We were told that they will meet us on Nov. 4 at our headquarters," party spokesman Nyan Win told The Irrawaddy on Saturday, adding that arrangements for the meeting were made by the US embassy in Rangoon.

According to Nyan Win, the US officials will hold a separate meeting with Suu Kyi. Another NLD source said that the delegation had requested permission from the Burmese regime to meet with Suu Kyi in her home instead of in a government guest house, where she usually meets with diplomats.

It will be the first visit to Burma by a senior delegation from the US State Department in more than a decade. The last senior US official to travel to the country was Madeleine Albright, who visited in 1995 when she was the US ambassador to the United Nations.

The US delegation is likely to meet Science and Technology Minister U Thaung, who is a former ambassador to Washington, during the trip. Campbell met him in New York in late September, soon after the US announced its new policy of engagement with the Burmese regime. However, he is unlikely to meet junta chief Snr-Gen Than Shwe.

The topics of the meetings with the military regime will probably include US sanctions on Burma, the junta's planned election in 2010 and the participation of Suu Kyi and opposition groups in the election.

Nyan Win said the NLD welcomes the trip, but doesn't expect it to result in any major changes. "We believe this is just first step," he said.

Suu Kyi's lawyer, Kyi Win, said on Thursday that she is "keenly monitoring" the planned visit.

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The Irrawaddy - <<http://www.irrawaddy.org>> - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/highlight.php?art\\_id=17133](http://www.irrawaddy.org/highlight.php?art_id=17133)>

## Suu Kyi, Campbell Hold Two-hour Meeting

By WAI MOE      Wednesday, November 4, 2009

Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi met with a delegation led by US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell at Inya Lake Hotel in Rangoon for two hours today, according to US officials.

US Embassy officials in Rangoon said the meeting started 11:40 am local time at the hotel and ended at 1:40 pm.



Aung San Suu Kyi arrives for a meeting with US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Kurt Campbell at the Inya Lake Hotel in Rangoon, on November 4. (Photo: Reuters)

Earlier today, the visiting US delegation met with Burmese Prime Minister Gen Thein Sein before flying to Rangoon for talks with Suu Kyi.

An official with the US Embassy in Rangoon, speaking on condition of anonymity, told The Irrawaddy that the meeting between Thein Sein and Campbell proceeded as scheduled. Campbell will hold a press conference at Rangoon International Airport at 6:30 pm local time.

Campbell's meeting with Thein Sein was the first between a senior US official and a Burmese prime minister in more than a decade.

At last month's summit meeting of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean), Thein Sein told his Asean counterparts that Suu Kyi has a role to play in the national reconciliation process.

Responding to Thein Sein's statement, Win Tin, a prominent leader of the opposition National League for Democracy (NLD), said that if Suu Kyi has a role to play in the national conciliation process, the junta has to prove it practically.

Shortly after his arrival in Rangoon on Wednesday morning, Campbell was scheduled to meet Suu Kyi at the city's Inya Lake Hotel. Following the meeting with Suu Kyi, the US delegation will meet with ethnic and opposition leaders on Wednesday afternoon.

NLD spokesman Nyan Win said six of the nine members of the party's central executive committee, including Win Tin and Khin Maung Swe, would meet with the US delegation at the party's headquarter.

Nyan Win said the three other executive members, including party chairman Aung Shwe and secretary U Lwin, would not be able to attend the meeting because of ill health.

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The Irrawaddy - <<http://www.irrawaddy.org>>

## Burmese-US Relations: 'Mind the Gap!'

By **DAVID I. STEINBERG**

Wednesday, November 4, 2009 - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion\\_story.php?art\\_id=17132](http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion_story.php?art_id=17132)>

As a Burmese colleague reminded an unofficial Washington conference on Burma/Myanmar a few days ago, departing passengers on the London tube (subway) were warned to "mind the gap" between the train and platform, otherwise there might be an accident.

That advice, he noted, also has merit in thinking about Burmese relations with the US.

That dangerous gap in relations has widened over the decade and a half since the last senior US officials traveled to Burma/Myanmar. The isolation in direct dialogue with that country has also been reflected in US-imposed economic isolation through the imposition of various degrees of sanctions since the failed peoples' revolution of 1988.

In the past few months, we have witnessed a remarkable shift, not so much in policy but in the efforts to see whether that gap in relations might be narrowed and perhaps bridged.

The present visit of Assistant Secretary of State Kurt Campbell follows the articulation of a new policy toward Burma by the United States, which in turn followed the August visit by Sen. Jim Webb, the chair of the US House of Representatives Asian subcommittee on foreign affairs. These efforts are part of a process, which as Secretary Campbell has noted, is likely to be long and arduous.

The new policy of the Obama administration, released in September by Secretary Campbell, calls for a continuation of

the set of sanctions already set in place, and that began over two decades ago when the US cancelled its economic and military aid program in 1988. At the same time, it advocated enhanced and direct dialogue with the Burmese leadership.

Both sanctions and dialogue are obviously not ends in themselves—they are tactical means by which to try to achieve goals. Those goals, according to the administration, are to see a more democratic Burmese administration concerned with improving the economic and political plight of its diverse peoples.

The efforts by the Obama administration to improve relations with Burma/Myanmar through the visits of Sen. Webb and Secretary Campbell, and the new policy are welcome changes. There have been indications from the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) that they too are also interested in exploring better relations.

Both governments are, however, in effect restricted by internal administrative considerations. The SPDC is wedded to its new Constitution that will continue taut military control over the critical affairs of state through an elective process that, as Snr-Gen Than Shwe has noted, will bring “discipline-flourishing democracy,” a version of the democratic process unlikely to satisfy the unmodified meaning of the term “democracy” to the Western world.

He indicated in his March 27, 2009, speech that as a new well does not quickly yield clear water, so the administration under the new Constitution and legislature will require what is, in effect, a military filter of that muddied democratic water.

The Obama administration is also restrained by a strong anti-military sentiment in both parties in the Congress. As a Washington observer noted, Burma is a “boutique issue,” important but not top tier.

And, as another writer indicated, the executive branch, concerned with other more urgent priorities, leased out policy toward Burma to the Congress, from which it is now trying to retrieve it.

The attitudes, or purported attitudes, of Aung San Suu Kyi have strongly influenced U.S. policy backed by an effective lobbying force of rights advocates and expatriate Burmese. Modifications in US policy will not easily be accomplished without significant positive changes within Burma itself.

Clearly, internal political considerations affect the possible narrowing of the gap in relations that presently exists. But this is the best opportunity in about two decades to explore affecting change. It is in the interests of the Burmese people, the United States, and indeed the Southeast Asia region and beyond, that this process proves fruitful.

David I. Steinberg is distinguished professor of Asian Studies at the School of Foreign Service at Georgetown University. His latest book is “Burma/Myanmar: What Everyone Needs to Know.” (Oxford University Press). 🌀 🌀 🌀 🌀

QUOTE OF THE DAY “The US is prepared to take steps to improve the relationship but that process must be based on reciprocal and concrete efforts by the Burmese government.” ”



—Kurt Campbell, US assistant secretary of State

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[Shan-EU <shaneu31@yahoo.com>](mailto:shaneu31@yahoo.com) - [Shan-EUgroup] Will Mr. Campbell be able to break the ice? - Tue, 03. Nov 2009

## Will Mr. Campbell be able to break the ice?

Tuesday, 03 November 2009 - By: **Sai Wansai**

Kurt Campbell, the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, together with Scot Marciel, the US special envoy to Southeast Asia, will be in Burma from 3rd to 4th November on a fact-finding mission. It is the highest level diplomatic engagement between US and Burma within 14 years.

It is said that the four person US delegation also includes Laura Scheible, the State Department's Burma officer, which is scheduled to meet Aung San Suu Kyi, democratic opposition and ethnic parties' leaders.

Generally, it is assumed that officially Mr. Campbell fact-finding mission to Burma will be focused mainly around two points: reconciliation and democratisation. But weaning out massive Chinese influence and concern over proliferation of nuclear weapons, in the wake of North Korea-Burma shady relations, will also be high on its agenda.

Either way, let us just concentrate on the said reconciliation and democratisation processes, in the light of Mr. Campbell's fact-finding mission.

Reconciliation has been a buzz-word, both for the Burmese junta and the whole opposition spectrum, for quite sometimes in Burma political arena. But the earnest overtures have only come from opposition political parties and non-Burman ethnic groups in form of federal proposal and tripartite dialogue to end the internal conflict. Whereas the Burmese junta has been pressurising and oppressing its contenders, on a constant basis, to yield to its self-drawn, military supremacy constitution, leading to the establishment of its so-called “discipline flourishing democracy”, without

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offering any genuine give-and-take option to further reconciliation.

When U Win Tin, the senior NLD leader, speaking on PM Thein Sein's comment that Aung San Suu Kyi has a role to play, on 27 October 2009, that "reconciliation is more than just a word or concept and must be practised at the dialogue table", he is pin-pointing the fact of junta's rigid, non-compromising position vis-à-vis the opposition camp as a whole.

It is like saying, "Here is our roadmap and constitution. You could participate according to our rules and game plan or you could choose to sit it out. Anyway, we are going ahead, with or without your participation."

As all are aware, the chance of real, genuine reconciliation could only come about in a give-and-take atmosphere and not one party imposing its will on the other. Perhaps, Mr. Campbell's fact-finding mission could dwell on this core issue in details and find ways or mediate to correct the imbalance nature, which is blocking the real reconciliation process.



Kurt Campbell

In addition, Mr. Campbell could urge the junta to take concrete actions to improve the reconciliation climate, by withdrawing its troops confronting the cease-fire and resistance armies in non-Burman ethnic areas, halting its human rights violations, declaring nation-wide cease-fire and releasing all political prisoners to pave way for urgently needed, reconciliation talks.

Similarly, democratisation process, which would lead to all-inclusiveness, equality and rights of self-determination of the people have to be taken into account.

The junta's self-drawn constitution of 2008 is a joke and everybody knows that it is designed to give the military a continuous supremacy role over civilian population.

According to Alternative Asean's press release on 30 October 2009, the 2010 election, based on junta's 2008 constitution, will be a recipe for continued conflict. The constitution has given the military, immunity from prosecution and freedom from public accountability; control over future constitutional amendments; and legitimacy to subjugate ethnic communities.

Again, Mr. Campbell could focus his fact-finding on how people and the organisations that represent them think of the junta's 2008 constitution. In short, it should be viewed in the light of whether it is really in line with the people's political aspiration or not. For without the people's endorsement, which is the heart and soul of the issue, there would never be a democratisation process.

The solution to resolve this ongoing crisis, from the point of opposition camps, could be summed up as, a constitutional review process involving all stakeholders and the election law that guarantee all-inclusive participation, after the constitutional amendments to reflect common practice.

According to the Voice of America report on 02 November 2009, David Steinberg, a professor of Asian studies at Georgetown University was not very optimistic that Burma's military government would respond positively.

Many from the opposition groups in Burma and those in exile are also of the same opinion. But still a lot more are pinning their hope on Mr. Campbell that, somehow, this time around he should be able to turn the corner and make the junta more accommodative than it usually does.

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THE BURMANET NEWS - October 10 - 13, 2009 Issue #3817 - "Editor" <[editor@burmanet.org](mailto:editor@burmanet.org)> www.burmanet.org

**STATEMENT - October 12, 2009 - President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste**

## **Statement in support of a global arms embargo on Burma**

**Jose Ramos-Horta**

Earlier this month, Burma's military regime provided a further example of its extraordinary inhumanity and intransigence, with its decision to reject the appeal by my fellow Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi against the verdict last month which imposed a further term of eighteen months under house arrest. I deplore this decision, and call for her immediate and unconditional release.

The events of the past two years in Burma have shocked the world. The military regime's brutal suppression of the peaceful protests led by Buddhist monks in 2007, followed by the assassination of Karen leader Padoh Mahn Sha Lah Phan, the tragedy of Cyclone Nargis, the sham constitutional referendum, the escalation in the military offensive against

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civilians in eastern Burma, the famine in Chin State, attacks on ethnic groups on the China-Burma border and the trial and continued imprisonment of my fellow Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi are all examples of the desperate political, human rights and humanitarian crisis in Burma today.

The deterioration in the political and humanitarian situation calls for a clear response by the international community. I welcome the initiatives taken by the UN Secretary-General, and the recent statements by the US Administration. I also welcome Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's clear reiteration of her call for dialogue with the regime. A combination of high-level, principled engagement with specific targeted pressure is what is required to bring the Generals to the negotiating table.

It is time for the international community to increase and intensify its efforts. In particular, it is time for the UN Security Council to introduce an arms embargo on the regime. There can be no justification for selling arms to a regime which has no external threats and uses those arms simply to suppress its own people. As President of the Democratic Republic of Timor-Leste, I therefore call on all members of the UN Security Council to give serious consideration to this question, and to pass a resolution imposing a total, comprehensive, mandatory arms embargo.

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Published by : Burma Büro e.V., P.O.Box 27 03 66, DE-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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