

Viewing cable 07BEIJING119, BURMA NEEDS A GOVERNMENT THAT REPRESENTS ITS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 000119

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EAP FOR DAS CHRISTENSEN AND DAS JOHN

EAP/MLS FOR RAPSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/05/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [UNSC](#) [BM](#) [JP](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA NEEDS A GOVERNMENT THAT REPRESENTS ITS

PEOPLE, CHINESE MFA OFFICIAL TELLS VISITING EAP DAS

CHRISTENSEN

Classified By: Political External Unit Chief Edgard Kagan. Reasons 1.4
(b/d).

Summary

1. (C) Burma needs a government that represents the Burmese people and that provides more freedom to its citizens, MFA Asian Affairs Department Director General Hu Zhengyue told visiting EAP Deputy Assistant Secretary Thomas Christensen on December 21. Hu said that China has been "working on" Burma by urging the regime to begin ethnic and political reconciliation, encouraging UN U/SYG Gambari to visit the country, and urging the Burmese regime to become a country that ASEAN could accept as a responsible member. Hu claimed that China had achieved "significant progress" in replacing opium as a key agricultural product in certain areas of Burma. DAS Christensen stressed that Burma's domestic problems remain a serious threat to regional stability and that the regime continues to eschew reform. Hu asserted that the United States and China share a common goal in a stable Burma and should coordinate our Burma policy. End Summary.

12. (C) Pointing out that he did not have the latest information regarding timing as a result of his participation in the Six-Party Talks, visiting EAP DAS Christensen told MFA Asian Affairs Department Director General Hu Zhengyue during a December 21 meeting at the MFA that the United States would pursue a UN Security Council Resolution on Burma in the near future. Noting that he realized China did not agree with this approach, DAS Christensen asked whether Beijing had additional suggestions as to how the United States and China might coordinate our activities to make concrete progress on improving the political situation in Burma. We should work together to urge the Burmese regime to seek reconciliation with the opposition parties and to release Aung San Suu Kyi, he said.

13. (C) In response to DAS Christensen's comment that the United States took notice of Chinese pressure on Burma toward achieving reconciliation with the opposition, Hu acknowledged that China had been "working on" Burma and described several Chinese initiatives. Hu said that China had pushed Burma on ethnic and political reconciliation and encouraged UN U/SYG Gambari to visit Burma to engage on this issue. According to Hu, China has supported and encouraged ASEAN to pressure Burma to engage in reconciliation and in turn has urged the Burmese regime to become a country that ASEAN could accept as a responsible member nation. Beijing invites Burmese leaders to visit China often so that they can observe the tangible results of Chinese economic reforms, he said. Referring to past U.S.-Chinese efforts to coordinate our Burma policy, Hu said that the United States and China share a common goal in a stable Burma.

Opium for Sugar

14. (C) According to Hu, China has achieved "significant progress" in certain regions of Burma in replacing opium as a key agricultural product. He explained that Chinese local authorities near the Burmese border, using funds from Beijing, have worked with their counterparts in northern Burmese states to implement a program to replace opium with other crops, such as sugar. China provides the market for these alternative crops, he said. Hu promised to share with us a report that charted China's progress in this initiative.

Hu on the Problems with Burma

15. (C) Referring to Burma as "not a normal country," Hu said Burma has always been ruled by military leaders. Burma is a Buddhist country, and therefore, he posited, its population is passive. Noting the country's long border with China, Hu said Burma has been a major source of drugs and lacks a leadership capable of controlling the entire country. He referred to Burma as a major problem for ASEAN in its efforts to improve relations with other countries, particularly the European Union and the United States. Eighteen years after cracking down on democratic parties, the regime has since

made no progress in its treatment of Aung San Suu Kyi. According to Hu, one of the biggest problems is the country's "natural economy." He said citizens could rely on nature to provide fruit and other products for sustenance without having to rely on imports from other countries.

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¶6. (C) Hu told DAS Christensen that Burma's neighbors, including India and China, worry about instability in Burma and the exodus of Burmese refugees. Hu said that Burma needs a government that represents the Burmese people and that provides more freedom to its citizens. However, this needs to be achieved in a stable manner, and not through revolution, he said. DAS Christensen stressed that Burma remains a serious threat to stability in the region and that the regime continues to eschew reform. Hu stated that China has "lots of contacts" with Burma and will continue to encourage gradual change.

SEDNEY

<http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2007/01/07BEIJING119.html>