Viewing cable 07BEIJING1269, CHINESE STATE COUNCILOR TANG'S VISIT TO BURMA

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SUBJECT: CHINESE STATE COUNCILOR TANG'S VISIT TO BURMA

REF: BEIJING 1268

Classified By: DCM David S. Sedney. Reasons 1.4 (b/d).

Summary

¶1. (C) China encouraged Burma to accelerate its democratic and national reconciliation processes, develop its economy and improve the lives of the Burmese people, State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan told Burmese generals on his February 25-27 visit to Burma. According to a readout provided to the DCM by MFA Director General for North American Affairs Liu Jieyi, Tang said Burma's internal affairs should be settled through consultation between the government and the people and noted that the international community can provide "constructive help" in this regard. Burmese officials told Tang they are prepared to have formal written communication with Aung San Suu Kyi, to engage with the international community and to continue progress in their roadmap toward eventual elections. The generals' priorities remain domestic stability, economic development and training of personnel. DG Liu's readout was notable for its promptness, provided on the same day that Tang and his delegation departed Burma. The Chinese provided the same prompt readout to our Russian, Japanese and ASEAN colleagues. End Summary.

¶2. (C) MFA North American Affairs DG Liu Jieyi called in the DCM late February 27 to provide a briefing on State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan's just completed three-day visit to Burma at the invitation of State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) First Secretary General Thein Sein. Tang met with SPDC Chairman Than Shwe, Thein Sein and "all the top generals" on February 25-26 before departing February 27 for Thailand, Liu said.

China Urges Reconciliation and Responsiveness

¶3. (C) Tang made clear China's hope that Burma can accelerate its democratic and national reconciliation processes, develop its economy and improve the lives of its people, Liu said. After listening to the generals' description of Burma's domestic situation, Tang stressed that Burma's internal affairs should be settled through consultation between the Burmese people and government. The international community can provide constructive help in this regard, Tang said.

¶4. (C) In addition, Tang said China believes Burma needs to:

- respond to concerns of the international community,
- handle its domestic problems in a "timely and appropriate way,"
- maintain consultation with the international community and
- embark on a path toward unity and peace at an early date.

Ready for Dialogue With International Community?

¶5. (C) Burma's leaders emphasized they are ready to maintain dialogue with the international community. The regime welcomes outsiders to visit and learn about Burma's "true situation," DG Liu said. Burma wants to maintain good relations with its neighbors and especially with all ASEAN countries. Maintaining domestic stability, promoting economic development and training of personnel remain the regime's highest priorities, as these factors are the key to national prosperity and development, they said.

Generals Prepared to Talk With ASSK

¶6. (C) At the same time, the government told Tang it is ready to be in touch with Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) and the National League for Democracy. The government is prepared to communicate with ASSK in writing with the goal of achieving national reconciliation through dialogue and consultation. The generals said they "do not intend to hold on to power for a long period of time," Liu said, and are willing to transfer power at an appropriate time to people who are "patriotic and truly representative of the people's wishes." Responding to the DCM's questions, Liu said Tang did not attempt to meet ASSK, but added China took the government's expression of readiness to talk with her as a positive sign.

¶7. (C) Moreover, the government will steadily move forward with a Constitutional National Assembly and other steps toward eventual elections based on its roadmap for democracy,

the Burmese told Tang. The Assembly will reconvene in the near future to finalize the principles for a new Constitution. The government is committed to "appropriately address" relations between different political factions, including the armed forces of ethnic minority groups. The goal of this process, they told Tang, is to build a peaceful, stable, prosperous and orderly democratic country.

Criticism of the United States and DCM's Response

¶8. (C) Liu said the generals told Tang that the United Sates has made things difficult for Burma, especially by "applying sanctions when it has no reason to do so." Sanctions, the Burmese claimed, are contrary to the self-interest of the United States.

¶9. (C) The DCM noted that after China took an opposite line from the United States and vetoed the resolution to place Burma on the UNSC agenda, China expressed willingness to continue to work with the United States on Burma. We appreciate the prompt briefing provided in that spirit and in light of important upcoming consultations on Burma by EAP DAS Eric John. DG Liu said the MFA looks forward to DAS John's visit.

¶10. (C) Russian and Japanese diplomats told us separately that they and the ASEAN countries received similar readouts on Tang's visit.
RANDT

http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2007/02/07BEIJING1269.html