Viewing cable 07BEIJING1268, PRC-BURMA: MFA ON NEXT STEPS FOR INTERNATIONAL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 001268

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TAGS: PREL UNSC ELAB BM CH
SUBJECT: PRC-BURMA: MFA ON NEXT STEPS FOR INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY AND SPECIAL ENVOY

REF: STATE 20000

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Daniel L. Shields. Reasons
1.4 (b/d).

Summary

¶1. (C) An MFA International Organizations Department official told us that State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan discussed Beijing's ideas about Burma's political situation during his visit to Burma that ended February 27. Responding to reftel demarche on next steps for the international community regarding Burma, the official said China believes that U/SYG Gambari has been a useful Special Envoy whose term might merit extension. Beijing is willing to cooperate with other stakeholders to address the situation in Burma in relevant international fora but stands by its view that the UN Security Council "should not interfere" in Burma's affairs, the official said. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Chinese State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, accompanied by a host of senior MFA officials, discussed Beijing's views about Burma's political situation during his February 25-27 visit to Burma,

MFA International Organizations Department official Dai Demin and Asia Department official Sun Shenyang said February 27 in response to Poloff's delivery of reftel demarche. The MFA agreed to convey our points to the traveling delegation and, later the same day, provided an extensive readout to the DCM on Tang's visit (septel).

Burma Likes Gambari, So Beijing Does Too?

¶3. (C) China believes U/SYG Gambari has done a good job as Special Envoy and that his term might merit extension, International Organizations Department official Dai said in response to reftel points. Burmese officials tell Beijing they are willing to continue discussions with Gambari and think his two most recent visits were productive and helpful, Dai said. Poloff emphasized the need to appoint a strong Special Envoy and questioned whether the degree to which someone is liked by the Burmese generals is an appropriate selection criterion.

Lukewarm Support For Further UN Action

¶4. (C) Referring to China's statement explaining its UNSC veto on January 12, Dai said China is willing to cooperate with other international stakeholders to address the Burma issue in appropriate fora. China's goal in this endeavor is to help the Burmese people, he said. Dai pointed to recent discussions between the International Labor Organization and Burma on a complaint resolution system as an example of progress in an appropriate forum. China stands by its view, however, that Burma does not threaten international or regional security. The UNSC "should not interfere" in Burma's affairs, Dai said, adding that China would have concerns about any country-specific resolution criticizing Burma in the UN Human Rights Council. Poloff emphasized the need for meaningful steps towards reform in Burma and urged Beijing to find ways to cooperate with the United States to address Burma's problems, both within and outside of the UN.

¶5. (C) Note: The Deputy Director-level officials who received our demarche were the highest ranking officials available. Vice Minister Wu Dawei, Asia Department DG Hu Zhengyue, International Organizations DG Wu Hailong and Burma Division Director Chen Dehai are all accompanying State Councilor Tang on his trip to Burma and Thailand, we were told in response to requests for a higher-level meeting. Previous Acting Deputy Director General for Asia Tong Xiaoling has left that position to become China's Ambassador to Brunei, Asia Department officials said. End Note.

¶6. (C) Separately, MFA Korean Peninsula Affairs Director (and reportedly a leading candidate to replace Tong as the next Asia Department Deputy

Director General for Southeast Asia) Yang Jian told Poloff that Tang's trip to Burma and Thailand combines political consultations with a post-Chinese New Year holiday. VFM Wu Dawei was not particularly happy to

be going on the trip, Yang said, noting that the travel to Burma's new capital Nay Pyi Taw was logistically difficult and required a military aircraft.
RANDT

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