

Viewing cable 07BEIJING6395, CHINESE MFA SAYS ONGOING CRISIS IN BURMA STILL NOT

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 006395

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SUBJECT: CHINESE MFA SAYS ONGOING CRISIS IN BURMA STILL NOT
THREAT TO REGIONAL PEACE

Classified By: Deputy Political Section Chief Ben Moeling. Reasons 1.4
(b/d).

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: In a meeting with Western Embassy officials on September 28, MFA Asia Department Deputy Director General Yang Yanyi delivered now familiar points on China's position on the crisis in Burma: China is concerned and supports UN efforts; the Burmese government should "properly handle" the situation; sanctions are not the solution; and the UN Security Council is not the appropriate venue to address the Burma situation. Yang said criticism of China's role in solving the crisis is unfair and "slanderous." Discussing whether the ongoing crisis affects regional peace and security, Yang reiterated that the situation is still only a "yellow light" and that China still believes the situation does not merit UN Security Council attention. End Summary.

China Concerned

[1](#)2. (C) Yang said that, as a neighbor, China is "greatly concerned" about the turmoil in Burma and is monitoring the situation closely. Yang described the September 13-14 visit of Burmese Foreign Minister U Nyan Win to Beijing. During

that visit, State Councilor Tang Jiaxuan, Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi, and Assistant Foreign Minister He Yafei all urged Burma to "properly handle" the situation and strive for national reconciliation. In addition, Yang said, since the turmoil began Chinese officials have met frequently with the Burmese Ambassador to China, and China's Ambassador to Burma Guan Mu "took pains" to travel to Burma's new (and relatively inaccessible) capital to express China's concerns to Acting Prime Minister Lt. Gen. Thein Sein. Asked what concerns were expressed, Yang said the Chinese Ambassador discussed how gas price hikes are "not conducive to daily life."

Working with the International Community

¶3. (C) Yang said China is fully supportive of the UN Secretary-General's activities on Burma and has worked hard

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to persuade the Burmese Government to allow access to UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari. She said the Burmese Government informed Chinese officials September 27 that Gambari will arrive in Rangoon on the afternoon of September 28. In response to a question about Gambari's plans, Yang stated she has no knowledge of his specific appointments in Burma. Yang said China is also "increasing its dialogue" with key partners such as India, Japan and ASEAN on the Burma issue, and AFM He Yafei will meet with the ASEAN countries as well as jointly with India and Japan on September 28. She did not mention the United States.

Encouraging Reconciliation

¶4. (C) China's message to Burma included urging the Burmese Government to "act in its own best interests and best common interests of its neighbors" by resolving the current crisis in a peaceful manner, Yang continued. China calls on all parties to exercise the utmost restraint in order to avoid complication and escalation. China hopes that peace and stability will be restored at the earliest possible date. China has also told the Burmese Government that it should commit itself to taking measures that promote the economic and social betterment of the people, push ahead with national reconciliation, and follow through on the seven-step road map. In addition, Burma should listen to the views and concerns of ASEAN and the international community.

International Assistance, not Sanctions

¶5. (C) China believes there should be "concerted and constructive" international action to help ease the present tensions in Burma. Yang said China hopes that ASEAN and the international community will provide "an enabling environment" to help Burma resolve its problems in a peaceful manner. She added that China hopes Gambari's visit will help in this regard. Noting that the UN Security Council met in emergency session on Burma and that "some members" suggested

sanctions, Yang said China, like ASEAN, does not believe sanctions can "constructively address" the situation in Burma. Sanctions will only aggravate the situation, she said. There is a "strong feeling in the region" that if things get out of control, it will be Burma's neighbors that bear the brunt of the consequences, she said.

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Criticism of China's role unfair

¶6. (C) The Chinese government will continue to work with the international community for a peaceful solution to the current problems in Burma. "All (countries) should shoulder responsibility for a peaceful settlement." Yang said that criticism that China has not done enough to address the crisis is irresponsible, and the Chinese government "cannot accept such slanderous remarks." She repeatedly called on the media to "not add fuel to the fire."

Situation still not a threat to regional stability

¶7. (C) In response to a question on a September 27 MFA statement on Burma's effect on regional peace and stability, DDG Yang stated that the situation is "fluctuating" and the "prospects are unclear." She referenced China's discussions with ASEAN states, saying that China and ASEAN believe the situation is a "yellow light" but not yet a "red light." However, if the "parties concerned" do not exercise restraint, then the situation could turn worse. Asked whether her remarks represent a change in China's position on the appropriateness of addressing the Burma crisis in the UN Security Council, Yang replied that the PRC still believes that the situation does not merit the attention of the UN Security Council. (Note: A contact in the UN Division of the MFA confirmed separately that China's position is still that Burma is "not an appropriate topic for the UNSC.")

Singapore Embassy Report

¶8. (C) A Singapore Embassy contact confirmed that in the September 28 meeting with ASEAN member states, AFM He Yafei delivered much the same message and urged ASEAN to take more diplomatic action. Seeming to contradict DDG Yang's depiction of ASEAN-China agreement on the regional implications of the Burma turmoil, the Singaporean Ambassador reportedly told AFM He that ASEAN believes the Burma crisis affects regional peace and stability and asked AFM He whether the Foreign Ministry Spokesperson statement should be read as a change in the Chinese position. Our Singapore Embassy contact said AFM He "went around the question" and tried to insist that ASEAN and China still agree that the Burmese situation is not a regional issue.
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