

Administration of Barack Obama, 2014

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Thein Sein of Burma in Nay Pyi Taw, Burma

November 13, 2014

Well, I want to thank once again President Thein Sein for welcoming us, not only for the excellent arrangements that were made for the EAS and the U.S.-ASEAN summit, but also the opportunity to exchange ideas face to face.

In part because of President Sein's leadership, the democratization process in Myanmar is real, and we can point to specific changes that are making a difference. Domestically, we've seen political prisoners that have been released. We have seen a effort to end the practice of children being recruited into the army. There is a genuine prospect for a cease-fire between some of the armed groups that have been fighting in Myanmar for decades.

But in our discussions, we recognized that this process is still incomplete. So, specifically, we had the opportunity to discuss elections that are scheduled for next year and the need for those elections to be fair, inclusive, transparent, and that the constitutional amendment process that has begun needs to reflect the ability of all voices in Myanmar's society to participate.

We also discussed the specific situation in Rakhine State and the need to work towards a situation in which the Muslim minority there is protected and their rights are respected and they are able to fully enjoy the opportunities of this society.

And we discussed the opportunities for changes in the economy—legal reforms, regulatory reforms—that can allow the incredible natural resources and talents of Myanmar to fully access the opportunities of the world market.

And I thanked President Thein Sein for his efforts to end the arms trade with North Korea and to participate with us in building a strong nonproliferation regime here in this—Southeast Asia.

So we recognize that change is hard and that it doesn't always move in a straight line, but I am optimistic about the possibilities of Myanmar. I am optimistic about the continuing strengthening of bilateral ties between our two countries. And I committed to President Sein as well as his delegation and the people of Myanmar that all those who are sincere in pursuing reform will always have a strong ally in the United States of America. We look forward to working together.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 p.m. at the Presidential Palace.

Categories: Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Burma, President Thein Sein.

Locations: Nay Pyi Taw, Burma.

Names: Thein Sein.

Subjects: Asia : Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN); Asia : East Asia Summit; Burma : Democracy efforts; Burma : Economic growth and development; Burma : Human rights issues; Burma : President; Burma : President Obama's visit; Burma : Relations with North Korea; Burma : Relations with U.S.; North Korea : Relations with Burma.

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