

## **THE BURMA DEAL**

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September 26, 2016

At the end of 2011, Aung San Suu Kyi dropped her boycott of Burma's elections. She ordered the National League for Democracy to re-register as a political party, to participate in the April 2012 by-election. This reversal in turn reflected a secret agreement, and furthermore it constituted surrender. Suu Kyi, acting as if she were the sole legitimate voice for literally everyone in and from Burma (i.e., including refugees, migrant workers and exiles), sacrificed the country's decades-old pro-democracy movement. There would be no freedom, or democracy, and certainly no human rights.

### **The deal**

The participants in the Burma deal included Suu Kyi, the military dictatorship, the United States as well as its junior partner the E.U., and American and European businesses. The rewards for the dictatorship were immense. As is now clear, five years later, the generals would not have to yield any political power. They would retain control of the most important ministries and functions of the government, and their fraudulently passed 2008 Constitution which guarantees them this power would not be changed. They would not be prosecuted for any of their countless crimes. Even more, they would retain the impunity to commit additional crimes, and which their soldiers, police and other agents continue to do on a daily basis (notably against the Rohingya and other ethnic nationalities). There would be no peace. Instead, they would retain the right, which they freely exercise, to launch attacks against anyone and at any time. And, they would not have to forfeit any of the huge sums of money that they have stolen, including through cronies and business partners, both domestic and international. Moreover, not only would this wealth not be confiscated, they would be fully protected to extend their armed robbery - their entire mafia apparatus of regime and business cronies would remain intact (and is actually being expanded). In summary, the deal was simply extraordinary for Burma's dictators. They got everything that they wanted.

This in turn suited both the governments of the U.S. and Europe - who were the parties that persuaded Suu Kyi to capitulate, and the corporations which they serve. Western policy on Burma has always backed the dictators, dating to when Ne Win seized power in 1962. The West used him as a bulwark against Chinese communist expansionism, in the process overlooking his totalitarian rule and crimes against humanity, again most notably against the country's ethnic nationalities. Western corporations then piggy-backed on this policy, to gain access to Burma's resources, beginning with its natural gas. Total, Unocal (later acquired by Chevron), and other energy companies made billions of dollars producing and selling the gas. They stole this massive wealth from the people - they continue to steal it to this day, sharing it with the dictatorship and which for its part uses it to fund its national repression.

The latest iteration of this relationship, between the West and the regime, is also supposedly driven by security - a resurgence of the need to contain China, but this is a fallacy. At any time after 1988, when the West seemingly changed its policy in response to that year's August massacre, Washington and Brussels could have shifted their support to the ethnic resistance forces, and helped them defeat the dictatorship once and for all. But during that period, apparently, countering China much less helping the people of Burma was not a priority. Even with the massacre, the West was unwilling to renounce its long-standing alliance.

Indeed, in 2003 Dictator Watch organized a project and asked Washington for funding to solicit 8,000 deserters from the 25,000 Burma Army soldiers that were in Karen State at the time. (The money was to buy their guns, the barrels of which were to be bent to render them useless.) The Army was weak at that time, having suffered major battlefield losses, and such an effort would have toppled it from within - the initiative was called House of Cards, without another shot being fired. We even used the China argument in our presentation. Help Burma free itself, on humanitarian grounds, and you will have two major regional allies, Burma and Thailand, on your side and not China's, and in the fastest growing region in the world.

We were refused point blank.

Now, though, China containment is seemingly essential. At least that's what they say. More realistically, however, it is about business. The status quo in Burma, while satisfactory, was still lacking. There was so much more to exploit! In other words, the country is a fruit that is finally ripe and ready to be picked - more accurately, a virgin who has come of age and is ready to be raped. There are countless international rapists ready to go.

The United States has ended the bulk of its sanctions. The Burma Deal is therefore closed. The military dictatorship will not be confronted, the war will continue, and democracy will proceed in name only. Full scale trade and business, even some day of weaponry to the dictators, can begin.

This is Obama's legacy on Burma. And, it is all the more shocking when you remember that Norway actually gave him the Peace Prize!

Personally, when I think about what has happened in the country, I am disgusted beyond words. I know that Than Shwe and his minions are vile, the worst of the worst, but to see everyone so happily embrace them, it makes me want to throw up. I really don't understand these people - the international carpetbaggers. Is having more money in your bank account and a larger house or apartment really that important? Does your personal selfishness really overwhelm the fact that you are aiding and abetting a gang of serial killers?

## **The Suu Kyi pardon**

This brings us to Suu Kyi. Her reward for sacrificing the people of Burma is clear. She gets power, or at least the appearance of power. More importantly, she retains her fame. Had she continued to boycott the elections, the battle between the dictators and the democrats would have proceeded - until the pro-democracy camp at some point achieved victory. Clearly aware of her advancing age, and diminishing status, she was no longer prepared to wait. By surrendering this catapulted her once more into the spotlight. She is now engaged in one high-profile ceremony after another. I don't think she realizes, though, that the diplomats who are so solicitous of her are completely two-faced. While heaping praise, they recognize her for what she really is - an incompetent leader and who is easily manipulated.

There is also the issue of corruption. It has to be raised. There is always more than meets the eye. Suu Kyi has accepted money from leading Than Shwe cronies including Tay Za, to help fund the NLD. This is astonishing. It begs the question, what else has she been offered? As I asked once before, what has she done with the proceeds of her own Nobel Peace Prize? While there is no public evidence as yet that she has made investments in Burma's new enterprises, it is certain that such offers have been made. We already know that she sold out her country for personal aggrandizement. I wouldn't be surprised if money was involved as well.

In summary, in return for personal gain Suu Kyi has abandoned her people. She is hoping, of course, that they won't notice this - that the public will be blinded by slight and temporary improvements.

In a democracy, top officials such as presidents and governors have the power to pardon, meaning of criminals who are in prison. However, they use this power sparingly, and case-by-case. For the most part, the only people who are pardoned are individuals who were falsely convicted, or who were convicted of actions which society later comes to realize should not be crimes, or where the punishments should be less.

Suu Kyi is not the President of Burma, but she has effectively issued a blanket pardon. She has pardoned literally thousands of individual criminals and who have perpetrated the worst crimes imaginable, who should in fact never receive clemency. This is such an abuse of authority that it is difficult to overstate. It is literally unprecedented. To my knowledge, no one has ever pardoned an entire dictatorship, certainly one guilty of such severe and ongoing crimes. (It's true that there was limited justice in Indonesia after Suharto stepped down, but the most egregious crimes in the country occurred decades earlier under Sukarno).

So, once again, why did she do it? The answer: Because she was getting old, and tired, and didn't want to fade away.

## **Little Miss Know-Nothing**

The principal defense that Suu Kyi uses to deny the reality in Burma is to refuse to acknowledge - at least in specific terms - that it even exists. This, in effect, is an extension of the well-worn political tactic of “plausible deniability.” In its common application, a leader will instruct his staff to keep him in the dark about specific actions that they undertake, so he can plausibly say that he didn’t know anything about it.

Suu Kyi has elevated this tactic into an entire strategy. If anyone brings up anything bad that is happening in Burma, from war to crime to racist abuse to demonstrations and political prisoners, she refuses to even talk about it. Indeed, as the following examples illustrate, she is truly ignorant. It is not the case that she knows the truth - that she keeps herself informed in private, but refuses to admit it. Instead, she actually goes out of her way not to know.

1. Suu Kyi has ignored the suffering of the Rohingya people, even falsely equating it to the conditions for the Rakhine. To do this, she has turned a blind eye to the literally thousands of Rohingya villagers who died in the three separate pogroms against the group (and other Muslims) that began in June 2012. (A close count reveals that there were thousands of casualties, not the “hundreds” that are normally reported.) These pogroms precipitated a desperate and deadly flight at the hands of ruthless human traffickers, to Thailand and beyond, and the establishment of apartheid in Arakan State with over 100,000 Rohingya now confined in concentration camps. (Indeed, a U.S. Senator recently said that he was appalled at her dismissal of the problem of human trafficking.) Needless to say, Suu Kyi also does not follow the websites of Rohingya Vision, The Stateless Rohingya, Rohingya Blogger, and Kaladan Press (among others), which document the never-ending murders, rapes, assaults and robberies perpetrated against the group by regime soldiers and police as well as Rakhine racists, and which have occurred daily since the last large-scale pogrom. In summary, it is unbelievable that a national leader would refuse to acknowledge properly one of the world’s worst humanitarian crises, and which is happening right under her nose.

2. Similar to this is her ignorance of the Burma Army’s war of conquest against the nation’s other ethnic nationalities, across the north and east. For years, including since well before the Army attacked the Kachin in 2011, breaking their ceasefire, there have been almost daily battles. Through an incessant series of offensives and other incursions, large areas of the country, populated by many different ethnic groups, have been terrorized. Countless people have been forced to abandon their homes, fields and villages, leaving the country with one of the world’s largest refugee and internally displaced populations.

Suu Kyi will not admit any of this. For instance, during her recent trip to the U.S., a Kachin activist who had been allotted two minutes (only two minutes!) to speak to her, abruptly had even that right terminated. She clearly had no desire to get a briefing about the Kachin war in a public place and with cellphone videos rolling. (Similarly, the military regime refused to allow

the Kachin leader N'Ban La to speak at the opening of the Union Peace Conference, although it later relented.)

3. Suu Kyi's ignorance also extends to the international sphere. Following her latest trip to China, she signed a joint statement that included this line:

*"Myanmar reiterated that it sticks to the One-China policy, understands and supports China's stance on the Taiwan issue, Tibet-related issues and Xinjiang-related issues."*

It was breathtaking that she would affirm the Communist Party of China's own massive repression. Taiwan is a free country. Tibet, also an independent country, was conquered by China in the 1950s. Xinjiang - East Turkestan - was an independent country as well until it was given to Mao Zedong by Stalin. China has invaded both Tibet and East Turkestan with a massive number of Chinese immigrants, and stolen their natural resources. This is identical to what Burma's military dictatorship has been doing in the ethnic homelands, and which prior to the Panglong Agreement were also independent states. Once again she appears to be willingly blind to the truth.

4. Another example of her know-nothingism is evident with Burma's nuclear and ballistic missile program, which many organizations including Dictator Watch have documented. In a May 2016 joint press conference with Secretary of State John Kerry, she was asked if the generals had such a program. She joked: *"Well, if they did, they haven't said anything about that to me."*

This answer reveals a couple of things. First, she obviously did not take any time to investigate the allegations, which if true constitute an international security threat, Burma's one and only such threat, and which as a leader should clearly be a top priority. Further, she apparently did not know that a key part of the U.S. sanctions was designed against this program (thereby lending it credence), and that in the just announced ending of the sanctions the provisions relating to military trade with North Korea were among the few that have survived.

As with so many things about Burma, this issue has never been properly resolved. There was extensive evidence of such a program, including with multiple suspected sites and major tunnel networks. What has happened to all of this? I would also like to repeat that it is my belief that the regime's connections to North Korea were what actually prompted the United States' rapprochement. Some ships that arrived from the country and secretly unloaded at night were then known to have continued on to Iran. I have always suspected that for this issue there is much more than meets the eye. I don't think it is unlikely that Than Shwe purchased a functioning nuclear bomb outright from the North Koreans (using the natural gas money), thereby giving the isolated and impoverished dictatorship a large infusion of cash. With such a weapon the Burma regime could actually blackmail the U.S. Further, China would be bookmarked by two client nuclear powers, giving it great strategic positioning for 21st century disputes with the West, including over the South China Sea. It may take fifty years, but someday

I hope the U.S. will reveal what the CIA has discovered - that we will finally understand what happened.

5. Lastly, Suu Kyi also insulates herself from the truth using another broad tactic. She refuses to expose herself to any contrary voices. It has caused widespread dissatisfaction that she has refused to work with other dissident groups, including former political prisoners, student activists, the ethnic armed organizations, and the wide range of civil society organizations that have been established. Suu Kyi runs the least transparent administration of any supposedly democratic leader. She has a tight circle (many members of which are actually from the dictatorship), and ignores everyone else, even though they are legitimate representatives of the people and stakeholders in the country.

In conclusion, to make good policy, and decisions, you need the broadest information possible, and the courage to do what is right. Suu Kyi is running a governmental structure that is pre-meditatively designed to prevent the first. Through her actions, she has made it clear that she lacks the second. Ignorance coupled with cowardice: How can Burma possibly progress?

### **What peace process?**

Interestingly, there was a final step in the secret Burma deal, which everyone - myself included - did not even recognize. There had to be some evidence of peace with the ethnic armed organizations. The West couldn't announce that Burma was undeniably on the way to democracy, thereby justifying opening the doors to full-scale commercial development, without this. But, the Burma Army continued to attack, and there was no chance at all that this would end. The EAOs therefore had to be tricked.

The deception began with Thein Sein and the European-funded Myanmar Peace Center, which tried to persuade the EAOs to accept an unbelievably complicated nationwide ceasefire agreement. This despite the fact that the only thing that is needed to see peace in Burma is for the dictatorship to stop firing its guns. Fortunately, other than the KNU and the SSA-S, whose top leaders had been bought off, all the major and active EAOs refused to sign. Thein Sein then tried a national or union peace conference, but while this was a big show, without the EAO signatures it meant nothing.

Then Suu Kyi did her part. After the general election she both accepted the regime's concept of the MPC, in a new form and with some new officials as the National Reconciliation and Peace Center, and of the need for the non-signatory EAOs to approve the NCA. She also followed dictatorship policy and accepted that the peace process did not need to be inclusive, even though it is supposedly nationwide. Still, there was no real progress. So, she announced - on a rushed timetable (now we know why!) - a second UPC. The EAOs weren't sure what to do, but given that it was Suu Kyi, they decided to attend. (I and others called for a boycott.) It was good news when the UWSA walked out, recognizing the conference's implicit bias towards the dictatorship,

but no one else followed suit. Then Suu Kyi took her prearranged trip to Washington, and - lo and behold - no more sanctions.

We really should have seen this coming.

To put it bluntly, there is no peace process in Burma - none at all. There is only smoke and mirrors: lots of forums and committees and meetings. More than anything, there is talk - talk and talk and talk. But, there is no real negotiation. The dictatorship will not negotiate. It is not participating in good faith.

What we are seeing in Burma is a “democracy process,” but which is also insincere, incredibly partial, and easily reversible, not a peace process.

A real peace process is simple. Anyone can understand it.

- Stop shooting: This requires an on-the-ground ceasefire, but the dictatorship refuses.
- Separate the combat forces: Following the ending of conflict, pull back the troops to reduce the possibility of new clashes.
- If need be introduce peacekeepers to monitor the demilitarized zone.
- Initiate sincere negotiations on territorial and governmental issues.

That's it! That's a peace process! And, you don't need a “peace industrial complex” of paid international “experts” to make it happen.

Unfortunately, no such thing exists in Burma, and it never will as long as Suu Kyi takes the dictatorship's side.

### **Barbarians at the gates**

(All quotes are from *Irrawaddy*)

*“During her talk on Tuesday's panel, Inle Advisory Group founder Erin Murphy—who has lobbied in favor of eliminating sanctions—described Burma as a country with “everything you can think of [...] every mineral, oil and gas,” and “a great labor population.”*

This is proof of my point that the carpetbaggers view Burma as a country that is finally ready to be raped.

*“US Ambassador to Myanmar Scot Marciel yesterday defended the decision to purge the sanctions list, referring to the embargoes as no longer politically expedient and a constraint on trade between the two countries.”*

Politically expedient! The only thing that matters (at least publicly) is trade!

*“In collaboration with the US-Asean Business Council, the US Chamber of Commerce is hosting a roundtable discussion, reception and dinner with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at the Four Seasons Hotel on Thursday during her visit to Washington DC this week. ...*

*The invitation pins participation to sponsorship packages—variously costing US\$7,500, \$15,000 and \$25,000—in which individuals or corporate entities gain an exclusive, “off the record” opportunity to engage the State Counselor and her entourage.”*

Wow. What did I say about corruption? And how did Suu Kyi pay back her partners? By calling for more investment!

The dictatorship won't even end its illegal organizations law, targeted at the ethnic nationalities, or its visa Black List; but, Obama will end the sanctions.

*“Burma’s Navy Chief Admiral Tin Aung San left for the United States on Monday to attend an international naval meeting at the US Naval War College (NWC) in Rhode Island, becoming the country’s first high-ranking military official to go to the US since sanctions were lifted against Burma last week.”*

That was fast!

With all of this as the staging, a false democracy and no peace, the evangelists for development are ready to go. The people of Burma don't need freedom after all, just iPhones!

This illustrates the failure of the development religion, also known as “constructive engagement,” once again. It didn't work in China, or Saudi Arabia, or anywhere. It is only about greed.

The people of Burma don't need iPhones, or even power grids or paved roads, at least not yet. They do need clean water, sufficient food, clinics, schools, and security. For security, they need real peace and freedom. But, development will not bring security. It is in fact the antithesis of security, since its principal impact will be to enrich and strengthen the country's dictators. Who are these bastards doing business with, after all!

## **Fight back!**

To the people of Burma, you have been sold out. Your supposed savior is a false prophet. She has made it clear that she is not a human rights champion, only a politician. Well, she is a terrible politician.

(Having Suu Kyi as a leader is an indicator of what a Trump presidency would be like.)

Your only option is to fight back, until the Suu Kyi era ends. (It will end!) For now, you must do everything you can to ensure that she damages the future of your country, and of your children and grandchildren, as little as possible.

For the ethnic armed organizations, you have been tricked. Suu Kyi will never help your people achieve peace. You don't have to oppose her directly, but you must continue to fight the dictatorship, and offensively whenever and wherever possible. A good Burma Army soldier is a dead Burma Army soldier.

Demand that the ethnic census results be released. Then you will see the extent of her duplicity.

Strategically, it is essential that the corrupt Mutu Say Poe clique be defeated at the upcoming KNU Congress. Then the EAOs can be reunified from the south to the north. At that point, the Federal Army can finally be established. Further, in addition to defending your towns and villages, you must continue to prevent major regime projects. Don't allow any new dams, or mines, or pipelines. Retake the Asian Highway, and stop Dawei.

For all the people of Burma, it is imperative to recognize Suu Kyi for who she really is. (We cannot wait for the judgment of history.) You do not have to be ignorant as well. (Please visit <http://www.dictatorwatch.org/burmadeathwatch.html> ) Oppose every one of her actions to appease the dictatorship and international diplomats and corporations. Take to the streets and protest land thefts, wage thefts, any and all repression, and new commercial and natural resource projects.

More than anything, do not let yourself be abused. You know when you are being abused. Don't tolerate it. Fight back, every single time. When international profiteers like Erin Murphy realize that you are not such gullible marks, they will back off. They are after easy money. If it's not easy, they will give up.

## **After Suu Kyi**

It should be clear by now that I detest Aung San Suu Kyi. This wasn't always the case. My first visit to Burma was in the autumn of 1994. I only went after it had become clear that she was going to be released from house arrest (she had just met Than Shwe and Khin Nyunt, and was

ultimately released in July 1995). I admired her, including her rare shows of defiance such as the standoff at the bridge outside Rangoon (I believe in 2000).

Over time, though, I became suspicious. During those periods when she had more freedom, I wondered why she never mentioned the regime's targeting of the ethnic nationalities, much less contacted the EAOs (if only clandestinely). Why did she insist on such a rigid demarcation between her NLD and the ethnic resistance? Wouldn't it be better to work together?

Ultimately, I came to realize, as did others, that she was biased against the ethnic nationality groups; that she accepted the dictatorship's claim of Burman superiority and the need for a unitary, non-federal state; and that she was autocratic as well. This was so sad. There were other good leaders in the NLD, foremost Win Tin (who was finally released as well, and not from house arrest but actual prison). But, and with that Peace Prize in her pocket, she dominated the NLD. Her way was the only way.

Suu Kyi serves as the dictatorship's "cooler." Her job is to dampen public expectations and hopes. She has done an excellent job at this, and through it she has stabbed the pro-democracy movement in the back. This is why I detest her. Some people are terrible, like the aforementioned serial killers and Than Shwe, but you know they are terrible and it is usually obvious that they know it as well. Far worse, though, are people who pretend to be good, but who in secret are not, and who openly accept public admiration. They, to me, are the real worst of the worst. Suu Kyi didn't start out this way, but it is who she has become.

We must her reject her argument that this is the only option, to beg and bribe the generals to allow democracy. This is bullshit! It is true believer pacifism combined with corruption. It will never work.

It is the height of irony that in the 2015 election countless people, foremost ethnic nationality people, voted for Suu Kyi and the NLD not because they supported her, but as a protest against the dictatorship. How could they have imagined that there was no real choice - that they were actually voting for the dictatorship as well?

To repeat, she won't be around forever. She will either die, or develop dementia. And, once she is gone, everything will change. The multitude of people who have been silenced - pacified by Suu Kyi - will regain their voices. They will be heard at last, and the final confrontation will begin.

For now, we need to minimize the damage while she is still in the picture. One of the best ways to do this would be to organize a public movement calling for the nationalization of all dictatorship-owned properties and wealth. The people of Burma are poor but the generals and their cronies are not. There needs to be a massive redistribution of wealth from the latter to the former. Through confiscating these assets and directing them to the aforementioned basic needs for water, food, clinics and schools, Burma can most quickly escape its appalling poverty. (Such a movement will frighten away the profiteers as well.)