



Burma

Burma

17 November 2010

QUOTABLE DAW SUU

By ALTSEAN BURMA

After her release from seven years under house arrest, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has spoken on a wide range of issues concerning the past, present, and future of Burma. What follows is a summary of the statements she made in the 48 hours that followed her 13 November release.

On the 2010 elections

"We decided not to participate in the elections for certain reasons which are spelled out in our official statements. First of all, because we did not [think] it was a free and fair election, secondly because we did not think that it is right to just write off the 1990 elections [...] and thirdly because we did not think it was right to sacrifice our comrades for the sake of the party."

"We did not participate in the elections so we have no reason to protest against the results. But as I said earlier, a report will be prepared on the results of the election in respect to the rule of law and equality of justice."

"From what I have heard there are many many questions about the fairness of the election and there are many many allegations of vote rigging and so on."

"Elections should be held in the correct way, and unfair elections do not bring about democracy."

On the NLD

"I would define it [the NLD] to be in the hearts and minds of the people. [...] This organization will continue to exist."

"The NLD is not an NGO. This is a political party. We have never said that we will become an NGO. We said that we will work in humanitarian affairs. Humanitarian affairs cannot be separated from politics. At this time, our people are in need, they are poor, in trouble, in need of help. We will help them in this respect, but this is nothing new, since 1995, we have been involved in humanitarian affairs."

"I don't believe in one person dominating the whole party. That's not democracy. How can we bring democracy to this country, if we don't try to practice as much as possible in my own party? So you mustn't say when I am going to take

control of this party. I hope - never!"

"This party [the NLD] is not illegal according to the law. The case is going to be heard in court on the 18th. The fact that the court has agreed to hear the case means that there is a question as to the legality of the case."

"On the 18th there will be court hearing as to whether it is legal to dissolve the NLD. We will know then. But this will [be] the ruling of the court. As to whether the NLD shall continue to exist, the answer lies in the hearts of the people."

On cooperation with other pro-democracy forces

"Our door is always open to all those who wish to work for democracy. This has always been our principle and remains so."

"[...] I will not only work with the NLD. I will work with all democratic entities and I would like the people to encompass us. We will tell the people, explain to them what our decisions are. There may be things that we decide which the people may not like. But this is natural. Not everyone can be of the same opinion. Accepting that there can be a difference of opinion is a democratic principle."

"I am willing to work hand in hand with other democratic forces in the country."

"We shall proceed in consultation with democratic entities and the NLD shall not go it alone but hand in hand with majority."

On ethnic issues

"We need a Panglong Conference that is in line with the 21st Century. [...] I would like this to be a conference that reflects the feelings of the ethnic groups in the 21st Century."

"The clashes with the ethnic groups are a matter of concern and is saddening. This should not be happening. But we believe in resolving differences through peaceful means so it very saddening that conflicts have to be addressed through battles."

"These problems [conflicts in ethnic areas] are not going to be resolve[d] overnight. We've all go to learn the meaning of reconciliation. We don't want conflicts to be resolved through armed battles. It has always been our policy. We want them to be resolved through dialogue and reconciliation and I am very very saddened that our country is still at a point where conflicts are to be resolved through force of power."

On dialogue and national reconciliation

"I am a fervent believer in national reconciliation. I believe that this is the path we should take."

"I am for national reconciliation. I am for dialogue. And whatever authority I have I would like to use towards that end."

"I will continue to work for national reconciliation among the people, among all of us. There is no one that I cannot

work or talk with. If there is a will to work together, it can be done. If there is a will to talk to one another, it can be done."

"[...] Reconciliation means that you recognize that there are differences. If there weren't any differences there would be no need for reconciliation. So because there are differences, we are very well aware of the necessity for reconciliation."

"We have got to be able to talk to each other. [...] I think, firstly, we have to start talking affably - real genuine talks, not just have some more tea or this or that."

"I think we will have to sort out our differences across the table, talking to each other, agreeing to disagree, or finding out why we disagree and trying to remove the sources of our disagreement."

<http://www.fidh.org/QUOTABLE-DAW-SUU>