

PRESS BRIEFING

ASSK, NLD HQ in Yangon, Myanmar

14-11-2010

TRANSCRIPT

Q: Inaudible

A: I am a little wary of the expression 'moral authority'. I hope that what I do for this country is not simply on moral authority. I like to think that I am part of an effective movement. And I would certainly not like to use whatever authority I have, morale or otherwise, to incite people to do what they should not do. I am for national reconciliation. I am for dialogue. And whatever authority I have I would like to use towards that end. And I think – I hope – that the people will listen.

Q - Inaudible

I've always believe in compromise. I don't where the people get the idea that we have not r compromised. I would like to give specific examples (inaudible).

Q – What is your next step?

A – My next step is actually to get this press conference over with.

Q – John Simpson (BBC) You talk a lot about reconciliation. How is it possible to reconcile with – be in peace with – a government that has treated you so brutally, and so many of your followers?

A –Actually, we have to get this straight. They haven't been treating me, personally, brutally at all. In fact, I have to be honest to say that throughout these years of detention, they have treated me well on a personal basis. They have not acted in accordance with the rule of law and that I shall always fight against. Because I don't think that any country can survive as a prosperous and dignified nation unless there is rule of law. The people cannot have security unless there is rule of law. So for that I shall always struggle. And I believe that to this day that my detention and the detention of those many prisoners of conscience, are not in accordance with the norms of justice. But that does not mean that I have been ill-treated personally. During the years of detention I have been treated well. I must – I do – appreciate that on a personal level, but that is not enough. It is not for one person alone that we move towards democracy, it is for all of us. So I don't see why we can't be reconciled. As I said earlier, I don't know if any of you were upstairs when I was talking with diplomats, but 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.

Q – What messages would you like to send to the western nations that have imposed economic sanctions on our country? And what message would you like to send to those parties and candidates who took part in the November 7th elections?

A – My message is not for Western nations in particular. And my message is not for those parties that took part in the elections in particular. It is for all those who are interested in seeing democracy in Burma. I think we all have to work together. We all have to try to find a way of helping each other. There are times for all of us when we need help, and this is a time for Burma where we need help. And we need help to go forward and we want everybody to help us in this venture. Western nations, Eastern nations, Northern nations and Southern Nations, the whole world.

Q – But how are you going to make a difference, especially after these elections, where your party was dissolved, technically. How much power do you still have to change anything, when they are trying to sideline you in this point of time?

A – I don't think it is my influence or my power that it is of importance. It is the influence and the powers of the people. We have always thought that one of the most important duties of the National League for Democracy was teach how the people can empower themselves, how to work with themselves, (inaudible) .

Q- In what way do you see the political opposition in this country after the elections? Is it as weak as ever before or even weaker?

A – It depends on what you mean by weak and it depends on what you mean by political opposition. (inaudible) So you could say they are weak if they are not in a position that you would like them to be.

Q - There was an election one week ago here. The government backed party won, they say it was fair. What do you say?

A – The National League for Democracy is (inaudible) in practices of unfairness in the election and they will be coming out officially. Until then I cannot say anything because I have not yet participated in the meetings of the CEC

Q- You're now free, Daw Suu Kyi, your people aren't. What are you going to do next?

A –some people are not free, how can you say that I am free. Either we are all free together or we are all *not* free together.

Q - Some people say that during your years under house arrest, you are out of touch with this country (inaudible). How can you now get back to reality?

A – I want to listen to the people. Unfortunately it is very difficult to listen to the people when they are all shouting at the same time. But I have encouraged people to write to us, to tell us what they feel, what they think ought to be done. Some of the suggestions may be just vague hopes and aspirations. But I think we must listen, I must listen, well I've listened to the radio for six years. I think I'd like to listen to human voices.

Q - Our countries resources are stolen by China. Do you have any word for the Chinese Government?

A – Are you from China?

Q – I’m not from China, I am a Burmese. Repeats question.

A - I would not like to use the word “stolen”. I think that there many of our resources that should not have been sold unadvisedly. There should have been more restraint and more care in (inaudible) our resources. But I do not look upon China as an enemy and I think we must not think of China as an enemy of those who want democracy in Burma because China and Burma are neighbours and will always be neighbours as long as this world stands. As to be good neighbours, one has to work hard.

Q - If you were to speak directly to Senior General Than Shwe, what would you say to him?

A – I would say, “Let’s speak to each other directly.”

Q - How long would the government allow the people to stay on the streets, do you think?

A - Well I hope they won’t stay till after lunchtime. I hope they will be able to go home to have lunch.

Q – Do you think there is going to be a crackdown, is what I am asking.

A – I hope not, because I don’t see any necessity for a crackdown. As you can see, the people do make a lot of noise, but there is no violence (inaudible)

Q – Were there any restrictions imposed on you?

A – No there were not.

Q – What about your son, waiting in Bangkok?

A - He’s still in Bangkok. I haven’t seen him for 10 years and it would be lovely to see him right now.

Q – After seeing all these mobile phones what (inaudible) and what is the difference in these past six years?

A – (Inaudible) I haven’t been out, but I do notice that there are a lot of mobile phones.

Q – Will you own one very soon?

A - Well, I used one for the first time yesterday. I didn’t know where the mouthpiece was.

Q- You’ve been freed from house arrest. But your people aren’t free. What are you going to do to help them now?

A – Well we’ve got to help each other, that’s what I’ve told them. I cannot do it alone. One person alone cannot do anything.

Q – According to the law, the NLD is illegal. So (inadible)

A – What is illegal? Oh, this party 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.

Q – What is your opinion of the Nobel Peace Prize for Liu Xiaobo?

A - I don't know very much about him, but as I have been given a Nobel Peace Prize myself, I do appreciate the Nobel Peace Prize and I think that it means that he has done something or many things to deserve it.

Q – When are you going to take full control of this party again? When are we going to see you lead?

A- I don't quite know what you mean by "taking full control of this party". Do you seem to think that I come in and tell the party members what to do, is this your point? It doesn't quite work out like that. (Inaudible) Its not utterly impossible, because, for example, we cannot organize our village and township (inaudible) so we are not as democratic as I would like it to be. But we do try to be as democratic as possible. For example, yesterday we had an EC meeting to discuss what I might say at this press conference. I told them what my views are and what I would like to say, and whether they all agree, and we were all in agreement. 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!

Q – Are you planning to go back to Depayin?

A – I've no plans to go but I hope to go back some time.

Q - (inaudible) on the state of the elections?

A – No not at all, 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 (inaudible) and thirdly because we did not think it was right to sacrifice our comrades for the sake of the party.

Q – (Inaudible)

A- First of all, let me take a look (inaudible)..the landscape is invisible

Q – (In Burmese) How do you plan to interact with the parties that participated in the 2010 elections?

A (in Burmese) Our door is always open to all those who wish to work for democracy. This has always been our principle and remains so.

Q - What is your relationship with the National Democratic Force?

A - It is one party like many others. It is a different party from ours, and there are many different parties.

Q – (in Burmese) Can you comment on the clashes with the ethnic groups on the border?

A – (in Burmese) 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.

Q - What's your opinion about the 1990 election results?

A- (inaudible)

Q – I am from Korea and we Koreans have suffered under a military government for 25 years. We could move out from this situation because of the brave younger generation. My question is – what do you think of the young generation in Burma now?

A - I don't think the young generation in Burma are any less brave than the Koreans were. But our young generation now, has fewer opportunities than you had then and we need to give our young people more opportunities.

Q (in Burmese) Is the NLD proceeding as an NGO?

A – (in Burmese) 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.

Q - Do you think your liberty will be short-lived if the junta feels threatened by you?

A - Well, I don't know them as well as that. I hope that they don't feel so threatened by me. After all (inaudible)

Q – Not threatened by you, by your popularity I mean.

A – Oh, popularity is something that comes and goes. I don't think anybody feels threatened by it.

Q - (in Burmese) What is your first step for the people?

A – (in Burmese) I want to hear the voices of the people, but as you saw, it was difficult (because of the noise). So I encourage them to write what they feel. I want to hear, know what is in their minds. Some of them may not be plausible, impossible dreams, but I wanted to hear the voices of the people upon my release, but it turned out that the people wanted to hear me speak.

Q - (in Burmese) What comments do you have regarding the so-called democratic “third force”?

A – (in Burmese) What they call the third, fourth or fifth forces are not important. What is important is how the democratic forces can come together to work for the people. These are just names.

Q – When did you hear that you were to be released?

A – Yesterday. At one o’clock, they came to tell me that they would be coming to see me at five o’clock.

Q – (inaudible)

A – My next political move? I’ve been moving all the time. (inaudible)

Q – (inaudible question in Burmese regarding calls for second Panglong Conferenc)

A –(inaudible)... I would like to call this the Panglong Conference of the 21st Century. I would like this to be a conference that reflects the feelings of the ethnic groups in the 21st Century.

Q - What is your message to Min Ko Naing and all the other political prisoners?

A – I am always with them. They are always in our hearts and minds.

Q – (in Burmese) I heard that U Tin Oo has been in discussions with U Thu Wai of the Democratic Party. What is the party, that has lost in this election, going to do together with the NLD?

A – (in Burmese) I don’t know about this, but as I said earlier, our door is always open regardless of whether there is participation in the elections. We stand ready to work together with all entities working towards democracy.

Q - (in Burmese) What arrangements have been done for your security?

A – (In Burmese) Nothing. My security is, equally with the rest of the people, the responsibility of the rulers of the State.

Q – (in Burmese) What is your foreign policy, regarding sanctions? Is there any change?

A – (in Burmese)I have not discussed with the CEC and therefore there is no change.

Q - (in Burmese) If the government extends a hand to you, what are your intentions?

A- (in Burmese) I am ready to cooperate with anyone for the good of the country.

Q - (in Burmese) There are rumours that you will be given the post of foreign minister.

A - inaudible answer.

Q - (inaudible question in Burmese) on the elections.

A – (in Burmese) Regarding the 2010 elections, the NLD is forming a committee to draw up a report. I will comment once the report is out.

Q - (in Burmese) There are some parties that lost the election who will be protesting against the results of the elections. How is the NLD going to cooperate with them?

A – (in Burmese) 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.

Q - (in Burmese) What is your opinion regarding the participation of women in politics?

A - (in Burmese) There should be more participation of women. Not only in this country but across the world ... (inaudible)

Q – What is the worst and best moment in your detention? Some good news?

A – (inaudible) Oh the good news is my release.

Q - (in Burmese) What inspired you to sacrifice for the people?

A - (in Burmese) I don't see this as a sacrifice. It's embarrassing when people say that. I chose this path and I took it. To say that it is a sacrifice is like asking to be indebted. I chose this path and I will face the consequences and I do not expect anyone to be in my debt.

Q - (in Burmese) The parties say during the 2010 elections that the people lack political education. What do you say?

A- (in Burmese) Our whole people is behind in education. So it does not come as a surprise that they lack political education.

Q - (in Burmese) Were you asked to sign any conditions to your release?

A - (in Burmese) No. I was not and if asked, I will not.

Q - (in Burmese) The people are saying that you always look so young and healthy and they want to know the secret to your lifestyle.

A - (in Burmese) It is the requirement of my work that I remain healthy until we achieve democracy. After that, I will indulge in becoming an old lady.

Q – (in Burmese) The government has said that the NLD will be dissolved. Will you continue as the NLD?

A - (in Burmese) 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.

Q - (in Burmese) The NDF used the Shwe Khamauk (Golden hat) symbol and so does the NLD. What do you say to that?

A – (in Burmese) We have never called ourselves the Shwe Khamauk party, but even if we were to call ourselves to be called “Khamauk” we’d rather be known as the Bamboo Khamauk.

Q - (in Burmese) What is your son’s visa status?

A - (in Burmese) He still hasn’t got it. But today is Sunday. Let’s see tomorrow.

Q - (in Burmese) Regarding sanctions, you said you will listen to the voice of the people. If the people wish the sanctions to be lifted, will you call for it?

A - (in Burmese) If the people should provide concrete justification for the lifting of the sanctions, I will do so, but they must be concrete justifications.

Q - Inaudible question on border dispute.

A – These problems are not going to be resolved overnight. We’ve all got 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.

Q – Will you form an alliance with the ethnic political parties?

A – Some of the ethnic political parties are our allies. The CRPP (Committee Representing People’s Parliament) is made up of ethnic political parties and the NLD.

Q – What are you going to do tomorrow?

A - I’ve got a full day of appointments. I wish I knew what I was going to do tomorrow.

Q - (in Burmese) If they disband the NLD, what banner will you be operating under – how will you continue?

A - (in Burmese) Whether the NLD is perpetuated is not the issue, the issue is the perpetuation of the people. We would like to have a democracy network throughout the country, throughout the world, by the people – for the people. From the beginning, we have not worked for the perpetuation of this party alone. But to attain democracy and to uplift the morale and qualities of the people.

Q – Do you have any plans to have further public speeches to the people?

A – Not for the moment. We will let you know.

Q - What are your plans for the youth?

A – The youth will be our successors. So we have to nurture them.

Q – What do you think of the new flag?

A - Frankly speaking, I didn't like the BSPP flag either. I like the flag when we got our independence the best.

Q – Is the NLD symbol , does it mean you are working together with the NDF?

A – It may look similar but it is different (inaudible). I believe they have a pom pom on top or something.

Q - (in Burmese) Are there plans to meet the NDF?

A - (in Burmese) We do not have any plans to meet any parties as yet because we have not time to make arrangements.

Q - (in Burmese) What do you say to Kalay Declaration on the second Panglong Conference?

A - (in Burmese) As I said earlier and in 1989, we need a Panglong Conference that is in line with the 21st Century.

Q – (in Burmese) What are your plans for the (NLD) youth?

A - (in Burmese) I have to consult with them first.

Q – (in Burmese) What is your message to Senior General Than Shwe?

A - (in Burmese) We can talk about anything so let's just talk.

Q - (in Burmese) Please give a message to energize the people.

A - (in Burmese) The people are my strength – so they must remain strong. I can't go it alone. I have just said democracy cannot be achieved alone. This is a valuable thing that involves a lot of sacrifice. If it is done alone, it is not democracy. If the people want democracy and want Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to attain it for them, they are not going to attain it. There will only be Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the dictator. Everyone has to have a hand in it.

Q - (in Burmese) What if there is no press freedom after the elections?

A - (in Burmese) Then I must say, what is the use of the elections?

Q - inaudible question on whether there were any conditions to her release.

A – No, not at all. It was an amicable parting of ways.

Q – How would you define the existence of the NLD.

A – I would define it to be in the hearts and minds of the people. I would define it to be a party per se I found it as a movement for democracy, as an organization that will achieve democracy and as long as the people want democracy in Burma, this organization (inaudible). This organization will continue to exist.

Q – How long do you think your aim to achieve democracy last?

A – I just want say that I am not a believer in astrology, although a lot of astrologers are very supportive of our cause. How soon we achieve democracy depends very much on how much support (inaudible)

Press conference ends.

