

TRANSCRIPT: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's public address NLD Headquarters, 14 November 2010

by Debbie Stothard on Monday, November 15, 2010 at 4:01pm

Unofficial translated transcript.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's public address

NLD Headquarters, 14 November 2010

I have to begin by thanking you for your support. We haven't seen each other for a long time but I am happy to see that our mutual faith remains strong, it fortifies me. In order to do our work, we must know what the people want – you do know what you want, don't you? Well it's fine to know what you want but you must also know how you are going to achieve what you want. I believe that politics must be learned. I have often said, in my talks with the youth, I don't believe there is such a thing as good people or bad people, or smart or stupid people, I only believe that there are people who can learn and people who can't (Applause). I believe that we, the people, can learn very well. It's not enough to know what you want but also to know how to achieve it with integrity. I say this not to patronize, I say from experience that no matter what the goal, if the path is without integrity, it will lose its way and be destroyed. This is why we must achieve what we want with integrity.

I know you have lots of questions to ask me and I want to hear the voices of the people but I can't hear through the cacophony. I believe that I will now have the chance to listen to the voices of the people. While under restriction, I listened to foreign radio broadcasts to hear what the people are saying. It is very tiresome to listen to the radio for five to six hours a day but I do this out of regard for the people (Applause). So I believe that I am, to a degree, aware of the wishes of the people. I don't believe I know everything. This is not possible. So the people must make their voices heard by us. This will help us help the people. I believe that the people now realize that nothing can be accomplished without the participation of the people (Cheers and applause). Because nothing can be accomplished without the people's participation, we would like to create a democracy network across the world, of the people and by the people. It is only when we strive with this mentality, can we serenely achieve our democratic goals. In short, it means we have a lot of work to do. You will not get anything without working for it.

We Burmese blame it all on luck. But do you know what luck means? Luck means you reap what you sow. So if there is anything you want, you have to work to achieve it. We cannot simply bribe the people and promise them the impossible (Cheers and applause). We will try hard and pave the road that the people want. We will pave it together and we will take that road together. It's not right that one person paves the

road while the other stands idly by. Speaking of paving roads, maybe I picked an inappropriate analogy (laughter and cheers). It was a slip of the tongue. What I mean is that we will walk the road that leads to the democratic goals. We will walk on it together, we will pave it together. It is only this way, can we reach our goals. Don't wait for others to do it for you. We will not "force" you to do it. If you do not put your mind and soul into achieving it, otherwise, who knows whether it will end up with the tar being stolen (alluding to the shoddy quality of the roads being built because of corruption – loud cheers and applause follow).

I know that your show of support is not without expectation. The burden of these expectations is great and the responsibilities are immense. But I am not one to shy away from responsibility. But I am afraid of not being able to live up to my responsibilities (Applause). I will do my utmost to live up to these responsibilities and call on the people to help us, to advise us, to point out our shortcomings. Pointing out shortcomings, if done in sincere goodwill, is very helpful. It will help us help the people achieve their aspirations.

I would like to ask the people to please communicate with us openly and courageously. Please don't have any qualms about talking to us. We won't do anything to you (cheers and applause). If we are not in agreement, we will let you know. This is the basis of democracy – that of freedom of speech. But freedom to speak is not the same as freedom to be abusive (cheers). Well, there may be a bit of admonition (she laughs). It is very important to be able to achieve mutual understanding. To be able to exchange views. We have to practice this and improve on this.

Upon my release, the main change that I have seen is that there is a proliferation of camera –phones. I see camera-phones all over the place. This shows the development of communication. This development must be used for the good of the majority. Communication brings understanding. Please use communication to foster mutual understanding and unity. Show me your phones; let's see how many there are (cheers). My, there are so many. I used a phone like this for the first time yesterday. Six years ago these did not exist here. I did not even know where to talk into – the phone was so.. (she laughs) (sound drowned out by cheers and laughter). I will have to put up a sign for those who cannot hear me (cheers and applause. Sign that DASSK displayed not seen. DEBBIE'S NOTE: Phoebe Kennedy from the Independent reported "she held up a sign, in blue felt-tip, reading: "I love the Burmese people" with a tick beside it and her name beneath.") Loud chants of Amay Suu or Mother Suu).

But it is not enough just to say you love me, you have to work. So I thought what love means. Love means the desire for mutual happiness and the implementation of that

desire. It is not enough to keep repeating “I love you” (cheers). If you want to give me that bouquet, pass it on. Why are you holding on to it? (Cheers when DASSK receives the bouquet).

I want to ask the people, to tell us what’s on your mind. You can deliver the letter here, if you don’t trust the postal service (laughter). I want to know what’s on your mind. What has been in your mind over the past six years, what has changed. I can’t know all of this at once. I have to study it. It’s not feasible to speak to all of you individually. If possible, I’d like to hand over the mike to you and listen to what each of you has to say. It’s not going to end. But I like that. It’s so boring to be the only one to speak. If there is an exchange of dialogue, it creates harmony and is more beneficial. I feel that it is not democratic if one person does all the talking. Let’s try it out. I will simply point to one of you in the crowd and ask you say a few words.

Persons from the crowd: 1. Together with Amay (Mother) Suu, we want to have a free democracy (cheers). Unintelligible screaming ending with “ I love Amay Suu. We love Amay Suu.

DASSK returns to mike: It looks like we will need a “Speakers corner”. To be able to hear the voices of the people.

(Addressing a commotion in the crowd:) “What is the problem over there? Can I help?” Is it because people at the back are pushing? (Crowd chants loudly) “Please have discipline,” referring to DASSK’s first historic speech at the Shwedagon in 1988. Don’t be so impatient. There will be other opportunities for us to talk. This will not be the only occasion. There will be many others. That is why. Let’s be patient.

I thank you for your patience. As I said just now, there is so much to do so you must save your strength. Well, it’s been twenty years of having a hard life, so you must be used to it. I don’t want you to continue to have a hard life. Having a hard life isn’t the point. The point is that the hard life must be worthwhile, and then one can have endurance. So you must save your strength to make it all worthwhile.

I want to tell you not to be dejected. Sometimes there may be some things in our country that will make you feel dejected. Surely you must feel that we have not gotten anywhere or that there has been no development (applause). But there is no reason to feel dejected. We must strive hard.

Perseverance is important. We must continue to persevere from the start to the finish. The work is never done. Even if something is finished, there will be something else. Building a nation is like this, one thing after the other has to be done. There will never be full satisfaction of the people but we must strive to achieve a measure of satisfaction. I cannot promise this, but with the trust, dependence and support of the people, I will be fortified because I cannot do it alone. I don't want to do it alone. Doing it alone is not democracy (cheers). I have no intention to do it alone. I will do it with the majority, with the people of this country, and with the global community that have shown us goodwill and support. We will do it with everybody. We have to keep this firmly in mind.

Courage means is not what some people think, to be up in arms and being a hero. Courage means the resolve to achieve ones goals. We must have this kind of courage. Go to the movies if you want a hero. Courage is a daily task. Don't we people have to muster the courage to face each day? We have to use this courage beneficially and effectively for our country.

It's not enough to think only of oneself or one's own family. I want to reiterate this. Please don't have the attitude that politics do not concern you. My father has said that before, that you may not be concerned with politics but politics will be concerned with you, you can't avoid this (applause). Everything is politics. Politics is not just coming here and supporting us. The housewife, who is cooking at home, also has something to do with politics because she is struggling to feed her family with the money she has (cheers). Struggling to send children to school is politics. Everything is politics. No one is free of politics. So saying that politics does not concern you and that you do not wish to be involved in politics is a lack of awareness of politics. So I ask the people to try and understand politics and to teach us. We must teach one another. Unless the people teach us what democracy is, we will not make mistakes.

What is important in a democracy is that the people at the back must be able to keep those who are working in the front, under control. This is democracy (applause). The people, who are the majority, must have the right to keep the rulers, who are the minority, under control. This is democracy (applause). So I will accept it if the people keep me under control. But of course, I do not like it if those, who are not of the people, keep me in control (cheers and applause). But then, I only say this in passing. During the time of my detention I had a lot of interaction with the people who were in charge of my security. They have been good to me. I have to say what the truth is. Since one must show appreciation to those who are deserving, I say with sincerity that I am grateful to those who were in charge of my security. I want the people to be able to have mutual understanding and gratitude. A revered monk once said when I was young, that those who were worthy of gratitude and those who showed gratitude were hard to find. I found the latter hard to accept. I thought that

human beings were capable of showing gratitude. But that is not true. There are some who show ingratitude (applause). What does showing gratitude mean? It means just to have mutual recognition.

(To commotion in the crowd): Well, you have to have a little forbearance. There is no question why you have to be angry just because someone stood up. As I said in front of my compound (yesterday) those in front must have forbearance and understanding of those at the back and likewise, those at the back must have forbearance and understanding of those in the front (applause).

So now I want to know how the people are going to embark on a journey of politics. So if we have to depend on the people, we must have an exchange of views. 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. I will take this path. On taking this path, I declare that we need the might of the people. I ask you to support us with the might of the people. Whatever we decide, we will let the people know.

I haven't finished consulting with the NLD, but 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. Why do we do this? We must gain the trust of the people not the votes of the people (applause and cheers). We will gain the understanding and support of the people. I apologize that I cannot clarify this further at this stage but it would be reckless of me if I were to start announcing one activity after the other, just after my release.

In the meantime, we would like to hear the voices of the people. We will decide how to proceed after listening to the voices of the people. But as I have said, we will use the might of the people and work with all the democratic forces and we will work for national reconciliation. In doing so, we will do it in a way that would bring the least damage to the people. I can't guarantee that there will be no damage at all. If I were to do so, it's another form of bribery to say that by following us, there will be no sacrifice. But we will find the least damaging way. There may be some sacrifice, we have suffered, our colleagues have suffered, so I ask you for a little forbearance if you have to sacrifice anything. You can't simply want something without sacrifice.

(Responding to someone in the crowd): If you say you had forbearance for too long, what was it that you had to forbear? It is important to differentiate between right and wrong and to have the courage to stand by what is right, but what is right can be relative to the occasion. My father used to say that he was not afraid to stand before the court of his conscience (cheers). Since I have stood before the court, I am not afraid to stand before the court of my conscience every day. I ask the people to stand before the court of their conscience to find the answer as to whether one is undertaking what should be done. If you can do this, your might will increase immensely. Remember if might is not used rightly, it is a menace. Might that is used rightly cannot be overcome by anyone (applause).

Let us now have a little test of your empathy, understanding and forbearance of one another. The people over there are complaining that they cannot hear. I am about to finish speaking. So can I suggest that the people in front make way for the people on the other side? (Chants of “Daw Suu” during crowd movement) ... So now you can hear can't you? So if one group of people were to always remain in one place – that's not good. (Crowd bursts into laughter as they catch the double meaning of the remark and the exercise). Now that's fair isn't it? (After crowd has managed to rearrange themselves) (Further comments on crowd jostling removed.)

So now I would like to thank all of you who took the trouble to come here and to show your support. We have repeatedly said that we depend on the might of the people and we cannot succeed without the might of the people. This might of the people must be used systematically. When the people in front stand up for too long the people in the back get annoyed. The people in the front shouldn't be standing up for too long. The people in the back should also have a little forbearance if they are standing up for just a while. Well, so what, but it's different if they are standing up too long of course (crowd catches double meaning of the remark and laughs).

I would like to repeat what I said that we have to work together to achieve success. You will not succeed just by wishing and hoping. You must be able to know how to achieve your aspirations and have the courage and ability to do so. We will find the best way. That is to find a way that avoids bringing suffering to the people as much as possible to achieve these goals. I am a fervent believer in national reconciliation. I believe that this is the path we should take. Let me openly tell the people here that I have no grudge against the people who kept me under restriction (cheers). I believe in human rights and the rule of law. I will always strive for this. I don't harbor hatred of anyone. I have no time for this. I have too much to do to harbor any hatred. The people in charge of keeping me under restriction were good to me. This is the truth and I value this and I am grateful.

Likewise in every aspect I would like everyone to have good interaction with one another. How wonderful would it be if the people were also treated as nicely as I was (cheers and applause)? But of course I don't mean that the people should be put under house arrest. So I would like to plead, "Please don't put the people under house arrest like I was, but please be nice to the people just as you were nice to me." (Cheers).

We must value the good things and be grateful things that are worthy of gratitude. Just because one doesn't like it, it does not mean that everything is bad. There are good things and there are bad things. So don't be angry if people say you are doing bad things. If you don't want the people to say this, then just don't do anything bad (cheers and applause). Just as I value what is good and am grateful, I am not hesitant to say so. It's so rewarding to be able to be able to give recognition to someone worthy of gratitude. I want to do this. I want to be so grateful so just do things that are worthy of gratitude and I will sing your praises all day. So I want to thank each and every one of the people. Of course, I would end up with a sore throat.

So let me say thank you. Keep up your strong resolve. People say that the courage of the Burmese is like straw fire. I don't like this. This shouldn't be so. A human being must have all its manifestations and live in human dignity. Do you want human rights? The Universal Declaration of Human Rights begins by saying that everyone is born with inherent dignity. This dignity must be upheld (applause). The dignity commensurate with these rights must be upheld. I don't wish to make a one-sided statement by repeating what should be done for the people. There are also things that the people must do. Everyone must know his or her responsibility and be able to fulfill them. Only then will our country develop. So it goes without saying that whether or not our country has developed, is something that the people will know more than I do (cheers). But rather than blaming who is at fault for this lack of development, I would only like to ask for the opportunities for us to work together hand in hand (applause).

I don't like the people having to hold out their hands to beg. I shall not hold out my hands to beg and I believe that my people do not wish to hold out their hands to beg (applause). I believe that people want the right to development so we must work to give the people the right to development. (Inaudible remark). There must be opportunities for people to be able to feed themselves to the full (applause).

We shall proceed in consultation with democratic entities and the NLD shall not go it alone but hand in hand with majority. Furthermore, the majority must be encompassed by the people. We cannot do it without the people and we ask for their assistance. I ask for your faith and support (cheering). So keep up your strength. I feel bad to ask you to eat up (to keep up your strength) since I hear that you do not

have enough to eat (laughter). I ask you to keep up your physical and mental strength. It is with this strength we shall work together to reach our goal. I would have to say that there are some of us who have lost sight of that goal. But to have to walk the path to reach this proper goal is priceless. Man is mortal. One day it will all be over, but before it is over, how one has led one's life is the most important.

So I take this opportunity to honour those of our colleagues and comrades who have given their lives to the cause for democracy; to honour our colleagues and comrades who are still in prison. Let us pray that they will be released as soon as possible (cheering).

End of public address.

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Aung San Suu Kyi seeks to revive political party

The Associated Press, Rangoon, November 15 2010

YANGON, MYANMAR—Myanmar democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi began the nuts and bolts work of reviving her political movement Monday, consulting lawyers about having her now-disbanded party declared legal again, her spokesman said. Suu Kyi was released on Saturday after 7 ½ years in detention. On Sunday, she told thousands of wildly cheering supporters at the headquarters of her National League for Democracy that she would continue to fight for human rights and the rule of law in the military-controlled nation. The Nobel peace laureate must balance the expectations of the country's pro-democracy movement with the realities of freedom that could be withdrawn any time by the regime.

Nyan Win, who is her lawyer as well as a party spokesman, said Suu Kyi met with her lawyers Monday morning and also party officials from areas outside Yangon who have been keeping her political network alive during years of repression by the military government. He said Suu Kyi will lodge an objection to the High Court that her party's dissolution "is not in accordance with the law." It was disbanded earlier this year under a new party registration law because it failed to reregister for Nov. 7 elections. Suu Kyi's side says the new Election Commission has no right to deregister parties that were registered under a different Election Commission in 1990.

The party did not reregister to contest the recent elections — the first in 20 years — because it believed the conditions set by the junta for the polls were unfair and undemocratic. Full election results have yet to be released, but figures so far give a military-backed party a solid majority in both houses of parliament. Critics say the vote was rigged.

The NLD won 1990 elections in Myanmar by a large margin but the regime barred it from taking power. The legal battle against the party's deregistration was launched in May, when Suu Kyi filed a preliminary lawsuit to have the High Court declare that the NLD remains a political party. The court will hold a hearing Thursday to decide whether to accept the case.

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Burma's Suu Kyi holds talks with party

Newly-freed Aung San Suu Kyi, on 14 November 2010 Aung San Suu Kyi says she wants to hold wide-ranging talks on Burma's future. Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has held talks at her National League for Democracy office, two days after being freed. She had earlier told the BBC she was ready to listen to all Burmese people and to talk with all groups to achieve national reconciliation. Asia's democratic states have called her release a key step in what should be a larger process of change. The Nobel Peace Prize winner has spent 15 of the past 21 years in detention.

In her first interview since being released, Ms Suu Kyi told the BBC that one of the first things she had to do was "to listen to what the people have to say". "I want to listen to what the people want," she said. "I want to listen to what the other countries want, what they think they can do for us, what we think then that they could do for us, and to work out something that is acceptable to as many people as possible." Analysts interpreted her comments as suggesting a willingness to consider all measures - even a re-assessment of sanctions - if that is what the broader democratic movement in Burma wants of her.

Mixed reactions

The BBC's Vaudine England reports that the region has responded to her release with varying levels of enthusiasm. Asia's democracies have issued statements supporting her in what they hope is a broader shift towards democratic reform. "The next challenge now is how to ensure that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her supporters can become part of the solution to the situation in Myanmar [Burma], can be part of those who promote democratisation in Myanmar," said Indonesia's Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa. "And in this connection therefore we wish very much to see her being able to be part of the dialogue process," he said. Satoru Satoh, press secretary

to the Japanese Foreign Ministry, echoed that view. "Now we are expecting the government of Myanmar to take further positive measures to realise the improvement of human rights situation and promote democratisation as well as a national reconciliation," he said.

Thai Prime Minister Abhisit Vejjajiva said it did not make sense "to think that one particular event would be big enough to signal some kind of radical change". "The challenge more is to see how the post-election scenario shapes up," he said.

Thailand is one of the leading trading nations with Burma along with China, Singapore and India. Thailand also wants stability in Burma in order to reduce the flow of refugees over the border. By contrast, China, Singapore and Vietnam, have said little about Ms Suu Kyi's release, our correspondent says.

Some analysts suggest that if Aung San Suu Kyi's release leads to a change in the sanctions against trade and investment in Burma, China's leading role in the economy could be challenged. China and Vietnam praised Burma's first elections in 20 years, which was won by the biggest military-backed party, the Union Solidarity and Development Party (USDP), but widely condemned as a sham. Ms Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) won the last election in 1990, but was never allowed to take power.

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Suu Kyi vows to press ahead in her long fight for democracy

Associated Press, Rangoon, November 15, 2010

Democracy heroine Aung San Suu Kyi took her first steps back into Myanmar's political minefield Sunday, vowing to press ahead in her decades-long fight for democracy while also calling for compromise with other political parties and the ruling junta. Suu Kyi, who was freed from house arrest Saturday after widely criticized elections made clear she faces a precarious position: maneuvering between the expectations of the country's pro-democracy movement and the realities of dealing with a clique of secretive generals who have kept her locked up for much of the last two decades.

"I've always believed in compromise," the Nobel Peace laureate told reporters in the dilapidated offices of her party, the National League for Democracy. "I am for national reconciliation. I am for dialogue. Whatever authority I have, I will use it to that end . . . I hope the people will support me."

Earlier Sunday, she spoke to a rapturous crowd of as many as 10,000 people who jammed the street in front of the office. Though the speech was technically illegal -

any gathering of more than a handful of people needs government permission in Myanmar - officials made no arrests.

Deeply charismatic, the 65-year-old Suu Kyi is by far the country's most popular politician, a popularity the junta clearly fears. Dozens of secret police officers were on hand Sunday to record her comments and photograph those in attendance. "I believe in human rights, and I believe in the rule of law. I will always fight for these things," she told the crowd. "I want to work with all democratic forces, and I need the support of the people."

But she also urged her followers to work for national reconciliation. "If we want to get what we want, we have to do it in the right way; otherwise we will not achieve our goal, however noble or correct it may be," she cautioned. Later, she told reporters her message to junta leader Gen. Than Shwe was: "Let's speak to each other directly." The two last met in secret talks in 2002 at the encouragement of the United Nations.

If her comments seem surprisingly measured for a woman who has become an international symbol of democratic reform, she has long said she is willing to negotiate, even with the junta. "She's made clear to us that she's a pragmatic politician who wants to find pragmatic solutions to this country's problems," said U.S. Charge d'Affaires Larry Dinger. Energized as her supporters are, Suu Kyi faces a military determined to cling to power, and any collision between the two could well land her right back in the situation from which she emerged over the weekend - house arrest and isolation.

Suu Kyi's most recent term kept her under house arrest for seven years, though she has been jailed or under house arrest for more than 15 of the last 21 years. In that time, she was unable to see her husband before he died of cancer and she has never met her grandchildren. But she insisted Sunday her time in detention in a lakeside villa was far easier than most prisoners here experience. "Honestly, throughout these years of detention, they have treated me well," she told reporters. "But they have not acted according to the rule of law, and that I will always fight against."

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'I'm not free until the people are free' - Suu Kyi

Suu Kyi electrifies her followers – and vows to continue the struggle

Andrew Buncombe, The Independent, November 15, 2010

As overjoyed crowds celebrated the release of Aung San Suu Kyi yesterday, their leader gave a message that tempered their jubilation with a call to action. For the woman who has made so many personal sacrifices for the sake of her country, the

message was unchanged: until democracy comes to Burma, her work is unfinished. "If the people are not free, I am not free," she simply said. Despite the continuing risks of taking on the junta, her focus yesterday remained firmly on those whose freedom is still more curtailed than her own has been. One is a young monk who risked everything to lead his robed brothers in protest on the streets; one is a famed comedian who dared publicly to criticise the junta. Yet another is a young blogger who took to the internet to share information about the 2007 democracy protests with the outside world.

Her message was taken up by her supporters both inside the country and abroad. As celebrations of Ms Suu Kyi's freedom continued, campaigners demanded that more than 2,200 political prisoners who remain behind bars in jails across the country must also be released. They said, too, that a week after widely condemned elections were won by the junta's proxy party, the generals' grip on power in Burma looked as firm as ever. If Ms Suu Kyi continues to press her demands for democracy, something she made clear she would do, then it will be difficult for her to avoid a collision with them – a collision of the type that has in the past led to her own return to captivity. "We are pleased the military regime has released Ms Suu Kyi and we support her call to the regime to respect human rights and to restore the rule of law," said Sappho Dias, of the Burma Justice Committee, an organisation of British and US lawyers campaigning for the rule of law in Burma. "We urge the military regime to comply with their obligations under law and to immediately release these political prisoners."

Ms Suu Kyi stressed the need for dialogue and claimed, magnanimously, she held no antagonism to the military authorities who have detained her for 15 of the past 21 years. Yet she gave every indication she continued to see her role as someone at the forefront of the struggle for democracy. Senior members of her National League for Democracy (NLD) suggested it was likely she would travel around the country, despite her experience in 2003 when her convoy was attacked by a government-sponsored mob and 70 of her supporters killed in Depayin in northern Burma. "You have to stand up for what is right," she said.

"Her speech demonstrates her remarkable courage, determination and commitment to the struggle for democracy in Burma. Her emphasis on unity, and her desire to listen to what the people want to tell her, is absolutely right," said Ben Rogers, author of a biography of the junta's senior general, Than Shwe, entitled *Unmasking Burma's Tyrant*. "The international community must put pressure on the generals to respond to her request for talks. If the generals refuse to talk, then she will once again be on a collision course with them and there would be real concerns for her safety, and the risk of her being re-arrested."

So far, say observers, Ms Suu Kyi has behaved wisely, stressing her desire to negotiate and listen, and avoiding making any strident comments. Derek Tonkin, who heads the Network Myanmar group, said she may be able to create some common cause with the junta by opposing international sanctions against the country. "I think she will take things slowly," he said.

One issue Ms Suu Kyi will need to address is possible divisions within the opposition. When the NLD voted to boycott the election, some members broke away to form the National Democratic Force, which participated in the polls. Yesterday, however, the

NDF suggested any antagonism between the two groups could be healed. "We consider her a national leader and she does not belong to any single group. She belongs to the entire nation," the NDF's leader, Khin Maung Swe, told Reuters. "We are very anxious to hear her voice."

Despite her incarceration, the democracy leader demonstrated her ability yesterday to enthuse and delight a crowd, and to re-energise a country. But it is far from clear to what extent the authorities will allow her to reawaken the beleaguered democracy movement. It was pointed out to her that local newspapers would not be permitted to print her remarks, and she laughed, saying that, despite the election, nothing had changed.

Despite last week's election being won by the military-created Union Solidarity and Development Party, observers warn that the junta is deeply paranoid and insecure. From the thousands of people who risked being filmed by the secret police in attendance outside her party's headquarters when she spoke, the authorities will have been reminded of the unparalleled influence she continues to wield among ordinary people.

"All we are worried about now is whether she will be able to get a chance to work for the peace and prosperity of the country," Ba Ohn, a food stall owner in Rangoon, told reporters. "Things could not be worse for us."

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Suu Kyi Calls for Freedom, Reconciliation in Speech

Daniel Ten Kate, Bloomberg, November 14, 2010

(Updates with analyst quote in 13th paragraph.)

Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi said she is willing to work with the generals who imprisoned her and fellow democracy advocates in her first speech after being released from seven years of house arrest.

In a speech to thousands of supporters yesterday outside the headquarters of her National League for Democracy, Suu Kyi called for freedom of speech, human rights and economic reforms in Southeast Asia's poorest country, according to news reports. She was freed on Nov. 13, six days after Myanmar's first election in 20 years delivered a victory for a party backed by the military junta. "I am prepared to talk with anyone," Suu Kyi said in Yangon, Myanmar's former capital, according to The Irrawaddy, an online magazine run by Myanmar exiles that's based in Chiang Mai, Thailand. "I have no personal grudge toward anybody."

The speech sets the tone for Suu Kyi, 65, to re-engage with her supporters after spending 15 of the past 21 years in detention. She plans to listen to the views of her fellow citizens and push for national reconciliation in the country formerly known as Burma, where 2,200 political prisoners are still behind bars, according to the Irrawaddy.

“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,” Suu Kyi told BBC World Service radio in an yesterday. “There are so many things that we have to talk about.”

‘Reconciliatory Tone’

“She’s tried to strike a reconciliatory tone but it’s not going to be smooth sailing ahead,” said Thant Myint-U, a Myanmar historian and former United Nations official, in a telephone interview from Bangkok. “Whereas 15 years ago the government was very fearful of Western sanctions, it’s hard to make the same case now when there is much greater economic integration between Burma and the rest of the region, for better or for worse.”

Suu Kyi’s release meets a key demand of Western nations that impose sanctions against the Myanmar government for human- rights abuses. President Barack Obama and British Prime Minister David Cameron issued statements on Nov. 13 welcoming her release, with both leaders calling it “long overdue.” “It is time for the Burmese regime to release all political prisoners, not just one,” Obama said.

Suu Kyi indicated she wanted to mend relations with several former party members who ignored her call to boycott the election and created a new party to participate. “I want to work with all democratic forces,” Suu Kyi said, according to Agence France-Presse. “I believe in human rights and I believe in the rule of law.”

The junta-backed Union Solidarity and Development Party, formed by Prime Minister Thein Sein, won the Nov. 7 election, a vote condemned by the UN for excluding Suu Kyi and her colleagues. The poll was Myanmar’s first since the National League for Democracy won a landslide victory two decades ago in a result nullified by the junta.

‘Not the Case’

“It’s an attempt on the part of the government to convince the international community that between the elections a week ago and the release of Suu Kyi this past weekend that it’s somehow turned the corner on human rights in the country,”

said Benjamin Zawacki, Myanmar researcher for Amnesty International. “That clearly is not the case.”

Elected lawmakers in both houses will each be able to nominate a presidential hopeful to compete against the candidate picked by military-appointed legislators. Than Shwe, the 77- year-old junta leader, remains eligible to be president even though he didn’t stand in the election.

The U.S. maintains trade and financial sanctions against the regime, and legislators are pushing Obama to start targeting banks that hold offshore accounts for junta leaders. Europe has less stringent restrictions in place.

China, India and Thailand are investing in Myanmar’s ports, railways and oil and gas pipelines to gain access to their neighbor’s natural resources and trade routes in the Indian Ocean. Suu Kyi’s release “marks another important step in the national reconciliation and democratization process,” Thailand’s Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The Association of Southeast Asian Nations, of which Myanmar is a member, called the Nov. 7 election “a significant step” in the country’s path to democracy, according to a statement from Vietnam, which holds the rotating chairmanship. China welcomed the smooth election, Xinhua reported, citing Foreign Ministry spokesman Hong Lei.

Italian-Thai Development Pcl, Thailand’s biggest construction company, signed an \$8.6 billion contract this month with Myanmar to build a deep-sea port and industrial estate. Earlier this year, China National Petroleum Corp. started building oil and gas pipelines across the country, and India approved plans for Oil & Natural Gas Corp. and GAIL India Ltd. to invest \$1.3 billion in a natural gas project.

“I’m not sure Western governments know exactly what they should do next,” Thant said. “With the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, which has been one of their key demands for a long time, this should be a time to at least rethink sanctions.”