

Administration of Barack Obama, 2012

Statement on the Nomination of Derek J. Mitchell To Be the United States Ambassador to Burma

May 17, 2012

Today marks the beginning of a new chapter in the relationship between the United States and Burma. Since I announced a new U.S. opening to Burma in November, President Thein Sein, Aung San Suu Kyi, and the people of Burma have made significant progress along the path to democracy. The United States has pledged to respond to positive developments in Burma and to clearly demonstrate America's commitment to the future of an extraordinary country, a courageous people, and universal values. That is what we are doing.

Today I am nominating our first U.S. Ambassador to Burma in 22 years, Derek Mitchell, whose work has been instrumental in bringing about this new phase in our bilateral relationship. We also are announcing that the United States will ease its bans on the exportation of financial services and new investment in Burma. Opening up greater economic engagement between our two countries is critical to supporting reformers in Government and civil society, facilitating broad-based economic development, and bringing Burma out of isolation and into the international community.

Of course, there is far more to be done. The United States remains concerned about Burma's closed political system, its treatment of minorities and detention of political prisoners, and its relationship with North Korea. We will work to establish a framework for responsible investment from the United States that encourages transparency and oversight and helps ensure that those who abuse human rights, engage in corruption, interfere with the peace process, or obstruct the reform process do not benefit from increased engagement with the United States. We will also continue to press for those who commit serious violations of human rights to be held accountable. We are also maintaining our current authorities to help ensure further reform and to retain the ability to reinstate selected sanctions if there is backsliding.

Americans for decades have stood with the Burmese people in their struggle to realize the full promise of their extraordinary country. In recent months, we have been inspired by the economic and political reforms that have taken place, Secretary Clinton's historic trip to Naypyidaw and Rangoon, the parliamentary elections, and the sight of Aung San Suu Kyi being sworn into office after years of struggle. As an iron fist has unclenched in Burma, we have extended our hand and are entering a new phase in our engagement on behalf of a more democratic and prosperous future for the Burmese people.

NOTE: The statement referred to Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Party Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma.

Categories: Appointments and Nominations : Burma, U.S. Ambassador, statement.

Names: Aung San Suu Kyi; Clinton, Hillary Rodham; Mitchell, Derek J.; Thein Sein.

Subjects: Burma : Democracy efforts; Burma : Economic growth and development; Burma : Human rights issues; Burma : President; Burma : Relations with North Korea; Burma : Relations with U.S.; Burma : U.S. Ambassador-designate; Burma : U.S. sanctions; North Korea : Relations with Burma; State, Department of : Secretary.

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