

There are certain unique circumstances involved in this transition. The large number of ethnic groups in the country, the existing armed conflicts that have gone on for many years between some of the ethnic groups and the Government, and the fact that the military is still a very powerful institution and managing how it transitions to greater civilian participation—these are all questions that we've seen in many other countries both in the region and around the world. And in the United States, we've had to wrestle with many of these questions as well, both in our founding and over the course of our democracy.

But what I'm encouraged by is the commitment of all the individuals here to try to make this work. And I think that if with strong leadership and commitment the attitude that I've heard today continues in the years to come, then I'm confident that what we will see is a completely new day for Myanmar. But the work is not yet done, and the goal of the United States here is to be a strong partner in the process. Like every good friend, we will praise what works. There will be times where we offer constructive criticism about the lack of progress in certain areas or where reform efforts have stalled.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Thein Sein of Burma in Nay Pyi Taw *November 13, 2014*

Well, I want to thank once again President Thein Sein for welcoming us, not only for the excellent arrangements that were made for the EAS and the U.S.-ASEAN summit, but also the opportunity to exchange ideas face to face.

In part because of President Sein's leadership, the democratization process in Myanmar is real, and we can point to specific changes that are making a difference. Domestically, we've seen political prisoners that have been released. We have seen an effort to end the practice of children being recruited into the army. There is a genuine prospect for a cease-

But our consistent aim and goal will be to see that this transition is completed so that it delivers concrete benefits for the people, whether that's improved incomes for ordinary people; whether it means that farmers have greater access to productive lands; whether it means young people are getting a high-quality education; whether it means that religious minorities are adequately protected. The test in the end will be is it making people's lives better. These aren't abstract conversations, and I think all Members of Parliament here recognize that.

So I very much appreciate all of you sharing this moment with me, and it will inform my conversations with President Thein Sein this evening as well as my meetings with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi tomorrow when I travel down to Yangon. All right?

Thank you very much, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:49 p.m. at the National Democratic Institute's Parliamentary Resource Center. In his remarks, he referred to Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Thura Shwe Mann, Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Khin Aung Myint, and Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma.

fire between some of the armed groups that have been fighting in Myanmar for decades.

But in our discussions, we recognized that this process is still incomplete. So, specifically, we had the opportunity to discuss elections that are scheduled for next year and the need for those elections to be fair, inclusive, transparent, and that the constitutional amendment process that has begun needs to reflect the ability of all voices in Myanmar's society to participate.

We also discussed the specific situation in Rakhine State and the need to work towards a situation in which the Muslim minority there is

protected and their rights are respected and they are able to fully enjoy the opportunities of this society.

And we discussed the opportunities for changes in the economy—legal reforms, regulatory reforms—that can allow the incredible natural resources and talents of Myanmar to fully access the opportunities of the world market.

And I thanked President Thein Sein for his efforts to end the arms trade with North Korea and to participate with us in building a strong nonproliferation regime here in this—South-east Asia.

So we recognize that change is hard and that it doesn't always move in a straight line, but I am optimistic about the possibilities of Myanmar. I am optimistic about the continuing strengthening of bilateral ties between our two countries. And I committed to President Sein as well as his delegation and the people of Myanmar that all those who are sincere in pursuing reform will always have a strong ally in the United States of America. We look forward to working together.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 p.m. at the Presidential Palace.

The President's News Conference With Member of Parliament and National League for Democracy Leader Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma in Rangoon, Burma *November 14, 2014*

Ms. Aung San Suu Kyi. I'm sorry if we've kept you waiting. Let me just begin with—by saying what a great pleasure it is for me to welcome President Obama again to my house and to be able to meet all of you.

I would just like to say that there have been those who have been saying that there is tension between the United States and the National League for Democracy or perhaps with me. I would like it—to make it quite clear that the friendship between the United States and those who have been struggling for democracy in Burma is a very strong one. We may view things differently from time to time, that—but it will in no way affect our friendship.

And I have absolute confidence that the United States will continue to support us with regard to the democratic transformation and that when Burma becomes a fully functioning democracy in accordance with the will of the people, we will be able to say that among those friends who enabled us to get there, the United States was among the first.

So please don't think—please don't worry that there will be any problems between the United States and those working for democracy in Burma. We all believe in the same values. We all believe in the same principles. We may

sometimes think that there are different ways of getting to the goal that we wish to achieve, but these differences are part of the democratic tradition. Democracy allows people to have different views, and democracy makes it also—makes us also responsible for negotiating an answer for those views.

I would like all of you to feel welcome in this country, and I would all—like all of you to feel that you can join us in hoping for better days. But at the same time, I always warn against over-optimism because that could lead to complacency.

Our reform process is going through, let us say, a bumpy patch. But this bumpy patch is something that we can negotiate with commitment and with the help and understanding of our friends from all over the world. So let us not exaggerate the differences, the difficulties. But at the same time, let us not exaggerate the rosy picture either.

What we need is a healthy balance between optimism and pessimism. We need to view the situation for what it was. But at the same time, we all have to be confident that we will get there—we will get where we want to get to—because that's what our people want. In the end, it's a people of Burma who will decide