

model for leadership is Vladimir Putin. Think about that.

This is the party that extolls freedom and America and the flag and Ronald Reagan, and whose main criticism of me lately has been my tyrannical abuse of power: that I'm trying to take away their guns and I'm filing executive actions and I'm circumventing the Constitution. And we're going to nominate the guy who actively promotes and admires a guy who jails dissidents and controls all state media, all media in his country, and hence has an 82-percent approval rating.

Can you imagine what my approval rating would be if all those folks lined up in the back worked for me—[laughter]—and I was writing their stories? Wow. [Laughter] I'd be doing really well. I'm doing okay as it is, but—so you've got that, but also somebody who's explicitly tapping into some of the worst impulses in each of us, the notion that somebody who's not like me is bad, is dangerous, is not a real American.

And we followed that path before. That's woven into our history. And it's woven into world history, and it usually turns out really badly.

And we have a Congress that purports to want to be a champion for working class and middle class folks, but cannot describe any concrete proposals that would actually help the working class and the middle class and deal with the challenges of this new global economy.

So I say all this because this shouldn't be close, but it's close. The Presidential race we should win, but Donald Trump got the nomination, so weird stuff happens. [Laughter] The

House we have a chance to win because the Republican nominee has revealed the dysfunction of that party for quite some time. But it's hard. Because of gerrymandering and entrenched incumbents, it's going to be challenging. But we have a chance.

So we have to make this investment now. And I'm not on the ballot, and in 6 months, I'll be a private citizen once again. But I have two daughters, and I hope I'll have some grandkids—not too soon. [Laughter] But sometime. And I genuinely believe that the basic character of this country and our capacity to meet the challenges that all of you are aware of is dependent on what happens now. The stakes are really high.

So I need all of you to step up. And if you do, I think that the American people will make the right choice and Nancy Pelosi will be Speaker again and Hillary Clinton will be President, and Chuck Schumer of New York will be Majority Leader. And we'll have a burst of productivity like we did the last time we had a Democratic President and Democratic majority, and we'll lay the groundwork for more prosperity and security in the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:10 p.m. at the residence of James S. Chanos and Crystal Connors. In his remarks, he referred to Democratic Presidential nominee Hillary Rodham Clinton; Republican Presidential nominee Donald J. Trump; and President Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin of Russia. Audio was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma and an Exchange With Reporters *September 14, 2016*

President Obama. It is an extraordinary pleasure for me to welcome State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi and her delegation to the White House. This is not her first visit to the Oval Office, but it is her first visit in her official capacity. And it represents a re-

markable process that Burma is undergoing.

When I was first elected, Daw Suu was still under house arrest. And because, in part, of advocacy by the United States and others in the international community, but more importantly,

because of the courage and the strength and resilience of the Burmese people, what we've seen over the last several years is a transition to elections, a representative legislature that still has significant constraints from the previous military Government, but is giving voice to the hopes and dreams of a new generation of Burmese people. And as a consequence, now Aung San Suu Kyi, as State Counselor, Foreign Minister, is in a position with her Government to begin shaping a remarkable social and political transformation and economic transformation there.

In part, because of the progress that we've seen over the last several months, I indicated, after consulting with Daw Suu, that the United States is now prepared to lift sanctions that we have imposed on Burma for quite some time. It is the right thing to do in order to ensure that the people of Burma see rewards from a new way of doing business and a new Government.

At the same time, we're also going to be restoring the Generalized System of Preferences, which provides very important commercial and trading advantages for poorer countries as they enter into the global economy. And if you combine those two efforts, I think this will give the United States, our businesses, our nonprofit institutions, greater incentive to invest and participate in what we hope will be an increasingly democratic and prosperous partner for us in the region.

In addition to the political transition that's taken place, the economic reforms that are being initiated, Daw Suu has also helped to convene a peace conference so that the various ethnic groups and armed conflicts that have plagued this country for far too long can begin to be resolved. There's a process of beginning to reach out and address some of the ethnic minorities, including in Rakhine State, that historically feel discrimination. And so there's a broader process of transformation, reconciliation, and hope that has emerged in a country that for decades was burdened by a military dictatorship and closed off from the world.

And I can tell you that when I visited as the first U.S. President ever to travel there, I could

see the enormous potential that was about to be unleashed, and nobody represented that better than Aung San Suu Kyi.

So we are very hopeful about the future. We are hopeful about building on the friendship and partnership that we've already established, not just with the new Government, but more importantly, with the Burmese people.

I would encourage Americans who have the opportunity at some point to travel to Burma, to do so. It is a beautiful country with a rich culture and wonderful people. And I think, if I'm not mistaken, there is a very welcome tourist industry that is developing.

So we look forward to partnering with you, Madam State Counselor, on a whole range of issues. And congratulations on the progress that's been made. It is not complete, and I think Daw Suu is the first one to indicate that a lot of work remains to be done, but it's on the right track. And if you had predicted 5 years ago that Aung San Suu Kyi would now be here sitting as the duly elected representative of her country, many people would have been skeptical. But it's a good-news story in an era in which so often we see countries going in the opposite direction.

Thank you.

State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi. Well, I need hardly say that I'm very happy to be here, because this is an opportunity for me to thank all the people of the United States who helped us along our democratic struggle. It's not yet at an end. We have reached a point where, as President Obama said, people did not expect us to reach 5 years ago, although we were quite confident that we'd get here. But now we have to go ahead.

There's so much that has to be done in our country. And our party always said the most important thing was national reconciliation and peace.

In my country, fighting has been going on for decades, ever since we became an independent nation. We've never known a time when there is peace throughout the country. There was always fighting going on at some time, or someplace or the other. There are officially 135 ethnic groups in our country, and to keep

them all united and keep them all to one purpose is not an easy matter. But we think that we can do that. We think that we can do that because what all of us want is a truly democratic, federal union, a union in which we can create true strength out of diversity, in which we can celebrate our diversity as our greatest resource, our greatest richness. We are trying to do that now, and we are grateful to all our friends—of course, the United States more than included—who have been helping us in this process.

But unity also means prosperity, because people, when they have to fight over limited resources, forget that standing together is important. So we want to develop our material resources. We want to make sure that our people are better off materially in order to strengthen our political initiatives. It's not just a peace process; it's also the commission that we formed, headed by Dr. Kofi Annan, to look into matters in the Rakhine State. Communal strife is not something that we can ignore. It's too important; it's too serious for us to leave even until the next year.

So this is one of the first initiatives we have taken, forming this commission to look into communal strife and tensions within the Rakhine State. We want everybody who is a citizen of our country to be entitled to the full rights of citizens. And we want to make sure that everybody who is entitled to citizenship is accorded citizenship as quickly and as fairly as possible. And this is what we are trying to do in Rakhine. And we hope that the world will recognize that we are sincere in trying to bring together the different communities in what is a very poor state with tremendous potential.

If we could all come together, to help them to develop this potential and to eliminate the poverty that so destroys the unity, I think it would be helping not just one country, but the world at large, by proving that divisions can be overcome; that we can create unity out of diversity; that we can put aside suspicion and misunderstandings, and come to an agreement; that we can all put this together.

The United States Congress has been more than friendly towards our efforts towards dem-

ocratic reform, and over the years, they have done many things for us. And as we all know, sanctions have been one of the many steps they took in order to push democratic reforms in our country. We think that this time has now come to remove all the sanctions that hurt us economically, because our country is in a position to open up to those who are interested in taking part in our economic enterprises. We would like to invite all of you to come to see our country, to see why you should invest there, and see how you can invest there in such a way that you will benefit from it as much as we can.

I've always said that I have no use for businessmen who are incapable of making profits, so I expect your businessmen to come to our country to make profits so that they can make profits for us as well. If you can't look after yourself, you certainly can't look after other people. So we are very interested in successful companies, successful business enterprises coming to Burma, to looking around and to making new use of the opportunities open to them. Our new investment law will be adopted by the legislature quite soon, we hope within the next few weeks. And what with the lifting of sanctions and the new investment law, which I hope will be very attractive to many people all over the world, we think that our country is in a position to take off.

But for us, economic development is just part of the democratic process that we want to encourage in our country. There is still a lot to be done. We have a Constitution which is not entirely democratic because it gives the military a special place in politics. We are very—I am—[inaudible]—personally, very attached to our military because the army was founded by my father. And I want our military to be an honorable institution, loved and respected by the people, and capable of protecting and defending our rights and our honor in this world. But we do not think that politics is a place for the military.

So we will continue with our efforts to amend our Constitution, to make our country the truly democratic union that our founding fathers dreamt of. And we look to the United

States and our friends to continue with us along the road of progress: progress politically, progress socially, and economically. And we look forward to the day when we can say that we, too, are in a position to help those less fortunate than we are in this world.

Now I would like to take this opportunity to thank not just the people of the United States and the United States Congress and all the various nongovernmental organizations and individuals that have helped us, but also President Obama personally for coming out to our country as the first American President ever to have done so and to recognize the potential of our people, especially our young people.

Thank you.

President Obama. Thank you so much. Thank you.

Thank you, everybody.

U.S. Economic Sanctions Against Burma

Q. What's the timetable for lifting sanctions?

President Obama. Soon.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:27 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In her remarks, State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi referred to former Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan of the United Nations.

Joint Statement by President Obama and State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi of Burma

September 14, 2016

At the invitation of President Barack Obama, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, State Counsellor of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar, is on an official visit to Washington, D.C. in September 2016. During the visit, State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and President Obama held a meeting on September 14 in the White House and adopted this joint statement.

Both leaders remarked on the tremendous change in Myanmar over the past five years, during which time Myanmar moved from a military government through a period of opening, held free and fair elections in November 2015, and inaugurated a new, democratically elected government in March 2016. State Counsellor Daw Aung San Suu Kyi expressed her appreciation for the role played by the United States and other members of the international community in encouraging and supporting this transformation, and President Obama affirmed continued U.S. support for Myanmar's democratic transition. Both leaders noted that Myanmar's transition has allowed for a dramatic change in the bilateral relationship, creating opportunities to build a robust, multi-faceted partnership for the mutual benefit of both countries.

The State Counsellor reiterated to the President her commitment to furthering Myanmar's democratic transition by pursuing peace, national reconciliation, and inclusive growth. She expressed her belief that the 21st Century Panglong process, inaugurated on August 31, 2016, would lead to a lasting peace with armed ethnic groups and help the people of Myanmar build an inclusive Union that embraced the country's rich diversity. She stressed her government's commitment to the resolution of the complex political, economic, and humanitarian challenges in Rakhine State and the development of the state's economic potential. Noting that peace, national reconciliation, and inclusive economic growth were mutually reinforcing, the State Counsellor described the range of economic policies the Government of Myanmar was pursuing to develop its economy. She stressed that Myanmar welcomes international investment to help promote strong, inclusive, and long-term economic growth and asked that the United States lift remaining sanctions on Myanmar to encourage this investment and in recognition of the steps Myanmar has taken toward democratization.

The President told the State Counsellor that the primary focus of U.S. policy toward Myanmar