

Myanmar's New "Democratic Dictator": Aung San Suu Kyi

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The Western media is portraying Myanmar's recent elections as historic. One commentator described Myanmar as an "exuberant nation prepared for a new era of democracy and political freedom." But one wonders what sort of democracy and political freedom can be borne of elections in which nearly a million voters were banned from casting their ballots and with the apparent victor already declaring herself above the law.

Sidestepping these inconvenient facts, the West is nonetheless excited about the prospect of Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy (NLD) taking power in Myanmar.

This is in part due to the fact that Suu Kyi herself, along with the NLD she leads and a vast network of supporting "civil society" nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) have all been created and sustained annually by billions of dollars worth of backing [from the United States and United Kingdom for years](#). In exchange for this support, Suu Kyi's long-standing proclivity toward "foreign investment" will lead to the wholesale feeding of Myanmar's nationalized resources, industry, and infrastructure into the maw of the Wall Street corporations and institutions that have long underwritten Suu Kyi's rise to power.

"Democracy" and "political freedom," in this context, appear only to be convenient facades to hide a more obvious and logical explanation for the West's current post-election exuberance.

"Democracy," But Only When Convenient

In reality, Suu Kyi and her NLD's supporters helped disenfranchise nearly a million Rohingya from voting even before the elections took place. Through widespread protests and threats of violence if their demands that the Rohingya remain stripped of their voting rights were not met, the ruling military-led government backed down from a scheme to grant the Rohingya minority long-sought after rights, including the ability to vote.

The BBC reported in their article, "[Myanmar revokes Rohingya voting rights after protests](#)," that:

Hundreds of Buddhists took to the streets following the passage of a law that would allow temporary residents who hold "white papers" to vote.

More than one million Rohingya live in Myanmar, but they are not regarded as citizens by the government.

The BBC fails to mention that these “Buddhists” who “took to the streets” are in fact [the cornerstone of Suu Kyi’s political movement](#), leading every major pro-NLD protest over the years including the infamous “Saffron Revolution” in 2007.

They and the violence they have demonstrated throughout the years, were instrumental in ensuring Suu Kyi’s uncontested victory in recent elections by ensuring demographic blocs were either barred from voting entirely, or intimidated sufficiently from voting against the NLD.

Suu Kyi Declares Herself Above the Law

Additionally, in the wake of Suu Kyi’s apparent victory, she has literally declared herself above Myanmar’s constitution, vowing to make all decisions regardless of who is actually made president under the law.

The Guardian’s report, [“Aung San Suu Kyi vows to make all the decisions in Myanmar’s new government,”](#) stated that (emphasis added):

Under the constitution anyone with foreign children is barred from becoming president, in a clause seen as the military’s attempt to stop her taking power. But Suu Kyi, who has two British sons, suggested she would still be Myanmar’s leader.

Asked what she meant by stating last week that she would be “above the president”, Suu Kyi said: “If I’m required to field a president who meets the requirements of section F of the constitution, alright then we’ll find one. But that won’t stop me making all the decisions as the leader of the winning party.”

Asked if she planned to be president in all but name, she said “It’s a name only,” and after laughing added: “A rose by any other name.”

Suu Kyi’s disenfranchisement of the Rohingya and flagrant disregard for the rule of law demonstrates the very dictatorial traits she has long accused the ruling establishment of for decades.

Whether Suu Kyi agrees with Myanmar’s current laws or not, her choice to arbitrarily and selectively observe some while disregarding others entirely – instead of pursuing change through proper, legal procedures – makes her indistinguishable from the alleged “dictatorship” she claims to be replacing.

In the coming weeks and months, if Suu Kyi’s victory materializes in her NLD’s firm grip on power, one wonders what other laws she will selectively observe or disregard. For Myanmar’s Rohingya minority, the military-led government at times formed the only protection preventing genocide at the hands of Suu Kyi’s ultra-violent saffron mobs.

With the diminished role of the military in government and Suu Kyi’s self-serving and selective adherence to the rule of law, her supporters likely anticipate a free hand in actualizing their genocidal ambitions versus not only the Rohingya, but all of their political and sociocultural enemies.

Not only is the prospect of wider violence a concern for the people of Myanmar, but the rise

of political order in Myanmar unwilling or incapable of stemming genocide spells chaos for its neighbors, particularly Thailand.

Myanmar's Age of Disillusionment Has Begun

Suu Kyi's "promising victory" will inevitably deteriorate not unlike the initially promising victory of Thaksin Shinawatra in neighboring Thailand in 2001. Shinawatra's initial tidal wave of naive support and progressive expectations yielded to a reality of unprecedented abuses of power, the privatization and selling-off to foreign corporations of Thailand's nationalized resources and infrastructure, humiliating geopolitical concessions to the United States, and unprecedented human rights abuses including the mass murder of some 3,000 innocent people during a 90-day police crackdown in 2003.

After over a decade of clinging to power owed mainly to substantial Western support, Shinawatra and his various proxies were finally ousted from power [by a military coup](#). Thailand's painful but necessary decade-long national nightmare helped disillusion the majority of Thais regarding the empty promises of "globalization" and Western notions of "democracy." Today, there stands little chance of Shinawatra or a Shinawatra-like character ever again seizing so much power in the near to intermediate future.

If and when a similar awakening occurs in Myanmar is anyone's guess. However, the paradox of Suu Kyi's pro-democracy facade versus her undemocratic, inhumane reality, particularly her and her supporters' abuse of Myanmar's Rohingya minority, has become so apparent even the West is having a difficult time glossing over it.

Increasingly frequent articles like the London Guardian's, "[Why is Aung San Suu Kyi silent on the plight of the Rohingya people?](#)," attempt to claim Suu Kyi's role in what is essentially ethnically-motivated genocide is mere silence. In reality, Suu Kyi's silence is complicity, and those carrying out atrocities form the cornerstone of her support base, representing millions of votes.

Suu Kyi's trading in of her clearly disingenuous principles and the basic human rights of the Rohingya people in exchange for votes has raised concern even among some of the most indoctrinated rank and file across the West's vast network of NGOs.

It will only become increasingly difficult to continue rationalizing Suu Kyi's actions to fit her empty rhetoric and manufactured image.

As Suu Kyi and her NLD get their hands dirty leading - or rather misleading - the country, wider disillusionment will follow. Should the military or other opposition parties prepare themselves sufficiently, the opportunity to successfully and permanently dismantle the NLD and all its US-UK funded supporting networks, will reveal itself sooner than later.

Real progress in Myanmar will happen when the people of Myanmar themselves - all of them including ethnic minorities like the Rohingya - are able to more equitably utilize its vast natural and human resources for their own future, not that of a handful of special interests in the capital of Naypyidaw, and not that of a handful of special interests on Wall Street or in London.

Myanmar may believe it has shed dictatorship in recent elections, but it is clear they have only replaced one of local and very limited means, with one backed by immense foreign interests bringing with them centuries of experience in emptying out the wealth of other

nations - including at one point in the past, Myanmar itself.

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