

WRITTEN QUESTION E-5936/09  
by Emilio Menéndez del Valle (S&D)  
to the Council

Subject: New US policy towards the Burmese military junta

The Obama administration appears to have decided to change its policy of isolating the military junta ruling Myanmar. It seems to have decided that 14 years of frozen relations have not produced satisfactory results and that it is time to try a new option.

This is why Kurt Campbell, the Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, visited Burma on 3 November 2009 to hold talks with the military junta. In the context of the forthcoming and possibly rigged elections to be held next year, Washington may be hoping somehow to convince the despots to concede an opening for democracy, however small, especially given that Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the democracy movement who has been imprisoned for years, may support such a compromise.

This should not come as too much of a shock if we bear in mind that Min Lwin, the Director-General of the Burmese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, surprisingly stated on 9 January 2009 that the junta was planning to free Aung San Suu Kyi soon so that she could organise her party and participate in the elections.

Does the Council agree with this change of direction taken by the US administration? What is its current position as regards the Myanmar military junta and the violation of rights being suffered by Aung San Suu Kyi and the hundreds of other political prisoners under house arrest or in prison?