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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 006912

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/05/2016 TAGS: PREL UNSC PHUM BM TT JA SUBJECT: DAS JOHN,S MEETING WITH DDG KITERA ON BURMA AND EAST TIMOR

Classified By: Ambassador J. Thomas Schieffer for reasons 1.4 (b), and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: DAS Eric John on December 4 underscored the importance of passing a non-punitive UN Security Council resolution on Burma as a starting point for increased diplomatic pressure on the regime. Deputy Director General Kitera responded that Japan would prefer a Presidential Statement, noting that the international community must be patient with Burma and not push the military regime closer to China. Japan views ASEAN support as key to a successful Burma policy, explained MOFA officials. DAS John stressed that a non-punitive resolution provided the most effective diplomatic platform for the international community to use to affect change in Rangoon. On East Timor, DAS John and DDG Kitera agreed that Japan and the United States share concerns about the deteriorating situation, and will intensify efforts to promote reconciliation among the government's factions. End Summary.

¶2. (C) Deputy Assistant Secretary for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Eric John met with Deputy Director General of Foreign Policy and Ambassador in Charge of UN Affairs Masato Kitera and other Japanese officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs December 4 to discuss policies on Burma and East Timor. DAS John observed that Foreign Minister Taro Aso's November 30 speech on the "Arc of Freedom" was an example of the "common platform" upon which the United States and Japan base their foreign policy. The challenge both countries now face is to operationalize this shared philosophical approach. FM Aso's speech demonstrated Japan's efforts to broaden the horizon of its diplomacy, replied Kitera, saying that Japan seeks to create new approaches to contact "bad countries."

Japan dragging its feet on a resolution

¶3. (C) Turning to Burma, DAS John told DDG Kitera that the international community must focus on delivering a unified message to the military regime. The United States is working with China, Japan, Korea and the countries of ASEAN to build a cooperative approach to Burma. To create change in Burma, stakeholder countries must develop a common message calling for the release of political prisoners including Aung San Suu Kyi, greater access for the United Nations and NGOs, and genuine political dialogue with all the parties, including the National League for Democracy.

¶4. (C) The most effective way to promote positive change in Burma is for Japan and other nations with significant interests in Burma to take a common message the Burmese message, DAS John stated. The best way to deliver this common message is by passing the U.S.-proposed UN Security Council resolution, DAS John stated. This non-punitive resolution would serve as a starting point for increased diplomatic pressure on the regime.

¶5. (C) The international community must be patient with Burma, replied DDG Kitera, describing his long history of working with the regime to explain why he is "so soft on Burma." In a recent meeting in Tokyo with UN Undersecretary General for Political Affairs Ibrahim Gambari, DDG Kitera told him that any progressive movement, however small, must

be put into context for the international community. After 20 years, the Burmese notion of time is different from that of the rest of the world, he said. A softer approach is a better approach, claimed DDG Kitera, suggesting that Japanese aid to Burma in 1995 might have played a role in the release of Aung San Suu Kyi that year.

¶16. (C) Japan attaches great importance to Gambari's access to the regime, DDG Kitera continued, pointing out that during Gambari's recent visit to Burma, the Special Envoy was able to meet with both Aung San Suu Kyi and Senior General Than Shwe. In order to preserve this "precious window" to Burma, any action by the international community should, first and foremost, be unanimous. Noting that Burma was "furious" with Japan after it concurred with the decision to put Burma on the UNSC's agenda, DDG Kitera told DAS John that Japan would prefer a Presidential Statement from the Security Council rather than a resolution. Whatever action the international community decides to take, Japan wants it to happen in late December so it doesn't sideline the East Asia Summit or other earlier regional meetings.

¶17. (C) A Presidential Statement would be a retreat at this point, DAS John rejoined. The resolution is key to "opening a door" for the regime to understand how to reform. The United States already has established broad international support for the resolution, which highlights the value of Burmese cooperation with the United Nations. The United

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States anticipates a vote on the resolution in the near future. When the resolution passes, all countries must "redouble diplomatic efforts," said DAS John, and use the resolution as a platform to engage Burma and create change.

Japan concerned about China

¶18. (C) It is Japan's "profound sadness" that Burma is moving closer to China, said DDG Kitera. Japan was Burma's closest friend 20 years ago, but now China's broad financial and political support combined with a lack of "rigorous criticism" of the military regime has led the junta to place relations with China above those with Japan. All this underscores the need for China to participate in the international consensus. China listens to the United States more than to Japan, DDG Kitera asserted, so the United States must play a lead role in convincing China to support the international community's approach to Burma.

¶19. (C) Burma thinks it can depend on China even if it is isolated from the rest of the world, elaborated MOFA First Southeast Asia Division Director Hideaki Mizukoshi. "Burma has an open door only for China," added Senior Foreign Policy Coordinator Ichiro Maruyama, adding his skepticism that China was interested in promoting human rights or democracy in Burma. Mizukoshi requested that the United States inform Japan of the China's response to U.S. requests for China's support in the UNSC.

¶10. (C) Japan sees ASEAN as key to engaging the junta, Mizukoshi continued. Burma is playing China, India, and the countries of ASEAN off against each other. ASEAN support is essential to the success of Burma policy. Japan will be watching for statements on Burma from member countries at the December ASEAN Business and Investment Summit, and would use its bilateral meetings with Burma at the summit to pressure the regime to demonstrate positive change, said Mizukoshi.

¶11. (C) The fact that China allowed Burma to be placed on the UNSC agenda is a sign of China's reluctance to be seen as obstructionist by the international community, replied DAS John. The USG has expended significant effort over the past year to convince China of the importance of pushing for change in Burma, including the necessity of a UNSCR. The United States also has been talking to the Philippines, Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam and the other ASEAN countries to develop a common approach on Burma. As international momentum builds towards a resolution, China will not want to compromise its international image with a veto, DAS John remarked.

Than Shwe still in command, says Japan

¶12. (C) Hopes that Than Shwe is becoming isolated within the SPDC are "wishful thinking," said Maruyama, discounting rumors that Maung Aye may be becoming disaffected from his boss. Maung Aye's quick rise to power was only with the consent of Than Shwe, and his fall from power could be just as quick. The difficulty in accessing Than Shwe should not be misconstrued as increased isolation, and in fact shows the importance of keeping the door open for Gambari. That is why UN action must "not be overly aggressive," said Maruyama.

Japan and the United States must cooperate on East Timor

¶13. (C) Turning to the situation in East Timor, DAS John noted that fighting among factions has gotten worse, and is

crippling civil society. The major problem is not outside influences, or a lack of international support, but rather the unwillingness of factions within the government to compromise. This sends a bad signal to all of society and manifests itself most disturbingly in the existence of violent gangs terrorizing the streets. DAS John asked for Japan's help in pressuring the East Timor government's factions to reconcile. The United States also wants Japan to support the leading role of Australian forces maintaining peace in East Timor.

¶14. (C) Japan and the United States must share more information about East Timor, agreed DDG Kitera. Portugal's influence there is doing more harm than good, and Japan agrees with the United States that the international community "must be vigorous" in promoting reconciliation. Japan will support the "Green Hat" option for an Australian-led international peacekeeping force, and will inform the Department when Japanese officials responsible for East Timor issues travel to Washington.

¶15. (U) EAP DAS John has cleared this message.
SCHIEFFER