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When Suu Kyi came to power with an overwhelming majority in the elections of 2015, People's expectations were rather high. Barring the Rakhine State, where the NLD had a poor showing, her party had performed very well even in areas dominated by Ethnic Armed Organizations. The belief was that she would bring back the "Panglong Spirit" of her late Father which in essence involved reconciliation between the majority Bamar and the non Bamar ethnic organisations who were 40 percent of the population but holding approximately 60 percent of the land.

Suu Kyi's second priority was to reform the Army centred- Army controlled 2008 Constitution and her approach had been to go gradually as she was aware that the Army is not going to let go its power in the near future. A repetition of a coup cannot be ruled out either. Her efforts to go out of the way not to say or go against the Army has not also paid any dividend. In the aftermath of the Army's cleansing programme of Rohingyas, her reputation abroad had also dipped.

In the third priority in economic development, Suu Kyi's performance has been mixed. Both the IMF and the Asian Development Bank have recently projected a growth of over 6 percent and significantly both have warned as expected, that she is running a risk of withdrawal of trade privileges due to her record in dealing with the Rohingya crisis.

Suu Kyi who had opposed the construction of the controversial Myitsone dam before she took over has suddenly become reticent in talking about the dam and there are many indications that Suu Kyi may finally give in. The people in the region (Kachins) do not seem to have faith in her and just on the eve of her visit to Beijing to attend the second BRI Conference, over 4000 local people in the town of Kanpiketi demonstrated against the construction of the dam. The local people said- Ayeyarwaddy river is their inheritance from their ancestors and that

they cannot lose it.

Some of the Chinese officials have introduced a new element in pushing for the dam and they have said that Xi Jinping is a “strong supporter” of the Myitsone Dam project. I am sure that this is what they may have told Suu Kyi too to bring her round!

It was interesting to note that the Arakan Army Chief Tun Myat Naing told the Press in Pangshong that so far as the Rakhine crisis is concerned, Suu Kyi has become not part of the solution but part of the problem.

Two issues trouble the people of the Arakan State. One was the imposition of an NLD supporter as Chief minister, when the State had overwhelmingly voted in favour of AWP. Second was the direction given at the cabinet level to the Tatmadaw to go after the Arakan Army and destroy it. This has only enhanced the popularity of the Arakan Army amongst the people of Rakhine State.

It is now learnt that the amidst the activities celebrating thirty years of cease fire, the Vice chairman of the UWSA strongly criticized the NLD of Suu Kyi for pushing them to sign the National Cease Fire Agreement. He claimed that the Wa Group had nothing to do with the National Cease fire Agreement as they had signed the cease fire and subsequent two agreements on the condition that they will not sign the NCA!

He then posed a question that while they had signed the agreement at both the levels (Union and State) why does the Government want them to sign the NCA? He made an ominous statement that he is doubtful whether the truce will remain in place after the 2020 elections.

The point he made was that the *status quo* was working well for both sides and so why disturb it with additional demands like signing the NCA etc. What made him make this statement? Surely, he is talking from a position of strength and would also be having clearance from the Chinese before the Press Conference for making such a statement.

We had earlier in our paper of South Asia Analysis Group in 5612 dated 27th November, 2013 by C.S. Kuppuswamy discussed about Wa group in great detail. We had said even then that China was playing a double game by arming the UWSA as more of a deterrent while professing to respect the sovereignty of Myanmar in encouraging the peace efforts of the Government. China continues to play the “double game” even now- while continuing to arm the Wa group to withstand a conventional war!

If China wants a *status quo* why does it not press the Myanmar to continue with a ceasefire? It is said that even prior to ending of the four-month cease fire, the KIA and the Myanmar have been clashing for several days in the Shan State. It is alleged by the KIA that the Myanmar Army wants to control more of KIA territory- to what purpose- One does not know. The two sides are supposed to meet for fresh talks towards the end of this month in Muisse on the border.

Both the Government and the Army on the one side and the ethnic armed organisations on the other are yet to come to terms on a fundamental contradiction. While the ethnic armed organizations want to address the security sector reforms first, the Army wants the

groups to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate first.

There is one other point that needs to be cleared. Where does China stand on the question of the National Cease fire agreement? While professing support on the surface, it appears to be encouraging its proxy (UWSA) not only to oppose it , but get other non signatories to form an umbrella organisation – the FPNCC to suggest a totally different narrative!

It has also come to notice that China is in touch with the Arakan Army to keep its investments in Kyaukphyu port coming under the BRI safe and secure! The Arakan Army Chief, while interacting with the Press at Pangshang said “We are trying to get along with the powerful countries as much as we can. If we go against their projects, it will make us suffer. We have no reason to go against the Chinese Projects.

We have already dealt with the initial steps taken by the Suu Kyi government on reforms to the charter and the vigorous opposition from the Army Representatives both within and outside. The issue came out into the open on the Army Forces day – March 27th. Gen. Soe Win, the deputy to the Chief (the Chief was not able to come due to an accident) justified the taking over of the country by Gen Ne Win earlier. He called the 1988 nation-wide uprising where thousands of unarmed protesters were killed as a “riot”. He also accused the NLD of trying to amend the Constitution as a breach of the procedure laid down in Chapter 12 of the Constitution. Like the devil quoting the scriptures, he said that in a democracy the opinion of the minority should be respected. (after ensuring that nothing can be done to amend the Constitution without the endorsement of the minority!).

On the other hand, many senior members of the NLD openly criticized the Army, something that has not happened before. One of them said that when even the President cannot appoint a single Parliamentarian, the Army Chief has the powers to appoint one fourth of the members of the Parliament!

Suu Kyi’s approach should be inclusive. She should be able to regain the confidence of the ethnic minorities. She should insist on a cease fire for all (not NCA) as a first step towards reconciliation. She should continue to take a strong position with regard to the amendments to the charter. Otherwise the Army and its proxy the USDP may gain the upper hand in the next elections of 2020.

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