



Tom Lantos

**HOUSE COMMITTEE ON
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
RANKING DEMOCRATIC MEMBER**

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Lantos Hails White House Signing of Burma Sanctions Bill

Washington, DC – Congressman Tom Lantos (D-CA) said the White House signing of his bill extending sanctions against Burma today was a necessary step on the path toward a more democratic future for those suffering under the current, politically repressive regime.

Lantos, the co-author of the 2003 Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act, convinced his House colleagues in June to renew import sanctions that had been established in that bill because, as he said at the time, “Burma’s ruling elite, who have direct financial ties to most enterprises in Burma, must understand that they will be unable to enrich themselves off of the American consumer until true democratic change comes to that nation.” The House passed Lantos’ H.J. Res. 97 on June 14; the Senate version of the legislation was passed on June 24.

“We would all like to see a negotiated solution to Burma’s political crisis,” Lantos said today. “But we cannot be naïve enough to believe that Burma’s thugocracy has changed its stripes. They have no intention of allowing opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi – a woman they tried to kill just a few months ago -- to participate meaningfully in free and fair elections, let alone to transfer power to the opposition.

“We will achieve the goal of a free and democratic Burma only by maintaining strong pressure on the country’s ruling clique, and convincing our allies to do so as well,” Lantos said. “The sanctions legislation made law by the President today signals to Rangoon that we will not give up that goal.”

Lantos is the ranking Democrat on the House International Relations Committee and co-chairman of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus.

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