

## China urges 'correct' understanding on Myanmar

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The Associated Press

BEIJING -- China has urged an activist group in Myanmar that called for a boycott of this year's Olympic Games to have a "correct understanding" of Beijing's policy toward their country.

China's "good neighbourly and friendly policy" toward Myanmar "serves the interest of the people in Myanmar and also in China," Foreign Ministry spokesman Liu Jianchao said Tuesday. China is one of Myanmar's key trading partners.

"The policy is conducive to the democratic process of reconciliation and peace in Myanmar. I hope relevant organizations could have a correct understanding of this policy," Liu said.

On Monday, Pro-democracy activists in Myanmar called for the world to boycott the Beijing Olympics over what they said was China's continuing support of Myanmar's military dictatorship.

The 88 Generation Students group, which was instrumental in last year's pro-democracy demonstrations in Myanmar, accused China of bankrolling and arming the junta and failing to facilitate a meaningful dialogue between it and detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy party.

The 88 Generation Students joined a growing group of critics urging an Olympic boycott over complaints ranging from Beijing's human rights record to its failure to more actively press Sudan -- where China is a major oil buyer -- to end violence in the Darfur region that has killed at least 200,000 people.

Liu said China opposes any move to link the Olympics with politics.

"Our main concern is that the Olympic Games is a great gathering event of the Chinese people and world people and they shall not be politicized or boycotted under some political excuses," Liu said.

Hollywood director Steven Spielberg quit earlier this month as an artistic adviser for the Beijing Olympics, saying China was not doing enough about Darfur.

Myanmar has been under military rule since 1962 and has not had a constitution since 1988, when the army violently suppressed pro-democracy protests and the current junta took power.

In September the junta crushed peaceful demonstrations that were triggered by rising food prices but expanded to include demands for democratic reforms. The U.N. estimates the crackdown killed at least 31 people, and thousands more were detained.

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