

US says Myanmar must re-work constitution

Posted: 21 February 2008 0146 hrs

ACCRA : The United States on Wednesday called Myanmar's proposed constitution a failure over a ban on Aung San Suu Kyi running for office and urged the ruling junta to "start from scratch."

"That is hardly the definition of free and fair elections. The Junta needs to start from scratch with a real draft constitution that actually passes the laugh test," said White House national security spokesman Gordon Johndroe.

Myanmar's military government said earlier that the democracy icon would not be allowed to run under the proposed charter, which has been drafted ahead of a May referendum.

The junta says the referendum - if approved - will clear the way for democratic elections in 2010, the first since Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) party scored a landslide victory in 1990 polls, which the junta never recognised.

On Tuesday on state television, the junta announced that a special commission had finished the final draft of the charter.

Foreign Minister Nyan Win told a regional gathering in Singapore that the document would bar Aung San Suu Kyi from running because she had been married to a foreigner.

Her party denounced his remarks as "unjust," saying the military appeared to be making plans for the elections before knowing the outcome of the referendum. - AFP/de

http://www.channelnewsasia.com/stories/afp_asiapacific/view/330125/1/.html