

Directions:

1. Mark your confusion.
2. Show evidence of a close reading. Mark up the text with questions and/or comments.
3. Type a one-page reflection in Google Docs and Save it in your AoW Collection
4. Name your document- YourName\_AoW # 8 (example- John\_AoW # 8)
5. Your reflection will be organized into paragraphs

**Myanmar Promises to Change its Brutal Ways**

Source: Veronica DeVor/ PBS NewsHour/ 12/01/2011

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is in the Southeast Asian nation of Myanmar this week in a much-anticipated diplomatic visit that's the first of its kind in more than 50 years. Myanmar, also known as Burma, has recently implemented a series of reforms that have eased its harsh government control and improved human rights.

"After years of darkness, we have seen flickers of progress in these last several weeks. We want to seize what could be a historic opportunity for progress, and make it clear that if Burma continues to travel down the road of democratic reform, it can forge a new relationship with the United States of America," President Barack Obama said while announcing Clinton's trip.

Analysts say the United States is eager to get a diplomatic foothold in Myanmar, which is strategically located between two rising Asian powers, China and India.

During her trip, Clinton will visit the country's capital, Naypyidaw, and will meet with pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi.

**Decades of military rule suppress democracy**

Myanmar has been run by a military regime, in one form or another, since 1962. Between the end of World War II and 1962, Myanmar, then known as Burma, was fully independent. However, in 1962, a military general named Nei Win staged a coup, overthrew the government and formed his own regime. Under his rule, people were not allowed to criticize the government and had no constitution that guaranteed their rights.

After living in oppression and poor economic conditions for 25 years, the people of Burma revolted in 1987 and 1988 in protests that were brutally put down by the government. Shortly thereafter, Burma's government officially changed the country's name to Myanmar. However, the U.S. State Department doesn't officially recognize the new name.

**A reformer under house arrest**

In the early 1990s, Myanmar's government held elections, but it refused to recognize the results when the National League for Democracy, which opposed the military government, won in a landslide. The NLD leader, a woman named Aung San Suu Kyi, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991 for her fight for human rights for the Burmese people.

Since the early 1990s, Suu Kyi has frequently been under house arrest and has rarely been allowed to speak with her supporters. In 2007, Buddhist monks joined a large protest against the military government which ended with a major government crackdown. Images of monks in long yellow robes being shot and killed were broadcast around the world on TV and the Internet.

### **On the road to change**

In the past few years, Myanmar's government has shown signs of a willingness to give the people more rights and listen to their demands. In October 2010, it held its first elections in 20 years, and Suu Kyi was freed from house arrest days afterward.

Myanmar elected a new president and a new parliament, although military supporters won 60 percent of the seats in Parliament and another 25 percent are always reserved for members of the military.

In September, Myanmar's president offered amnesty to more than 6,000 prisoners who had been held by the military.

And, on Nov. 25, its Parliament passed a bill allowing public protest in the country. These reforms encouraged Western leaders that Myanmar was taking small steps toward democracy and led President Obama to send Secretary Clinton on her historic diplomatic visit to the country.

### **Reflection Ideas**

- What was the most interesting thing you learned? Explain.
- What topic from this article would you like to learn more about? Explain.
- Find a passage from the article and explain why it grabbed your attention.
- Why do you think Myanmar's government is not willing to give its people many rights? Explain.
- Does Myanmar sound like a place you would enjoy living? Explain why or why not.

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Myanmar Promises to Change its Brutal Ways- Reading Questions

**Directions**

- Read **Myanmar Promises to Change its Brutal Ways**
- In complete sentences answer the entire question
- These questions are due at the beginning of class on Tuesday, December 06, 2011.

1. Why is Hillary Clinton visiting Myanmar? Explain.
2. Of the recent reforms which Myanmar has passed, which do you believe is the most important? Explain your answer.
3. What are some of the things people are not allowed to do in Myanmar?
4. Why do you think it's been so long (50 years!) since an American politician has visited Myanmar? Explain.
5. Why do you think the United States wants to establish a good relationship with Myanmar? Explain.
6. If you were Hillary Clinton, what would you try to do during your trip to Myanmar? Explain.