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Congress Bans Imports from Myanmar



The House of Representatives announced the renewal of a one-year ban on all imports from Myanmar, a country believed to be in violation of numerous human rights issues while under an oppressive military junta. The country, formerly known as Burma, is best known for what has been called a "sham trial" against Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. The ban is against both direct and third-party imports from the military-held country.

U.S. Lawmakers praise the sanctions, though there is talk that more should be done to correct the situation in Myanmar, which is delicate due to Myanmar's open trade relationship with bordering China. Under the military junta, which took power in 1962, Myanmar has converted to a socialist government, and become one of the most impoverished countries in the world. This June, Aung San Suu Kyi was arrested for violating her house arrest when an American allegedly snuck into her residence to speak with her. Her 19 year house arrest by the Burmese government is categorically referred to as an attempt to keep her from claiming her right to the Burmese presidency after a landslide election in 1990.

The Chinese government is against the sanctions, which they believe will not fix what China recognizes as a tragedy in Myanmar. Even UN officials like Than Myint-U and researchers from the Cato Institute believe that the sanctions may have done more to aggravate the issues in Myanmar rather than lead to positive change. The latest report from aid agencies working inside Myanmar believe that as many as 800,000 people are subject to forced labor, children being large part of this statistic.

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