

Japan pressures Burma to allow democracy

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Tokyo (AP) — Japan has told Burma's military government it wants to see democracy established in that country, and will weigh

the political situation when it decides whether to resume economic assistance, the Foreign Ministry said yesterday.

Japanese Ambassador Hiroshi Otaka met on Tuesday in Rangoon with Ohn Gyaw, director general of the Burmese Foreign Ministry's Political Department.

He said Japan wished to see an end to bloodshed and the establishment of "a democratic political settlement duly reflecting the general consensus of the Burmese people," the ministry said in a statement.

Otaka said in Japan's decision whether to resume aid to Burma, "it would be important that a political settlement reflecting the general consensus of the Burmese people should be achieved and the stability of the domestic situation restored," the ministry said.

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The ambassador also said the Burmese government should institute economic reforms and make efforts to open up the economy, it said.

Japan recently halted its aid to Burma because of transportation difficulties there caused by widespread strikes and demonstrations against 26 years of authoritarian rule.

Japan has been Burma's largest aid donor, and in 1986 supplied 79.3 per cent of all government loans and grants to that country.

In 1987, Japanese aid to Burma dropped to \$172.0 million from \$244.1 million the previous year. Only \$27.5 million in aid has been committed so far this year, according to government figures.

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