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The US State Department said on Monday that it has not seen any move from Burma's military government to restore democracy in the country.

“So far, we have not seen any meaningful steps by the regime to indicate it is putting in place measures that would lead to credible elections,” the State Department spokesman, Ian Kelly, said in response to a question on the latest statement from the Burmese leader.

Sen-Gen Than Shwe promised that an election would be held this year in a message on the occasion of the 62nd anniversary of the country’s independence.

“Burmese authorities have said they will hold elections in 2010, but have not yet announced an election date or promulgated an election law,” Kelly said.

The Obama administration, Kelly said, will continue to take a measured approach to the 2010 elections until the US can assess the electoral conditions and determine whether opposition and ethnic groups will participate.

“Much of the opposition's leadership remains in prison, there is no space for political dissent or debate and no freedom of the press. We continue to urge the Burmese government to address these issues and to engage Aung San Suu Kyi and the democratic opposition, ethnic leaders and other stakeholders in a comprehensive dialogue on democratic reform,” Kelly said, adding that these would be first steps towards inclusive elections and a return to democracy.

Meanwhile, Sen. Jim Webb said: “As chairman of the Foreign Relations subcommittee on East Asian and Pacific Affairs, this year, I will support all appropriate efforts to ensure that the election process is credible and transparent.”

Webb, who visited Burma last year, said: “I have expressed my view to the Burmese leadership that the United Nations or other international organizations could provide valuable election assistance, and thus enhance the integrity of the process.”

Webb is the only US leader ever to have met with Than Shwe and one of only a few people to have met with both Than Shwe and Nobel Laureate Suu Kyi.