



# BURMA REPORT

June 2011

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**Free all political prisoners, free Burma.**

Peace Nyeinchanye <nyeinchanye@googlemail.com>

The best friend - [www.thebestfriend.org](http://www.thebestfriend.org) - Alexandra Rösch <a.roesch@green-pix.de>

**“Fear is still everywhere”** - *By Alexandra Rösch - 12.05.2011*

<<http://www.thebestfriend.org/2011/05/12/%e2%80%9cfear-is-still-everywhere/#more-8829>>

“Nothing has really changed so far. Fear is still everywhere. As long as the people feel this fear, we can not say there has been any real change in the country,” Aung San Suu Kyi said at a live discussion about ‘The Future of Burma’ via telephone with students of the Hertie School of Governance on 10 March 2011 in Berlin.



Burma’s pro-democracy leader and Nobel Peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi had approached the Hertie School some weeks ago and expressed her interest in having a discussion with the students. The Hertie School prepares exceptional students for leadership positions in government, business, and society.

After a discussion with the panel consisting of students and teachers of the Hertie School, Aung San Suu Kyi answered questions from the 150 participants, mostly students, in the audience.

She explained that the three main points to see a real change in Burma would be:

- 1. a free judicial system**
- 2. the established rule of law**
- 3. freedom of expression**

Point one and two belong together, she said, if this could be achieved, all political prisoners would have to be released.

When asked “How can we help the Burmese people?”, Aung San Suu Kyi encouraged everyone to support NGOs that are not working with the current Burmese regime. “Strengthen the civil society in Burma,” she said, “especially the young people do not want to rely on the government. And help with education. In our country the government spends more than 40% of income on defense and less than 10% on education.”

“Those who have access to the Internet are aware of the Arab uprisings and are asking many questions about it. But Internet access is still not accessible for everyone. Especially in the rural areas, people do not have access to this kind of information,” she said. “And many people are still afraid to talk about politics openly.”

When asked about the lack of unity in the Burmese pro-democracy movement, she answered, “We don’t have to agree on anything to work together.” She later added that, when we are speaking of unity, it would be good if the EU member states could agree on the issue of Burma. “There is also no unity in the EU.”

On the official resolve of her party NLD (National League for Democracy), she commented “We have never been able to work freely, even as a registered party. Our offices have been closed in the past. So it is not really that different now.”

**FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA**

Ashin Kovida told her about the situation in the refugee camps along the Thai-Burma border, and that it would be good to build libraries for the people inside the camps. Aung San Suu Kyi said she will “talk with her treasurers and the international community about setting up libraries in refugee camps.”

One student asked her what kept her going all the years under house arrest, and what was her greatest inspiration? “My colleagues”, she answered. “While I was relatively peaceful and comfortable at my home, they were in prison cells and still not giving up.”

When asked about her age and if she is thinking of retiring, she answered, “No, I’m not thinking about that. We do not retire in Burma.”

*Aung San Suu Kyi, 65, was released in November after spending most of the past 20 years under house arrest in Burma.*

By Alexandra Rösch

May, 12 | Category: [2010 Election](#), [Ashin Kovida](#), [Aung San Suu Kyi](#), [Germany](#), [The Best Friend Library](#) | [Comment](#) | [Social Networks](#)

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The Irrawaddy Newsletter for Tuesday, May 10, 2011, [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org), [www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org)

**The Irrawaddy** - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=21270](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21270)>

## UN Envoy to Visit Burma - By KO HTWE Tuesday, May 10, 2011



Vijay Nambiar talks with Aung San Suu Kyi during his first visit to Burma in November. (PHOTO: Getty Images)

Acting UN Special Envoy to Burma Vijay Nambiar is scheduled to visit Burma on Thursday, with his main agenda being to forge new ties with the new government, according to an official source in Naypyidaw.

Although Burma's new president, Thein Sein, is undecided on whether he will meet with Nambiar, Foreign Minister Wunna Maung Lwin is scheduled to have a meeting with him, said the official. Nambiar is the UN's first leading figure to visit Burma since President Thein Sein was sworn in on March 30.

However, opposition sources said the UN must include Burma's national reconciliation on its agenda.

Speaking to *The Irrawaddy* on Tuesday, Ohn Kyaing, a spokesperson for the main opposition National League for Democracy

(NLD), said Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, accompanied by the party's Central Executive Committee (CEC), will meet the UN envoy at her lakeside home in Rangoon.

Indian diplomat Vijay Nambiar, who is also UN chief of staff under Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon, met with Suu Kyi on Nov. 22 during his first official trip to Burma. Suu Kyi commented that the talks were “valuable” and that they “may need many and frequent meetings to sort out all the problems we are facing.”

Nambiar is also scheduled to meet with representatives of up to 10 political parties, including the National Democratic Front (NDF)'s CEC, on Friday at the office of the United Nations, said Khin Maung Shwe, a leading NDF member.

“Nambiar wants to investigate the capabilities of the political parties to react to the changing of government and emerging of a new parliament,” said Khin Maung Swe. “He also wants to know what we think of the new president's recent promises.”

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Zin Linn <[zinlinn@cscoms.com](mailto:zinlinn@cscoms.com)>, Friday, 20 May, 2011- [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma

**The Mizzima** - <<http://www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/5300-suu-kyi-says-presidential-commutation-not-amnesty.html>>

## Suu Kyi says presidential commutation not ‘amnesty’

Friday, 20 May 2011 18:35 Myo Thein

Rangoon (Mizzima) – Watch your language...that's the message Aung San Suu Kyi sent to Burmese state-run newspapers, where a recent headline said, 'Government grants amnesty for prisoners'.

Burma's pro-democracy leader said on Thursday that the one-year commutation on all prison sentences ordered by President Thein Sein should not be labeled as an 'amnesty'.

Her remarks were part of a press conference held in her lakeside home in Rangoon after a two-hour meeting with US Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Yun on Thursday.

'The meaning of 'amnesty' in their usage is very controversial', she said. 'So, I looked it up in the dictionary. The word, 'amnesty' means an order by a government that allows prisoners to be free. So, the commutation ordered by the president was not an amnesty. It was just commuting sentences. It was just a reduction in severities of punishments. Death sentences were commuted to life sentences and other prison terms were commuted by one year. It is just a commutation, not an amnesty', Suu Kyi said in answer to a journalist's question.

In the meeting with Yun, Suu Kyi talked about her view of the new government and the issue of granting all political prisoners amnesty, according to sources.

Suu Kyi said that she believed in a policy of direct engagement between the Burmese government and the NLD in order to reach an agreements in areas that affect the country

She also said that she might travel to various townships within two months. On May 17, Burma began releasing about 14,600 prisoners across the country under the one-year commutation ordered by President Thein Sein.

According to the latest figures, 55 (0.3 percent) of the 14,600 prisoners are political prisoners and 27 of the 55 political prisoners are NLD members.

<http://www.mizzima.com/news/inside-burma/5300-suu-kyi-says-presidential-commutation-not-amnesty.html>.

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**The Irrawaddy** - Newsletter, Wed, May 11, 2011, [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org), [www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org)

## Burma Rocks Asean's Boat – EDITORIAL

Wednesday, May 11, 2011 <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion\\_story.php?art\\_id=21279](http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion_story.php?art_id=21279)>

Depending on how you look at it, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) is a farsighted enterprise committed to achieving unity among its disparate members, or a shambolic effort to present a unified front in the face of often irreconcilable differences. At the moment, it seems more like the latter. Thailand and Cambodia are at each other's throats over a few square kilometers of territory on their shared border, and Asean seems powerless to do anything about it.

What Asean needs at a time like this is a show of real political will—a display of the “united we stand, divided we fall” mindset that often comes to the fore when any of its members is singled out for criticism from the West. Or failing that, it needs a sideshow to distract everyone from the fact that the bloc commands less respect from its own members than it does from the rest of the world.

Thank goodness, then, for Burma, with its new government eager to do its part to divert attention away from Asean's deep divisions by introducing a controversial non-issue that matters only to itself: its bid to chair the grouping in 2014.

Burma's prime minister-cum-president, ex-general Thein Sein, reiterated his request for the chairmanship when he attended the Asean Summit in Jakarta last weekend. It was his first trip abroad since taking office in March, and as such, a sort of coming-out party for Burma's newly civilianized leaders.

However, Asean's response—a provisional nod of assent—was underwhelming, and showed how reluctant the grouping still is to cross its major dialogue partners in the West. In 2006, the Burmese regime was forced to forfeit its claim to the chairmanship because of international condemnation of its poor human rights record and its violent crackdown on dissidents, including the attack on opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and her supporters in May 2003.

Although some of Asean's partners may be willing to give Burma the benefit of the doubt this time around, on the grounds that it has at least taken a step away from direct military rule, others—notably the US—are less likely to be swayed by changes regarded by many as mere window dressing. This means that once again, Burma could end up putting Asean in a very difficult position.



Aung San Suu Kyi addresses a group of NLD members at headquarters in Rangoon in this file photo. Photo: Mizzima

Normally, the onus would be on Asean to find some way to satisfy the demands of a country it depends upon heavily for both trade and security, while at the same time affirming its internal solidarity. This time, however, it should be Burma's rulers who bear the greatest burden. If they insist that they are fit to lead, they must show that they are willing to put the greater good of Asean ahead of their own interests by demonstrating that they have truly changed the way they govern at home.

They can do this, first of all, by releasing all of Burma's more than 2,000 political prisoners. Then they can bring a halt to all military offensives and human rights violations in ethnic regions. And then they can start talking to all parties—including Suu Kyi's now officially disbanded National League for Democracy—about how to achieve lasting reconciliation.

As the current chair of Asean, Indonesia can clearly indicate what changes will be required of its would-be successor when it sends its foreign minister, Marty Natalegawa, to Burma on a fact-finding mission to study the new regime's suitability as chairman of the grouping.

Once he is in Burma, Natalegawa should meet opposition leaders and activists and even request permission to speak with prominent imprisoned dissidents. He should also visit areas of Shan and Karen states where widespread human rights violations have taken place for decades. And to get an even more complete picture of the scale of Burma's conflict-driven humanitarian crisis, he and his team should visit the country's border regions to meet refugees and internally displaced persons.

If Burma is indeed serious about taking on a more prominent role on the regional stage, it must be willing to address important issues at home. Likewise, if Asean doesn't want to become utterly irrelevant, it must be prepared to tackle tough issues head on, instead of sweeping them under the carpet. Dealing with Burma would be a good place to begin.

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Tin Kyi <[mtinkyi7@yahoo.com](mailto:mtinkyi7@yahoo.com)>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK@yahoogroups.com](mailto:NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK@yahoogroups.com), Burma Related News - May 13-14, 2011, Sat, 14. May 2011

**AP – CBSNews** - <<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2011/05/12/ap/asia/main20062472.shtml>>

## UN envoy meets Myanmar's pro-democracy leader

Thu **May 12, 2011**, 1:13 pm ET -

YANGON, Myanmar (AP) – Myanmar pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi says she agrees with the visiting U.N. special envoy that the country's new nominally civilian government should be given a chance to prove itself.

Suu Kyi spoke after having what she described as "a frank meeting" with Vijay Nambiar. Though her party was officially disbanded, she is still considered the country's main opposition figure.

She said the two agreed to "wait and see how things develop, but we do not want to be negative."

Critics charge the new government is merely the latest iteration of the repressive military regime that has ruled for decades.

Nambiar, who also met government officials, said the government has made "some very interesting statements ... which are very encouraging." He did not elaborate.



Myanmar's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, left, and Vijay Nambiar, right, a top aide to U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, meet the press as she welcomes Nambiar at her home on Thursday, May 12, 2011, in Yangon, Myanmar. (AP Photo/Khin Maung Win) (Khin Maung Win)

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THE BURMANET NEWS -May 13, 2011 Issue #4197, newsletter covering Burma -"Editor" <[editor@burmanet.org](mailto:editor@burmanet.org)>, [www.burmanet.org](http://www.burmanet.org)

**PRESS RELEASE - United Nations Information Center- Yangon - May 13, 2011 -**

<[http://reliefweb.int/node/401710?utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+ReliefwebUpdates+%28ReliefWeb+-+Latest+Updates%29](http://reliefweb.int/node/401710?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+ReliefwebUpdates+%28ReliefWeb+-+Latest+Updates%29)>

## Press statement by Mr. Vijay Nambiar, Special Adviser to the Secretary-General

Yangon – I have just completed a three-day working visit at the invitation of the new Government of Myanmar in my capacity as Special Adviser to the Secretary-General. This follows my earlier visit shortly after the elections in November last year. The purpose of this visit was three-fold:

First, to engage with the new six-week old Government and with other stakeholders in order to take stock of recent developments and to build on the comprehensive dialogue between the United Nations and Myanmar. In Naypyitaw, I met with the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Home Affairs, Social Welfare, National Planning and Development; and senior

officials of the Ministries of Commerce, Health and Education. I also met with the newly appointed Presidential Advisers for political, legal and economic affairs. Meetings were also arranged with the Deputy Speaker of the People's Assembly at the Union Assembly hall, and the Secretary-General of the Union Solidarity and Development Party. In Yangon, I met again with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and members of the Central Executive Committee of the National League for Democracy. Further meetings were held with representatives of political parties represented in Parliament, and civil society organizations. This morning I visited Bago and met with the Chief Minister of Bago Region.

The second purpose of my visit was to convey a forward looking message. The United Nations welcomes the important themes and reforms announced by President Thein Sein in his inaugural speeches. These include the recognition of some of the most pressing political and economic challenges facing Myanmar and the need to address them in a way that strengthens national unity and reconciliation - sustainable development and equitable growth; good governance through greater responsiveness, inclusiveness, accountability, and transparency; continued engagement through genuine goodwill and keeping the door open with those who do not accept the Constitution and the roadmap; and respect for fundamental human rights, the media and the rule of law. These stated priorities of the Government are consistent with the expectations of the United Nations and the international community.

Recognizing the significance of the Government's commitments, we must stress that implementation is key. I underscored the opportunity and responsibility that the Government now has to translate its commitments into effective action. Domestically and internationally, expectations are high that it will start taking concrete steps soon. In all my meetings, I stressed that this must include the release of all political prisoners and inclusive dialogue with all segments of society, as well as greater outreach to the international community to ensure that the proposed reforms enjoyed broad buy-in. Only then can there be greater confidence that the efforts undertaken will indeed serve to meet the longstanding needs and aspirations of the people of Myanmar. There is no time to waste if Myanmar is to move forward.

Thirdly, I reiterated the United Nations' strong commitment to long-term engagement with the Government and people of Myanmar in support of their efforts to move the country towards durable peace, democracy and prosperity. Since Cyclone Nargis three years ago, the collaboration between the United Nations and Myanmar has grown significantly. With all my counterparts, I discussed the opportunity and the need to build on such efforts to deepen and broaden our engagement in advancing needed reforms, including through continued facilitation and greater assistance in the areas of economic development, health, education, capacity-building, and human rights. The United Nations wants Myanmar to succeed. With the cooperation of Myanmar and the support of all concerned, including regional and donor countries, the United Nations looks forward to being able to deliver to its full potential in order to better serve the people of Myanmar. On its part, the UN agencies would be better placed to respond to Myanmar's development needs if the existing restrictions on its operations are removed.

#### United Nations

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The Irrawaddy, Newsletter for Monday, May 23, 2011, [news@irrawaddy.org](mailto:news@irrawaddy.org), [www.irrawaddy.org](http://www.irrawaddy.org)

**The Irrawaddy** - <[http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art\\_id=21342](http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=21342)>

## UN Envoy Doubts Burma Govt Commitment -

By **SIMON ROUGHNEEN**

Monday, May 23, 2011



United Nations Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in Burma Tomás Ojea Quintana addressing reporters at a Bangkok press conference on May 23. (PHOTO: IRRAWADDY)

BANGKOK—Speaking in Bangkok on Monday at the end of his week-long mission to Thailand, United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burma, Tomás Ojea Quintana, said that “the situation of ethnic minority groups in the border areas presents serious limitations to the government’s intention to transition to democracy.”

Expressing some optimism about recent political developments in Burma, the special rapporteur said that “these democratic institutions are very new, and I see some positive signs in them,” mentioning discussions of possible prisoner amnesty and the convening of an anti-poverty conference which took place in Naypyidaw on Monday.

However, he said that the “electoral process excluded several significant ethnic and opposition groups,” and despite the government’s claim that the parliament is “the only venue for discussion of national reconciliation,” added that violence continues in many ethnic minority areas.

Quintana was denied entry to Burma, a country he has been unable to visit since his March 2010 call for the establishment of a Commission of Inquiry (Col) into alleged human rights abuses in Burma.

His mission to Thailand came at the request of the UN Human Rights Council, and involved meetings in Bangkok, Chiang Mai and Mae Hong Son, where he met with Thailand’s Foreign Minister Kasit Piromya and the Burmese ambassador to Thailand, as well as “various stakeholders including civil society and community-based organizations, experts, UN officials and diplomats.”

Thailand is the current president of the UNHRC, and Quintana praised the Thai government for co-operating with his mandate and mission.

Quintana said that Thailand’s foreign minister expressed his country’s desire to repatriate Burmese refugees in Thailand and close the nine northern Thailand-based border camps that hold around 140,000 refugees, though no timetable was apparently mentioned.

Asked by *The Irrawaddy* whether he could advise the Thai authorities on whether conditions in ethnic minority regions were suitable for return of refugees, Quintana reiterated his previous comments about the situation in ethnic regions, but added that his mandate applied only to issues “inside Myanmar.”

Burma has been lobbying fellow members of the Association for Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) to be allowed to chair the bloc in 2014, citing its new government as evidence of reform. However, last week, the *Associated Press* quoted Thai Foreign Minister Kasit as saying that Burma has an “obligation to itself, to the Asean community in terms of the credibility, respectability and also the internal position of the Asean community.”

Quintana spoke in positive terms about his interaction with Asean, saying that the bloc “is calling for the release of all prisoners of conscience in the country.”

Quintana said that refugees in Thailand, from Karenni State in Burma, has raised the issue of Burma’s new conscription laws, saying that village heads were told by the army to provide a list of all available men.

According to Quintana, this could worsen Burma’s child soldier problem because, outside of urban areas, many people in ethnic minority regions do not have official papers, meaning that there is no way to ensure conscription does not include underage people.

Last week, the Burmese government released thousands of prisoners, including 51 of the country’s more than 2,100 prisoners of conscience.

However, Quintana dismissed the release as a “a commutation of sentence by one year only,” adding that as with government policy in ethnic minority areas, the decision “did not provide a strong signal on national reconciliation,” as some of the detainees are “key stakeholders,” such as ethnic minority leaders.

The Special Rapporteur said that he spoke with Aung San Suu Kyi by telephone, but did not go into detail about the conversation, other than to say that she supports the call for a Col.

According to Quintana, he and Suu Kyi regard the Col as merely an inquiry, not a tribunal.

Asked whether he felt in retrospect whether he should have kept the call for a Col private, which might in turn have facilitated his acquisition of a visa to enter Burma, Quintana answered that “human rights cannot be made subject to negotiation.”

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THE BURMANET NEWS - April 30 – May 2, 2011 Issue #4189 -: 02. May 2011 - "Editor" <[editor@burmanet.org](mailto:editor@burmanet.org)>, [www.burmanet.org](http://www.burmanet.org)  
Zin Linn <[zinlinn@cscoms.com](mailto:zinlinn@cscoms.com)>, 0105.2011 - [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK] News & Articles on Burma

**Asian Tribune** - May 1, 2011 - <<http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/04/30/civil-strife-will-prolong-under-burma%E2%80%99s-new-president>>

## **Civil Strife will prolong under Burma’s new president -** - Zin Linn

Burma’s new President Thein Sein gave an address at 1/2011-Meeting held at the President Office in Naypyitaw on 23 April. Thein Sein highlighted that without national unity, the country with more than 100 races cannot have peace and

stability. So, the government has to prioritize the national unity, he said.

However, in contrast, fresh fighting between Burmese armed forces have been making lots of hostilities against various ethnic armed troops. Without any external threats, the Burmese army has been expanding its strength over 400,000 soldiers and is one of the strongest in the region. Its armed forces have been engaging in ongoing conflicts with several ethnic rebel groups seeking self-determination since 1948.

Recently, the United Wa State Army and its ally the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) also called Mongla, were informed by the Burma Army yesterday, 28 April, to depart from their bases outside designated territories by tomorrow, 30 April, quoting informed sources from the Sino-Burma border, Shan Herald Agency for News (S.H.A.N.) said.

The messages were by phone calls by separate regional commands: The order to UWSA in Panghsang was from commanding officer of the Northeastern Region Command (Lashio), while the order to Mongla was from the commander of the Triangle Region Command (Kengtung). According to a source close to the Mongla leadership, the Burma Army would attack Wa and Mongla posts at anytime they wanted if the ethnic troops failed to withdraw their bases by the given time limit.

The United Wa State Army (UWSA) has reportedly ordered all of its frontline units on 24-hour alert along the Salween river, a shared border with its ally the Shan State Army (SSA) 'North'. The UWSA have alerted all of its troops to be ready to defend Wa State, although they do not want war. They will not fire the first shot, said a senior Wa officer.

SSA 'North' has been combating Burmese armed forces currently since the junta issued the ultimatum to accept the Border Guard Force program. The SSA 'North' has been fighting with the Burmese Army since 13 March. It was given an ultimatum to surrender by the end of March and to pull out from all their bases deploying in areas outside its main base. The latest skirmishes between the two apparently took place twice in Kehsi Township.

The Burmese Army has had at least 30 killed and 100 wounded, while the SSA has had four killed and eight wounded, according to SSA sources.

According to the latest information, SSA-North's core base Namlao in Tangyan township, the gateway to its ally the UWSA, was seized by the Burma Army on 15 March after heavy fighting between the two sides for almost half a day, according to sources from the SSA.

The Burma Army allegedly accused them of breaching their 1989 agreement that they would not make recruitment or expand their territories. Currently, the UWSA leaders are still holding an emergency meeting to discuss the ultimatum.

In the meantime, the NDAA has already pulled out from two of its tactical bases in Wan Kho and Pong Hiet in Shan State East's Mong-yawng township by the side of the west bank of the Mekong. Wan Kho base was taken by the Burma Army on 27 April. And NDAA troops in Pong Hiet were reported to have pulled out yesterday, Shan Herald Agency for News said.

According to a source, the Burma armed forces came with the strength of 100 soldiers and enclosed the group in the morning without firing a shot. After the NDAA troops left the area in the evening, Burmese soldiers from the Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 573 based in Mongphyak took over the post.

In March 2010, Chinese defense officials made an effort to repair the worsening relationship between the UWSA and the ruling military junta which demanded repeatedly the Wa accept its Border Guard Force plan. Despite the fact that details are lacking, sources say China is making another attempt to convince the Burmese junta of the futility of war against the UWSA.

Recently, two of the anti-Border Guard Force groups – United Wa State Army (UWSA) and National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) – were reportedly advised by China not to join in with any groups opposing the military junta. If not they would be under attacks similar to the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) and Shan State Army (SSA) North, according to a Sino-Burma border source.

The junta doesn't have the strength to make an offensive towards several ethnic groups at the same time, observers believe. At present, the military junta has spread out more troops along the Salween River to bring to a halt a possible relationship between the UWSA and SSA 'North'. The SSA is active in the west of the Salween while the UWSA is in the east.

The UWSA and NDAA said they will maintain the four principles: *not surrender; not transform into BGF unless their autonomy demands are met; not shoot first; but they are ready to protect themselves.*

However, the junta dogmatically insists the homeland must have only one army and that clause has been put in the unfair 2008 constitution which cannot be amended without permission of the armed forces.

In light of the current vote-rigging election scenario in Burma, the armed rebellion is still the only realistic means to

accomplish the essential goals of self-sufficiency and self-determination. The NLD – which won the 1990 polls but was not allowed to take power by the military – is boycotting the 7-November election, describing them as undemocratic and counterfeit.

Western nations and human rights groups have also affirmed the election was unfair since the military regime banned the National League for Democracy and Shan National League for Democracy to take part in the latest polls.

As a result, most analysts predict that the current President Thein Sein's regime will fail to get supports from various ethnic populations; instead it has to face political defiance as well as armed insurrections in the near future.

- Asian Tribune-

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Tin Kyi <[mtinky7@yahoo.com](mailto:mtinky7@yahoo.com)>, NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSKJ Burma Related News - May 04, 2011.Datum:Wed, 04. May 2011

**The Asian Tribune** - <<http://www.asiantribune.com/news/2011/05/04/burmese-perspective-osama-bin-laden-dead-burmese-hope-spread>>

## A Burmese Perspective: Osama bin Laden is Dead hope is Spread

- By Kanbawza Win Wed, 2011-05-04 08:52 — editor

Burma (now under the chauvinist name of Myanmar), inspire to be the first nuclear power with the help of North Korea is just is notorious for its gross human rights violation and the world knows about the brave lady

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi that stand up against the ruling Generals.

In private and public forums, many of the tea-leaf-readers as well as the self appointed Burmese experts interested in the country continue to discuss without putting their finger on the single most fundamental issue of the daily misery and country's bleak future

It is lamentable that the international community has been trying to understand or solving the Burmese ethnic crisis for more than half a century but little could they comprehend because their approach is entirely on a wrong platform and construe Burma as a monolithic whole. So until and unless one could see it from a proper perspective to the Burmese problem, there is little or no hope of understanding Burma. Even in the Myanmar ethnic history, except during the three warrior kings, had never ruled the country as a united whole and as such could not be treated as a country. Hence if contemporary history of Burma were to be studied from the perspective that Burma was country until the whole region fell under the boots of British colonialism in the 1850 would be entirely wrong.

Burma before the British annexation was just a cluster of principalities with each ethnic tribe and race having its own administration. Obviously the Myanmar were a bigger race more numerous and when they were strong they conquered the other ethnic nationalities, in as much as the other races like the Arakanese, Mon, Shan had conquered the Myanmar and ruled them. Hence when the British colonize Burma, it took a long time for the pacification of the country as it had to subjugate one ethnic race after another, when the Myanmar has already put their hands up to the British.

At that time of British colonization there was no such thing as ethnic conflicts in Burma because one ethnic has been living peacefully with the other for centuries. When Britain was about to give independence to this region, the majority of the ethnic nationalities readily join the Union which was formed by an accord signed at a little town in Shan State called Panglong in 1947, one year prior to the emergence of the Burma as an independent, post-colonial state (in 1948). The accord was between the leaders who represented the different territorial entities of what became the **Union of Burma**. In this sense, both historically and conceptually, the ethnic Burma's so-called ethnic conflict is more aptly described as a political conflict against the ruling military rather than a conflict between warring ethnic groups. The conflict is primarily a conflict between the ruling military exercising a monopolistic control of the state in Burma and the ethnic nationalities. It is a vertical conflict between the state and various ethnically defined societies. It is a conflict about how the state is to be constituted and how the relation between the constituent components of society and the state are to be ordered. It is not the case of ethnic segments feuding with and killing each other, nor is it driven by the secessionist impulses. Looking at Burma's history since 1948, a long-standing and seriously dysfunctional relationship between the state and broader society can be observed and it has been exacerbated by five decades of monopolistic military rule. Hence the word Myanmar is both politically and phonetically wrong. (The original spelling is Myanmah).

To understand the ethnic conflict, it is essential to look into the issues of conceptual differences, constitutional crisis, national identity, majority-minority configuration and other pressing issues like gross human rights violations, torture, ethnic cleansing, drugs and environmental management. The successive military regimes dominated by the Sino-Myanmar, including the ruling Junta, see Burma as an existing unified nation since 1044 AD. As such, all other non-Myanmar - Shan, Chin, Kachin Arakanese, Mon, Karen and Karenni - are seen as ethnic nationalities, which must be controlled and suppressed, lest they break up the country. This is what most of the international and the world understand or comprehend and incidentally this is also what most of the chauvinist Myanmar led by the Generals portrayed to the world. **This is the crux of the Burmese problem.**



On the other hand, some of the educated and well meaning Myanmar especially those from upper Burma called Ah Nyar and all the non-Myanmar maintain that the Union of Burma is a newly developed territorial entity, founded by a treaty, the Panglong Accord, where independent territories merged together on equal basis to obtain independence from Britain and this is what General Aung San (father of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi), the architect of Modern Burma envisage. Given such conceptual differences, the Burmese military goes about with its implementation of protecting "national sovereignty" and "national unity" at all cost. This, in turn, gives way to open conflict resulting in more suppression and gross human rights violations. The intolerance of the military and its inspiration to "racial supremacy" and to political domination and control has no limit and the climax of it could be seen by its refusal to hand over power to the winners of 1990 nation-wide election.

Almost all the non-Myanmar and pro democracy movement are in agreement that the ethnic conflict and reform of social, political and economic cannot be separated from one another as they are two sides of a coin. And the only solution and answer is to amend the 1947 Constitution according to *Panglong Agreement*, where equality, voluntary participation and self-determination, of the constituent states, formed the basis for the Federal Republic of the Union of Burma or in other word is the Genuine Union of Burma. The ethnic cease-fire groups, especially in the cases of the Kachin Independent Army (KIA) and United WA State Army (UWSA), remained such a stumbling block. If one were to make a research on it is the KIA proposal to totally give up its arms if the Junta honours the principles of the Panglong Agreement.

Burma's fundamental problem is not just about leadership, policy failure, dysfunctional institutions, rights abuses or fractured opposition movements but a full-scale pathological process of internal colonization, this time by its own military. This is an evolutionary process which was set in motion since the coup of 1962 decisively established one-party military rule, where the military and the State cannot be separated. Indeed Burma has evolved into a dual-colony in which the population of more than 55 million citizens is being herded into a political space via the Orwellian "*7-steps road map for democracy*." The ruling military clique backed by its 400,000-strong military will continue to make all decisions with massive societal and ecological consequences for the whole population; only this time their decisions are going to be made to sound constitutionally mandated, and in accord with the laws of the land.

Further, this small group of men subscribe to an irredeemably myopic and toxic version of ethno-nationalism which refashions Burma along the old feudal lines where the majority "Myanmar Buddhists," as defined by these men in generals' uniform, will be more equal in their Union of Republic of Myanmar. As said earlier they have taken their philosophy if not aspirations from the three warrior kings, which founded the three Burmese dynasties not only vanquishing all the existing ethnic nationalities but also some part of the neighbouring countries of Thailand, India and part of the current China (*every year columns of soldiers march past newly erected, statues of the three most prominent warrior kings in Burmese history: Anawratha, Bayinnaung and Alaungpaya*) which justifies their colonization over the ethnic nationalities especially in the peripherals.

Needless to say, the generals will pay lip service to ethnic unity and create nominal space for the ethnic people while pursuing "divide and rule" as the overarching strategy. The ruling generals have rejected the federal spirit of ethnic equality and violently opposed any struggle towards a genuine federated Union. They have declared dead the *Panglong Agreement* of 1947, the founding document of a modern, post-colonial Burma, wherein ethnic equality was enshrined as an inviolable pillar of multi-ethnic Burma. Hence in new colonial rule under its own military, will control, subjugated or crushed.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic nationalities leaders, whether armed or not, are heading on an inevitable collision course with Burma's military junta. For they have made repeated calls for national and ethnic reconciliation as well as genuine public expressions of inter-ethnic solidarity, which is the last thing any colonial power would want and would tolerate is social and ethnic solidarity across communities, regions and classes.

For those who have viewed the emerging parliamentary and formal political processes as the only space in which the people's voices can be heard, policies debated and public welfare advanced, it is time for a serious rethinking and soul-searching. In a polity where those in power in effect accept nothing but total surrender, where politics are regarded as an extension of war and everything is viewed through Zero-Sum lens, choosing sides becomes necessary. There are no shades of gray in any colonial phenomenon. Battle lines are clearly drawn. The colonized are to be exploited, crushed, subjugated or co-opted.

The generals, of course, don't see themselves as "native colonialists." They feel no need for reconciliation along ethnic or political lines with any person, organization or community. In short, they have done nothing wrong, and they can do no wrong. For they perceive themselves as the country's sole national guardian, untainted by partisan politics. What more they are the only patriots in the country ready to give up their lives while the rest are parasite living on the army's labour and do not have a pale of patriotism. Verbally they are committed to the abstract idea of a multi-ethnic nation while practically trampling on the very idea in reality. And they embrace an absolutist notion of sovereignty where the military, not the people in whose name it exists, is sovereign.

To be candid they love the country, but they can't stand the people, especially the kind who refuse to go along with their design for the rest of the country. Political, defiant ethnic communities and 2,100 political prisoners spring to mind. Their politics is all about resuming and completing the process of re-consolidation of the power of the ethnic Burmese majority, most specifically the soldiering class, over the rest of the ethnic nationalities—a process only interrupted by the old

kingdom's 19th century defeat by Great Britain. Nearly seventy years after independence, the military has built its own version of local colonial rule serving as the constitutionally-mandated ruling class and where the rest of the civilian society, especially the ethnic nationalities and the common people as second class citizens.

Twenty years ago, when the generals launched a ceasefire strategy with more than half a dozen disparate ethnic armed resistance organizations, they weren't acting out of genuine desire for reconciliation, but following a strategy to pre-empt the inter-ethnic solidarity between the Daw Aung San Suu Kyi-led majority and ethnic nationalities and the calling of the 2nd Panglong Conference they were alarmed. Now that some of the most crucial ceasefires are likely to unravel, the highest strategic priority of the regime has become preventing inter-ethnic unity.

Throughout modern history, no colonialism is ever known to have offered the colonized political processes or institutions which would undo, or even undermine, such broad colonial objectives as economic exploitation of land, labour and natural resource, political domination and subjugation of populations under colonial rule, and control over the cultural and intellectual life of colonies. Whether one has in mind the formal and classical version, which dissolved, thanks in no small part to colonialists slaughtering one another during the two 20th century world wars, or the subsequent and newer versions characteristic of the Cold War, the essence, objectives and nature of colonial rules remain virtually the same.

Humanitarian assistance, developmental aid, foreign direct investment, increased trade or commerce may be needed in any systemic efforts to rebuild poverty-stricken Third World nations emerging from decades of war and conflicts. But they are no substitute for forging inter-ethnic and class solidarity, on which an inter-generational political resistance, armed and non-violent, depending on one's own location, needs to be built.

The fact is the colonial state in the Union of the Republic of Myanmar stands in between public welfare and international assistance and increased foreign direct investment, which has been in the billions thanks to Burma's economically predatory regional friends such as India China, and ASEAN countries, whose Asian values of economic prosperity give precedence to people's freedom is paramount as can be seen in their Constructive Engagement Policy. In the next meeting of Association of Southeast East Asian Nations, the Myanmar delegates, with their fluttering Gaung Baung Sa (the little flag in the headdress to prove that they have shed their uniforms) will be sitting smart for all the international community to see. Unless the Junta finds the political will to release more than 2,000 political prisoners, call a nationwide cease-fire and prepare for national reconciliation talks among all political stakeholders, especially Aung San Suu Kyi, it has no business being elevated to a more responsible role on the regional stage. After all, this is a country whose leaders are facing growing calls for a full inquiry into their alleged war crimes and crimes against humanity

In short the Asian values lead by the most populous nations of India and China whose combined population and economic strength is mightier than the world's population and economic power are calling the shots and will soon be triumphing over people's freedom and democracy. Will the West led by the US and EU stands by, is still to be seen and Burma is a test case. Why allow the ethnic cleansing policy of the Myanmar Junta go unpunished? But most importantly will the international community allow Burma to join the rogue nations with nuclear arms like North Korea and Iran?

The ethno-democratic nationalist bond between the majority ethnic Myanmar and the ethnic nationalities call by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for the 2nd Panglong Conference leading to national reconciliation and inter-ethnic solidarity against oppression poses the greatest threat to the ruling Junta. It is a matter of time for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's to stay as a free citizen. It may see that the Burmese issue is complex, but as far as the regime's strategy is concerned is a simple, time-tested "divide-and-rule."

Now that Osama bin Laden is dead which indicate that the backbone of Al Quida is broken and witnessing the Arab people struggles in Egypt, Tunisia Libya, Syria, Yemen, Bahrain one wonders whether the West will help the people of Burma whom the Junta considered be the slaves of the military forever. At least the hope is spreading even as the people of Burma know that the only way the opposition movements in particular and multi-ethnic communities in general, can defeat these native colonizers is through inter-ethnic—and inter-class—solidarity.

On their part they are endeavouring that the Northern alliance (Kachin, WA and Shan) to work hand in glove not only with the Southern alliance (Karen, Karenni, Mon, Rakhiaung and Chin) but also with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD to be an alternative to the Junta's puppet government and for this the people of Burma need the international backing, then and only then Than Shwe will be soon Burma's Osama-bin Laden.

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