



BURMA REPORT

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Issue N° 56

Free all political prisoners, free Aung San Suu Kyi, free Burma.



Wed Jan 30, 2008 - Zin Linn <zinlinn@cscoms.com>, "Hla Kyaing" <hla.kyaing@gmail.com>, [NLDmembersnSupportersofCRPPnNLDnDASSK]

Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi 'not satisfied' with junta talks

by Hla Hla Htay - Wed Jan 30, 2008 6:55 AM ET



Aung San Suu Kyi – daughter of General (1947) Aung San

Myanmar's detained pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi is "not satisfied" with her talks with the nation's junta, which after three months have yielded few results, her spokesman said Wednesday.

The Nobel peace prize winner, who has been under house arrest for 12 of the last 18 years, made the statement during a rare meeting with top members of her National League for Democracy (NLD) party.

She was taken from her home in an official convoy to a military facility, where she met for about 90 minutes with eight NLD officials, and then for 45 minutes with the junta's liaison officer, party spokesman Nyan Win said.

The military appointed Labour Minister Aung Kyi as a "relations minister" to coordinate contacts with her in the wake of a deadly crackdown on pro-democracy protests in September.

They have now met five times since late October, but the talks have produced no visible changes.

Instead, the military has tightened the screws on political dissidents, arresting a popular blogger, intensifying pressure on the media, and bringing charges against 10 prominent protest leaders.

"Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is not satisfied with her meetings with the relations minister, mainly because there is no time frame" to the process, Nyan Win told reporters, using an honorific.

He also read out a statement from Aung San Suu Kyi, who said she cherished her supporters' sacrifices and urged the public to remain patient.

"So far we have not received any clear message from the government," she said in the statement.

"We have to be patient, as we have sacrificed for many years," she said.

"I don't want to give false hopes to the people. I will tell the people more when the time comes."

Aung San Suu Kyi quoted her father, liberation hero Aung San, telling the public to "Hope for the best, and prepare for the worst."

She also repeated her party's call for tripartite talks bringing together the military, the NLD and the armed ethnic groups that have battled the junta for decades.

For the first time since her talks with the junta began three months ago, she referred to the military's self-proclaimed "road map" to democracy, which has been widely dismissed by western nations as a sham.

She said the road map should be "all inclusive," although her own party has boycotted the process in protest at her detention.

The protests spearheaded by Buddhist monks in September were the biggest threat to military rule in nearly two decades. The United Nations says at least 31 people were killed during the suppression, and 74 remain missing.

Hoping to quell international outrage at the bloodshed, Myanmar made a series of conciliatory gestures, including allowing

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UN special envoy Ibrahim Gambari and a UN rights investigator to visit the country.

Gambari made two trips to Myanmar, but when he requested to make a third this month, the junta put him off until April.

Ten leaders of last year's protests have been charged with violating the nation's strict publishing law, a crime punishable by up to seven years in prison, the NLD said Tuesday.

US State Department deputy spokesman **Tom Casey** denounced the charges as "**further evidence that the regime is rejecting all efforts to promote dialogue and national reconciliation.**"

Meanwhile censors have tightened controls on the media, banning one newspaper for a week over an article that said the government had backtracked on a huge hike in fees for satellite television.

Another paper was forced to suspend publication for printing a love poem that carried a secret message calling junta leader Than Shwe "power crazy."

The Irrawaddy Online Newsletter for January 19, 2008 - The Irrawaddy <news@irrawaddy.org>

The China Factor by Min Zin - http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=9986

January 19, 2008

A few weeks after the September protests last year in Burma, a Chinese diplomat approached an influential Burmese advocate in New York and asked why the Burmese dubbed their protest the "Saffron Revolution."



"The diplomat was quite uncomfortable with this particular saffron name while he whispered to me," said the Burmese advocate, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Chinese are very sensitive to the 'color revolutions'," she said.

In the wake of successful "color revolutions," meaning the victories of nonviolent democracy struggles in post-communist countries, such as Georgia's 2003 Rose Revolution and Ukraine's 2004 Orange Revolution, Beijing is anxious to prevent similar movements at home or among its neighbors.

Then, a country in its backyard triggered the "saffron revolution," and the military's subsequent crack down captured the world's attention. Along with Burma's crisis, China was drawn into the spotlight in unflattering coverage

in international media and diplomatic pressure increased against its support of one of the world's most odious regimes.

Public outcries have called on China to assume larger role in helping to resolve Burma's crisis.

However, contrary to common perceptions, China has a limited sway with the junta's generals. China is not a patron that pulls the strings and the self-isolated, delusive Burmese regime is not a puppet. The relationship runs in both directions. This is what complicates Burma's problems and their resolution.

Of course, China has more power and influence on the generals than any other country. It also intends to use that leverage to its own benefit.

According to Chinese diplomats, Beijing has been gradually changing its Burma policy since the removal of former Prime Minister Khin Nyut in 2004 and the recent deadly crackdown in Burma. However, they warn that the policy shift should not be expected to be quick or dramatic. It will be slow and well-calculated.

"Than Shwe and Maung Aye are more intransigent than former dictator Ne Win, and they often do incredibly silly things," said a Chinese official during a meeting with a Burmese opposition activist. "China knows that Burma will not prosper under their leadership."

China's special envoy, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs Wang Yi, was sent to Burma in November. He met with the junta's top leader, Snr-General Than Shwe, and asked the military "to resolve the pending issues through consultations so as to speed up the democratization process."

However, the regime responded that it will go with its own pace for unilateral implementation of its "Seven-Step Road Map," according to a Western diplomat.

"The Chinese keep telling us that the international community is overstating their influence over Burmese generals," said a European diplomat. "Beijing said they don't have ability to tell the regime what to do."

Aung Kyaw Zaw, a Burmese analyst living on the China-Burma border, disagrees with that interpretation.

"Persuasion, without power backup, will not work. The soft-soft approach should be changed. China must show the 'stick' part of its diplomacy," said Aung Kyaw Zaw.

However, Beijing is clearly not ready to go that far. It still believes that working to resolve Burma's problems is secondary to its principal economic and strategic interests in its relationship with the junta.

But simultaneously, China would like to maintain its international role as "a responsible stakeholder."

The time has come for concerted international diplomatic pressure on China to tip the balance toward the "responsible" direction. China must take up Thucydides' advice: an amoral foreign policy is neither practical nor prudent. At the same time, the United States and the European Union cannot outsource Burma's democracy reform to China, which itself lacks democracy.

The West's most powerful countries should coordinate with China to facilitate a real transition in conflict-ridden Burma. However, diplomacy alone is not enough to compel China to play an effective role.

Public action is needed.

"China was very annoyed to see the wave of protests taking place outside its embassies in major cities of the world in the wake of the September protests," said Aung Kyaw Zaw. "More importantly, they were really worried when demonstrators linked Burma's cause with a 2008 Olympic boycott."

The vice mayor of Beijing warned in October 2007 that any move to link China's role in Burma to a boycott of the 2008 Olympics would be "inappropriate and unpopular." China is very much anxious to prevent any negative effect on the Olympic Games. They might even accommodate their Burma policy and give more support to the UN's Burma mediation role if they sensed a real damage to the much-hyped gala this summer, even though it might be a tactical and temporal accommodation.

However, the Burmese opposition has so far failed to seize and exploit this opportunity effectively. During the peak of Burma's "Saffron Revolution" in late September, The Washington Post labeled one of its editorials the "Saffron Olympic," highlighting the dynamics of an international campaign against Beijing's summer gala. But that effort has run out of steam.

"The Burmese opposition in exile cannot accelerate the campaign in a consistent manner," said Nyo Ohn Myint, the head of the Foreign Affairs Office of the National League for Democracy (Liberated Area). "Our campaigners are going after ad hoc protests without a focus. We fail to form a wider coalition with other Olympic detractors. Unless we can launch a coordinated international grassroots action, China would not be swayed to our direction."

Beijing plans to start its Olympic gala on 8/8/08, a date that is surprisingly similar to the 20th anniversary of Burma's "Four Eight (8/8/88) Democracy Movement."

Whether or not Burma can make the best out of this coincidence remains to be seen.

The Nation - Published on January 21, 2008 - [Shan-EUgroup] -Shan-EU <shaneu31@yahoo.com>

No hope for Burmese junta in next US elections

http://www.nationmultimedia.com/2008/01/21/pda/opinion_30062872.html

The United Nations Security Council issued a statement requesting that UN Envoy Ibrahim Gambari be permitted to visit Burma again in January instead of the later date in April preferred by the military junta. The generals are running out the clock on Laura Bush, hoping that the next US administration will change its Burma policy. The most likely Democratic candidate for president is Hillary Clinton. If she becomes the US president, the policy on Burma will not change because Madeleine Albright will most likely become secretary of state again.

If John McCain wins the Republican nomination and becomes the next president, Burma policy may include the military option. McCain's likely candidate for vice-president is Senator Joseph Lieberman, who recently advocated using the US military for covert operations in Burma.

But change may come to Burma before the US presidential elections in November. Than Shwe's photo was published in Mizzima last week surrounded by four bodyguards with sub-machine guns while he was visiting a Buddhist pagoda. The monks don't have any weapons. His threat is from the Burmese army.

The last Burmese general I saw closely guarded by bodyguards with sub-machine guns was Khin Nyunt. He was toppled

in a military coup a few months later.

Myint Thein

Senior Adviser to the Burmese Resistance

Dallas, Texas

Associated Press - 21 January 2008

Asean Won't Let Burma Troubles Slow Regional Integration

Burma News - 21 January 2008 -Euro-Burma Office -"EBO" <burma@euro-burma.be> , "http://www.euro-burma.eu/"www.euro-burma.eu

The 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) will not let the actions of its troubled member Burma hamper the group's regional integration efforts, a senior Singaporean official said on Monday.

"We should not and will not let the Myanmar [Burma] issue slow down the integration of our region," Second Minister for Foreign Affairs Raymond Lim told the Singapore Parliament.

Lim was responding to Singaporean parliamentarians' questions on why Asean leaders cancelled a scheduled address by UN Special Envoy Ibrahim Gambari at the bloc's annual meeting in Singapore in November, after Burma had objected.

Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong, the chairman of Asean, had invited Gambari to address the summit about the progress made in his meetings with Burma's junta. But Burma regarded the issue as a domestic affair, Lim said.

"Myanmar [Burma] wanted to deal with the UN directly, and did not want Asean to play any political role. Once Myanmar [Burma] took this position, Asean could not proceed" as it is a consensus-based organization, Lim said.

"It is obviously unsatisfactory that Myanmar [Burma] sees no role for an organization of which it is a member, and on an issue which affects us all.

But this is not a matter of Asean's credibility," Lim said.

Lim also ruled out the possibility of expelling Burma from the regional bloc, saying it was in Asean's interests to keep the country as "a member of the family."

"I don't think that expelling Myanmar [Burma] from Asean is the solution," he said. "We still have channels of communication which hopefully can influence the situation in Myanmar [Burma]."

"Myanmar as a regime is known as a very isolated regime. I don't think it can get any more isolated than it is and to expel it I don't think is particularly constructive," Lim added.

"What happens in Myanmar [Burma] affects the well-being of the rest of Southeast Asia. We do not want to see Myanmar [Burma] descend into chaos or implode."

BBC News January 30, 2008 -**THE BURMANET NEWS** -January 30, 2008 Issue # 3391, "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org> , www.burmanet.org

Burma's Suu Kyi meets colleagues

Burma's pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been allowed to meet political allies for the second time since last year's bloody crackdown.

Officials took Ms Suu Kyi to a military guest house to meet seven top members of her National League for Democracy.

She last left house arrest to meet colleagues in November 2007.

That meeting followed sustained international pressure on Burma's leaders after troops used violence to end anti-government protests.

At least 31 people died in the crackdown and thousands were detained. Hundreds of people are thought to remain in custody.

After the violence, the United Nations called for greater dialogue between the ruling military junta and the Suu Kyi-led pro-democracy movement.

A government liaison, Aung Kyi, was appointed to negotiate with Ms Suu Kyi.

The two have since held four meetings, but it remains unclear whether they are yielding any progress.

Ms Suu Kyi was also meeting Aung Kyi, reports from Burma said.

The NLD won elections in 1990 but has never been allowed to take power. Ms Suu Kyi has spent 12 of the last 18 years under house arrest in Burma's commercial capital, Rangoon.

**THE
IRRAWADDY**
Covering Burma and Southeast Asia

Burma News - 01 February 2008 - "EBO" <burma@euro-burma.be>

The Irrawaddy Online News Alert -The Irrawaddy <news@irrawaddy.org>:http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=10109

Unimportant Topics Take Up All the Time, Says Suu Kyi

By **WAI MOE** Thursday, January 31, 2008

In the reconciliation talks between Burma's democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the junta's liaison officer, Aung Kyi, most of the time is taken up on trivial subjects, according to sources in the National League of Democracy.

Senior members of the NLD who asked for anonymity told The Irrawaddy on Thursday that sometimes an hour-long meeting is filled up with explanations and questions, such as "What is cooperation?" and "What is collaboration?" by the junta liaison officer, Suu Kyi told a group of NLD members whom she met with on Wednesday just prior to her fifth meeting with Aung Kyi.

Suu Kyi said she has spoken to Aung Kyi about important issues, and he replies that he will report her remarks to top officials and then a month goes by with no discussions, NLD sources said.

Suu Kyi told her colleagues that Aung Kyi told her to endorse the regime's "seven-step road map" to democracy because it's the foundation of the junta's plan for the country.

Instead, Suu Kyi suggested an inclusive reconciliation process that includes participation by ethnic group leaders in any talks about the country's future.

"She [Suu Kyi] is not pleased with the talks," said an NLD member. "She does not mean the process is hopeless, but it is being drawn out and prolonged."

Suu Kyi's request to meet with the head of the military junta, Snr-Gen Than Shwe, has received no response from the junta, and the talks are proceeding without a time frame.

Suu Kyi said she does not want to give false hope to the people of Burma, but in such conditions something positive could happen.

On Wednesday, she said she recalled her father Aung San's famous remark before he held talks with the British government in London during the pre-independence period, "Let's hope for the best, but prepare for the worst."

A veteran journalist in Rangoon, Sein Hla Oo, commenting on the talks, said, "She [Suu Kyi] is not satisfied with the process. She thinks meaningful dialogue is very important for the country, but others think it is not important."

Suu Kyi reportedly told her NLD colleagues to move forward without her, said the source. Sometimes she can lead the party; sometimes she will follow others' leadership within the party, he said.

She suggested that sometimes the party needs to push and sometime it needs to pull, and if it is necessary, everyone needs to give up everything, he said.

He said she asked authorities to allow NLD deputy leader Tin Oo to participate in the meeting on Wednesday, but the authorities rejected the proposal.

IRRAWADDY PUBLISHING GROUP
<http://www.irrawaddy.org>

The Times of India - 31 January 2008 - Burma News - 01 February 2008 - "EBO" <burma@euro-burma.be>

India agrees to work with UN on Myanmar

NEW DELHI: India doesn't want sanctions in Myanmar. But keeping bilateral relations intact, the government has agreed to work on the Myanmar military regime for national reconciliation and dialogue.

On his most recent visit to India, Ibrahim Gambari, UN secretary general's special envoy on Myanmar, requested the government to take on additional responsibilities on Myanmar. After meeting PM Manmohan Singh, foreign minister Pranab Mukherjee and foreign secretary Shiv Shankar Menon, Gambari said, "I am very encouraged." Clearly, it's not enough any more to offer verbal support to the UN's work.

In an exclusive conversation with TOI, Gambari said, "I have asked for help from India on the following issues: to help us source more information from Myanmar; to work as a reliable and influential conduit for important messages to and from the Myanmar government; help regularise my visits to Myanmar."

The Indian government, he said, has promised to do its best. In fact, Gambari's optimism is catching. "Last time, China facilitated my trip to Myanmar. This time, I believe it will be India." Gambari is visiting China in February. Asked when he would make his next trip to Myanmar, Gambari said, "The Myanmar government has indicated I could visit in April. But that's too far away." India's position has evolved significantly from the time when it was unwilling to lean on Myanmar for fear of endangering relations that had been painfully rebuilt. But that was before the riots broke out last August. Since then, India has moved to officially endorsing the UN secretary general's good offices. But this time, India will step a few steps further.

Guardian Unlimited, January 25, 2008

Burmese military intensifies crackdown – Mark Tran

THE BURMANET NEWS - January 25, 2008 Issue # 3388 - "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org>, www.burmanet.org

The Burmese military has intensified its crackdown on political opponents despite pledges given to a senior UN official, a human rights group said today.

According to *Amnesty International*, there have been **96 arrests since November**, when Burma's prime minister, Thein Sein, assured **Ibrahim Gambari**, the UN's special envoy to Burma, that there would be no more arrests.

"Four months on from the violent crackdown on peaceful demonstrators, rather than stop its unlawful arrests the Myanmar government has actually accelerated them," said Catherine Baber, director of Amnesty International Asia-Pacific programme.

Amnesty said the **arrests in December and January** targeted **people who had tried to send evidence** of the crackdown abroad and clearly showed the government's priority was to silence its critics.

Those arrested since November include Buddhist monks, trade unionists, pro-democracy dissidents and members of the National League for Democracy, led by the Nobel peace prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi.

Among the **latest detained** was a **popular poet, Saw Wai**, who was taken into custody on January 15 after authorities deciphered part of a love poem that contained a hidden message criticising the junta leader, General Than Shwe.

At least **700 people who were arrested as a result of the September protests**, sparked by a rise in petrol prices, remain in prison, Amnesty said. About **1,150 political prisoners** held before the protests remain in jail. More than 80 others remain unaccounted for since September, the group said.

Buddhist monks started the protests in September that swelled to mass demonstrations, posing the most severe challenge to Burma's military rulers for years.

The **EU's special envoy to Burma** is scheduled to make a three-day visit to Thailand, Burma's neighbour, next week to discuss efforts to press Burma's ruling junta on promised reforms.

Piero Fassino is expected to meet the Thai foreign minister, Nitya Pibulsonggram, and UN agencies and non-governmental organisations.

Fassino last week called for Gambari to return to Burma and seek the release of the opposition leader leader, **Suu Kyi**, who has spent 11 of the past 18 years in detention under Burma's military regime.

Gambari had reportedly asked to return to Burma this month, but was told that April would be more convenient. He has visited the country twice since September.

After worldwide condemnation of the Burmese junta, the UN sent Gambari to broker a political compromise between Suu Kyi and the military. He was promised the arrests would stop, but as Burma fades from the news, Burma's rulers show little sign of change.

AFP - 29 January 2008 - **Burma News** - 29 January 2008 - "EBO" <burma@euro-burma.be>

Myanmar Charges 10 Over Protests Against Government

YANGON - Military-ruled Myanmar has filed criminal charges against 10 activists arrested in August over rallies that snowballed into mass demonstrations against the regime, a lawyer said Tuesday.

Prominent pro-democracy leaders including Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi were among those charged under a law that bans unregistered groups from making statements, said the lawyer for the opposition National League for Democracy.

"They are likely to face trials behind closed doors inside Insein Prison," lawyer Aung Thein told AFP.

"I am ready to defend them, but so far I have not been allowed to meet with them," he added.

Each could be sentenced up to seven years in prison, Aung Thein said, adding that it wasn't clear what statement the activists had been accused of making.

The lawyer said he only learned of the charges from relatives of the activists, who found out while visiting them in prison last week.

Min Ko Naing and Ko Ko Gyi were among the top student leaders of a pro- democracy uprising in 1988, and both have already served lengthy prison sentences.

They formed the 88 Generation Student Group after their release about four years ago. The group spearheaded demonstrations against the government in August, in anger over a massive hike in fuel prices.

After their arrest, Buddhist monks began leading the protests, which turned into the biggest threat to military rule since the 1988 uprising.

Min Ko Naing's group isn't recognized by the government.

Kawthoolei diary - http://www.economist.com/daily/diary/displaystory.cfm?story_id=10594615 - Zin Linn <zinlinn@cscoms.com>

A blistering journey

Jan 28th 2008

From Economist.com



Still in the fight

Something wicked (or not) this way comes

Monday

THE pain in my legs is subsiding, as the crisp night air blows across my perspiring body, numbing it. But as I grow cold, I cannot help but wonder when this hike will be over. The jungle is thick, and with every uphill step it seems to pull me down. I steal glances at the moon, but my focus is really on my blistering feet, which I must keep moving lest I get lost in the jungles of Myanmar. It is dark and the men who are leading me, the men with the guns, may not notice if I fall behind.

So I keep my head down and stare at the calloused heels of the Burmese porter in front of me. On her back she carries a sack of rice twice as big as my overstuffed backpack. It is held in place by a cotton strap that she balances uncomfortably across her forehead. Her footwear, a pair of decaying sandals, is two sizes too small, yet I envy her adroit footing on this unforgiving terrain. She is 13 years old. She doesn't stop, so neither can I.

Exhausted, my mind wanders. I ponder the stories I have heard along the way -

of homes destroyed and family members killed - and wonder if this young porter has endured similar suffering. It has been months since Myanmar's military junta, known as the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), cracked down on protesting monks in Yangon and Mandalay. But away from the big cities, in ethnic enclaves like this one, government persecution has been the norm for nearly 60 years.

That is why my guides carry guns. They are members of the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA), which has been fighting the government since shortly after Myanmar gained independence from the British in 1948. The Karen people make up only 7% of Myanmar's population - they live mainly in the rugged hill-country of eastern Burma and western Thailand, a region they call Kawthoolei - but they are a favourite target of the government.

In 1949 government-sponsored militias led by Ne Win, the country's future dictator, rampaged through Karen villages, sparking a counterinsurgency that nearly captured Yangon, which was then the capital. But the government regrouped and subsequent offensives have pushed the rebels back to the border with Thailand. This success has not satisfied the SPDC. Government patrols still roam Myanmar's ethnic areas searching for rebels and terrorising civilians.



And she's strong too

Later in my journey, I jump a bit when I hear movement in the bushes up ahead. The entire hiking party stops and I look to one of our guides for reassurance. The confused look on his face provides me no comfort. Nobody should be on the trail at this time of night.

Seconds pass and a bell rings. A bell? Suddenly the trees shake violently and the bell rings several more times; if there are people in the bushes, there are a lot of them. If it's the SPDC, there won't even be a fight. "Is this really happening?" I ask myself, as our guide approaches the area.

With hindsight, I imagine he must have been smiling when he turned around to tell us we could keep moving. Trusting his judgment I move toward the area where the trees are still shaking and the bell still ringing. I stop for a second, cautiously shine my flashlight into the jungle, and find myself closer than I ever want to be to the posterior of a very large elephant.

I will not see any SPDC soldiers on this trip, but tomorrow I will meet some people who walk in their footsteps.

DPA - 29 January 2008 - **Burma News** - 29 January 2008 - "EBO" <burma@euro-burma.be>

European Union's special envoy for Myanmar seeks Asian cooperation

Bangkok - The European Union's special envoy for Myanmar on Tuesday stressed the need for close cooperation with Asian governments in speeding up a solution to Myanmar's political crisis. "We are open to all common initiatives and actions, all common strategies with the countries of Asia," said EU envoy Piero Fassino after holding talks Tuesday morning with Thai Foreign Minister Nitya Pibulsonggram.

Fassino has already visited Beijing to discuss the Myanmar issue, and plans to travel to Indonesia, India, Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia and Japan to solidify Asian support in what has become a fairly universal call on the military rulers of Myanmar to speed up their political dialogue with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi and other suppressed segments of Myanmar society.

"It is necessary to open a new phase of more constructive and more concise, a real dialogue between the junta and the opposition and all different sectors of Myanmar society," said Fassino.

Fassino's visit to Thailand might have been better timed as the country has just elected a new prime minister, Samak Sundaravej, and will set up a new government by mid-February.

"We are identical in our wish," noted outgoing Thai Foreign Minister Nutya, who added, "However, this government and its mandate will end in ten days, and therefore this issue of long-standing concern shall be a matter for the future government to decide."

Thailand is deemed a crucial player in the Myanmar issue, as it is the pariah's state closest neighbour in South-East Asia and the two countries have close economic ties.

Thailand will also take the chair of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN) on July 5, this year, which has been a crucial forum for discussing the Myanmar issue.

"EBO" Euro-Burma Office <burma@euro-burma.be>

Foreign & Commonwealth Office

Press Release

JOINT STATEMENT ON BURMA BY THE UK, US AND FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTERS AT THE WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM IN DAVOS (24/01/08)

The Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum at Davos is a unique event. No other occasion brings together so many of the world's leaders from all fields. For over three decades now, these meetings have provided a global platform for collaboration and action to address international priorities of concern to us all.

One such priority is the urgent need for progress towards a transition to democracy and improved human rights in Burma. The fact that we have chosen to write about this issue, with so many competing priorities, should underline the strength of our governments' determination to support the people of Burma in their pursuit of a peaceful, prosperous and democratic future. We have repeatedly made clear that the situation in Burma cannot continue, and that we remain committed to helping the people of Burma.

It is now more than four months since the world was horrified by the violent repression of peaceful demonstrations in Burma. The dramatic pictures seen around the world of the brutality directed against peaceful protestors, including monks and nuns, were truly shocking. We cannot afford to forget. We must convince the Burmese regime to meet the demands of the international community and respect the basic rights of Burma's people.

The UN Security Council in October spelled out its expectations and reiterated those expectations on January 17. First, the early release of all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, and the creation of conditions for a genuine dialogue between the Government and the opposition. Second, full co-operation and constructive engagement with the UN. Third, the need for the regime to address the economic, humanitarian and human rights concerns of the Burmese people. Several months on, however, we find the regime has met none of these demands.

The regime claims to be moving ahead with its roadmap to civilian rule. However the process, already 14 years old, is open-ended, and many key political actors, not least Aung San Suu Kyi, are excluded. There can be little doubt that only genuine and inclusive dialogue can deliver national reconciliation and stability for Burma and its neighbours.

We call on all those attending the World Economic Forum to demonstrate that, while the regime may be indifferent to the suffering of the Burmese people, the world is not.

We ask you to support the return to Burma by UN Special Adviser Gambari as soon as possible, and to urge the regime to cooperate fully with him and the UN. We call on the regime to act on the recommendations of UN Human Rights Envoy Pinheiro; to release all political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi; and to launch a substantive, time-bound dialogue with democratic leaders and ethnic minority representatives, as called for in Aung San Suu Kyi's statement of November 8.

A unified call for genuine and peaceful political reconciliation and reform will be heard in Burma. We would not live up to our values if we ignored Burma's plight.

DAVID MILIBAND

CONDOLEEZZA RICE

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U.S. Department of Treasury

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HP-807

Treasury Action Targets Financial Network of Burmese Tycoon and Regime Henchman Tay Za

The U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) today announced financial sanctions against family members of regime leaders and key additional individuals and businesses that are part of the financial network of Tay Za, a Burmese business tycoon and arms dealer with close ties to Burma's military junta.

"We are tightening financial sanctions against Tay Za, an arms dealer and financial henchman of Burma's repressive junta," said OFAC Director Adam J. Szubin. "The President has made clear that we will continue to take action against the military junta and those who prop it up so long as human rights violations continue and democracy is suppressed."

Today's action targets the Htoo Group of Companies, which carries out key projects on behalf of the Burmese junta, including the purchase of military equipment and aircraft for the Burmese military.

Among the individuals named today is Aung Thet Mann, a director of Tay Za's Htoo Group of Companies. Aung Thet Mann is the son of General Thura Shwe Mann, a senior official in the Burmese government and a member of the State Peace and Development Council. Tay Za has used his business relationship with Aung Thet Mann to win favorable business contracts from the Burmese junta. OFAC also designated Thiha, Tay Za's brother and business partner, and U Kyaw Thein, a director of Tay Za's business ventures in Singapore.

The companies designated include Myanmar Avia Export Company Ltd., a company Tay Za has used to purchase helicopters and aircraft on behalf of the Burmese regime; Ayer Shwe Wah Company Limited, an enterprise for which Aung Thet Mann serves as a director; and Pavo Aircraft Leasing Pte. Ltd. in Singapore.

Four spouses of senior Burmese government officials have also been named - Khin Lay Thet, the wife of General Thura Shwe Mann; Myint Myint Ko, the wife of Construction Minister Saw Tun; Tin Lin Myint, the wife of Lieutenant-General Ye Myint; and Myint Myint Soe, the wife of Foreign Affairs Minister Nyan Win.

These actions were taken pursuant to Executive Order 13448, which authorizes the Secretary of the Treasury to designate senior regime officials, human rights violators in Burma, persons engaged in public corruption in Burma, financial and material supporters of the Government of Burma, and spouses and dependent children of previously designated individuals. Tay Za was named along with five of his companies by President George W. Bush in the Annex to E.O. 13448 of October 18, 2007.

Today's designation freezes any assets the designees may have subject to U.S. jurisdiction, and prohibits all financial and commercial transactions by any U.S. person with the designated companies and individuals. It also puts the world on notice about the financial operations of key junta associates and their companies.

-30-

NLD Statements (en) - "EBO" <burma@euro-burma.be> - 04.02.2008

Unofficial Translation by the NCGUB

The National League for Democracy

No (97/B) West Shwegondine Street
Bahan Township, Rangoon

1st Waning Moon of Pyatho, 1369 Burmese Era
January 23, 2008

Announcement No: 3/01/08

With the view to keep the public informed, the letter sent by the chairman of the National League for Democracy (NLD) to the chairman of the State Peace and Development Council on 14 January 2008 in accordance with the decision made at the meeting of the NLD Central Executive Committee on 11 January 2008, is reproduced as follows:

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

"(E)" Subject: National Reconciliation

The NLD has unfailingly adhered to the principles of national reconciliation and general harmony, devoid of any ill-will so that progress and development can be achieved in the nation. It has accordingly been striving for the emergence of a dialog and wishes to make the following suggestions:

The State Law and Order Restoration Council (now the State Peace and Development Council) promulgated Law No 14/19 -- the Pyithu Hluttaw (People's Parliament) Elections Law -- on 21 May 1989. Additionally, the Commander-in-Chief of the Defense Services gave the following explanation to the foreign and local journalists at the conference room of the Guest Hall of the Ministry in the Ministry Defense on 5 July 1989:

"... if they want to draft a new (constitution), we have told them to do so. ... Which sort of constitution do they want? Every nation has a government. It must also have a constitution. Which is the one they wish to (recognize), do they want to make any (amendment)? These are matters that the political parties must consider ..."

Furthermore, the Commander-in-Chief also told regional and divisional commanders at a meeting held at the Army Commander-in-Chief Operations Room on 10 May 1990:

"... our present objective is to hold the elections as scheduled and, therefore, we should not be considering the constitutional matter which was suggested by that individual. Furthermore, that matter does not concern us. The matter could backfire and turn us into criminals in history. They can write a new constitution if they so desire, or amend the old constitution to use it."

The authorities successfully held the elections on 27 May 1990 and frequently claimed thereafter that the elections were fair and free. At the coordinating meeting of the State and Divisional State Law and Order Restoration Councils held at the Army Commander-in-Chief Operations Room on 3 July 1990, the Commander-in-Chief once again made the following promises to the nation:

"... What will we do after the elections? We must draft the constitution. I have touched on the matter in my speech on 5 July 1989. I have said that the State Law and Order Restoration Council will not draft it. We do not intend to become any wrongdoer in history. ..."

"... The drafting of the constitution is a matter that must be done by the elected representatives from the political parties..."

The State Law and Order Restoration Council issued Notification No 1/90 on 27 July 1990 and asked political parties to sign pledges promising to abide by the notification. Among the stipulations then was the clause that any political party that refused to abide by No 1/90 will be abolished. Paragraph 20 of the Notification clearly states that:

"... under the present circumstances, the representatives elected by the people are those who have the responsibility to draw up the constitution of the future democratic State..."

The clause was intended to further solidify the promises made to the people and the country before and after the elections.

Such being the case, it is vitally essential for the authorities to make arrangements that will enable the citizens to freely engage in politics and undertake tasks in cooperation with the elected representatives. Hence, it is vital that all matters of national importance be tackled in unity through a broadly consulted and widely participated all-inclusive process, involving not only elected representatives but also all parties concerned.

Furthermore, the authorities issued Announcement No 2/2007 to appoint U Aung Kyi as the Minister for Relations to perform tasks and liaise with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. In this age of globalization changes are taking place with speed, and hence, in order to avoid delay, meetings being held between the two should ought to have a time frame. The earlier success is achieved in finding a solution, the quicker the people and the nation will enjoy the benefits.

Hence, national reconciliation which is urgently needed in the nation under existing circumstances should be explored through dialog. A solution found through dialog will ensure stability and economic development in the nation. Here are our suggestions:

(a) The State Peace and Development Council should abide by its own law and order -- the Pyithu Hluttaw Election Law and Order 1/90.

(b) Our suggestion, if accepted, will contribute positively to national reconciliation as well as to the various phases of democratic transition

(c) It will also boost the trust of the international community in the State Peace and Development Council

(d) Since it also amounts to implementing the will of the people which was overwhelmingly expressed through the 1990 multiparty democratic general election, the State Peace and Development Council will leave behind a positive historical landmark.

(e) Burma being a member of the United Nations, it will also make it apparent that the State Peace and Development Council is implementing the resolutions of the UN General Assembly and the points raised in the statement of the president of the UN Security Council.

These suggestions are made with best intention and sincerity so that a process, which is politically, legally, and ethically sound, and is in accord with international norms and the tradition of the Defense Services, will take place.

As per the decision taken at the Central Executive Committee Meeting of 11 January 2008, "(End)"

Central Executive Committee
NLD

Rangoon

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