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

green leaf <saffronmailletter@gmail.com> (22.04.09)

The Irrawaddy – News letter for Tuesday, April 21, 2009 - <news@irrawaddy.org>

Attack on NLD Leader Raises Questions

By **SAW YAN NAING** Tuesday, April 21, 2009 - http://www.irrawaddy.org/article.php?art_id=15509

The recent attack against a National League for Democracy (NLD) leader has raised questions about whether the assault was politically motivated and could be part of a systematic campaign to strike fear into the opposition movement ahead of the 2010 general elections in Burma.

On April 16, an unknown attacker reportedly entered the garden of Thein Nyunt, 65, an NLD spokesperson and elected Member of Parliament in the 1990 elections. His family members said that he was beaten with a baton and suffered injuries to his forehead, back and hands.



Burmese activists in Japan hold a giant party flag as they stage a rally to mark the 20th anniversary of the founding of the National League for Democracy at a Tokyo park last year. (Photo: AP)

Nyan Win, head spokesperson for the NLD, told The Irrawaddy on Tuesday that he doubts the assault against a veteran member of the party was a random attack.

“We do not know who is behind this incident. But, when NLD leaders and members are attacked like this, it forces us to consider that there may be a systematic campaign to suppress us,” said Nyan Win.

He added that attacks against opposition members were not the solution to the political conflict in Burma.

Thein Nyunt is not the first NLD leader to be physically attacked and hospitalized. Since 2003, at least 11 physical assaults against NLD

members or political activists linked to the opposition have been reported, including an attack against Nobel Peace Prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi.

In May 2003, Suu Kyi’s convoy was attacked in Depayin in Sagaing Division by a group of thugs, thought to be members of the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) and its militia, the Swan Ah-shin.

In 2006, Thet Naing Oo, an activist who actively participated in the national uprising in 1988, died after he was beaten by riot police.

In June 2007, Than Lwin, an elected member of parliament, was punched in the face by an unknown assailant wearing steel “knuckle-dusters.” His nose was broken and he later lost one of his eyes.

In March 2008, prominent social activist, Myint Aye, who is a leading member of the Human Rights Defenders and Promoters group, was beaten up and required five stitches.

And last April, Tin Yu, a member of the NLD in Hlaing Tharyar Township, was attacked by unknown assailants carrying batons as he walked home from a bus stop. He was admitted to hospital where he required 50 stitches in his face.

minye kyawswar <minyeyawswar8888@gmail.com> 24-25 April 2009

[Bangkok Post Opinion -Aung Zaw is Editor of Irrawaddy magazine.](http://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/15634/than-shwe-empty-well-of-purported-democracy) <<http://www.bangkokpost.com/opinion/opinion/15634/than-shwe-empty-well-of-purported-democracy>>
THE BURMANET NEWS - April 23, 2009, Issue #3696 - "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org> -www.burmanet.org

The Irrawaddy - COMMENTARY – News letter for Wednesday, April 22, 2009 - <news@irrawaddy.org>

Than Shwe's Empty Well - <http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion_story.php?art_id=15512>

By **AUNG ZAW** Wednesday, April 22, 2009

If you want to know what Snr-Gen Than Shwe is thinking these days, I suggest you read his recent Armed Forces Day speech in Naypyidaw.



Junta strongman Gen Than Shwe: democracy in Burma is at a fledgling stage.

There was nothing new in his annual speech, which contained an admonition that the democratization process would be slow.

Here is part of his speech:

“Democracy in Myanmar [Burma] today is at a fledgling stage and still requires patient care and attention,” the general said.

“As a Myanmar proverb puts it, a recently dug well cannot be expected to produce clear water immediately; understanding the process of gradual maturity is crucial, as is contributing to it through concerted constructive efforts in an environment of peace and tranquility,” he added.

Phew. This is disappointing indeed. How many times have we heard this nonsense over the past two decades?

After hearing about his speech, some Burmese joked that maybe Than Shwe was digging his well in the wrong soil.

Clearly, it is Than Shwe who is not ready for democracy, and not the people of Burma, who have often demonstrated that they are more than ready to return to life in a democratic society.

Than Shwe is not interested in amending the new constitution, and has shown no inclination to make his “road map” more inclusive, as the intentional community has repeatedly requested.

In his speech, Than Shwe warned against efforts to undermine the constitution, which he said had been adopted by the people in last year’s referendum.

He also warned potential participants in next year’s planned election against engaging in personal attacks.

“I would like to request those who will be involved in organizing work for parties to refrain from inciting unrest, to avoid personal attacks and smear campaigns against other parties and to find unity in diversity by practicing tolerance, forgiveness and understanding toward one another. Everyone following such ways and means of mature party organizing work will receive the blessing of the government,” he said.

It is obvious that Than Shwe intends to plow ahead with his road map, even if there is good reason to believe that most people, including many in the military, are unconvinced that it will extract the country from its current quagmire.

Sources in Naypyidaw say that Than Shwe and top leaders are having difficulty selling the road map, which will culminate in the 2010 election, even to soldiers and officers. The army is divided on the election issue and some senior army officers want Than Shwe to extend an olive branch to opposition leaders, including Aung San Suu Kyi, the sources said. But the stubborn old general has shown no signs of backing off.

To Than Shwe, the road map is his own personal exit strategy, which he hopes will enable him to relax his iron grip on power so that he can spend his dotage without fears of reprisal, either from his military successors or from some future civilian government.

Official sources said that Than Shwe knows that he and his family are intensely disliked both in Burma and in countries where Burmese political exiles have largely succeeded in portraying his regime as the epitome of oppression.

The sources said that he has been closely monitoring news and criticism of his regime. What he sees when he holds this mirror to his face must indeed be truly frightening.

Than Shwe knows that in the dog-eat-dog world of Burmese despotism, there is a very real danger that he could end up spending his final days as a prisoner, just as his own boss did.

Gen Ne Win, who ruled Burma for 26 years, spent his last days as a prisoner of the regime and died while under house arrest in 2002. This is not the fate that Than Shwe wants to find awaiting him.

So does this mean that Than Shwe could yet find it within his heart to make a compromise with the opposition and bend somewhat to international opinion?

Not likely. When United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon recently visited the region, Than Shwe did not extend an invitation because he knew that he would be asked to make concessions that are anathema to him.

Officials close to Than Shwe say that he spends a great deal of time pondering the possibility of releasing prisoners, including Suu Kyi, before the election, as a gesture to placate the international community. But at this stage, he still feels that such a move would be too risky.

Than Shwe, a former psychological warfare officer who takes great care to anticipate his enemies' every move, is no gambler. He doesn't dare risk releasing Suu Kyi even if it is a guaranteed way to win the world's applause.

Suu Kyi, for her part, has shown no reluctance to discuss any issue on the table, including sanctions. She has signaled her willingness to meet with the regime's leadership through the junta's liaison minister, Aung Kyi.

The thought of such an encounter with his nemesis no doubt sends chills up Than Shwe's spine. Better to break out the shovels and tell his minions to keep digging that well that could take forever to finally yield water fit to drink.

But the Burmese people are getting thirsty, and the soldiers are getting tired of the backbreaking labor required to keep a hated regime in power. Sooner or later, Than Shwe will learn that you can't keep people waiting forever.

Burma News - 05 May 2009 - "Burma_news" <burma_news@verizon.net> / beauzm@gmail.com - :Wed, 06. May 2009

Myanmar has food surplus, junta claims

DPA - Deutsche Presse-Agentur – 05 May 2009 - <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/db900sid/KERN-7RR7SG?OpenDocument&RSS20&RSS20=FS>

Yangon - Myanmar's ruling military junta claimed the country has almost tripled its rice production over the past two decades, boasting a food surplus despite the destruction of Cyclone Nargis last year and reports of famine conditions in Chin state, state newspapers reported Tuesday. Myanmar's current annual rice production has reached 1.6 billion baskets (with one basket equalling about 33 kilograms), the junta's chief, Senior General Than Shwe, said Monday.

Than Shwe said Myanmar "had not only reached self-sufficiency but also a surplus in food."

He said Myanmar's annual rice production was only 600 million baskets in 1989 when the junta came to power but had now nearly doubled.

"There is no need to worry about food even when the nation's population reaches 100 million," Than Shwe said. Myanmar's population now is at an estimated 53 million.

The World Food Programme, which studied Myanmar's food situation earlier this year, concluded that the country as a whole was enjoying a good crop in 2009 despite the devastation wrought by Nargis in the Irrawaddy Delta and near-famine conditions in Chin state in western Myanmar.

Although apparently enjoying a food surplus, the government has done little to relieve the famine-like situation for the Chin, a minority group, a human rights group charged.

"The government has done nothing to respond to the poverty and food shortages in the Chin state," said Human Rights Watch's Amy Alexander. "In fact, the army makes it worse by demanding food and money from the people in the Chin state."

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The Irrawaddy – COMMENTARY - Today's Newsletter for Friday, April 24, 2009 - news@irrawaddy.org

Regime Faces Crushing Defeat if Election is Free and Fair

By KYAW ZWA MOE Friday, April 24, 2009 - http://www.irrawaddy.org/opinion_story.php?art_id=15529

If Burma's upcoming election in 2010 is free and fair, it can be predicted with certainty that the National League for Democracy (NLD) of Aung San Suu Kyi will win with no less than the 82 percent of the votes it secured in the 1990 poll.

One basic reason for such optimism is that the NLD has committed none of the crimes laid at the door of the current military regime—killing innocent people, including revered monks, and sentencing dissidents to harsh and lengthy terms of imprisonment.

There are several other valid reasons: the NLD is an elected party, while the government is a ruthless regime; the stark contrast between their leaders, Than Shwe and Suu Kyi. There's absolutely no comparison between the cold-blood monk killer and the sincere and candid NLD leader.

However, critics would say that the popularity of the NLD is declining because of its inability to bring about democratic reforms despite the mandate a large majority of the people bestowed on it two decades ago. That's true if we don't take into consideration just how oppressive the regime is.

The same majority won't see any difference between the regime and the proxy parties which are now being formed ahead of the 2010 election.

It's logical to assume that the regime, having failed to honor the result of the 1990 election, will not accept an NLD victory in the 2010 poll. The generals in Naypyidaw aren't keen to see a resurrection of the "ghost" that has haunted them since 1990.

In order not to repeat their mistake, the generals will choose a means to make sure that their proxy parties will largely win in the election, even though they've secured 25 percent of the seats in both the upper and lower houses of parliament with handpicked military officials, according to the constitution which was drawn up by the junta's delegates.

Logic, therefore, says that there is no reason for the generals to hold a free and fair election in 2010.

Regional events such as the anti-government riots in neighboring Thailand would have made the generals more determined to keep walking on their own "roadmap."

Burmese Prime Minister Gen Thein Sein would have reported to his colleagues in Naypyidaw how he was evacuated by helicopter from the disrupted Association of Southeast Asian Nations summit in Pattaya, and together they would surely have ridiculed Thailand's democracy, noting its "anarchy"—a word they like to use.

Consequently, they would now be more determined than ever to keep walking toward what they have called "disciplined democracy."

Nothing—including the criticism and demands of the international community—can seem to affect the determination of the Burmese generals.

Since taking office in January, US President Barack Obama and his administration have been reviewing the policies of the previous George W Bush government against authoritarian countries such as Iran, North Korea and Burma.

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton announced in February that the US administration was reviewing its policy on Burma, saying the sanctions imposed on Burma since 1997 had got nowhere. Constructive engagement applied by neighboring countries of Burma has also failed to bring about change.

The prospect of a change in US approach towards Burma doesn't appear, however, to have persuaded the regime to review its own policies.

The international community has demanded a review by the junta of its constitution to ensure the inclusion of all opposition and ethnic parties in the 2010 election. But the junta has said that anyone who is against the constitution is an "enemy of the state."

In other words, the military regime will definitely proceed with its roadmap, including the 2010 election, according to its own norms without considering any suggestions and demands by domestic and international.

THE BURMANET NEWS - April 25-27, 2009, Issue #3698 - "Editor" <editor@burmanet.org> - www.burmanet.org

The Nation (Thailand) – **Opinion** - <http://nationmultimedia.com/2009/04/28/opinion/opinion_30101462.php>

A good chance for Burma to respond EDITORIAL - By The Nation

Published on April 28, 2009

Extension of EU sanctions against the junta is a welcome move, but the offer of talks should stand if there is progress inside the country

The European Community decided yesterday to renew economic sanctions against Burma for another year. This is a good decision from the EU and was made in good faith when the group's foreign ministers met in Luxembourg. After all,

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the EU - albeit a strong and unyielding critic of the military regime - is still one of the biggest donors for humanitarian assistance to the Burmese people, especially since Cyclone Nargis hit the country last May. The EU position should eliminate any lingering doubts among the junta leaders in Burma that the EU will give in to their stubbornness.

During the past few months, the debate among EU members has been intense, as some thought the time had come to relax the sanctions and go soft on Burma. They believe that there are some moderate elements in the Burmese government that need to be supported and further nurtured. But rather than coming up with additional sanctions, the EU has instead reached a compromise among its members with the one-year extension, with the hope of an olive branch in case there is progress in the near future.

The EU sanctions will have an impact on the policy review in Washington DC in the months to come. Like it or not, when US Secretary of State Hilary Clinton came to Asia in February and revealed that the US was reviewing its policy on Burma, it sent shock waves around the world. She said that neither sanctions nor engagement with the junta had worked so far. At the moment, nobody knows which direction the US will take. Certainly, the renewal of EU sanctions will have some influence over the future US policy, although it is not possible to envisage the US having a policy that would end its current sanctions against the regime, especially with the latest Tom Lantos-Jade Act. The EU extension indeed sets a new benchmark for the international community to follow.

Sanctions should continue against the regime, and at the same time there should be a willingness to talk if progress is seen to be made inside Burma. There have been recommendations that assistance should be given to Burma without any conditions. That would be suicidal because it would only benefit the regime without any prospect of constructive change. Some US lawmakers have called for an end to sanctions. Maybe they should take some history lessons about the regime's behaviour and how it has treated its people.

The EU position is commendable and shows moral courage. The EU is ready for dialogue with the junta, and the latest policy pronouncement gives the Burmese junta the opportunity to respond to specific questions raised by the EU, especially the status of the proposed election and the release of political prisoners, including opposition party leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The junta is preparing for next year's election and the international community, including the EU, has already called for an inclusive process that is transparent, free and fair. So far, there has not been any positive response.

The Burmese leaders know full well the strengths and weaknesses of the international community. As long as there is no concerted approach and policy coordination, the regime is safe because, after more than 20 years, outside parties have not cooperated with one another. China and India, the two most powerful Asian players, are still in two minds about their own roles regarding Burma. They have their own interests to protect in supporting the regime. Asean has tried in its own way to engage Burma as a family member but there are limits to what the grouping can and cannot do. For instance, Asean might be successful in persuading Burma to allow international relief organisations inside the country but the grouping has failed to convince the generals to expand the areas of coverage beyond the Irrawaddy Delta, even after one year of rehabilitation efforts.

When foreign ministers from Asia and Europe meet next month in Hanoi, Burma has to defend itself and explain its political circumstances and its political inertia. Asean is not going to defend Burma like it used to do. With the Asean charter in place, Burma should know its obligations and duties as a member of the grouping. Failure to do so would be remembered by Asean in the future.

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UPI (United Press International) Asia Online - Column: Burma Question

<http://upiasia.com/Politics/2009/04/28/burmas_inhumanity_toward_its_citizens/2833/>

Burma's inhumanity toward its citizens

By **Zin Linn**

Published: April 28, 2009

Bangkok, Thailand — Burma's military rulers have repeatedly described U.S. and EU sanctions as an "unjust and inhumane act" that will cause chaos and anarchy in the country. The junta has also said that economic sanctions are unilateral actions taken by big powerful countries against developing countries, ignoring the equality among nations, which the international community accepts.

According to their logic, sanctions imposed by a big country on a developing country, with the ill intention of hindering the economic, trade and manufacturing sectors of that country, are inhumane acts intended to incite unrest and cause the nation to fall into anarchy.

However, Burma's rogue military regime does not practice self-criticism with regard to sanctions it imposes on its own

population.

For instance, one member of Parliament from the National League for Democracy, a physician by profession, was informed by state authorities that he would have to choose between his profession and politics. If he wanted to remain a physician he must resign his political position and party. His family situation compelled him to choose his medical profession.

Numerous NLD members have faced similar threats and intimidation, being forced to choose between their professions and politics. This is one method the regime uses to sanction its own citizens.

The junta also commits atrocious acts against its citizens. One example is the experience of Htay Htay, an executive member of the Ma-gwe Division of the NLD. She was hospitalized for an emergency appendectomy; right after the operation a secret police officer appeared at the hospital and told the chief surgeon to discharge the patient immediately. When the doctor asked how he could interfere with a physician's care of his patient, the policeman showed his identity card and said the patient did not deserve hospitalization because she was a member of the NLD. The policeman also threatened the doctor; eventually Htay Htay was discharged.

A different type of sanction practiced by the junta is in clear violation of Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. An example is the case of a female student who wishes to remain anonymous. Although she passed the test to qualify for further studies in a foreign country, the authorities refused to issue her a passport because her father supports the NLD.

There are numerous such cases with regard to education. Burma is trampled under the jackboots of the army generals who refuse to allow equal opportunity in higher education.

Even the basic right of identity as a citizen is sanctioned by the military intelligence bureau. When a citizen comes of age, he has to submit an application for a National Registration Card. First he must obtain a recommendation from the head of the local ward of the junta's Peace and Development Council. Then he has to seek a second recommendation from the local police station. The application for an identity card must be filed with these two recommendation letters.

The important point is that in order to get the recommendations the youth must be a member of the Union Solidarity and Development Association, an organization similar to Adolf Hitler's brown-shirted Nazi storm troopers. Without USDA membership, a high bribe is required to obtain the NRC. A member of the National League for Democracy must either resign from the party or pay a six-digit bribe to authorities. Without the NRC one cannot work or travel.

People from all walks of life in Burma are suffering under various sanctions set up by the military regime that has ruled the country since 1962. The consequences of this reign of violence produce spillover effects in neighboring countries as well. Thailand is the nation most afflicted by Burma's socioeconomic troubles, which include political unrest, refugees, migrant workers, trafficking in women and children, disease, drugs, prostitution and terrorism.

In the past two decades, it is estimated that more than 1 million illegal workers have fled from Burma to Thailand due to the economic failures of the military-ruled country. This has caused successive Thai governments to face numerous socioeconomic problems.

There has been a massive influx of narcotic drugs, including heroin and methamphetamines, and the trafficking of women and children occurs on a regular basis. These are serious transnational crimes taking place along the 2,400-kilometer Thailand-Burma border. The junta's negligence of healthcare problems has also produced a new HIV/AIDS flow into neighboring countries.

Another problem that has drawn international criticism is the situation of over 2,100 political prisoners detained in the junta's prisons, many sentenced to unbelievably long terms of imprisonment. Most of them were intentionally transferred to remote prisons with very poor healthcare.

Most prisoners of conscience have to face terrible torture as well as a lack of nutritious food and little or no medicine. The outcome is that over 100 political prisoners – including members of Parliament, writers and journalists – have already passed away in the regime's jails. People are therefore deeply concerned about the safety of the 2,100 prisoners of conscience.

All political prisoners were arrested and sentenced due to their political activities involving democracy and human rights. If the generals honestly want to restore democracy and human rights in Burma, releasing these prisoners of conscience would be a sign of their sincerity. If they wait too long without releasing these prisoners, it indicates the generals have no intention of allowing democracy or promoting national reconciliation in Burma.

The military regime speaks loudly about national reconciliation. It sometimes releases a limited number of prisoners in hopes of reducing international pressure, especially sanctions.

The regime should understand that building an appropriate political atmosphere is a basic step toward national

reconciliation. This would require the unconditional and immediate release of all political prisoners, including pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, that have been detained arbitrarily and inhumanely.

The release of all political prisoners could cause international sanctions to be lifted and allow the revival of the nation's economy, which is currently in a state of collapse.

(Zin Linn is a freelance Burmese journalist living in exile in Thailand. he is working at the NCGUB East Office as an information director and is vice-president of Burma Media Association, which is affiliated with the Paris-based Reporters Sans Frontiers. He can be contacted at uzinlinn@gmail.com.)

Burma News - 05 May 2009 - "Burma_news" <burma_news@verizon.net> / beauzm@gmail.com - :Wed, 06. May 2009

Myanmar tops list of worst places to be a blogger

CNN - May 5, 2009 - <<http://edition.cnn.com/2009/TECH/05/04/world.bloggers/>>

Bloggers in Myanmar, Iran and Syria work under some of the most repressive conditions in the world, facing tactics such as regulation, intimidation and even imprisonment, according to a report from the Committee to Protect Journalists.

The organization released a list of the "10 worst countries to be a blogger" to call attention to online oppression in connection with World Press Freedom Day, which was observed Sunday.

Myanmar is the worst place in the world to be a blogger, Simon's organization says. A military government restricts Web access and throws people into jail for posting critical material.

Burmese authorities have the capability to monitor e-mail and other communication methods and can block users from viewing the Web sites of political opposition parties, the organization says, citing research group OpenNet Initiative.

One Burmese blogger, Maung Thura, is serving a 59-year prison term for circulating video footage after Cyclone Nargis in 2008, the Committee to Protect Journalists says.

Burma News - 05 May 2009 - "Burma_news" <burma_news@verizon.net> / beauzm@gmail.com Wed, 06. May 2009

Myanmar junta rejects Suu Kyi's detention appeal

AFP – 05 May 2009 - <http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20090505/wl_asia_afp/myanmarpoliticssuuky>

YANGON – Myanmar's military government has rejected an appeal by pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi against her detention, a party spokesman said Tuesday.



AFP/File – Myanmar democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi speaks at a press conference in 2002. Myanmar's military

National League for Democracy (NLD) party spokesman Nyan Win told AFP that Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyer had received a letter confirming the failed bid last Friday, less than a month before her current sentence expires.

The 63-year-old Nobel Peace Prize laureate has spent most of the past 19 years under house arrest in Yangon where she lives with her two maids and is allowed only occasional visits, mostly from her lawyer and doctor.

She lodged her appeal in October last year.

"According to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyer U Kyi Win, the appeal against her detention was rejected," Nyan Win said, although he himself had not read the letter.

"It should not be like this as they haven't allowed her any court hearing for her appeal."

He said the assistant to Aung San Suu Kyi's lawyer, Hla Myo Myint, went to the remote administrative capital Naypyidaw on Friday to receive the rejection letter after being summoned by authorities.

Her lawyer Kyi Win has now requested a meeting with Aung San Suu Kyi, Nyan Win said.

Burma News - 05 May 2009 - "Burma_news" <burma_news@verizon.net>/ beauzm@gmail.com - :Wed, 06. May 2009

Myanmar opposition appeals to Clinton

Agence France Presse – 05 May 2009 - <<http://www.abitsu.org/?p=4545>>

Two prominent Myanmar opposition leaders sent a joint appeal Tuesday to US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, urging her to keep sanctions on the military regime and engage regional powers.

The opposition figures -- Ashin Aww Bar Sa of the All Burma Monks' Alliance and Tun Myint Aung of the 88 Generation Students -- said they signed the letter in a hiding place as they fear they will be arrested imminently.

In the letter, the two asked the United States to maintain sanctions until the junta releases political prisoners and enters "meaningful" dialogue with the opposition.

The junta has "been complaining that the US and Western nations that have imposed sanctions are making the people poor, our country underdeveloped and our economy destroyed," they wrote in the letter.

"Let us be clear -- it is the military junta and its disastrous economic policies, terror, corruption, illegal rule and mismanagement that have turned one of the richest countries in Asia into one of the least developed in the world," they wrote.

In the letter, the Myanmar opposition leaders supported US efforts to hold direct dialogue with the junta but said Washington needed to reach the country's top leader, Senior General Than Shwe.

They also called on the United States to engage other nations in a solution on Myanmar including China -- the junta's main backer -- and nations in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

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"Burma_news" <burma_news@verizon.net> (EBO) – Mittwoch, 29.04.2009

National League for Democracy
97B - West Shwegondaing Street,
Bahan Township, Rangoon

April 29, 2009

Shwegondaing Declaration

We the members of the National League for Democracy (NLD) including the Central Executive Committee, representatives of State and Division organizational committees, the Members of Parliament- elect still standing with the NLD, representatives of the Central Women's Affairs Committee, representatives of the Youth Affairs implementation Committee gathered on the 28th and 29th of April 2009 in the meeting hall of the Head Quarter of the NLD on West Shwegondaing Street and held discussions on the political and organizational Situations and the analytical report regarding the Constitution with the aim to resolve all the political impasse in striving to build up the Union of Burma as a democratic state in accordance with the inspiration of all the people.

This Shwegondaing Declaration is issued to inform the people as the agreement of the majority was obtained through these discussions for the plan to create a fair climate for the evolvement of a dialogue which is the best means for resolving the above impasse.

The NLD believes that the current political problems facing the country such as

1. The immediate and unconditional release of all the political prisoners including U Tin Oo, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi;
2. Review of the Constitution;
3. Establishment of a genuine Union based on the principle of equality for all the ethnic nationalities; recognition in some ways of the result of the 1990 general election;

are the main issues to be resolved immediately for the benefit of the country and the people.

The stands of the League are:

FOR PEACE, FREEDOM, DEMOCRACY AND HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

(a) Unconditional Release of All the Political Prisoners including U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Su Kyi

(b) Review of the Draft Constitution (2008)

A State Constitution based on the democratic principles is required to establish a democratic state - The not yet in force Constitution (2008) of the State Peace and Development Council contains provisions which are not in accord with democratic principles. Therefore the emergence of a Constitution which is acceptable to all the people including the ethnic nationalities is urgently required.

(c) Organization in this Union of Burma where all the ethnic nationalities live together, a unity based on the principles of equal opportunity and mutual good will must be established. Genuine democracy can flourish only on such a fertile ground. Furthermore, all the political parties must have the freedom to organize. Therefore, the offices of the State! Divisional and Township Organization Committees which were closed and sealed since May 31 2003, said to be a temporary measure, should be reopened immediately together with those of the parties of ethnic nationalities.

(d) Recognition of the result of the Multi Party Democracy General Election (1990)

At the present recognition in some way of the People's Parliament, which is the outcome of the 1990 elections, is urgently needed in accordance with the Section 3 of the People's Parliament Election law. Only then the democratic traditions can be maintained. Otherwise the State Peace and Development would seem to be breaching their own laws and regulations enacted by themselves.

(e) Political Dialogue

The NLD has been constantly striving for finding solution through political dialogue since 1988. Daw Aung San Su Kyi, the General Secretary of the NLD has candidly stated the fact that she can work with flexible approach according to the political necessity as follows: "We have repeatedly stated that the NLD would negotiate flexibly to get beneficial outcomes for the people of Burma. Nevertheless such dialogues should not aim for the good of the NLD nor should they aim for the benefit of the authorities. Only the interests of the people of Burma should be targeted."

Therefore, the NLD requests again with pure intention that the dialogues that can resolve all the problems be carried out without fail. The agenda of the dialogue envisaged by the League is as follows:

(1) Unconditional dialogue participated by the decision makers should be commenced immediately based on the principles of mutual respects and national reconciliation.

(2) During the dialogues the issues of provision of equal opportunities for the ethnic nationalities: the unconditional release of all political prisoners including U Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Su Kyi; review of the Constitution (2008); recognition in some way of the People's Parliament which is the result of 1990 election; issues of the elections of the future: development of the living condition of the people etc shall be considered.

(3) To arrange to recognize the result of the 1990 elections by approving the result of the dialogues at the People's Parliament which is to be formed according to the People's Parliament Election Law.

(4) All the stake holders to follow unitedly the political course for the future delineated by the agreements of the dialogue as adopted by the People's Parliament.

(f) Attitude towards the Possible Future Elections The NLD firmly believes that enduring political stability and the development of the country could be achieved only by resolving the fundamental problems mentioned above.

The people shall be informed what will be its stand if the State Peace and Development Council -uni-laterally hold upcoming elections at their own arrangement, without considering to resolve through dialogue.

The League accepts that elections are the landmarks to be passed in the journey to democracy. The NLD will not abandon the struggle for democracy. The League will stand by the people in all circumstances.

Therefore if the State Peace and Development Council unilaterally hold possible upcoming elections with their own plan and if:

(1) All the political prisoners including the leaders of the NLD were unconditionally released,

(2) The provisions of the (2008) Constitution which are not in accord with the democratic principles were amended,

(3) All inclusive free and fair general election were held under international supervision:

The National League for Democracy, through this Shwegondaing Declaration, states that, anticipating for the realization of the benefit of the whole people, it intends to participate in the elections only after gravely considering as a special case and after studying the coming Party Registration Act and the Laws relating to the Elections.
As per the resolution made at the meeting of the Central Executive Committee held on 29 April 2009

Central Executive Committees, National League for Democracy, Rangoon

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