

PDC NEWS COMMENTARY

April 2010

Compiled and commented by the Political Defiance Committee (PDC)
National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB)

The activities of NLD and domestic opposition forces
The relationship between NLD and the military junta

On March 8 at 4 pm, SPDC TV and radio announced election laws for 2010 elections. Party Registration Law and Election Commission Law followed the next day. The law openly stated that parties would be abolished if convicted persons or those in appeal process are included, leading to a big dilemma for the NLD since it could be registered only after expelling Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD members currently in jail. The law explicitly calls for her non-participation in elections even as an independent.

NLD Vice-Chairman U Tin Oo remarked on March 10 that the law put excessive restrictions on her. On the same day NLD spokesperson U Nyan Win also said that the law was forcing the League to expel her. NLD General Secretary Daw Aung San Suu Kyi also said through spokesperson U Nyan Win on March 11 that the law was disgraceful because it came into being to be directed at a certain person.

The SPDC consecutively published election laws since March 9. Chapter 16, Article 91(b) of the parliament election law issued on 11th said that the 1990 multi-party general election was not compatible with the Constitution so that its election results have automatically become void. Although regime's laws have caused some difficulties, the NLD believed that it would find ways to overcome them, NLD Vice-Chairman U Tin Oo said on that day.

On March 11 Daw Aung San Suu Kyi met with U Nyan Win for two hours and instructed him to explain inside the party and among the people about Shwegondine Declaration and why SPDC's 2008 Constitution is unacceptable. U Tin Oo affirmed the plan on March 13 to brief the people extensively in line with her instruction.

Coinciding with the publication of election laws, the military regime allowed re-opening of long sealed-off NLD offices, since March 10. However it continued to shut down some township offices in Rangoon Division, Rangoon Division Vice-Chairman Dr. Than Nyein disclosed on March 13. On March 12, Dagon Myothit Township PDC Chairman U Ko Ko Hlaing summoned NLD members to told them that the current township organizing committee has become invalid because so many deaths of NLD members in the township have made it unable to fulfill specified number of party members for the township. The regime also allowed printing of news in March 23rd issue of *Yangon Times* and *Envoy* journals on NLD's internal differences.

The NLD Central Executive Committee again demanded the SPDC on March 17 to allow meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to discuss current situation but the regime made no reply.

The NLD hoped for effective action by the UN and the international community upon SPDC's restrictive election laws rather than their merely criticizing, U Tin Oo said on March 16. He also said on March 18 that the NLD would challenge the unfair laws legally in the courts at all levels. On March 23, the NLD sued SPDC boss Senior Gen. Than Shwe at the Central Court in Rangoon but the court turned down the case.

The NLD demanded the SPDC on March 27 to let Daw Aung San Suu Kyi meet with Senior Gen. Than Shwe and allow ethnic political parties which had won in 1990 election to exist legally. If the NLD wins the election Americans would dominate Burma, Rangoon Mayor Aung Thein Lin said on March 29.

The Central Committee meeting of the NLD unanimously decided on March 29 to refrain from participating in 2010 election. On the same day Vice-Chairman U Tin Oo asserted that though the party did not register at the election commission, it would not dissolve. On March 30, NLD CEC U Win Tin warned that the military regime could launch new suppressive measures against the NLD for deciding to boycott the election. Since the regime has instructed cessation of house repair work Daw Suu's security was very worrisome because her house fences were in ruins, her lawyer U Kyi Win said on March 15.

As the SPDC has planned to ultimately abolish NLD and 1990 election results by utilizing 2010 election law, we assume that the NLD has but to fight back for truth by all available means, leading to more intense confrontations and worse persecutions. We think that though the military regime was able to put the NLD into a quandary through its election law, the path chosen by the NLD has also pushed the regime into a corner.

The relationship between ethnic groups and the military junta

As the SPDC military regime has decided to transform all ceasefire groups into Border Guard Forces or Home Guard Forces before 2010 election, its Transformation Policy Committee, Central Work Committee on Transformation and Regional Command-level Work Committee on Transformation are exerting all sorts of pressure upon ceasefire groups, resulting in tension and war preparations at various ceasefire territories.

Despite SPDC's rejection, the UWSA continued insisting on its 9-point demands. The SPDC is preparing to declare the Wa group illegal and launch a war on it if the latter refused to transform. The Wa group has also given orders since March 2nd to fire in self-defense at any invading armed force, a Wa commander disclosed on March 12. Due to increasing likelihood of antagonism between SPDC and Wa troops, China has deployed more military forces in Lanxiang Township on the Sino-Burma border, local residents reported.

In a gesture of threat to UWSA and ceasefire groups in Eastern Shan State, squadrons of MiG-29 jetfighters carried out long-range flight exercises near those territories, and on March 13 a squadron stopped for night at Kengtung airport. When the SPDC instructed government staff of Border Region and Ethnic Nationalities Development Ministry engaged in agriculture, health and education services in Wa region to take long term leave and return to mainland, they started departing on March 23. The regime has tightened immigration and food deliveries to the region. About 300 Wa civilians mostly including senior citizens from Panhsang have moved to Namtit, Hopan and Xing Sui-haw regions.

The SPDC is giving basic military training and small arms training to dependent families in its battalions based in Tangyang and Mongyai near territories controlled by SSA (N) and UWSA ceasefire groups. The regime has reinforced its Division 33 and Division 77 near Kokang area adjacent to UWSA Brigade 418-controlled territory and Divisions 77 and 99 in

Lashio, Tanyang and Mongshu areas while it has deployed Division 55 in Mawpha region east of Salween in addition to local troops and militia.

Though China has suggested to the UWSA not to stick steadfastly to its nine-point demand but to compromise and withdraw Wa troops from the southern military region 171, Wa leaders explained to them infeasibility of this plan, a news source close to Wa leaders disclosed on March 22. Wa leaders and SPDC MAS Chief Lt. Gen. Ye Myint have agreed to meet again on April 1st at Tanyang.

The SPDC is also putting all sorts of pressure on the KIO. It is learnt that the KIO would try to settle the problem politically through negotiations but has prepared to meet the worst. It called an emergency meeting of its Central Committee from March 1 to 10. No outcome of the meeting was publicized but tensions and war preparations broke out when SPDC Northern Command troops launched maneuvers on the pretext of opium suppression. The KIO has moved its important office equipment, military equipment and troops from Laiza to Lycin base, former HQ location. In Tarmakhan and Phakant jade fields of Kachin State, SPDC forces and KIO troops were recruiting soldiers in competition. Chinese government is also preparing refugee camps on the border for Kachin people who would flee from fighting.

The SPDC has issued an ultimatum to the KIO to concede to BGF transformation by March 15. On March 12 KIO Vice-Chairman Gauri Zawsaing led a delegation to Northern Command in Myitkyina to meet with Maj. Gen. Soe Win for the 12th time and presented KIO's position which was to transform into Union Army rather than into Border Guard Force. The KIO also submitted a four-point proposal. SPDC troops caught eight KIO militiamen on March 13 together with over 30 remote-controlled bombs at Kya Kham Dup village between Mongmauk and Myothit in Kachin State Bhamo District, leading to increased tensions between two sides. Northern Command Chief Maj. Gen. Soe Win showed the bombs to Kachin Christian leaders.

Though not reported in SPDC media, Gen. Shwe Mann, BSO Chiefs Lt. Gen. Tha Aye and Lt. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing visited Northern Command HQ on March 24 and then to Hopin, Tanaing and Pu-tao, returning home on 25th. Despite tensions between two sides, Dr. Manang Tuja resigned from the KIO to lead the Kachin State Progressive Party which reportedly has 15 central committee members and over 500 party members at ready. The party would register with SPDC's 2010 Election Commission, Dr. Tuja said on March 15.

The SPDC continues to pressure NDAA Mongla group and NMSP to transform into BGF. On March 29, MAS Chief Lt. Gen. Ye Myint and Traingle Region Commander Maj. Gen. Kyaw Phyto summoned Mongla group Vice-Chairman 2 Sao San Lu and Vice Chief-of-Staff Sao Kham Maung to Kengtung and gave ultimatum to them to transform by April 28 at the latest or else be declared an illegal association.

Though seven months have passed since SPDC troops attacked the MNDA Kokang group headed by Peng Jia-sheng, the region is far from stable and secure. An unknown group killed Lin Sang who was serving as Liaison Officer between Pai Sou-chien's breakaway Kokang group that has been transformed into a BGF, at his house in Ward 6, Lashio, on March 11. The SPDC announced that it has caught seven armed guerrillas in Laukkai on March 27. Because 'terrorists' committing bombings and shootings in Kokang region were based along Sino-Burma border, the SPDC has asked China to assist in apprehending them.

On March 16, Regional Commander Maj. Gen. Thet Naing Win, Chairman of South-East Command Working Committee on Transformation, called New Mon State Party (NMSP) Vice-Chairman and team to pressure them to accept BGF transformation and set up a political party for elections. The Commander also demanded a final answer. Nevertheless NMSP

Central Committee meeting held in the last week of March decided not to accept BGF transformation but to continue negotiations with the emerging government on political issues.

While some ceasefire groups are resisting SPDC pressures, the Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Front (KNPLF) which has transformed into a BGF would contest in the election under the name "Karenni Nationalities People's Liberation Party," its Secretary U Shwe Wah said on March 23.

At the same time as SPDC's putting heavy pressure on ceasefire groups and political parties, it is also stepping up its military offensives against armed groups like KNU, KNPP and SSA (South) which are still fighting the regime. In Karen State's Toungoo and Nyaunglebin districts, troops under the command of MOC-7 and MOC-8 were carrying out scorched-earth policies, burning down plantations and orchards. The KNU issued a plea to UN Secretary-General on March 4 to force the SPDC regime to cease its hostilities against Karen people. On March 30, combined troops of SPDC and DKBA Battalions 901 and 906 attacked KNU Sixth Brigade's Battalions 201 and 101, resulting in a heavy firefight south of Myawaddy.

SSA (South) troops battled with combined SPDC troops of LIR 525 and IB 99 near Wan Kyaung Loi Kham village in Namsan Township, Southern Shan State, on March 13, resulting in twenty dead that included Capt. Tin Aung Moe and eight wounded from SPDC side. The SSA (South) also seized arms and ammo from SPDC forces.

The National Democratic Front (NDF) which is composed of armed ethnic groups issued a statement on March 13 strongly denouncing the political party registration law published by the SPDC regime because of its unfairness. The KNU also urged world nations and the entire people on March 16 to fight SPDC's law that bars popular leaders and ethnic leaders.

KNU, SSA (South), NDF and ENC issued statements welcoming NLD's decision not to register and contest in SPDC's 2010 election. The Arakan Liberation Party (ALP) also announced its opposition to regime's 2010 election, on March 10.

On the other hand the SPDC is trying to spread propaganda domestically and internationally by holding ceremonies pompously for ceasefire groups and surrendered groups' transformation into BGF. On March 30, the SPDC organized a ceremony to transform Lahu People's Militia into a Border Guard Force. MAS Chief Lt. Gen. Ye Myint and BSO Chief Lt. Gen. Min Aung Hlaing personally attended the ceremony.

Despite SPDC's plan and relentless effort to transform ceasefire groups into Border Guard Forces or Home Guard Forces and rein them in before 2010 election, powerful ceasefire groups in alliance are stubbornly standing up against the plan, resulting in a deadlock. Although China is mediating between them demands of both sides are so far apart that negotiations failed and tensions increased day after day. Both sides do not wish to fight but some miscalculation could re-ignite the civil war.

Fearing domestic pro-democracy forces, ceasefire groups and forces still in armed struggle to come closer and united, the military regime seems to be stepping up its pre-emptive assault on the KNU. We assume that since the SPDC is facing mounting perils from all aspects it would not launch war against ceasefire groups yet but could attack weaker or isolated groups first while militarily containing the Wa group. We think that the regime could launch the attack by citing drug issue, sowing dissension and instability inside ceasefire groups or between ceasefire groups.

The activities of NLD and domestic opposition forces

A meeting of NLD Legal Assistance Team on March 3 reassigned the post of team chairman to U Tin Oo. On the same day, an NLD Central Committee list was also published. The list of 100 central committee members and 8 alternate members also included Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and 11 NLD leaders currently in jail for conscience. On account of SPDC regime's election laws published on March 8 some differences came up inside the NLD on whether to register or not. NLD CEC U Win Tin asserted on March 9 that it would uphold Shwegondine Declaration while another CEC member named U Khin Maung Swe spoke to the VOA news service on the same day about need to contest in SPDC elections. Dr. Than Nyein also spoke to the BBC on March 23 in favor of elections.

To talk about the issue, the NLD called a meeting of CEC on March 15. Chairman U Aung Shwe personally attended the meeting and spoke in favor of registration for NLD's existence. CEC members U Khin Maung Swe and Dr. Than Nyein also stood on the side of pro-registration. Such differences effected lower ranks of the NLD and both domestic and exiled forces. Nevertheless Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, U Win Tin and CEC members, Central Committee members, Divisional-, State-, District- and Township-level Organizing Committee members, Central Women's Team, Central Youth Team and majority of NLD members, border-based and exiled pro-democratic forces gave support to non-registration and anti-election views, resulting in an unanimous decision at the Central Committee plenary meeting on March 29 not to register.

Before the meeting started NLD Chairman U Aung Shwe, U Khin Maung Swe and Dr. Than Nyein who have expressed their views openly pledged to abide by the majority decision. Therefore in contrary to SPDC's expectation, no palpable splits have come up. NLD Youth and Women groups, grass root members, domestic and exiled forces all of whom have urged adoption of an unyielding stand have been strengthened with firm positions supporting NLD's struggle so that it seemed the military regime itself has pushed the NLD and opposition forces to a determined position. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD also got more internal and international attention.

The Arakan League for Democracy (ALD) announced on March 10 that it would not contest in elections if the SPDC fails to revise 2008 Constitution. On the same day, ethnic leaders U Aye Tha Aung, Sai Lek and Pu Chin Sian Thang also expressed their rejection of SPDC's election laws. The United Nationalities Alliance (UNA) also wrote to Ban Ki-moon on March 17 asking for more pressure from the UN as the election laws were violating fairness and human rights. Disbanded Mon National Democratic Front (MNDF) also decided at its CEC meeting held in Moulmein on March 24 not to contest in 2010 election. The Shan Nationalities League for Democracy (SNLD) as well would not consider party registration and elections till its leaders Khun Tun Oo and Sai Nyunt Lwin were released, party spokesperson Sai Lek said on March 22.

While most of the parties except the NUP that had won in 1990 election were deciding not to run for elections in 2010, at least twenty political parties were preparing to register for elections. U Aye Kyaing led a group to form Union of Myanmar National Politics Force (Arakan State) and said on March 24 that the party would contest in 2010 elections. Some Karens led by Dr. Simon Tha were also planning to form a party and run for elections. Phyo Min Thein, who claimed to be a former student leader, was going to set up Mass Democracy Party and contest in election. The Democratic Party (Myanmar) would contest in election, U Thu Wai said on March 15. The Union of Myanmar National Politics Federation led by Aye

Lwin and the '88 Generation Student and Youths (Union of Myanmar) led by Aye Lwin's brother Ye Tun has registered at SPDC Election Commission on March 22.

Workers' strikes continued to simmer in Rangoon's industrial zones within March. On March 3, more than 200 workers from Super garment factory in Shwe Pyitha Township Industrial Zone-1, Rangoon, went on strike to demand labor rights. Over 1000 workers from Grand Royal distillery on U Shwe Yoe Street, Shwe Pyitha Township, also demonstrated to get wage increases, public holidays and overtime charges. Thousands of female workers from UIB and Asia Thamadi garment factories in the same industrial zone also went on strike on March 4 and 5 to get wage hikes. On March 6, workers from four SGI garment factories in South Dagon Myothit Industrial Zone-1 demonstrated in discontent over bonus cut and cost-of-living allowance cut. On March 8, about 500 workers from Lucky footwear factory in Hlaing Thayar Industrial Zone-2 strike for higher wages. More than 100 workers from a vermicelli factory in Shwe Pyitha Township Industrial Zone-2 demonstrated in front of Township Labor Office to demand higher wages. Fearing escalation of labor strikes into political movements, the SPDC regime pressured employers to concede to workers' demands, resulting in successful ending of strikes within few days.

On March 5, the Committee Representing the People's Parliament (CRPP) held a meeting to discuss current labor strikes, landmine ban issue, possibility of civil war expansion, and privatization of state-owned-enterprises. However, exiled Members of Parliament Union demanded the CRPP on March 14 to set up an interim government.

On March 24, South Korean Consular and French Consular to Burma called on NLD Vice-Chairman U Tin Oo and CEC member U Nyan Win at the NLD HQ and asked them about Burma's political situation and NLD's position.

Former Gen. Thura Tin Oo's 83rd birthday and U Win Tin's 80th birthday both of which fell on March 12 were commemorated at the NLD HQ where NLD youths paid respects to them. U Tin Oo and U Win Tin exhorted the young people to join hands and struggle in unity energetically. On the same day, the DVB published U Win Tin's jail memoirs titled "Standing up to man-made hell" in honor of his birthday.

On Peasants' Day which fell on March 2, a peasant welfare group called 'Scarecrow' from Khayan Township, Rangoon Division, carried out a mass activity to commemorate it. In the third week of March, activists dropped flyers repudiating SPDC's 2008 Constitution and 2010 election at busy places in Rangoon. There was also a campaign in the last week of March at many locations in Mandalay where activists sprayed the words 'Free' in red paint and distributed flyers agitating to support NLD's Shwegondine Declaration.

On March 22, '88 Generation Students group, All Burma Monks Alliance and All Burma Federation of Students Unions jointly sent a letter to Ban Ki-moon to call an emergency Security Council meeting on Burma issue because of SPDC's publication of unreasonable election laws. Over 470 villagers from Toungoo District also asked the ILO on March 1 via the Federation of Trade Unions of Burma (FTUB) and the Federation of Trade Unions of Kawthoolei (FTUK) to investigate and take action upon SPDC's imposition of forced labor.

Since the NLD has opted for political existence rather than party existence and openly announced its plan to challenge the SPDC and its 2010 election within the legal framework, heavier confrontations would come up in the future between NLD and SPDC. We assume that the regime would closely watch NLD activities and crush them decisively. The SPDC has instructed the police to particularly watch communications between NLD members and illegal organizations in exile. The NLD need to adopt definite policy guidelines and prepare replacement leadership tiers before the regime picked up its leaders one by one for prison.

The entire people and all opposition forces inside and abroad ought to greatly reinforce NLD's activities. We also believe that lives of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin Oo and U Win Tin are especially in danger now.

The military junta and domestic situation

The situation of the activities of the military junta

Election laws issued successively by the SPDC regime since March 8 have been systematically designed to put Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the National League for Democracy and other winning political parties of 1990 into a dilemma. The laws aimed to push the NLD into a tight corner and split it into two or at least expel her from the party and make it accept SPDC's 2008 Constitution automatically. Nevertheless it seems that NLD's March 29 decision has derailed SPDC's ploy. Consequentially the NLD and majority of political parties that had won in 1990 are now boycotting the election so that SPDC's 2010 election results could never be credible internationally.

We believe that the regime could not obtain international recognition which it terribly longs for while even those countries persistently defending the SPDC would be hesitant to officially support the results of 2010 election. Because true nature of Senior Gen. Than Shwe and his cohorts who are highly prejudiced toward the Lady and her party was plainly exposed not only to the people inside and world countries but also to its army, we assume that differences and rivalries could emerge among the SPDC top brass if effective pressure is exerted upon them from both inside and abroad.

There might be big crises inside the top leadership over allotment of posts and sharing of power. Futures of over-aged Senior Gen. Than Shwe, Vice-Senior Gen. Maung Aye, Gen. Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo, Gen. Thura Shwe Mann and Gen. Thein Sein have not been settled yet. Since none of the SPDC generals dare not relinquish power, they could only beget a hideous and repugnant institution by sharing out top posts of President, C-in-C, Vice-President and Vice-C-in-C among them after the elections.

In his address to 65th Armed Forces Day (Anti-Fascist Resistance Day), Senior Gen. Than Shwe spoke of army's tradition of moving to political realm out of necessity, implying that he might serve as President. Though no political parties representing the military junta have been registered, news about USDA transforming into a "National Development Party" and getting registration as a political party, and Gen. Thein Sein's assuming chairmanship of USDA are getting out.

Although no date has been fixed by the regime for the election, it announced setting up of a Union Elections Commission on March 11 signed by Gen. Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo. The 17-member commission was headed by former Judge Advocate General Maj. Gen. Thein Soe (BC/12742) (OTS 47th intake). He has also been on the Drafting Commission of 2008 Constitution. Because the elections commission is composed of former regime judges, attorneys-general, auditors, former chairpersons of Women's Affairs Federation, former staff of Office of Strategic and International Studies and former members of constitution drafting commission, it could not be fair and impartial.

Currently serving cabinet members and military officers are reportedly assigned as parliamentary candidates as follows: U Aung Thaung and Maj. Gen. Hla Tun for Magwe Division, U Soe Tha, Brig. Aung Thein Lin, Brig. Lun Thi and Rear-Admiral Soe Thein for Rangoon Division, Maj. Gen. Thein Swe for Arakan State, Brig. Soe Naing, Maj. Gen. Tin Htut, Brig. Ohn Myint-1, Brig. Ohn Myint-2, Maj. Gen. Thura Aye Myint and Brig. Thein

Aung for Irrawaddy Division, Brig. Thein Zaw for Kachin State and Brig. Kyaw San for Sagaing Division.

Maj. Gen. Htay Oo, Brig. Maung Maung Thane, Brig. Tin Naing Thein, Brig. Khin Maung Myint and Maj. Gen. Maung Oo would also run for elections while Police-General Brig. Khin Yee and Deputy Police-General Brig. Hpone Swe would remain in the police.

In other states and divisions, currently serving military and civilian officers as well as retired ethnic military officers and businesspeople close to the regime have been assigned to run for elections. Ex-Col. Saw Khin Soe and ex-Col. Khin Kyoo are now campaigning in Karen State Hlaingbwe and Pa-an townships respectively. Big businessmen close to SPDC generals are now amending the clauses of their business chambers so as to set up political parties and contest in elections. Burma Hoteliers Association has revoked its Constitution Article 2 (c) which forbade its members from joining political parties or organizations, association's Chairperson Zaygar Co. owner U Khin Shwe said on March 23.

SPDC Prime Minister Gen. Thein Sein who is reported to be running for elections from his native Bhamo constituency while serving as USDA Chairman was touring Northern Shan State, Arakan State and Kachin State, campaigning for USDA party since the day after election laws were published. He has visited Shan State on March 9, Arakan State on March 17 and Kachin State on March 31. Industry-1 Minister U Aung Thaung and some ministers were also campaigning in their respective areas. The election is reportedly scheduled for the last week of October or early November.

The regime is handing over all state-owned business resources to military-owned Holdings Ltd. and businesspersons close to Generals before the election. It has given away the Five Star Line, Burma's sole international shipping line, to the Holdings Ltd.

The military regime is also trying to entice support from ASEAN countries. On March 16, Senior Gen. Than Shwe, Vice-Senior Gen. Maung Aye, Gen. Shwe Mann, Prime Minister Gen. Thein Sein and Secretary-1 Gen. Thiha Thura Tin Aung Myint Oo met with Thai Royal Princess Mahachakiri Thiridon who arrived in Burma one day earlier, in Naypyidaw. To improve relations with Vietnam which is the current ASEAN chair, the junta invited Vietnamese Foreign Minister to establish air traffic line. To pre-empt Chinese pressure and threat with regard to ceasefire groups along Chinese border, the SPDC is planning to improve relations with India militarily, diplomatically and economically.

In order to ease ILO and US pressures, the regime freed lawyer Ko Pho Phyu from Thayet jail on March 5 after reducing his sentence by three years. The SPDC also released US citizen Ko Nyi Nyi Aung on March 18. He has been sentenced to three years in prison with hard labor.

Because some powerful ceasefire groups are still repulsing SPDC's proposal to transform into Border Guard Forces, the War Office has instructed relevant regional commands to implement it by all means before 2010 election. Hence central-level Transformation Working Committee Chairman MAS Chief Lt. Gen. Ye Myint and regional command-level working committees were frequently summoning ceasefire group leaders to put pressure upon them. There is likelihood of resumption of civil war if the military regime miscalculated about ceasefire groups or some mishaps broke out among lower ranks. We assume that the SPDC could start the civil war if 2010 election does not turn up as it wants.

The socio-economic situation of the people

Burmese people's economic conditions are deteriorating terribly. Unemployment is soaring giving rise to prostitution and beggars day by day. Illegal massage parlors or brothels opened under the name of Beauty Saloons are mushrooming in downtown Rangoon's Kyauktada Township. A casino complex named 'City Center' complete with night clubs and karaoke halls has been opened at the old open-air market site.

Though Thai authorities extended the time to submit applications for illegal Burmese migrant workers' temporary passports hundreds of thousands of Burmese workers have not registered leading to Thai government's attempt to arrest approximately 500,000 unregistered workers. A Thai company named Aphai Phanok swindled 600,000 Baht out of Burmese migrant workers in Ranong by promising temporary passports for them. On March 9, Thai police raided a construction site in southern Thailand's Phuket city resulting in death from drowning of two fleeing young Burmese girls. Thai police also arrested more than 100 Burmese beggars in Maesot on March 5 and forcibly deported them to Burma.

Since March 27, Malay police was chasing and arresting alien workers in Malaysia, catching over 300 Burmese within two days. While Rohingyas detained in Thai jails were staging a hunger strike to return them home, Malaysia caught 93 Rohingyas from Burma entering Malaysia by boat on March 14. SPDC's military offensives and suppressions were causing people from Karen State and southern Mon State to flee to Thai border. Bad weather in Shan State has also compelled hundreds of farmers to migrate to Thai border.

As A(H1N1) flu virus was still spreading throughout Burma, Chin nationality cultural delegates attending the Union Day ceremony in Naypyidaw this year have to be hospitalized and number of delegates to Armed Forces Day ceremony was also cut. Rice prices shot up since March 10 resulting in public rush for rice. Matriculation exams started on March 10 but in Rangoon and most cities except Naypyidaw electricity and water supply was disrupted for many days.

International Pressure

Because of highly prejudiced election laws announced by the military regime, the international community which was pushing toward an inclusive election has their hopes dashed and reached their wit's end—repeatedly expressing disappointment as usual.

The UN and international community repudiated SPDC's election laws on March 11. About ten days before the publication of election laws, UN Secretary-General wrote to Senior Gen. Than Shwe about his concern on credibility of SPDC's election but the regime totally ignored him and carried on issuing the laws. Since military regime's human rights violations constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes, the UN should set up a commission of enquiry promptly and investigate them, Mr. Quintana, UN Human Rights Special Rapporteur on Burma, proposed on March 12. He again asserted on March 15 at the UN Human Rights Council Assembly held in Geneva that Burma's forthcoming election which bars participation of political prisoners is completely unacceptable.

British Prime Minister Gordon Brown demanded Ban Ki-moon in a letter on March 17 to hold an emergency meeting of US Security Council on SPDC's coming election. France also demanded likewise. The UN Security Council meeting held on March 23 decided to have an informal discussion on Burma issue but at the closed-door informal session next day Chinese Ambassador asserted that Burma issue was only an internal affair which could not affect

international security, and strongly objected to putting it on Security Council agenda. However, British Ambassador said that Burma's post-election consequences could hurt regional and international security.

On March 25, Ban Ki-moon called a meeting of 'Friends of Burma' at UN HQ. Five permanent members of Security Council plus Asian and European countries like EU, Norway, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, Australia, Japan, India, Indonesia and Vietnam attended the meeting. Due to some countries' speaking on the side of SPDC, the meeting could only issue a vague statement calling for release of all political prisoners before the election. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon again urged the SPDC on March 26 to allow all stakeholders to participate in the coming election and create free and fair conditions for elections.

At a House panel on March 4 before SPDC's publication of election laws, US Congressman Don Manzullo recommended stronger policies by the US on the SPDC regime which continued to oppose international notions. On March 3, US State Department spokesperson PJ Crowley expressed concern for increasing cooperation between North Korea and SPDC regime on nuclear technology. US Navy also conducted joint naval exercise with Bangladesh Navy near Burma waters for three days starting from March 2.

Kurt Campbell, US Under-Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Region, said on March 6 that the US is carefully watching and engaging with Burma. On March 10, he and US State Department spokesperson PJ Crowley asserted that SPDC's election laws which barred Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from contesting in elections were unacceptable. On March 12 Kurt Campbell said that by looking at SPDC's acts, the new US policy seemed to be failing. On the same day, US Embassy in Burma confirmed news of talks with the SPDC on Campbell's forthcoming visit to Burma. US government's Human Rights Report for 2009 issued on March 11 stated that SPDC's 2008 Constitution does not guarantee basic human rights.

On March 30, nine influential US senators wrote to President Obama, demanding more stringent pressure on the SPDC, appointment of a Special Envoy and a policy coordinator on Burma, and more disclosure and punishment of regime's crony businesspeople. US Navy Pacific Fleet Admiral Robert Willard said at US Senate and House's Armed Forces Committee meeting on March 25 and 26 that he would like to talk to SPDC Generals on a soldier-to-soldier basis if US policy on Burma changes. A seven-member delegation consisting of Lt. Gen. Wallace C. Gregson, Assistant Secretary of Defense for security in South-East Asia, and American Ambassador to Thailand inspected Maela refugee camp near Thai-Burma border on March 31 and enquired about refugees' views on 2010 election.

EU countries also denounced SPDC's election laws strongly. Speaker of European Parliament Jerzy Buzek said on March 12 that SPDC's laws do not lead to democracy but are misdirected, and demanded participation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners in the election. The EU announced on March 2 that it would provide Euro 17.25 million (equivalent to over US\$ 23 million) to Burmese refugees as humanitarian aid for this year. On the same day Scandinavian foreign ministers demanded the SPDC regime to free Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and conduct dialogue for national reconciliation. Two Belgium parliamentarians currently visiting Thai-Burma border said on March 25 that they would urge their government and the EU to step up sanctions on the SPDC junta before the 2010 election.

Canadian Ambassador to Thailand and Burma Mr. Ron Hoffmann expressed his disappointment on SPDC regime's act and commented on March 22 that the regime has lost an opportunity to earn world nations' trust. Canadian government has announced on March 27

that it would increase assistance to displaced people who were fleeing from SPDC army's offensive.

On March 26 Japanese Foreign Minister Katsuya Okada called Burmese Ambassador to Japan U Hla Myint and told him to hold free and fair elections which would include Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and informing him too that as long as Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other worthy persons were barred from election, Japan which has been providing most economic assistance to Burmese regime would cease the aid.

Some Asean countries also repudiated SPDC's action. On March 8 Thai Senator Kriangsak Chuhavan told reporters in Maesot that Burma's election could not settle its internal political problems and would be a sham election. On March 16 the Asean Parliamentarians Caucus (AIPMC) issued a statement urging Asean countries not to accept the election laws since those are not free and fair. Asean leaders also remarked that the election without participation by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other opposition leaders would be a sham. Philippines Foreign Minister Alberto Romulo disclosed on March 15 that the matter would be talked over at the coming Non-Aligned Movement meeting in Manila on March 17 with SPDC Foreign Minister U Nyan Win.

On March 4 East Timor President Jose Ramos Horta launched a signature campaign at Britain's Bretford University to demand release of Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Despite Indian government's silence, Indian Parliamentarians' group called IPFDB denounced junta's action on March 17 and commented that the law would cause internal disturbances. They also expressed support on March 31 to the NLD for its decision not to contest in elections.

Nobel peace laureates and international law scholars demanded on March 4 to investigate crimes committed by the SPDC. On the same day Nobel laureate women sent to Ban Ki-moon testimonies given at a New York panel on military regime's human rights violations. The Human Rights Watch group also recommended rapid formation of an international commission of enquiry on March 16 to investigate military regime's human rights violations that constitute crimes against humanity and war crimes. The group also demanded on March 26 to put Burma issue on agenda at the coming G-8 summit in June. The Asean-Burma Task Force (TFAB) also urged the Asean Human Rights Commission on March 28 to consider SPDC's systematic violations of human rights.

In spite of denunciations and repudiations by world countries, Russian and China remain completely silent but Russia kept on planning sales of passenger aircraft and cargo planes reportedly for civilian use, Itar-tass news agency and Flightglobal website reported while China has exported hundreds of military trucks to Burma across the border.

Since SPDC military regime's actions have clearly proved its total disregard of Asean and international community's positive engagement policies, we assume that world countries are now reviewing their tactics rapidly.

//End of Report /Tuesday, April 06, 2010//

//End of Translation/Wednesday, April 20, 2010//