

**THE PERSPECTIVE & SUGGESTIONS OF MEMBRERS OF
THE MON COMMUNITY IN FORT WAYNE
REGARDING THE UNITED STATES FOREIGN POLICY ON BURMA**

Date: April 25, 2010

Sanction or Engagement?

It has shown that the present US sanctions on Burma/SPDC do not work effectively. Why? In our perspective, the sanctions themselves, as having been imposed by the US and EU, are not strong enough to force SPDC into moving towards democratic change in Burma. The US and EU sanctions alone are not enough, because SPDC has the support of other world powers such as China, Russia, India and Southeast Asian Nations. An international economic sanction on SPDC, imposed by the United Nations with the US playing a leading role, is inevitable to be strong and effective enough. While the US sanctions are not strong and effective, there are no reasons and evidence to believe that a US engagement policy with SPDC, as proposed by the Obama administration, will work effectively either. Instead of lifting the present US sanctions on SPDC, in our opinion, a "carrot and stick" approach may be considered by the US Government in dealing with SPDC. The US sanctions should target on those US business companies that have big investments in Burma, like the natural gas projects, that give vast financial support for SPDC to remain in power and go its own way.

The existing international order is not fair:

The changes we want to propose

There are two main political struggles in Burma, namely the non-violent struggle led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the armed struggle of the ethnic non-Burman groups that have both been fighting against the Burman-dominated military dictatorship (SPDC) for democracy and racial equality. The non-violent struggle led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has the moral support of all the peoples of Burma and the whole world. We also wholeheartedly support this non-violent struggle.

While SPDC has the crucial support including weapons from the other world powerful nations such as China and Russia, the armed resistance movements of the ethnic non-Burman groups are helpless with no moral or material support from any world power. The massive sale of sophisticated weapons to SPDC by China and Russia has psychologically deeply discouraged the ethnic non-Burman groups, because these sophisticated weapons will be used by SPDC to crush their respective armed resistance movements.

These armed resistance movements of the ethnic non-Burman groups, in fact, are all supporters of the US. But the US policy on these ethnic non-Burman armed resistance movements is unfair and unacceptable to us. The present US policy regards all these ethnic non-Burman armed groups as “terrorist organizations”. The US has branded them as “terrorists” whereby putting them in the same category as Osama Bin Laden.

The ethnic Mon armed resistance movement, namely the New Mon State Party (NMSP) with its armed wing of the Mon National Liberation Army (MNLA), according to the common point of view of the Mon people, is in no way a terrorist organization but a revolutionary political party fighting for the Mon people’s self-determination and freedom. While NMSP is not flawless, generally and basically it is not a terrorist organization. It has the support of its Mon people. The support of the Mon people has empowered and enabled NMSP to survive and continue its armed resistance movement over the past half century of the civil war in Burma. This US policy on these ethnic non-Burman armed groups, regarding them as “terrorists”, has also psychologically greatly discouraged them.

This US policy has also affected the refugees who are former members of these ethnic non-Burman armed resistance movements. It has affected both those refugees who are still in the second country and those who have already migrated to the United States. Many Burmese refugees in the United States have been denied US citizenship on the grounds that they have “poor moral character” because of their being former members of these ethnic non-Burman armed resistance movements. This US policy, in our point of view, should be reviewed and reconsidered.

If the United States regards these ethnic non-Burman armed groups as “terrorist organizations” that means undesired organizations, does the US want to see that there are no more armed resistance movements against the ruling military dictatorship (SPDC)? Without these armed resistance movements, will the non-violent struggle led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi become more powerful or less powerful? In our perspective, the non-violent struggle led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the armed struggle of the ethnic non-Burman groups, sharing much common ground and having almost the same goals, are mutually supportive and encouraging. The United States, the world’s sole superpower, should not discourage or humiliate the armed struggle of the ethnic non-Burman groups by calling them “terrorists”. Instead, why should they not be treated with an “engagement policy” too?

Thank you very much for receiving our suggestions.

US sanction doesn't work and its engagement policy doesn't work either. We would like to suggest to become a force of internationally sanction rather than EU and US sanction. SPDC can safely survive from the sanction because it has strong allies of China and Russia and also India and southeast Asia.

SPDC uses its national resources like gas to be in power. US policy should target on the major companies who invested in Burma. These company vastly support SPDC financially. We need to pressure on these companies to leave Burma.

- Sanctions by US and EU did not work; it will need more participation from UN body including Asian nations. US should lead this mission.
- Engagement policy by US still does not work, too. SPDC never listens to the proposals of international including UN, US, EU and ASEAN.
- US should support both non-violence struggle and ethnic arm forces;
- SPDC will never surrender their power, unless there are forces or pressure overcome them
- As long as SPDC has a space or until the last minute; they will not think to solve the Burma problem peacefully or with the mean of dialogue

