

# GENERAL THAN SHWE SHOULD SEIZE THE MOMENT OF OPPORTUNITY

## Editorial Rebound 88

We do not pay too much attention to what the Police Chief Major- General Khin Yi said in Kuala Lumpur about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Officials from Burmese Government normally do not hide the fact that they do not know what their government is up to. The government is under one man's absolute control and the Supreme General can change his mind any time without notice, some times, with out reason too. Besides, U Khin Yi was trying to discredit Daw Aung San Suu Kyi by saying her influence was waning in Burma- no statement can be further away from the truth.

What caught our eyes was that Mr. Gamberi, - UN representatives who just visited both General Than Shwe and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Burma- used U Khin Yi's speech to highlight that even Myanmar Police chief was saying, her release was imminent and Burma is turning a new page in politics.

This had happened before. Once Daw Aung Su Kyi was released, expectations were high that the political reconciliation process would begin. But more than often, the stubborn army generals refused to accept the reality and we remained the same. The country suffered as a result.

If Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is free today, we understand that some outstanding issues are resolved or near resolution;

- Recent attempts on her life at Depeyin,
- The fate of political prisoners in jails and
- The stalled National convention.

General Than Shwe had sanctioned a group of thugs to attack Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and party at Depeyin in central Burma. General Soe Win was said to organize this attack and he was promoted to Prime Ministership afterwards.

There are over a thousand political prisoners languishing in Burmese jails. NLD and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi had been asking for their release. Any meaningful dialogue can not be started unless they are out of jails.

National convention is stalled and seven points roadmap plan become a joke as long as the army insists that they are above the law.



Of course, we would like to see Daw Aung San Suu Kyi comes out of this house detention and says these issues are resolved. Furthermore, we like to see she be engaged in a meaningful dialogue with General Than Shwe while the army is still under his absolute control.

The late General Ne Win had a similar chance during and after 1988 uprisings to bring about real democratic changes. Obviously misguided, he refused to take the opportunity to do so. His mistake was compounded by the formation of SPDC ( State Peace and Development Council) and as a result, Burma became a failed state. Eventually, Ne Win found his brokenhearted end forced by his ungrateful subordinates whom he gave the chance to run the country. As a result, Burma suffered the never ending miseries since he took control of the country in a military coup in 1962.

Now we are witnessing another juncture where our country could lead to a good future, but General Than Shwe has to take the initiative. Although we can understand his problems, there is no guarranty for their safety if they relinquish power. His wife was said to be involved in massive corruption cases. U Than Shwe let himself surrounded by corrupt and egoistic ministers who would push him to stay on. During his rule, his government created many corrupt generals who were fired one after another after damages had been done to the

image. Furthermore, he is said to have royal ambitions ie: he wanted to be the kind of one of ancient Burmese Kings. If he can not evaluate the real situation and ignore Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's contribution, the situation will be getting worse, and results can not be good for anybody.

One can easily see the deteriorating conditions in Burma. Problems are well known and we do not need to repeat here. It is up to the neck, but the army is not an organization to solve these problems. They are social problems, economic, educational and developmental which should be left to solve by experts or qualified personnel. Armies are designed to defend the country when it is in danger, not to run the economy and social enterprises. Lacking in qualification to be good managers, the uniformed Generals are ruining the country in all aspects. They are only good in making themselves rich.

NLD and the opposition are saying they are willing to cooperate with the SPDC and General Than Shwe should seize this moment of opportunity to work together with the people. It is time for them to go back to the army barracks. He should offer his blessing to form an interim government headed by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to oversee the Burma's transition to Democracy. Burma has to do many things to get rid of the status of a rouge state and needs to reintegrate with the international community. There is a herculian tasks ahead of catching up the lost years.

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