

we forget the peoples' sentiments and whom they elected as their leaders? Will elections under the military be fair? I want to make it clear that another election will not solve the current political situation, as we already had one in 1990. You ask what is needed to solve the situation in Burma. We (BSDO) strongly believe that the current political problem in Burma can only be solved through an equally-based tripartite dialogue that includes democratic forces under the leadership of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, ethnic minorities and the military regime. The tripartite dialogue must be based on mutual respect. The tripartite dialogue must not have any preconditions. Each related party should have the right to choose its own delegations who will participate in the proposed dialogue. To have successful tripartite dialogue, as a first step, the Burmese military regime must lift all the restrictions put on the democratic forces, unconditionally release all political prisoners including student leader Ko Min Ko Naing and initiate a dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Having a dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi will pave the way to solving the current dilemma in Burma. Without Daw Aung San Suu Kyi present, no dialogue will be meaningful.

Since the military came to power through its bloody crack down on the democracy movement, it has never listened to our voice, to the voice of Burmese people. Everything they have done clearly indicates their intention to hold onto power as long as they can. So we have to think about what we can do to force the military to listen to the people of Burma. In that case, what I see as the most effective action that we should take against the military regime is international economic sanctions. We need to work towards international economic sanctions. They are the only language that will make the military understand the concerns of the international community concerns vis a vis the deteriorating situation in Burma. When we talk about economic sanctions, everyone frequently voices concerns that sanctions will hurt the people of Burma even more. In that case, I can assure that the sanctions will not affect the ordinary people of Burma. Don't forget student leader Ko Min Ko Naing is still in prison. Don't forget that there are millions of Burmese people being conscripted into forced labour, forced to work in the beautification projects of tourism, rail roads, and dams which are

directly or indirectly related to international investments. The people of Burma are suffering. Burma is like a prison. With or without sanctions, the people of Burma will still be suffering until the common goals of democracy and human rights are restored in Burma. So the sanctions will not effect the ordinary people. The sanctions will only affect the military and privileged people who have close connections with military. Now those military relatives and privileged people are getting worried about their future and survival because of investment sanctions from the US, because of selective purchasing and trade sanctions from Canada, because of a possible international economic sanction which we demand now. There is no choice. Only sanctions will make military regime in Burma respect the will of the people of Burma. Only sanctions will work in forcing the military regime to open a dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. So let us work on the international community to impose economic sanctions against Burma for the sake of the people of Burma. The sanctions will certainly work on Burma. We already witnessed how the sanctions worked in ending apartheid in South Africa. So why not Burma? To make sanctions more effective in accordance with our goal, I also want to express our strong support to Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy's proposal of having an international monitoring group watch over the developments in Burma. This proposal is similar to the five-member contact group of former Yugoslavia, and I have no doubt that will certainly be useful for Burma. So I want to urge Canadian Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy to try and implement his proposed idea.

While I am talking about the action that we should take to achieve the people's desire for democracy, I am also aware that those actions will only take place if we, the democratic forces, work together in perseverance and mutual cooperation. Failure to have the strong cooperation among us will result in a long road to achieving democracy. Therefore I want to tell all of you that it's time we are more united than we are now. It's time we have much stronger cooperation than we have now. With our strong cooperation, with our strong unity and with our strong perseverance, let us work together until our common goal of democracy and human rights are restored. As I talk about the unity, I notice a motto written on the invitation let-