

the survival of the regime at a time when they are facing severe economic hardships.

The generals know very well that the international community will lift the aid embargo if they engage in a political dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the ethnic peoples of Burma. But they do not want to do this because a dialogue will mean a political compromise and the military will lose its supremacy. They want money from the international community but only on their own terms.

If anyone thinks the generals are serious about drug eradication, they should remember that in the late 1970s and early 1980s, the US government gave about US\$80 million to the Burmese military to eradicate drugs. The helicopters given for drug eradication were used against the people of the Shan State and opium production during that period doubled. In addition, the major drug lords in Burma are today living in Rangoon and are protected by the regime.

The political strategy of the Burmese generals is to:

- keep the people of Burma under tight control
- wipe out any remaining ethnic resistance by force
- try various means to get international aid without giving up power
- isolate strong political opponents and co-opt weak ones
- finish drafting the new constitution that will legitimize military rule and hold elections to legitimize the regime
- use its new-found legitimacy and aid to consolidate military rule

International Arena

For the time being, most governments are standing firm. They are aware that the military in Burma has not changed substantively since the name change. This can be seen in the latest unanimous resolution of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva this month. Incidentally, the Canadian Mission in Geneva was very helpful to us in getting the resolution passed. Japan has tried to use the resumption of some old

Official Development Aid to bring about change but nothing has resulted. The US has not changed its position but might be persuaded by the drug eradication plan. The European Union and other friendly nations like Canada are also standing firm. Even the ASEAN countries are beginning to try and persuade the generals to change. The president of the Philippines and the Prime Ministers of Singapore and Malaysia have visited Rangoon in quick succession.

We would like to see change in Burma. But as I said before, in order to see real change, the military must first accept that they must compromise. They will not compromise if they keep getting what they want. That is why we say that it is important to keep up the pressure on the

Burmese military. Now is not yet the time to start giving aid to Burma. It will only harden the military's stance. We have seen this repeated in the past. Every time the international community has relaxed its position, the military stepped up its repression of the people of Burma.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself has said that she is willing to discuss any options with the military. There are no preconditions.

How much more flexible can you be?

NCGUB's vision and plan for the future

For our part, we have always maintained that the root cause of the problems in Burma is political and they must be resolved by political means. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi herself has said that she is willing to discuss any options with the military. There are no preconditions. How much more flexible can you be?

But since the military has very stubbornly refused to begin a real dialogue either with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi or the ethnic peoples, we can no longer wait. If the military will not talk to us, we will talk amongst ourselves without the military.

The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma is committed to the establishment of a democracy and a federal union. As expressed in the 1947 Panglong Agreement, we see all the ethnic races of Burma as equals having the same rights and responsibilities. Everyone must participate in the building of the new Burma. No special class or elite has the monopoly to shape the country's future.