



NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT ★★★(BURMA)★★★

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NDF Report on Ceasefire Groups Resisting SPDC's Pressure and the Instability

1. Introduction

The SPDC military clique has consistently rejected demand by the ethnic nationalities, the democratic forces and the international community for dialogue and peaceful political transformation. On the other hand, it continues to commit inhuman acts of massive military attacks on the innocent civilians in areas of the ethnic nationalities, sowing division, arresting, torturing and jailing activists engaged in political, human rights and humanitarian activities, exploiting the Nargis refugees and plotting to exclude by various means the NLD and the democratic icon, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, from the political process.

The SPDC has been attempting unilaterally to implement only its so-called Road Map to strengthen its hold on despotic power, in total repudiation of the logical demand by the NLD in accordance with its Shwegon Daing Declaration, the aspiration of the entire people of the country for national reconciliation, the demand by the political forces at home and abroad including the Committee Representing People's Parliament (CRPP), request by the UN Sec. Gen. Ban Ki-moon and urging by the world leaders.

Using trickery and open pressure, the SPDC has been attempting to disarm or weaken the ceasefire groups and control them by transforming their armed wings into the so-called Border Guard Force (BGF), without any political guarantee for their basic rights. For the ceasefire groups, accepting transformation into BGF would be worse than surrendering arms as the group transformed would have to protect the SPDC's interest and cause bloodshed between the transformed and those remaining independent.

The SPDC militarily smashed Kokang ceasefire group in the month of August, at a time when the Chinese government was urging it to keep peace in the border areas and resolve peacefully the issues of ceasefire groups. While it is having talks with some ceasefire groups for diversion, the SPDC is preparing to smash the others by military force. On the other hand, the SPDC continues launching military operations without letup in its ethnic cleansing war against the Karen, Shan and the Karenni peoples, forcing thousands of innocent civilians to abandon their homes, daily, and take refuge in the border areas. Though the SPDC is saying that it is going to establish a state of discipline flourishing democracy, its activities in practice, are increasing momentum of the civil war in Burma and there is a possibility that its activities will adversely affect regional peace.

2. SPDC's 2010 Elections and Issues concerning Ethnic Ceasefire Groups

To gain some measure of legitimate recognition by the people and the international community of its 2010 elections that will perpetuate the rule of military dictatorship, the SPDC vitally needs to get participation by the NLD and all the ethnic ceasefire groups in its 2010 elections. The NLD Shwegon Daing Declaration, dated April 29, 2009 totally rejected the SPDC's Road Map and the 2010 elections. Similar declarations were made by the ethnic

ceasefire groups, which also rejected the idea of participation in the elections. These had caused a serious political crisis for the SPDC.

Since the time of their ceasefire agreement in 1990, the ethnic ceasefire groups have lost all opportunity for political dialogue. In a move to appease the ceasefire groups temporarily, the SPDC urged the ethnic leaders to participate in its National Convention and discuss their political issues there. However, none of their political concerns submitted in the Convention was addressed. Though the SPDC military clique has included in its 2008 Constitution the rights of autonomy of the ethnic nationalities, those rights are specifically curtailed by numerous provisos. For that reason, the ethnic ceasefire groups that stand firmly for national (ethnic) equality and self-determination find it extremely difficult for supporting the 2008 constitution and the 2010 elections, in compliance with the SPDC's desire. The ethnic organizations, which have been trying to resolve the political problems peacefully by political means, have clearly stated their inability to accept the 2008 Constitution. The main reasons for their inability to accept the SPDC's 2008 Constitution are:

- (1) The Constitution Drafting Committee which drafted the 2008 Constitution had no mandate to draft the Constitution;
- (2) The people were entirely excluded from the 2008 Constitution drafting process;
- (3) The 2008 Constitution was adopted in May referendum by force and fraudulent means;
- (4) The Constitution has entirely no provision guaranteeing national (ethnic) equality;
- (5) There is also no provision for self-determination but instead there are provisions only for the rights to sham autonomy;
- (6) The people in the autonomous Divisions and Regions have no liberties to exercise their political and social rights;
- (7) Though the form of State is said to be a Union (Federation), there is no regularity in the determination of constituent states;
- (8) Though the natural resources are the traditional possessions of the indigenous peoples living on the respective lands, the Constitution gives possession and control of all the natural resources to the State (Central Government);
- (9) Instead of following the federal practices in the division of power, the Constitution provides for excessive centralization;
- (10) Counter to the democratic practices, the Constitution has many provisions to perpetuate the rule of the military dictatorship.

As the ethnic ceasefire groups refuse to participate in the 2010 elections, the SPDC military clique is preparing to crush them militarily by beefing up its military strength in the ethnic ceasefire regions and committing more and more acts of provocation. However, the ethnic ceasefire groups continue patiently to explain why they cannot participate in the 2010 elections.

In order to reduce tension, some ethnic ceasefire groups form political parties, though not for participation in the elections but to show that they have no intention to block participation in the elections by the others. However, the United Wa State Army (UWSA) ceasefire group's request for participation in the elections as the United Wa State Party (UWSP) was turned down by the SPDC.

3. SPDC's 2010 Elections and Plan for Transforming to BGF

According to the 2008 Constitution, a ceasefire group, agreeing to participate in the 2010 elections, has to place its armed wing under the control of the SPDC army. When participation

of all the ceasefire groups in the elections was not certain, the SPDC came up with the plan of transforming the ethnic armies into BGF.

According to the plan, the ethnic ceasefire armies have to reduce their strength and accept control by the SPDC. The SPDC formed a committee with its top military leaders to carry out the plan. The committee is headed by Lt. Gen Ye Myint. Then, committees at the divisional levels were formed. No ethnic leaders were included in any of these committees.

According to the SPDC's stipulation, a battalion of BGF is to have 326 personnel including 18 ethnic officers and 30 officers from the SPDC army. Most of the key positions such as administration, personnel, and materiel support etc. departments are to be manned by the SPDC army officers. For that reason, the BGF is definitely to become a subordinate organization under the control of the SPDC military clique.

Since the first week of March 2009, the SPDC military clique has been forcefully pressuring all the ceasefire groups to transform into BGF. The ceasefire groups which stand firmly for national equality and self-determination has been patiently explaining their inability to accept the one-sided proposal by the SPDC. However, there are small ceasefire groups which have to accept reluctantly the SPDC's proposal.

All the ethnic organizations maintain the position that they will have to retain their arms, in one way or another, so long as the ethnic nationalities has not achieved the objectives of national (ethnic) equality, the right to decide their own destiny and establishment of a genuine federal union, which are guarantee for their viable existence.

Since the SPDC military clique has used violence to implement its plan, there have been blood shed, damages, regional instability and adverse effect on relation with neighboring countries. There are some leaders in the SPDC, who do not want to use force in resolving the ethnic issues, but they are only a minority. In the system of absolute unity and total control, they just have to follow the order of the SPDC chief, Sr. Gen. Than Shwe.

(3 a) Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (MNDAA)

The MNDAA, led by Pong Kya Shin, understood well the attitude of the despotic military leaders. Firstly, it informed the SPDC about its position of not accepting the BGF and made certain preparations for resuming resistance. However, on the allegations that MNDAA was engaged in arms production and involvement in narcotic drug trafficking, the SPDC launched military operations against the MNDAA from August 23 to 29, 2009. In a classic move of divide and rule, it installed leader of the splinter group Peng Sauk Chaing in power and formed a Kokang Army.

It issued an arrest warrant against MNDAA chairman, Pong Kya Shin, and his followers and seized all the assets of Pong Kya Shin. In the past, starting from the time of ceasefire agreement, the SPDC had given favors to Pong Kya Shin in the form of business concessions, including the business of drug trafficking in cooperation with the SPDC military leaders. Due to military attacks against Kokang, over 30,000 Kokang people had to flee into China for refugee. The local Kokang people suffered extensive losses of their property. Though the SPDC has declared the return of stability to Kokang, only about 10,000 refugees dared to return to Kokang. Twenty thousand Kokang refugees are still in refugee camps in China, as there is still no security and stability in Kokang under the rule of the SPDC.

(3 b) United Wa State Army (UWSA)

In the first week of September, after the clashes in Kokang had died down, a leader of the UWSA, Pau Yu Chan, in a Phoenix TV broadcast said that he wanted to peacefully resolve problems with the SPDC. With regard to the SPDC's BGF plan, he said that a period of time was necessary for the two sides to discuss in detail the matter of transforming forces into BGF.

He went on to say that if the SPDC refused to settle problems peacefully and used militarily attacks, the UWSA had no choice but to resume armed resistance, in self defense.

In the 20-year period of ceasefire, the UWSA has come to learn more about the dishonest nature and devious stand of the SPDC military leaders. During the time, the UWSA has succeeded in improving the life of the Wa people in the areas of politics, administration, economy and development, and systematically served the interest of Wa people. Moreover, it has established better relations with other fellow oppressed ethnic nationalities and taken more interest in the movement for democracy and national liberation in the country.

The UWSA is now the strongest group in terms of arms and ammunition reserve, human resource, fund, administrative capacity and morale of the troops. All military personnel are ready to sacrifice their lives in the defense of the rights of the Wa people and their interest.

The SPDC military clique is making preparation to take advantage of the UWSA's weaknesses, as in the case of Kokang, in relation to UWSA's extensive business establishment in the country and the narcotic drug matter. However, there is difficulty for it to take actions against UWSA leaders since some SPDC top leaders themselves had been involved in the narcotic drug business. On the other hand, the UWSA had actively cooperated with the UN for the eradication of narcotic drugs in Wa area, starting from the year 2005.

The SPDC leaders have been trying hard by various means to have the UWSA units in the south to break away from the UWSA. At the same time, they are preparing for war against the Wa by pouring in more troops into Wa areas. During the time the SPDC was pressuring the UWSA for transforming into BGF, the two sides came close to military clashes on a number of occasions. The relation between the two sides has become very tense since then.

(3 c) National Democratic Alliance Army-Eastern Shan State (NDAA-ESS)

The NDAA, led by U Sai Lin, is a strong ceasefire organization militarily and in terms of personnel. The relation between the NDAA and the SPDC had been cordial up to the early part of 2009, before the SPDC proposed to NDAA to transform into BGF. However, the relation turned sour when the NDAA turned down the SPDC's BGF proposal. The NDAA, led by U Sai Lin, who is the son-in-law of Pong Kya Shin the deposed leader of Kokang, may become the next target of the SPDC for annihilation. In the event of the SPDC encroachment on the territory of the NDAA, under any pretext, the NDAA and the UWSA together will have to put up a stiff resistance. For that purpose, the UWSA has sent 2000 of its troops to the NDAA area and kept them in readiness.

(3 d) Kachin Independence Army and Kachin Independence Organization (KIA, KIO)

When the SPDC pressure on the KIO for the transformation of KIA into BGF became intense, a range of opinions emerged among the Kachin leaders. However, the knowledgeable Kachin leaders replied to the SPDC operations commander Lt. Gen. Ye Myint that they had decided to listen to the voice of the people. At the meeting held on September 5, at the KIA Headquarters in Laiza, representatives of the people once again turned down the SPDC proposal for transforming the KIA into BGF. However, they came up with a plan calling for the participation of the KIO in the exercise of the executive, legislative and judicial powers in the Kachin State and transforming the KIA into the Kachin Regional Guard Force (KRGF) instead of BGF.

The KIO leaders met with the SPDC military leaders led by Lt. Gen. Ye Myint on September 10 and 11 and discussed about the BGF proposal and 2010 elections. Though the Kachin leaders have met with the SPDC leaders for no less than 8 times, the two sides fail to reach any basic agreement and the SPDC military leaders continue to pressure the Kachin leaders just to follow their wish.

Permission by the KIO of its 6 top leaders, including one vice chairman, during the first week of September, to resign from the KIO and form a political party, shows that the KIO will firmly follow the will of the Kachin people. At the same time, the KIO is undertaking preparations to provide full security to the local populations.

(3 e) Other Kachin Armed Groups

The New Democratic Army-Kachin (NDAK) and the Kachin Defense Army (KDA), under severe pressure from the SPDC, had agreed to transform into BGF but they had requested for permission to participate in all levels of civil administration and to form BGF only with the Kachin nationals. They propose for formation of a political party together with retired KIO leaders and upholding the position of resolving problems peacefully by political means. However, they are likely to face the problem of having to fight the KIO as a result of pressure from the SPDC in the future.

(3 f) New Mon State Party (NMSP)

The NMSP, with a firm political stand for ethnic rights and freedom, turned down the SPDC proposal for transforming its armed wing into BGF for the simple reason that when the ceasefire agreement was made, there was no stipulation that it had to transform its armed wing into BGF. However, the BGF Transformation Committee head Lt. Gen. Ye Myint and head of the South-East Command Maj. Gen. Thet Naing Win held meetings frequently with the NMSP leaders and applied pressure on them. Later, the SPDC relaxed by a step and came up with the proposal of forming the NMSP armed wing into Mon militia force and tried by several means to sow dissension among the Mon leaders.

In early August, the NMSP held a general meeting which totally rejected the BGF proposal as well as the 2010 election. Moreover, the meeting decided that any attempt by the SPDC to separate the NMSP from its army, to abolish the NMSP and its army or intrude into the NMSP controlled area would be regarded as abrogation of the ceasefire agreement. At this, the SPDC spread false propaganda among the local Mon population accusing the NMSP Gen. Secretary, Nai Hantha, of conspiring to cause uprising and instability, and commit terrorism.

In order to resolve political problems peacefully through dialogue and negotiation, the NMSP attended the National Convention organized by the SPDC military clique. However, as the NMSP was not given a chance to discuss the basic stand of the ethnic nationalities at the Convention, it ceased to attend it. At the present, the NMSP is pointing out to the SPDC that there is still time to amend the Constitution, release all the political prisoners and conduct a genuine political dialogue, and demanding for peaceful political transformation.

(3 g) Shan State Army-North (SSA-N)

For the SSA-N, which has been marginalized politically by subjecting its leaders Say Htin and comrades to long jail terms, it would be impossible in any way to accept the SPDC proposal for transforming its army into BGF and accept the 2010 elections. It has resisted the SPDC pressure to reduce the strength of its army and transform it into a militia force, since its area is away from the international border. The SPDC is keeping a close watch on it and trying to sow dissension among its members, as the SSA-N could become a potent force if it gave leadership to other resistance forces in the Shan State and worked in coordination with the SSA-South, led by Col. Yordserk.

The SSA-N has no plan to transform itself into a political party as there are Shan leaders to give leadership to Shan people in political activities. The SSA-N leaders and its troops are seen to be making preparations for resuming resistance or joining force with the SSA-South, any time, in case the SPDC pressure on them increases.

(3 h) Other Ceasefire Groups

Among the other ceasefire groups, the Kayan New Land Party (KNLP) has declared its rejection of the BGF proposal, but there is still no direct pressure on it from the SPDC. However, it is making necessary preparations, as the pressure will surely come after the SPDC has dealt with the other ceasefire groups.

The Pa-ao National Organization (PNO), the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army and the Karenni Nationalities Peoples' Liberation Front (KNPLF) have accepted the BGF proposal according to the wishes of the SPDC. The other small splinter groups such as the KNU/KNLA Peace Council led by Bo Htain Maung, Karen Peace Force (KPF) etc., created by the SPDC, have no alternative but to accept the BGF proposal and the 2010 elections.

The SPDC has created dissension and misunderstanding within the armed ethnic organizations by various means and given massive support for internecine conflict and wars. Thus, the DKBA was made to war against the KNU and the KNPLF against the KNPP. Now we see signs of the SPDC plotting to make the Kachin splinter groups to make war against the KIO, and the Lahu militia against Pansan based Wa forces.

4. The SPDC Policy of Force to Resolve Problems and Deterioration of Regional Stability

When the SPDC military leaders Vice Sr. Gen. Maung Aye and General Shwe Mahn met the Chinese government leaders on a trip to China in June, the Chinese leaders urged them not to use military force in resolving the ethnic nationalities problems, with a view to maintaining stability in the border areas. The aim of the Burmese military leaders in meeting the Chinese leaders was to have the Chinese put pressure on the ceasefire groups which were refusing to accept the SPDC BGF proposal. However, the Chinese leaders politely refused to do the SPDC's bidding.

In spite of the Chinese request not to use force, the SPDC launched military operations in its aggression against Kokang, causing widespread death, destruction of properties and the flight of over 30,000 civilians into China. The SPDC army's heavy weapon shells landing in China had killed some Chinese citizens. After occupation of Kokang, troops from the SPDC army Division 33 looted and destroyed valuable items from the locally owned department stores and shops in Longai and Chinhaw towns. The troops indiscriminately arrested and tortured a number of Kokang people.

After the attack and occupation of Kokang, the SPDC military leaders concluded that China would not make any serious protest if they use military force to smash the ceasefire groups refusing to accept the BGF proposal and the 2010 elections. Accordingly, the SPDC continues its preparations for launching military operations against other ceasefire groups. The SPDC now has massed, in the KIO, UWSA, NDAA and SSA-N areas, more than 6,000 troops from its LID-33, LID-99, MOC-1, MOC-16 and other locally based garrison units.

Expecting more disturbances, people from the local communities in the border areas opposite China and Thailand are crossing daily into the border areas of China and Thailand, for refuge. The SPDC troops are commandeering civilian trucks and indiscriminately seizing people daily, for portage, in the towns of Lashio, Muse, Namkham and other big towns in Northern Shan State. As a result, the people in the areas are living in constant fear and a situation without security. The KIO family members and Kachin people in northern Burma are leaving daily for other places for security reason. The native Shan people from Naung Pon, Tunt Hone, Mankaung etc. villages near Lwehje on the Kachin-China border have moved to the China side together with their possessions, and people from Kong Sa, Munt Lin, Onlon, Winhaing and Maija Yan villages had already moved their possessions to China side in the first week of September. Though the KIO and the Kachin people have been demanding for the resolution of problems by peaceful means, the SPDC is most likely to launch military offensives

against the KIO and the Kachin people and cause more instability, if the KIO continues to reject the BGF proposal.

In a devious plot to cause animosity between the Lahu and Wa people, the SPDC army troops in Eastern Shan State strengthen the Lahu militia in Mungtung township and encourage it to conduct armed patrols in the area controlled by the southern UWSA units, and assure the Lahu militia that they will join forces with it and launch offensives, if any problem arises. In Mongsat area alone, the SPDC has reinforced its strength to 300 men and 10 armored cars, and has armed and equipped 2000 Lahu militia troops. The UWSA troops counter Lahu militia's provocative acts of aggression by firing heavy weapon warning shots to places close to the patrolling troops and have averted a serious clash, up to now.

Starting from the later part of August, the SPDC reinforces its troops in Hopan Township, in Northern Wa area, with battalions from Meiktila based LID-99, causing the civilians in the township, anticipating clashes between the UWSA and SPDC troops, to flee to safer areas. According to a Wa army officer in the area, the UWSA is keeping a close watch on the reinforcement of the SPDC troops and the Wa troops are in readiness to defend the Wa territory if and when the SPDC initiates hostilities. Though the SPDC leaders are saying that they are going to resolve problems with the Wa and Mongla forces, peacefully, they are deploying more than 30 battalions of troops against the Wa and Mongla areas.

A high ranking officer of Naypyidaw (Imperial City), Col. Kyaw Kyaw and Mongsat based Tactical Commander, Col. Nay Lin, at a meeting with village elders and civil servants in Mongyang Township, said that in case of war against the UWSA, heavy weapons and fighter planes would be used. The SPDC has trained and armed about 40,000 militia troops in Northern Shan State and about 8,000 militia troops in Southern Shan State. This is part of the SPDC plan to use the local militia as cannon fodder in suppression of the ethnic nationality armies.

For that reason, people and civil servants, in areas where the Kachin, Shan, Wa, Mongla and Mon ceasefire armies are based, are moving to safer areas, as they have come to the conclusion that war between the ceasefire armies and the SPDC army can break out, at any time. Without holding a political dialogue for peaceful resolution of problems with the ethnic nationality forces, if the SPDC presses on for the acceptance of its BGF proposal, the ceasefire agreements between it and the ethnic ceasefire groups will certainly break down and the fire of civil war is bound to spread and burn more violently.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

The SPDC's plan of transforming armies of the ceasefire groups into BGF has run into difficulties much more than the SPDC has initially expected and it has caused serious tension in the relation between the SPDC and the ceasefire groups. Though the SPDC military clique is saying that it is not going to take military actions against the ceasefire groups but to resolve problems with them peacefully through dialogue, increasing of pressure by it on the ceasefire groups for the acceptance of its plan does not bode well for the amicable resolution of problems in a fraternal spirit. Moreover, the massing of troops and armament in the areas of powerful NMSP, KIO, SSA-N, UWSA and NDAA-ESS ceasefire groups – can only be interpreted as an act of war or the readiness on the part of the SPDC to use military force, in the event of failure eventually to persuade the ceasefire groups mentioned above to accept its BGF plan. Moreover, the use of trickery and deceptions to cause internal problems within the ceasefire groups and conducting a sham dialogue with them do not mean the resolution of problems by peaceful means.

It is impossible on the part of the ethnic ceasefire organizations, which have agreed to ceasefire in order to resolve political problems peacefully by political means, to reduce their military strengths and transform their armies into BGF, without any genuine political dialogue.

As the SPDC military clique continues its attempt to force its will on the ceasefire groups without any sign of concession on its part, the possibility of greater civil war, more death, destruction and human suffering, and increasing threat to regional peace and stability has become more tangible.

In order to avert or reduce the dangers of greater civil war in Burma and threat to regional peace and stability, it would be advisable for peace and justice loving countries of the World to urge the UNSC to pass binding resolutions:

- (1) Instructing the SPDC to immediately cease its acts of war against the ceasefire organizations;
- (2) Imposing UN arms embargo;
- (3) Blocking capital intensive investments;
- (4) Imposing targeted sanctions enforced and monitored by the UN;
- (5) Calling on the SPDC to hold an inclusive political dialogue, under the aegis of the UN, with all the stake holders for national reconciliation, establishment of peace and justice.

(Victory through Alliance!)

**Central Executive Committee
National Democratic Front**

September 18, 2009