

Time to rejuvenate the exile Burmese government

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After a rare meeting with her top Executive Committee members, the leader of the National League for Democracy, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, gave an ambiguous message to the people of Burma.

She said that the so-called dialogue between her and SPDC liaison minister, Aung Kyi, has not been going well, and instead of being useful, time was being wasted with efforts discussing trivial matters.

Furthermore, the democratic icon warned her people to "hope for the best and prepare for the worst." What exactly is the best hope and worst case for the people of Burma is undefined, as the ongoing dialogue has apparently become a strategy of procrastination and a means for the military regime to hold on to power.

As it was vividly demonstrated in last September's Saffron Revolution, the SPDC will never hesitate to employ their usual heavy-handed, brutal methods to any challenges posed by an opposition party, including Buddhist monks. Thus, the "worst case" scenario for the people inside the country may be another peoples' uprising, which will again be dealt with harshly and violently by the military junta.

However, the "best hope" for the people inside the country may now increasingly depend upon effective and all-inclusive support provided by exile Burmese democratic dissidents living across the globe. Thus, the role of the Burma's exile government has increasingly become more prominent and important to provide pillars of support for people inside.

The exile Ministers elected in the 1990 election will soon be meeting in Thailand, and the reformation of the current exile government (NCGUB) is on this meeting's agenda. Hopefully, these MPs shall look objectively into those constructive comments and opinions offered by various authors published in recent exile media forums, and take bold initiatives to establish a reformed, broad-based and genuine "coalition" government in exile.

To do this they must reach out to all political, ethnic, professional, and student organizations and communities across the globe, inviting their participation in this important reform process. It is time for a bottom-up, grassroots approach to the democratic process instead of an undemocratic and draconian top-down procedure. The exile leaders must accept the 21st century's dynamic nature of the democratic political process, and discard the outdated and static 19th century process which is not much different from the rule of dictators....

The following are some minimum qualifications, objectives and goals that must be attached to the reformation of the exile democratic government, based upon past and present political obstacles of the current exile government:

1. The reformed government in exile should be a broad-based and genuine coalition, inclusive of all exile democratic political parties, ethnic nationalities, students, professionals, and other associated communities living across the globe.

2. The reformed government in exile should consist of democratically elected representatives from all communities including the ethnic nationalities; and representatives from all other exile political, social, and professional organizations including the students.
3. The reformed exile government should take responsibilities beyond its primary political objective of denying legitimacy to the current military regime in Burma; it should take up the challenges of economic and social problems facing exile communities, especially the refugees and illegal workers in neighboring countries.
4. The reformed government in exile should appoint cabinet ministers based upon both political representation and professional qualification, to handle political, social and economic problems of exile communities across the globe.
5. The reformed government in exile should be capable of generating necessary the funds to finance the execution and operation of its various ministries.
6. The reformed government in exile should be led by an executive President, with a term of four years and supported by a cabinet.
7. Members of the reformed government in exile should have clearly stated responsibilities and must be held accountable for their actions, which need to be transparent.
8. If the reformed government in exile cannot fulfill these minimum qualifications, it should not adopt the title of government, but instead should call itself a congress until such a time when they are able to meet the required qualifications.

It is recognized that it is a daunting and uphill task for the reformed government to meet these criteria. And it will be a monumental political undertaking to organize a broad-based political coalition throughout the worldwide exile Burmese population.

But the establishment of universal human rights and democracy in Burma, and forcing the Burmese military to give up power and stay out of politics, is a mammoth task in itself, as witnessed during the past five decades of continuous military rule in Burma.

If the leaders of exiled democratic political and ethnic organizations, and the members of social and professional communities, are all prepared to put aside their personal, political and ethnic differences and invest their efforts in initiating and establishing these objectives, there is much hope for the citizens of Burma to regain their freedom and once again live lives of liberty and prosperity