



KNU/KNLA PEACE COUNCIL HEADQUARTERS

TOKAWKO, KAREN STATE

Lt. Gen Ye Myit

Chief of Military Intelligence

Naypidaw

KNU/KNLA PEACE COUNCIL's Response to 22nd April Deadline of Merger with Burma Army:

April 7th, 2010. You had a meeting with some of my KNU/KNLA executive committee at Moulmein – 12 noon.

They reported to me that you put pressure on them to accept your proposal for us to become Burma Army Militia Group.

Last time you pressured us to become a Border Guard Force, and now you are putting pressure on us again under a new name “Burma Army Militia Group”.

I would like to clarify to you that no matter what name you come up with, we will not agree or respond to any kind of military program which disturbs the peace and security of the lives of our Karen. More than that, you are against your own policy and propaganda in TV and all newspapers.

“Only with stability and peace will the nation develop”

“Only with stability and peace will democratization process be successful”

Your military proposal is contradictory to your own policy. In this previous year, you proposed for us to become Border Guard Force, which has stirred up so many problems that are still affecting many innocent Karen today in our area. Some of the militia groups upon immediately accepting the Border Guard Force proposal began gathering recruits from Karen villagers, demanding 5-10 men from each village. If the families did not want to comply, they were forced to pay fines of kyats 1 million, 3x a year. Families have had to sell all they have, leaving them

in acute poverty. One family had only one goat and they were forced to sell the only thing they possessed so as not to become a Border Guard. Some, their rice field, or cow.

Your Border Guard Force program is creating many problems among the villagers of fear, poverty, insecurity, panic and disturbing the peaceful living of the people. Rather than allowing the country to go forward according to the policy that is stated in every TV and newspaper. Before I go further I want you to answer 3 main questions as follows:

- 1. Where is the money, from many thousands of villages in the Karen State that you and your militia groups collect, going to?**
- 2. How do you explain the contradiction between your policy stated in the media and this military program?**
- 3. Have you fulfilled your promise, after achieving the peace agreement on February 11th, 2007, for the government to support us in the future development of the Karen State for the people?**

Because of your military program of a Border Guard Force, has stirred up so many problems as mentioned above, after which many Karen villagers came to me and asked for our help. As the KNU/KNLA Peace Council, it is our responsibility to intervene and talk to the authorities and these particular militia groups in alliance with you, not to threaten or cause a problem to the people.

It is good that we have been able to solve the problems that have stirred up in a peaceful way otherwise millions of these villagers would be fleeing to Thailand as refugees.

The country today does not need more military programs. The country today needs peace and development and a peaceful transition to Democracy.

I would like to educate you that election is not selection. Election is by the people and for the people.

If this upcoming election is selection then it would only stir up more problems of division and disunity and widespread corruption and I am very much concerned that it will cause this country to fall apart. All the Ethnic groups will no longer trust your leadership.

I understand that you have already chosen selected candidates to represent the government in all areas of Burma, but it is necessary to open up for opposition parties without discrimination to compete freely in this election so the people can make a choice. An election without opposition parties is not a Democracy, it is just selection which is not credible.

In Moulmein, on April 7, 2010 in the meeting with the PC Delegation you mentioned 5 things:

- 1. To become a militia group under command and control of the Burma Army and to respond by the deadline 22nd April, 2010. If your response is negative then you threatened that we would become illegal.**
- 2. Don't increase our army.**
- 3. Not permitted to make contact with any other Ethnic group.**
- 4. Don't meet with KNU.**
- 5. Don't maintain relationship with Thailand, nor trust them.**

I would like to clarify sentence by sentence according to your request:

1. TO BECOME A MILITIA UNDER COMMAND AND CONTROL OF BURMA ARMY

I would like to proclaim that the KNU/KNLA Peace Council will not become militia or any form of armed body that creates violence, unrest, insecurity or threat or become an instrument of abusing military power for the extortions of money or corruption, nor will we support any political power or tyranny that drags the country down. KNU/KNLA Peace Council Peace Force is to support all the policies and propaganda your government has stated in all national media, for peace and development, stability, carrying on the union and patriotic spirit, for unity, freedom, and prosperity within the Karen State. This is a clarification that we will not be a threat to the stability of the country or the well-being of the people within Karen State. The KNU/KNLA Peace Council and our Peace Force will always make sure the lives of the people and the livelihood and possessions that they have will be secure from any injustice in the law or violent threat that would bring harm to the Karen innocent in the community and people within the Karen State. If any harmful abuse or injustice in the law or any form of activity that disturbs or robs what rightfully belongs to the people of Karen State, which includes natural resources in Karen State which belong to the Karen people in the first place, we have a duty to defend and maintain a stable environment to the benefit of our own Karen. 60 years of conflict between Karen and Burmese is enough, we do not want to create another conflict to drag into the next 100 years, which would not only affect our own people but also the whole country. We choose to have peace and harmony to see the country go forward which is our main goal. Unless you are in opposition to your own State policies by enforcing your own agenda.

2. DON'T INCREASE OUR ARMY

The KNU/KNLA Peace Council has never had intentions or interest in increasing military forces to compete against government forces. We do not have this even in our policy.

Part of the conditions stated in our peace agreement with you, is to not increase military activity or power on either side, but instead to use the finance allotted for the military to focus on the development of the Karen State, but in 3 years after achieving peace, we have not seen evidence of any benefit on your part towards our Karen people except building houses and roads to enable us to live where we are. Although we appreciate that effort, it is not our goal to live nicely while thousands to millions of our people live under threat and in poverty. In fact, you have used peace to increase your own military agenda, through militia groups in alliance with you, and have created conflict between Karen, causing Karen to kill Karen in these previous years. Not only that, the militia groups that are following your orders, having been given favours by you are destroying forests for logging businesses; drug trafficking and human trafficking of thousands of people daily with each person forced to pay Baht 1500, back and forth; some paying up to 50,000 Baht each to search for jobs in Thailand and surrounding countries. All this extorted monies are going to your local military commanders and some Thai mafia along the Thai/Burma border that are using these Karen militia groups as their scapegoat. You are also encouraging these militia groups who follow your orders to build up more army, by giving them favour with natural resources and trade along the border, causing more threats and persecution toward our Karen people, including all citizens living in Karen State, whether Burmese, Indian, Chinese etc, who are facing all kinds of hardships from this wide-spread corruption and extortion of monies.

The people are feeling threatened and insecure with the formation of your Border Guard Force and other military programs so much that you are implanting in them the idea to join the KNU/KNLA Peace Council Peace Force in their defense despite our efforts to discourage this. If it appears that we are increasing our forces it is due to your own military program not ours.

It is good thing that we have our Peace Force to defend the safety of our people and the stability of the area, otherwise every single Karen and other Burmese citizen will be in chaos.

With your and that of your local authorities pressure in restricting our means of income and communication efforts because we are not in agreement to your military programs; Giving the natural resources and favours only to those who agree to your military programs therefore resulting in building military might these militia groups are continuing to threaten with all forms of human right abuses against all citizens within Karen State – in despite all of the negative outcome from your programs, with the little that we have, our main focus today is on developing roads for access to trading; and waterways for agricultural irrigation; and protection of the environment by the planting of trees; and growing rice and other staples for self-sufficiency of the KNU/KNLA Peace Council and the public in the our area of influence.

3. NOT TO ASSOCIATE OR MAKE CONTACT WITH ANY OTHER ETHNIC GROUP

We have made contact within all Ethnic Groups long before we made reconciliation with the government. It is not possible to break that relationship among all the Ethnics, including the Myanmar people. We all are brothers and sisters and have a union spirit under one country. We are different but we are one, united and strong, having a common goal to bring this country not to split but go forward for the benefit of all. Any power that carries on the British colonization spirit with a divide and rule policy and attempts to split the unity within our brotherhood then we have a right to defend. If you treat the Ethnics right without arrogant pride and keep the essence of brotherhood based on equality and fairness to every Ethnic group within Burma, there is nothing for you to fear or feel threatened. We should not see each other as an enemy but only those who come with a different ideology that breaks the union spirit that we have for each other. Every Ethnic group wants peace and development for their State. They do not want conflict. They will respond according to how they are treated. As far as we see today, the natural resources in the Ethnic areas are being robbed by corrupt authorities and their business cronies, bringing nothing that benefits to the Ethnic peoples. Many of the Ethnic development projects are not in the hands of the Ethnic leaders who want to see the development of their State, but are being sold out to many foreign companies in neighbouring countries. With all these problems surfacing, I am quite concerned for you as to how you can gain the trust and respect if you continue with your military programs. All the Ethnics, including us, want to see a peaceful transition to Democracy. Why are you

trying to push your military program now, in such a time like this? You should not use military programs, to delay the process of Democracy. All the opposition parties in Burma should be able to participate in this election alongside with the government candidates to allow choice to be given to the people, then the trust of the Ethnics can be won and Democracy will be achieved in a peaceful way. Too long, Burma has been suffering under conflict and political turmoil. We want to see the country go forward and be a safe haven for every citizen.

4. DON'T MEET WITH K.N.U.

It is strange that someone who is not Karen comes to tell us that we cannot meet with our own Karen. If we choose to meet, we will meet to achieve a good outcome. We Karen, all of us, are one family. Unity within the Karen is a top priority under the KNU umbrella. The unity among ourselves will only enhance the unity desired in the whole nation. The KNU/KNLA Peace Council holds no enemies. We want to see peace and harmony. In the past, we followed your advice since gaining peace which caused my son-in-law and many Karen commanders and innocent people to die. Causing grave misunderstandings and killing each other. Your advice caused conflict within our Karen rather than do any good. We do not know how many Karen will have to lay down their lives just to follow your commands. In past history, since colonization until now our Karen have been misused and abused by other military or political agendas. History has taught us a lot, not to follow the ideas of others that only create conflict and disunity within our Karen. For that reason unity plays a vital role and a main priority for a good outcome for our Karen.

5. DON'T MAINTAIN A RELATIONSHIP WITH THAILAND, NOR TRUST THEM.

The KNU/KNLA Peace Council does not hold a narrow-minded character. We are not the only group who has a relationship with Thailand. There are many traders and others as well. Relationship with our neighbouring countries or any other country in the world cannot be stopped. No one can order us or tell us who to relate and who not to relate.

The leadership with the KNU/KNLA Peace Council have a knowledgeable, mature and broadminded outlook with high morals and integrity in our relationships with others, who to relate and who not to relate to within the country and abroad. Mainly our relationships are based on mutual trust and mutual interests that benefit the people within Karen State. Not only based on maintaining the security of the country for peace, but also trade and exchange of knowledge for the future development of the Karen State. In Thailand, there are good people and also bad as it is in Burma and in every country. We are only relating and working with people that are good to us and who do not have any selfish agenda for their personal gain.

If anyone threatens the national security of the country and the Karen State, or disturbs the peaceful living of the Karen, we will honestly inform you.

Our response stated above is not intended to disappoint or create conflict with you but give assurance that the stand of the KNU/KNLA Peace Council is for the good of the country and future peace and development within Karen State and support towards the entire nation of Burma. We want to give you assurance that we have no other agenda other than seeing the country move forward in the unity, freedom, and prosperity of Karen and the entire nation. If anyone is found creating an opposite outcome, causing murder and violence and conflict, hatred and prejudice, then the responsibility is not ours but the one who orders and pressures for their own military agenda resulting in the country's downfall. Those who do this will be held responsible and will be brought to justice before the entire nation of Burma and the International Community.

I know there are many sincere Generals in the Burmese army who desire to see our country go forward with unity and prosperity. Let's work together towards a great future that is secure and brings happiness for every citizen within Burma.

The reason we do not agree with your Border Guard Force or to become a Burma militia group under your command is:

1. **90% of our Karen people feel threatened and unrest if we join with your military program. Previous conflict between the Burmese and Karen is still fresh in their minds.**
2. **Wide-spread corruption and threat to security are continually in the area.**
3. **Development within the Karen State for the benefit of the people as you have promised after achieving peace has not been realized as we discussed.**
4. **This military program should not be based on command or demand but it should be based on a long process of building trust and on a good outcome towards the people.**
5. **Bringing up a military program now contradicts the smooth transition to Democracy process and entraps the Ethnic to receive all blame for any failure to achieve Democracy.**

Let God be Judge. If you do what is righteous and just, then I will stand by you, but if you do wrong with costing the lives of many innocent, out of my sincerity and concern, I will not hesitate to stand up and say you are wrong.

In this case, I can definitely say that you are wrong in contradicting your own national policy. On the back of every newspaper, don't you see what your own propaganda says:

People's Desire: We favour peace and stability; We favour development; We oppose unrest and violence; Wipe Out those inciting unrest and violence.

Before I die and leave this world, it is my dream and hope to no longer see soldiers baring arms among the public in any form within Karen State, whether army or militia. This includes us, as a Peace Force. The people are sick and tired of being under threat of these images. I would like to see very few law-enforcers on the streets; people law-abiding with respect, loving and caring for each other, maintaining the good culture and heritage of this country and living in peace.

One day sooner or later, whether you believe in God or not, we will all have to stand before God and be judged by Him. We will all have to give an account of what we have done.

You can do the right thing whilst you are in your position to give to the people and the nation what is right, just and fair. To give them what they desire – Peace, stability, and development and a peaceful transition to Democracy, which is more important for the country and people rather than military programs that only cause further division with all the Ethnic and cause the country to come into chaos and decline.

Your government named itself the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC).

The government has come a long way to gain reconciliation with all the Ethnic leaders, which no government in the past has been able to achieve. Why not go further and have a peaceful dialogue to find a solution in a peaceful way coming from both sides, rather than enforcing your own agenda. No government in the past has been able to shape this country on its own, whether politically or military, socially or economically without the

support and peaceful dialogue with the indigenous ethnic nationalities. Military programs only breed hate, war, and conflict. This outcome is the opposite of what your government wants to achieve.

History shows that military might and pride in weapons does not secure a country (ie: Germany (Hitler), Japan, Soviet Union, England, even the USA with the trouble they are facing today) but a country is only secured by good leadership who have a heart of serving and giving what is right to the people. Only countries where the leadership is wise, and is not selfish or gripping power, but rather pursuing peace and finding solutions in a peaceful way in every aspect bring their country to be secure and prosperous.

You might ask me the question – “Can you give me a better answer”? I give you the best answer now and for as long as I live:

Nothing is better than PEACE and HARMONY, from the beginning of the human race until the end.

Everywhere that I have travelled in Burma, I have seen a lot of the suffering, pain and hardship the people of Burma are going through although our country is rich in natural resources. They deserve a better life. Since Independence from the British, Burma has never experienced true Peace and stability. **The challenge is, as is for all of us: What will we do in our lifetime? Will you make the country worse or better? At the end of your time, will you leave with happiness or regret? It is all up to you.**

If by our refusal to bow to your military programs, you then call us ‘ illegal’ and by doing so declare war, you are no longer just faced with a one-party issue but with all the Ethnic from every corner of Burma. Mark my words, the whole world will know who has destroyed the peace and stability of the nation. It is your call.

I pray that you will back down from all these military programs for the sake of the country’s unity and future development to protect many innocent lives.

Sincerely,



GEN. HTAY MAUNG

Chairman

KNU/KNLA PEACE COUNCIL

Tokawko, Karen State