

SENATE

P.S. RESOLUTION NO. 191

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Prepared by the Committee on Foreign Relations

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RESOLUTION

EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE THAT BURMA SHOULD NOT ASSUME THE CHAIRMANSHIP OF ASEAN IN 2006 UNLESS THERE HAS BEEN COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RIGHTS LAW, PARTICULARLY THOSE WHICH NECESSITATE THE FREEDOM FROM HOUSE ARREST OF AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND PARTICIPATION OF HER POLITICAL PARTY IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS IN BURMA

WHEREAS, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), Article 9, provides that: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile;"

WHEREAS, the Philippines, as a member of the United Nations (UN), affirms its faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women, and has determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom;

WHEREAS, all member states of the UN have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms as stated in the UN Charter, and as elaborated in the UDHR, the international Conventions on Human Rights, and other applicable human rights instruments;

WHEREAS, on 27 May 1990, the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Aung San Suu Kyi, won a majority of the parliamentary seats in the elections held in Burma;

WHEREAS, the Burmese military junta annulled the results of the said election and ordered the arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi and hundreds of NLD members, with others being forced to flee;

WHEREAS, Aung San Suu Kyi and members of the NLD have been denied the basic rights of freedom of movement and assembly by Burmese security authorities who, on 24 August 2004, forcibly blocked her and her party from traveling to NLD township offices near Rangoon;

WHEREAS, since their forcible return to Rangoon on 24 August 2004, Aung San Suu Kyi and other NLD leaders have been held incommunicado in their residences, and diplomats have been denied access to them;

WHEREAS, in 1999, the United States Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices in Burma identified more than 1,300 people who continue to suffer as political prisoners;

WHEREAS, on 1 December 2004, Senator Aquilino Q. Pimentel Jr. delivered a privilege speech in the Philippine Senate entitled: "Myanmar Does Not Deserve to Chair

ASEAN in 2006”, which was discussed at the ensuing hearing of the Committee on Foreign Relations;

WHEREAS, during the committee hearing, the representative of the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) read the DFA’s position paper stating that President Arroyo urged Myanmar that “it would be best for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy to be represented in the political process in Myanmar”;

WHEREAS, the DFA position paper also stated that the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest would show “Myanmar’s sincerity and restore its international credibility in its road map to democracy”;

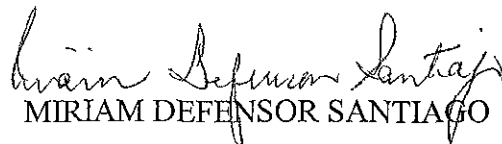
WHEREAS, Myanmar formally joined the ASEAN on 23 July 1997, where the chairmanship is assigned by alphabetical rotation among the member states;

WHEREAS, Myanmar is scheduled to assume chairmanship of the ASEAN in 2006, but owing to the failure of the incumbent administration to defend its human rights record, it has been urged to waive or defer ASEAN chairmanship;

WHEREAS, in the “Workshop of ASEAN Parliamentarians on the Myanmar Issue,” held in Kuala Lumpur on 26-28 November 2004, participating parliamentarians from Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Singapore, Malaysia, and the Philippines issued an Official Press Statement, saying that “in the absence of substantial and meaningful democratic and constitutional reforms in Myanmar, such assumption of the Chairmanship of ASEAN would be severely detrimental to the interests of ASEAN,” and strongly urging “that ASEAN bar Myanmar from serving as Chairman of ASEAN and immediately review Myanmar’s membership” to the ASEAN;

WHEREFORE, let it be expressed as the sense of the Senate that Burma should not assume chairmanship of the ASEAN in 2006, unless there has been compliance with the principles of human rights law, particularly those which necessitate the freedom from house arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi and participation of her political party in the political process in Burma.

Adopted,

  
MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO