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Campaign Sub-Committee  
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25 February 2005

Rt. Hon. Tony Blair MP  
Prime Minister  
10 Downing Street  
London SW1A 2AA  
United Kingdom

**Re: International arms embargo on Burma**

Dear Prime Minister

We would like to express our concerns regarding with your government's position on the European Union lifting of arms embargo on China. We regret that your government is supporting the EU to lift the arms embargo on China. We fear that it will ignite the international arms race on the world.

Furthermore, we are very concerned about the Chinese government selling of arms to the Burmese military. Since 1989, China has sold an estimated 3 billion USD worth of arms to the Burmese military junta.

The European Union has the embargo on sales of arms to the Burmese military junta. We should like to point out that the EU lifting of arms embargo on China is inconsistent with European Union's policy on Burma.

The Burmese military junta refuses to enter negotiation with the elected parliamentarians. The junta continues to detain the opposition leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. The junta had excluded the elected National League for Democracy along with all other political leaders in drafting of constitution. During this week, the delegates from International Labour Organization have to end their visit to Burma due to the lack of co-operation from the junta. It is therefore most appropriate that the UN Security Council to put Burma in its agenda.

We wish to advocate that an international arms embargo on Burma that is authorised by UN Security Council is most appropriate at this point in time. We therefore ask your government to put Burma case at the UN Security Council including implementation of international arms embargo on Burma.

Yours respectfully

*W. 25/2/2005*  
(U NE OO)  
Political Campaign Committee  
Burma Action Group in South Australia.

**Copy:**

1. Hon. Jack Straw, Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

## **Britain backs EU in lifting arms ban**

**By Jiao Xiaoyang (China Daily)**

**Updated: 2005-01-22 03:06**

British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw on Friday reassured Chinese officials about Britain's support of lifting the European Union's (EU) arms embargo on China, but said no timetable on a decision had yet been reached.

Foreign Minister Li Zhaoxin meets with his British counterpart Jack Straw in Beijing on January 21, 2005. "I've made the British Government's position clear when I gave evidence to the House of Commons Select Committee," Straw said at a joint news conference with his Chinese counterpart Li Zhaoxin in Beijing on Friday.

But he did not predict when the EU will make a formal decision. Straw has told a Parliamentary committee that Britain will support removing the arms embargo "subject to satisfaction of the issues laid out by the European Council in December."

China has repeatedly called for lifting the embargo as soon as possible.

"The arms embargo is hurting not only Chinese interests but also European interests," said Wu Jianmin, president of the China Foreign Affairs University, who has worked in Europe for years.

"It is incompatible with our strategic partnership," Wu said at a foreign policy seminar on Friday, which Straw attended. But some see the lifting of the embargo as more about mood than money.

"Even if the embargo is scrapped there will be a host of tough criteria to limit the export of arms sales to China," said Gu Junli, head of the Institute of European Studies at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.

He said lifting the embargo will not usher in any massive increase in the trade of weapons, as many have imagined. "The nature of the arms embargo is political discrimination," said Gu.

Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said on Thursday China has no plans to go on a shopping spree for weapons, even if the EU removed the embargo. He said the country adopts a "defensive" line in its national defence strategy.

Straw also said that diplomatic efforts to solve the Iranian nuclear issue will go on. "What I hear from the United States, Washington, (and) President Bush is support for the diplomatic approach, which European countries - Germany, France the United Kingdom have taken," he said when fielding questions at the foreign policy seminar.

Tourism and market economy Britain, the

largest European investor in China, is also in favour of granting China full market economy status within the EU, said Straw.

"We've been strong supporters of China's case to achieve market economy status inside the European Union," he said, noting that a unanimous decision has yet to be reached within the EU on this issue.

Earlier on Friday, Straw signed a memorandum of understanding with Director General He Guangwei of the China National Tourism Administration, making Britain an approved tourism destination for Chinese travellers.

Britain will replace Luxembourg as the EU's rotating president for the second half of this year.

Premier Wen Jiabao met with Straw on Friday before he ended a one-day visit in Beijing and left for Hong Kong.

## **PM defies Bush over China arms**

**By Greg Sheridan 12feb05**

The Australian: (Text-Abridged) THE Howard Government has defied US efforts to dissuade the European Union from lifting its 15-year arms embargo on China, which Washington fears will transform the balance of power in the Taiwan Strait.

Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, fresh from meetings with his European counterparts, will not oppose the EU lifting the arms embargo, imposed after the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. A spokesman for Mr Downer said this week that Australia hoped the Europeans would not sell arms that would destabilise the military balance in the Pacific.

The Europeans say they will satisfy this request by imposing strict rules on what they sell to China and under what conditions.

The Howard Government places a high premium on its relations with China, with which it is hoping to negotiate a free trade agreement.

Analysts believe Beijing is not likely to seek from Europe main weapons platforms such as submarines and planes, but rather computer-based parts of systems that can be adapted to make weapons far more lethal.

A high priority would be anything related to missiles. Computer-centred technologies that allow for miniaturisation and precise targeting are among the systems the Chinese are believed to want.

Strategic analysts say China is pursuing four methods of obtaining military high-tech: indigenous development, intelligence efforts, purchase of Western dual-use civilian technology and direct purchase of military technology.

## **EU PRESS RELEASE**

**15 February 2005**

### **EU General Affairs and External Relations Declaration of the Presidency on behalf of the European Union at the reconvening of the national convention in Burma/Myanmar**

The EU notes that the National Convention will reconvene on 17 February 2005, and strongly hopes to see concrete results. In this context the EU calls on the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to put aside past hostilities and enter into a constructive dialogue with the National League for Democracy (NLD), other legitimate representative bodies and the ethnic groups. Only such a dialogue can lead to the drawing up of a constitution that can win the genuine support of the people and bring peace and development to the country. Only by adopting such an approach will the Government be able to achieve real and lasting national reconciliation and live up to the commitments they have already made to the international community under their proclaimed Roadmap "to build a modern, prosperous, democratic nation."

The EU regrets that the SPDC has so far failed to create the conditions for the NLD and other legitimate representative bodies to participate in the National Convention which reconvenes on the 17 February, and which could provide the opportunity for genuine transparent dialogue. These conditions include the release of Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest, the reopening of all NLD Party offices as well as the release of all political prisoners including elected officials from opposition parties.

In this regard the EU is very concerned by the arrest on 9 February of Khun Htun Oo, leader of the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, together with other Shan community leaders, as well as the increased harassment of leaders from other ethnic nationalities. The EU calls for all restrictions on them to be immediately removed.

The EU appeals to the Burmese authorities to establish a permanent and sincere cooperation with the Special Envoy of the Secretary General of the UN and with all relevant UN agencies

The EU takes this opportunity to underline that it might, according to the Council Common position 2004/730/CFSP of 25 October 2004, respond positively to tangible signs of progress, and that it is already committed in favour of poverty alleviation and of the promotion of democratisation in Burma/Myanmar.

## **STATEMENT BY ILO DELEGATION**

**23 February 2005**

### **International Labour Organization Statement by the ILO very High-Level Team at the close of its visit to Myanmar**

The mandate which had been entrusted to the vHLT by the Governing Body of the ILO at its 291st Session (November 2004) was to evaluate the attitude of the Myanmar authorities at the highest level to the elimination of forced labour and assess their determination to continue their cooperation with the ILO in this regard. Its composition had been established accordingly. The Myanmar authorities were fully aware of these terms of reference before the mission departed for Yangon. However, the mission was informed on its arrival that for various reasons linked to the National Convention the program did not include the meetings that would have enabled it to successfully complete its mandate as it understood it.

Under the circumstances, and after having discussions and making its views known to the Minister for Labour and to the Prime Minister, the mission decided that there would be no point at this stage to have more in-depth discussions at the technical level on the concrete steps outlined in those meetings which in the mission's view could contribute to alleviating recent concerns expressed in the Governing Body.

The vHLT will submit its report to the next session of the ILO Governing Body in March.

**Sir Ninian Stephen on behalf of the vHLT**

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*From the Direct Communications Unit*

30 June 2004

Dr U Ne Oo  
Burma Action Group SA  
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Australia

Dear Dr Ne Oo

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 19 June.

Mr Blair appreciates the time you have taken to write to him to explain your views. As I am sure you will understand, he receives many thousands of letters each week, so I hope you will understand that it is not possible for him to respond personally to the great majority of them.

The Government have made the strongest possible representations in respect not merely of the release of the leader of the opposition, but of the restoration of proper human and democratic rights in Burma. On trade, the Government are making it clear to British companies that it is not appropriate for them to trade with the regime as it continues to suppress the human rights of its people.

Thank you for bringing your concerns to the Prime Minister's attention.

Yours sincerely

AEMER LODHI