

18 January 1995

Dear Dr Kim Dae-jung

The accounts I have received of your wonderful initiative last December to convene a meeting in Seoul on the issue of democratization in Burma gave me very great satisfaction. It was surely the best demonstration of regional support for our long struggle that has so far been given. I thank you with all my heart.

Having underlined Burma's unique difficulties there are of course many lessons to be learnt from other countries that have achieved a successful transition from military or one-party dictatorship to democratic rule. May I suggest that the Forum considers holding a conference on the theme of democratic transitions and the lessons to be learnt from these by Burma and other countries still struggling for democracy? The questions to be raised are those perennial ones which ask: Why are totalitarian regimes doomed to failure? Why is it in the military's best interest to hand over power to a fully accountable civilian government? How have such transitions been achieved elsewhere? What factors are there in any particular situation which promote or impede such a transition? What are the benefits to be derived from a wholly professionalized, apolitical military? These key issues have of course been raised in other contexts on numerous occasions, but it is essential to air them again thoroughly with



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reference to those countries like Burma which are currently at a critical stage in their political development. If the conclusions reached in such a conference could be disseminated as widely as possible, particularly through the region and within Burma too if that can be arranged, it would be of the greatest benefit to all of us.

I cannot possibly thank you sufficiently for all the interest and concern you have shown for our cause.

With best wishes,
Yours sincerely,

Aung San Suu Kyi



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