



Security Council

Sixty-first year

Provisional

5526th meeting

Friday, 15 September 2006, 1.35 p.m.
New York

<i>President:</i>	Mr. Vassilakis	(Greece)
<i>Members:</i>	Argentina	Mr. Mayoral
	China	Mr. Wang Guangya
	Congo	Mr. Biaboroh-Iboro
	Denmark	Ms. Løj
	France	Mr. Lacroix
	Ghana	Mr. Yankey
	Japan	Mr. Oshima
	Peru	Ms. Tincopa
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Qahtani
	Russian Federation	Mr. Smirnov
	Slovakia	Mr. Burian
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Johnston
	United Republic of Tanzania	Mrs. Taj
	United States of America	Mr. Bolton

Agenda

The situation in Myanmar

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The meeting was called to order at 1.35 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The President: The provisional agenda for this meeting is before the Council in document S/Agenda/5526, which reads "The situation in Myanmar". Does any member of the Council wish to speak on the subject?

I give the floor to the representative of China.

Mr. Wang Guangya (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): I wish to emphasize the following points on the question of the inclusion in the agenda of the Security Council of an item concerning the situation in Myanmar.

First, we should objectively evaluate the relationship between the situation in Myanmar and international peace and security. According to the United Nations Charter, it is only those questions that constitute threats to international peace and security that warrant discussion by the Security Council. If the existence in Myanmar of such issues — including human rights questions, refugees, drugs and HIV/AIDS — means that they are likely to endanger international peace and security and thus makes it necessary to make one country the subject of an item on the Council's agenda, then it follows that any country facing similar issues should likewise be inscribed on the Council's agenda. That is preposterous.

In fact, neither the direct neighbours of Myanmar nor the overwhelming majority of Asian countries recognizes the situation in Myanmar as any threat to regional peace and security. Without seeking the consent of the country in question, and without a request from a country in the region, some countries as far away as across the ocean are, however, of the belief that the situation in Myanmar is indeed a threat to international peace and security. That is a far cry from reality, to say the least. To request that the Security Council discuss an issue that by nature pertains to the internal affairs of a country not only exceeds the mandate given by the Charter to the Council, but will also undermine the Council's authority and legality.

Secondly, we should recognize the efforts on the part of Myanmar to solve its own problems. There is no denying that in Myanmar there are many questions or problems, some of which are quite serious. However,

all of the countries involved are faced with problems of some kind. The key is to find a constructive solution to the problems facing a country.

Recently, in cooperation with the International Labour Organization (ILO), Myanmar revised its domestic law so as to align it with the ILO conventions. On the basis of close consultations with its neighbours, Myanmar has set out to properly tackle its refugee problems.

The 2006 World Drug Report and the United States Government's International Narcotics Control Strategy Report both point to remarkable achievements on the part of Myanmar in combating drug production and trafficking. All of that indicates that the situation in Myanmar is gradually improving.

The international community should continue to encourage Myanmar and to create a favourable environment for the country. Only in that manner can real momentum be injected to accelerate the early completion of the democratic process so that Myanmar will participate in regional peace and development.

Thirdly, we should further promote communication and cooperation between Myanmar and the international community. In May 2006, Under-Secretary-General Gambari visited Myanmar upon invitation. The visit, during which he met with members both of the Government of Myanmar and of civil society, had successful results.

Following the visit, Under-Secretary-General Gambari also indicated that Myanmar was ready and willing to collaborate with the United Nations and turn over a new leaf. As we speak, the Government of Myanmar has once again extended an invitation to Under-Secretary-General Gambari, and a visit will likely take place in early November.

On 10 July, the Non-Aligned Movement wrote a letter to the Security Council in which it put forward its categorical opposition to the inclusion of the issue of Myanmar on the agenda of the Security Council and its request for constructive cooperation between the international community and Myanmar. In August, the Foreign Minister of the Philippines, as current Chair of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), paid a successful visit to Myanmar, which served to boost ASEAN's confidence in finding a successful solution to the question of Myanmar on its own.

As a result of that series of exchanges, visits and communications, we now have favourable interaction between the international community and Myanmar and some hard-won gains. The international community should welcome and further encourage such momentum. Only in this way can it assist the Secretary-General in fulfilling the mandate of good offices entrusted to him by the General Assembly. To force the Security Council into intervening is not only inappropriate but will also further complicate the situation and have a negative impact on future interaction between Myanmar and the United Nations.

As a permanent member of the Security Council representing the Asia-Pacific region, and as an immediate neighbour of Myanmar, China wishes, more than any other country in the world, to see political stability, economic development and national unity in Myanmar. At the same time, China has all along adopted a responsible attitude in constructively assisting the Government of Myanmar in tackling its problems incrementally. We are of the view that events in Myanmar certainly relate to that country's internal affairs, and that it should therefore be left to the Government and the people of Myanmar to find a solution to the problem on the basis of consultations. It is incumbent upon the international community to lend a helping hand and play a positive and constructive role.

So long as the situation in Myanmar does not pose a threat to international or regional peace and security, China will be unequivocally against including the question of Myanmar on the agenda of the Security Council. China's position on this matter will remain unchanged.

Mr. Al-Qahtani (Qatar) (*spoke in Arabic*): Qatar has always affirmed the importance of respect for the respective competences of the organs of the United Nations. The relevant organs, particularly the Human Rights Council, should be given priority in dealing with questions of human rights, including the question of Myanmar. It is well known that neither Myanmar's neighbours nor the regional organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) consider the human rights situation in Myanmar to constitute a threat to regional peace and security. Therefore, we must leave the door open for the Secretary-General and the regional organizations, as well as the competent United Nations organs, to deal

with questions of human rights; they must be given priority in dealing with such matters.

What we fear is that, by including this question on the agenda of the Council, we would close the diplomatic channels opened by Myanmar with the competent international human rights institutions and with the Secretary-General. Therefore, we believe that including this matter on the agenda of the Security Council is inappropriate, and we object to it.

Mr. Bolton (United States of America): In order that the record is clear on what we are doing here, I would just briefly like to make a few remarks, starting with the reading of the letters that we have sent to you, Mr. President, in your capacity as President of the Security Council, and that bring us to this important vote today.

The first letter, dated 1 September, addressed to you, Mr. President, states,

"The United States and other members of the Security Council are concerned about the deteriorating situation in Myanmar, known to the United States as Burma, and this situation is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security.

"In his briefings to the Council in December 2005 and June 2006, Under-Secretary-General Gambari described the grave human rights and humanitarian conditions in Burma, including the detention of over 1,100 political prisoners, as well as the outflow from Burma of refugees, drugs, HIV-AIDS and other diseases. These conditions threaten to have a destabilizing impact on the region.

"Therefore, we request that the situation in Myanmar, known to the United States as Burma, be placed on the Council's agenda, and that a senior official of the Secretariat formally brief Member States in a meeting of the Security Council on this situation and its implications for international peace and security".

The second letter, Mr. President, dated today, addressed to you in your capacity as President of the Council, states,

"Further to my letter of 1 September 2006 on the subject of Myanmar, known to the United States as Burma, and to our subsequent

discussions with Council members, I would like to specifically confirm my request for a meeting of the Security Council during September, but after 19 September, under the agenda item 'The situation in Myanmar', for members of the Council to receive a briefing from Under-Secretary-General Gambari on the situation in that country and the status and progress of the Secretary-General's good offices mission. I would appreciate your circulating this letter as a document of the Security Council".

Since the passage of resolution 688 (1991) dealing with the refugee flows from Iraq after the first Persian Gulf war, matters of this kind have been deemed to be threats to international peace and security. And so it is with Burma. The vote that the Council is about to take is an important, albeit procedural, one. I urge that everyone on the Council support it.

The President: I wish to draw the attention of members to document S/2006/742, containing the text of a letter dated 15 September 2006 from the representative of the United States addressed to the President of the Council, which Ambassador Bolton just read out.

In view of the request that the matter be included in the provisional agenda and in view of the comments made by the representatives of China and Qatar, I propose to put the provisional agenda (S/Agenda/5526) to the vote. Accordingly, I shall put it to the vote now.

A vote was taken by a show of hands.

In favour:

Argentina, Denmark, France, Ghana, Greece, Japan, Peru, Slovakia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America.

Against:

China, Congo, Qatar, Russian Federation.

Abstaining:

United Republic of Tanzania.

The President: There were 10 votes in favour, 4 votes against and 1 abstention. The provisional agenda has been adopted.

The situation in Myanmar

Letter dated 15 September 2006 from the Permanent Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2006/742)

The President: Pursuant to the request of the representative of the United States contained in document S/2006/742 that the meeting of the Council on the agenda item "The situation in Myanmar" be convened after 19 September, I shall accordingly schedule such a meeting to continue consideration of this agenda item, following consultations with Council members.

There is no other business before the Council at this time.

The meeting was suspended at 1.50 p.m.