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Resolution Urging the Governments of China, India, Thailand, Korea, Japan, and of the United States, as well as the Chevron and Daewoo Corporations to Take Action in Defense of Peaceful Pro-Democracy Demonstrators in Burma

WHEREAS, San Francisco is the birthplace of the United Nations; and

WHEREAS, It is the responsibility of all to speak out against oppression; and

WHEREAS, On August 5, 2007 the Burmese government without warning raised fuel prices by as much as 500 percent, thereby making it difficult for many Burmese people to afford sufficient food; and

WHEREAS, street protests against the military dictatorship of Burma and for democracy began on Aug. 19, 2007, and when thousands of Buddhist monks and nuns took to the streets beginning Sept. 18 and numbers swelled to many tens of thousands; and

WHEREAS, Starting on Sept. 26, the government of Burma has launched violent repression of the demonstrations, arresting hundreds, killing an unknown number of people estimated by diplomats to be in the dozens or more, cremating the victims' bodies and, allegedly, persons still living, raiding Buddhist monasteries, beating and arresting more than 4,000 monks, imprisoning monks in their monasteries, and placing an estimated 20,000 soldiers in the streets of Rangoon; and

WHEREAS, Burma's closest trading partners, China, India and Thailand have been slow to respond, China first calling the developments an "internal matter," and only after the initial crackdown urging "all parties" to exercise restraint. Thailand has refused to take action, claiming it "lacks moral authority", and India continues business as usual; and

WHEREAS, Daewoo Corporation of Korea made a giant gas discovery in Myanmar in early 2004 and has recently entered into a production sharing contract with the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the military government. The project is expected to become the regime's largest single source of revenue, providing, on average, US\$580 million per year for the regime for twenty years, or a total of US\$ 12 billion; and

WHEREAS, the Chevron corporation is one of the largest foreign investors in Burma and is the only remaining major U.S. corporation with a significant presence there, and the Chevron subsidiary Unocal has partnered with the Burmese military to provide security for its pipeline and such partnership has resulted in allegations of horrific human rights abuses including torture, rape, unlawful land seizures to remove villagers from areas slated for development, and the military's use of forced labor to facilitate the pipeline construction. According to ILO estimates, more than 800,000 Burmese are currently conscripted in slave-like conditions with little or no pay as army porters or workers in construction and agriculture. Such allegations resulted in a lawsuit charging that the companies knew about and benefited from the Burmese army's human rights abuses. The lawsuits were settled after the companies agreed to make large payments, but Chevron & Unocal continue to operate in Burma; and

WHEREAS, Burma has been ruled by a repressive military dictatorship since a coup d'état ended democratic governance in 1962. After holding free elections in 1990, the government annulled those elections when it lost decisively; and the government continues to hold more than 1,000 political prisoners, including Aung San Suu Kyi, the leader of the party that won the 1990 election;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council urges the government of Burma to immediately cease the use of violence in suppression of nonviolent protests by its citizens, cease the detention of political prisoners and release those currently held, cease the harassment of those suspected of supporting the protests, and enter into sincere negotiations with leaders of the movement for democracy and human rights in Burma; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council urges the Daewoo Corporation and the Chevron corporation and its subsidiary, Unocal, to withdraw immediately from all dealings with the military government of Burma on the basis that not to do so is to be complicit in perpetuating a brutal and amoral regime and the torture and murder of its citizens; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the San Francisco Labor Council urges its members and affiliates to speak up for the safety, human rights, and freedom of the people of Burma by participating in letter-writing, vigils, demonstrations, and other actions organized by such forces as the Burmese American Democratic Alliance SF, Amnesty International, Avaaz.org, the US Campaign for Burma, the Berkeley-based Buddhist Peace Fellowship, and the international organized-labor movement; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that copies of this resolution shall be sent to the governments of Burma, China, India, Thailand, Korea, Japan, and the United States, by way of their Missions to the United Nations as well as to the Board of Directors of the Chevron and Daewoo corporations.

Submitted by Allan Fisher, AFT 2121, and adopted by the Executive Committee of the San Francisco Labor Council on November 5, 2007.

Respectfully,



Tim Paulson
Executive Director

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