

File No. 080970

Committee Item No. _____
Board Item No. 115

COMMITTEE/BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
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Board of Supervisors Meeting Date July 15, 2008

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Completed by: _____
Completed by: Debbie Roddy

Date _____
Date July 10, 2008

An asterisked item represents the cover sheet to a document that exceeds 25 pages. The complete document is in the file.

1 [Burma Day]

2
3 **Resolution declaring August 8th "Burma Day" in San Francisco in honor of the 20th**
4 **Anniversary of the people of Burma's 1988 popular uprising against Burma's military**
5 **regime.**

6
7 WHEREAS, August 8, 2008 is the 20th anniversary of the nationwide Burmese
8 democracy uprising known by its date, 8/8/88, when the people of Burma took to the streets
9 to peacefully protest the increasingly repressive rule of the then 26 year-old military regime,
10 which brutally crushed the 8/8/88 pro-democracy movement, killing more than 3,000 people
11 and arresting, torturing, and imprisoning thousands more; and,

12 WHEREAS, The people of Burma and their supporters around the world annually
13 commemorate the 8/8/88 uprising on August 8th to honor and pay tribute to the thousands
14 who were killed and to remind the world of the need to liberate the 50 million Burmese people
15 from the dictatorship in Burma; and,

16 WHEREAS, In response to the 1988 uprising, the dictators held elections, but when
17 the National League for Democracy (NLD) won 88% of the vote, the government arrested and
18 imprisoned the democratically elected leaders, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the General
19 Secretary of NLD (who subsequently received the United States Congressional Gold Medal
20 on May 8, 2008 (H.R. 4286) in recognition of her courageous and unwavering commitment to
21 peace, nonviolence, human rights, and democracy in Burma); and,

22 WHEREAS, In August and September 2007, the people of Burma, led by Buddhist
23 monks, took to the streets in peaceful demonstration to protest intolerable economic
24 conditions resulting from a sudden 500% increase in fuel prices. The military regime killed
25 hundreds of peaceful protesters and arrested, imprisoned, and tortured many thousands

1 more including Buddhist monks. The violent actions taken against the peaceful protests were
2 reported by Human Rights Watch (See December 2007 Report "Repression of the 2007
3 Popular Protest in Burma"), Amnesty International (See November 2007 briefing paper "No
4 Return to 'Normal'"), and the United Nations (UN) Special Rapporteur, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro,
5 based on numerous first-hand accounts by victims and eye-witnesses of: shootings, beatings,
6 and killings of protesters and monks, monasteries being raided, arbitrary detentions and
7 disappearances, torture, cruel and degrading treatment, and restraints on political activity and
8 access to the media; and,

9 WHEREAS, On October 11, 2007, the UN Security Council, in a statement read by
10 President Leslie Kojo Christian, deplored violence used against Burmese demonstrators and
11 stressed the importance of releasing all political prisoners and the need for the Burmese
12 military regime to create the necessary conditions for a "genuine" dialogue with all concerned
13 parties and ethnic groups. It welcomed the regime's public commitment to work with the UN
14 and the liaison officer, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, but stressed the importance of follow-up
15 action. However, none of the Security Council's concerns have been adequately acted upon
16 by the military regime; and,

17 WHEREAS, During a mission to Burma in November 2007, the UN Special Rapporteur
18 was denied access to the Ye Way municipal crematorium in Yangon where he had received
19 reports of a large number of bodies – including some with shaved heads, indicating monks—
20 being burned during the nights of September 27-29th. Amnesty International also indicated
21 reports of secret cremation of bodies during the crackdown; and,

22 WHEREAS, in its report to the Security Council and its Working Group on Children and
23 Armed Conflict, the UN Secretary General expressed deep concerns regarding child-soldiers
24 in Burma and urged the Burmese government to take action to stop the practice of using
25 children to serve as soldiers in Burma (See November 2007 "Report of the Secretary-General

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1 on Children and Armed Conflict in Myanmar”—the first report on a nation prepared in
2 accordance with the provisions of UN Resolution 1612 (2005)); and,

3 WHEREAS, the Burmese Army has the world's highest number of child-soldiers with
4 more than fifty percent of its new recruits under the age of 18 years old and the Burmese
5 Army practices kidnapping and other forms of forced service (See October 2007 Human
6 Rights Watch article entitled, "Sold to Be Soldiers: The Recruitment and Use of Child Soldiers
7 in Burma"); and,

8 WHEREAS, Myanmar (Burmese) authorities failed to implement Resolution S-5/1 of
9 October 2, 2007, passed by the Special Session of the Human Rights Council calling on the
10 Myanmar government to, inter alia, "release without delay those arrested and detained as a
11 result of the recent repression of peaceful protests, as well as to release all political detainees
12 in Myanmar, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and to ensure that conditions of detention
13 meet international standards and include the possibility of visiting any detainee"; and,

14 WHEREAS, The Burmese military regime ignores the will of the people, of the
15 international community, and of the UN Security Council, by continuing to detain Daw Aung
16 San Suu Kyi and more than 1,200 political prisoners, and by forging ahead with its "Road
17 Map to Democracy," which is widely viewed as an undemocratic attempt to further entrench
18 military rule in Burma, to erase the results of the 1990 elections, and to prevent Daw Aung
19 San Suu Kyi and other NLD leaders from ever taking power; and,

20 WHEREAS, On March 21, 2008, labor rights activists and members of the main
21 opposition party, NLD, in Burma urged the International Labor Organization (ILO) to take
22 effective action on complaints about forced labor allegedly carried out by the Burmese military
23 regime. Despite decades of continuous effort by the ILO to end the world's worst forced labor
24 in Burma—including adopting a Resolution in 2000 under Article 33 of the ILO Constitution
25 calling on ILO constituents and other agencies to review their relations with Burma and take

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1 appropriate action, a first ever invocation of Article 33 by the ILO against a member country in
2 the ILO history—the Burmese military continues to exercise forced labor and child labor
3 including harshly punishing those who complain to the ILO; and,

4 WHEREAS, According to UN reports, Burma is now the poorest country in Southeast
5 Asia. The population spends approximately 75% of household income on food; one in three
6 children under the age of five does not complete primary school; and the per capita Gross
7 Domestic Product is less than half that of Bangladesh or Cambodia; and,

8 WHEREAS, numerous Housing, Land and Property (HLP) rights violations by the
9 military regime have effectively displaced millions of Burmese people within Burma rendering
10 them homeless or seeking refuge in neighboring countries (See the November 2007 Country
11 Report entitled, "Burma: Displacement and Dispossession: forced migration and land rights"
12 by the Geneva-based Center on Housing Rights and Evictions (COHRE)); and,

13 WHEREAS, As reported in the Boston Globe on April 26, 2008, "[t]he regime has
14 announced plans to hold a 'referendum' on May 10 on a new constitution that conveniently
15 disqualifies Nobel Prize laureate and democratic opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi from
16 running in future elections. The penalty for opposing the draft constitution is life in prison"
17 (See "New Urgency in Burma" by Michael Green). Regarding the life imprisonment
18 punishment for opposing the draft constitution, Paulo Sérgio Pinheiro, the UN Special
19 Rapporteur on Burma, commented, "How can you have a referendum when you repress
20 those who intend to say no? The process is completely surreal"; and,

21 WHEREAS, The May 2, 2008 natural disaster, tropical cyclone, Nargis, was
22 compounded by the criminal negligence of the Myanmar regime, which refused to allow relief
23 aid and workers prompt access to those in need and proceeded with the May 10th election
24 despite this tragedy while criminalizing opposition to the referendum. According to UN
25 estimates, by May 10th no help had reached 80% of those in need, yet the junta focused on

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1 the referendum for which some survivors were expelled from shelters to turn them into polling
2 stations. CNN reported that the regime had seized aid shipments, put their names on the
3 boxes, and redistributed them selectively. For these reasons, France insisted that aid be
4 delivered directly to those in need, with help from non-governmental organizations, rather
5 than by Myanmar's soldiers. On May 7th, this plan was rebuffed by China, Vietnam, South
6 Africa, and Russia. By May 14th, the UN increased its estimate of those severely affected by
7 Burma's cyclone to 2.5 million people; and,

8 WHEREAS, On May 30, 2008, the United Nations Children's Fund said, "The military
9 government in Burma, also known as Myanmar, is removing cyclone victims from refugee
10 camps and dumping them near their devastated villages with virtually no aid supplies"; and,

11 WHEREAS, On June 3, 2008, the New York Times reported that one month after a
12 powerful cyclone struck Myanmar and 10 days after the ruling junta's leader promised full
13 access to the hardest-hit areas, relief agencies said that they were still having difficulty
14 reaching hundreds of thousands of survivors in urgent need of assistance; and,

15 WHEREAS, Amnesty International's report released on June 6, 2008 denounced the
16 junta's forcible evictions of cyclone survivors from schools and monasteries where they had
17 taken shelter, stating: "Amnesty International has been able to confirm over 30 instances and
18 accounts of forcible displacement by the [military regime] in the aftermath of the cyclone, but
19 anecdotal evidence from numerous sources strongly suggests a much higher number"; and,

20 WHEREAS, The Chinese government supports the Burmese military regime and
21 vetoed a draft resolution before the UN Security Council on January 12, 2007 calling on the
22 government of Burma to respect human rights and begin a democratic transition; and,

23 WHEREAS, The Chinese government has sold billions of dollars worth of arms to the
24 Burmese regime that have been used to terrorize its own civilian population—including
25 women, children, nuns and monks—by destroying more than 3,000 villages and creating one

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1 million internally displaced people and nearly two million refugees in neighboring countries;
2 and,

3 WHEREAS, The Chinese Government continues to block the UN Security Council
4 from taking concrete measures towards resolving the situation in Burma through a binding
5 resolution calling for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners,
6 establishing a comprehensive arms embargo, and/or enforcing strong collective and
7 comprehensive economic and financial sanctions; and,

8 WHEREAS, The people of Burma live in darkness due to electricity shortages while
9 the Chinese government builds the Shwe Gas pipeline in western Burma that will channel
10 Burma's gas at cut-rate prices to China's Yunan province to support China's burgeoning
11 economy. The pipeline will provide billions of dollars to the Burmese military regime, which
12 has reduced Burma to one of the poorest countries in the world even though Burma is among
13 the richest in the region in natural resources; and,

14 WHEREAS, As a UN Member State since October 25, 1971, the People's Republic of
15 China pledged to uphold the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and to achieve the
16 promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental
17 freedoms, however, China contributes to the brutal treatment of 50 million Burmese people
18 through its military, economic, and diplomatic support of Burma's military regime. Moreover,
19 the Chinese government continually blocks the strong and collective comprehensive
20 measures at the UN Security Council, which might otherwise be the most likely means of
21 reversing the military regime's grip on power; and,

22 WHEREAS, August 8, 2008 is (in addition to being the 20th anniversary of the
23 nationwide Burmese democracy uprising) the opening day of the Olympics Games in Beijing,
24 which has been protested extensively worldwide and in the United States, including San
25 Francisco, and is expected to be boycotted during the opening ceremonies by many world

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1 leaders including some in the European Union, due in part to China's support of the Burmese
2 regime; and,

3 WHEREAS, The Olympic Charter sets forth the conditions for the celebration of the
4 Olympic Games and codifies the fundamental principles of Olympism. One fundamental goal
5 is to place sports at the service of the harmonious development of humankind with a view to
6 promote a peaceful society concerned with the preservation of human dignity. China's bid to
7 host the 2008 Olympics was granted by the international community based on a pledge made
8 by President of the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee, Liu Qi, who stated, "To make the
9 national capital peaceful and orderly, people must have a means of voicing their opinions,
10 and the mechanism for solving social problems at the grassroots level will be improved"; and,

11 WHEREAS, the United States House Representatives, Dana Rohrabacher (CA),
12 Joseph Pitts (PA), Eleana Ros-Lehtinen (FL), Thaddeus McCotter (MA), John Doolittle (CA),
13 Dan Burton (Ind.), Frank Wolf (VA), and Christopher Smith (NJ) co-sponsored House
14 Resolution 610 (August 2007), which calls for a boycott of the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games
15 because of on-going human rights violations in China; and,

16 WHEREAS, In October 2007, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors adopted a
17 Resolution urging the people of San Francisco and the governments of China, Japan, and the
18 United States to take action in defense of the peaceful demonstrators of Burma/Myanmar;
19 and,

20 WHEREAS, In 2005, the San Francisco Board of Supervisors adopted a Resolution
21 declaring June 19, 2005 "Daw Aung San Suu Kyi Day" in recognition of the 60th birthday of
22 Ms. Suu Kyi and the efforts of the Burmese/Myanmar people to reclaim their human rights
23 and democracy, following other Resolutions adopted by the Board of Supervisors in 1994,
24 1995, 1998, and 1999 against the repressive regime of Burma/Myanmar; now, therefore, be it
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1 RESOLVED, That the San Francisco Board of Supervisors commends the people of
2 Burma (now also known as Myanmar) for their 46 years of struggle against a brutal
3 dictatorship, and honors the 20th Anniversary of the 1988 popular uprising in Burma by
4 declaring August 8, 2008 as "Burma Day" and further declare August 8 as Annual Burma
5 Day; and, be it

6 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Office of the Clerk of the Board shall send this
7 Resolution to San Francisco's Congressional delegation with requests to forward the
8 Resolution to Senior General Than Shwe, Chairman, State Peace and Development Council
9 of Burma; President Hu Jintao of People's Republic of China; Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan
10 Singh of India; Prime Minister Samak Sundaravej of Thailand; President Lee Myung-bak of
11 Republic of Korea; Prime Minister Yasuo Fukuda of Japan and President Bush of the United
12 States, by way of their Missions to the United Nations, as well as to the Board of Directors of
13 the Chevron and Daewoo corporations; and, be it

14 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Office of the Clerk of the Board shall send this
15 Resolution to President George W. Bush urging him not to attend the opening ceremony of
16 the 2008 Olympic Games in protest of China's refusal to meet its promises to the international
17 community to cease human rights abuses in Burma, Tibet, Darfur and inside China; to
18 provide U.S. aid with or without permission from Burma's military; and to take affirmative
19 diplomatic measures to persuade China and Russia to vote on the United Nations Security
20 Council in support of aid to the Burmese people and for the protection of their human rights;
21 and, be it

22 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Office of the Clerk of the Board shall send this
23 Resolution to the President of the Beijing Olympic Organizing Committee, Liu Qi; and, be it

24 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Office of the Clerk of the Board shall send this
25 Resolution to: the United Nations Secretary General, The Honorable Ban Ki-Moon; the United
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1 Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Honorable Louise Arbour; and the Under-
2 Secretary General of the United Nations for Political Affairs, the Honorable Ibrahim Gambari;
3 and, be it

4 FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Office of the Clerk of the Board shall send this
5 Resolution to the Olympic TOP Partners (sponsors): Coca-Cola, McDonald's, General
6 Electric, Johnson & Johnson, Kodak, Visa, Lenovo, Panasonic, Samsung, Manulife Financial,
7 Atos Origin, and Omega, communicating the City of San Francisco's opposition to human
8 rights violations by the government of the People's Republic of China and its opposition to the
9 political cover that these companies give the Chinese government through their sponsorship
10 of the Olympics in China.

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