



Statement of Senator Feinstein  
On Burma's Relinquishment of 2006 ASEAN Chairmanship  
July 26, 2005

*Washington, DC – On the heels of Burma's announcement that it would relinquish assumption of the 2006 chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) today commended ASEAN for their efforts thus far to pressure Rangoon and further called upon the military junta to engage in a true national dialogue aimed at restoring democracy, human rights, and the rule of law to the Burmese people. The following is Senator Feinstein's statement:*

**"I am pleased that Burma has decided not to assume the chairmanship of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2006. It is essential that ASEAN now put additional pressure on the military junta, the State Peace and Development Council, to release Aung San Suu Kyi and other members of her National League for Democracy and engage in a true national dialogue aimed at restoring democracy, human rights, and the rule of law to the Burmese people.**

**Almost one month ago, Nobel laureate Suu Kyi celebrated her 60th birthday under house arrest, a condition under which she has suffered the better part of the past fifteen years. During that time, the military junta's profligate ways have aided in the spread of narcotics, HIV/AIDS, and refugees across the region.**

**Frankly, I believe that had Burma assumed this leadership position, it would have signaled ASEAN's fundamental inability to move the State Peace and Development Council toward elections or achieve reconciliation with the duly elected government led by Suu Kyi.**

**I believe that the United States can gain additional international support for a free and democratic Burma by continuing to take a leadership role on sanctions against the military regime. Let us stand with Aung San Suu Kyi and the people of Burma. The Senate and House recently passed the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act of 2003 and I urge President Bush to follow suit and sign the bill into law."**

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