

## **EURO - BURMA OFFICE**

European Office for the Development of Democracy in Burma



### **Bringing About Change in Burma.**

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## BRINGING ABOUT CHANGE IN BURMA

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## **Bringing About Change in Burma.**

### **Summary**

The Burmese military has in the past changed when its survival was threatened. It changed from ruling through the Revolutionary Council in 1962 to ruling through the Burmese Socialist Programme Party in 1974. In 1988, the State Law and Order Restoration Council discarded 'socialism' and adopted 'capitalism' hoping to replace foreign aid with foreign investments. In 2000 the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) again changed tactics from one of confrontation to one of 'dialogue'.

However, it is clear that while the military has changed its tactics, it is not yet committed to finding a solution to the crisis in Burma through political dialogue, negotiations and compromise. The current 'Secret Talks' are designed to decrease pressure and give the military time to consolidate its power base. The aim is to retain its grip on power.

The international community does not have a comprehensive strategy to ensure that this does not happen and that the current 'Secret Talks' will develop into a 'political dialogue'. It is depending instead on the goodwill of the generals and the hope that common sense will prevail. Recent developments indicate that these hopes may be misplaced and that the 'Secret Talks' could be on the brink of a breakdown.

The international community needs an overall comprehensive strategy to ensure that a political dialogue will follow the 'Secret Talks'. Instead, conflicting signals are being sent. The need for a facilitator to coordinate the strategy should also be considered.

However, before a comprehensive strategy is adopted, the international community needs to clearly understand the basic issues at stake in Burma. The root of the conflict is a constitutional one dating back to 1947. Unless the constitutional problem is also resolved, simply replacing a military government with a democratic one will not work.

To save the 'Talks', the international community needs to first demonstrate that it is unanimous in its opinion that the crisis in Burma can only be resolved through a political dialogue, negotiations and compromise. Second, it also needs to convey the message that the current pace and manner in which the 'Secret Talks' are being conducted is not acceptable. Minimum requirements must be met if the international community is not to 'interfere' by imposing more sanctions to speed up the 'dialogue process'.

Only when the minimum steps have been taken can progress be made and various steps be taken to encourage the further development of the 'Dialogue Process'. Without the minimum steps, it cannot be deemed that the 'Secret Talks' have progressed.

The unique opportunity presented by the 'Secret Talks' must not be lost. The international community must adopt a comprehensive strategy to make it happen.

## **Introduction**

When circumstances demanded it, the Burmese military leadership did change. It changed in 1974 from ruling as a Revolutionary Council by adopting a 'Socialist' one-party constitution and continued to rule through the Burmese Socialist Programme Party. Again, when foreign aid was withdrawn by the international community in the aftermath of the 'SLORC coup' in 1988, the generals became 'capitalists' overnight and invited direct foreign investments in order to survive.

The question is not whether the generals will change but what will make them change and in which direction? The author maintained in early 2000 that circumstances in Burma were ripe for the military to make another major tactical change. The January 2001 announcement by the United Nations Special Envoy for Burma Ambassador Tan Sri Razali Ishmael that secret talks have been underway between the generals and Aung San Suu Kyi since October 2000, indicates that the military has made that tactical change.

## **What brought about the change?**

Events in 2000 may have convinced the military that it can no longer continue ruling by force of arms alone. At the beginning of the year 2000, the policy of the ruling State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) was to eliminate the election-winning National League for Democracy (NLD) and its charismatic leader Aung San Suu Kyi by year-end. After systematically closing down NLD offices and increasingly restricting its leadership, SPDC tried in September to detain Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) and marginalize her.

The strong reaction and increased international pressure even from neighbouring states caught the generals by surprise. The stronger Common Position adopted by the European Union (EU) in April 2000, and the unprecedented decision by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in June 2000 to sanction the regime for its forced labour practices also shook the generals. By year-end, the military seemed to have accepted that changes have to be introduced if it seriously wants to maintain its political role in the future.

The military might also have realized that it is not in its self-interest to allow the situation in Burma to deteriorate further: that a weakened nation might not be able to defend her sovereignty and territorial integrity, and that her viability as a nation might be brought into question. The severe deterioration in the nation's health and education systems, the continuing economic and social problems, the increased fighting and unrest in non-Burman ethnic areas and the high rate of desertion from the army could have been some of the factors that contributed to the decision to change tactics.

Events in the rest of Southeast Asia in the year 2000 could also have influenced the military's decision. The increasing violence and uncertainty in Indonesia and the political crises in the Philippines may have convinced the generals that it is in their best interest to

oversee a planned transition to democracy rather than allow a situation to develop where control may not be possible and the threat of foreign intervention increased.

### **The current ‘Secret Talks’.**

Much misinformation, speculation and rumours surround the ‘Secret Talks’, but the facts that can be ascertained are as follows:

- ASSK has since October 2000 had a series of meetings with Major-General Kyaw Win of the SPDC’s Office of Strategic Studies.
- SPDC Chairman Senior General Than Shwe is ultimately in charge of the ‘Secret Talks’, not Intelligence Chief and Secretary 1, Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt.
- SPDC has ordered its news media to stop public attacks on ASSK and the NLD.
- Without specifically mentioning the ‘Secret Talks’, Senior General Than Shwe made a somewhat reconciliatory speech on Armed Forces Day 27 March 2001.
- The helicopter crash in February 2001, which killed SPDC Secretary-2 and Army Chief of Staff Lieutenant-General Tin Oo together with Armed Forces Inspector General, Brigadier General Lun Maung, and South-west Military Region Commander Major-General Sit Maung, seriously affected the stability of the SPDC and could have adversely affected the progress of the ‘Secret Talks’.
- The Myanmar Times which is published in English and read by foreign businessmen carried front-page news of Razali’s announcement of the breakthrough and reports regularly on the ‘Secret Talks’.
- While the fact that the ‘Secret Talks’ are taking place has been confirmed to the international community and has been reported extensively by foreign media, no official statement has been made about the ‘Talks’ in Burmese in the official media up until the end of June 2001. Since all media in Burma is controlled, it means that the people of Burma have actually not been told about the talks that have been taking place in the last nine months and are known to the rest of the world.
- ASSK agreed to stay within her compound in order to facilitate the talks.
- ASSK has access to U Lwin, a member of the NLD Executive.
- The substance of talks is not known to either the UN or the diplomatic community. It is not known how well informed the NLD executives are of the substance of the talks.
- Neither the UN Special Envoy nor his representative nor NLD executives are ever present at the talks. The Special Envoy himself was unable to visit Burma again until June 2001 after he made the announcement about the talks in January 2001. His

unofficial representative in Burma, Leon de Riedmatten of the Humanitarian Institute, was also unable to visit ASSK between January and April 2001.

- Since the UN Special Envoy's visit in June 2001, a number of political prisoners have been released, apparently as a gesture of goodwill. These include prisoners over 65 years old; members of parliament; prisoners who have already finished their official sentences; and those who have been detained without being formally charged.
- NLD Vice-Chair Tin Oo, and other executives have been released from detention but certain restrictions seem to have been placed on them. They are not totally 'free'.
- The NLD HQ, the Mandalay Divisional office and 18 township offices in Rangoon Division have been allowed to reopen. Local authorities have not permitted the NLD to open other offices elsewhere. The local authorities claim that it is illegal to do so.

### **Analysis of the 'Secret Talks'**

- There is an imbalance. ASSK does not have the same freedoms and access to the media as the SPDC has. She has not talked to the media. The SPDC Foreign Minister has twice made pronouncements about the progress of the 'Talks' to the media.
- ASSK alone is involved in the talks. She has no access to colleagues or advisors to discuss and weigh options, whereas the SPDC is able to consult each other and have, at the very least, the Office of Strategic Studies to depend upon.
- ASSK is not talking to an equal. Major-General Kyaw Win can always appeal to his superiors if a disagreement develops. If ASSK disagrees, there can be no solution.
- No facilitator is involved. Neither side may be getting adequate input regarding possible compromises and negotiating techniques. A deadlock could easily develop.
- A public relations war seems to have developed around the 'Secret Talks' with rumours and stories being circulated to discredit ASSK. For example, it has been insinuated that ASSK is arrogant and very content to talk to the generals by herself; and that she is in the process of making deals with the military without consulting either her party executives or other leaders, especially the non-Burmans. These stories ignore the fact that access to ASSK is controlled by the SPDC. Her isolation is the condition imposed on her by the SPDC. It is not of her choosing. In fact, she has in the past stated categorically that she will not make unilateral decisions about the future of Burma without wider consultation (Appendix I).

It is becoming clearer from these developments that while the military has changed its tactic from one of confrontation to that of 'dialogue', it is not yet committed to actually finding a solution to the crisis in Burma through dialogue. To date, it is still trying to use the 'Secret Talks' to decrease internal and external pressure and give itself more time to regroup and consolidate so that the military can continue to retain power with as little

compromise as possible. In other words, SPDC is still not serious about negotiating a transition whereby the military's prominence in national affairs could be reduced.

It is also possible that ASSK may not yet be fully committed to finding a compromise solution. She may be in the process of testing the commitment of the generals by making demands and waiting to see if they will be complied with. She could be trying to decrease the military's power with as little compromise as possible. She may not want to negotiate a compromise transition whereby the military's prominence in national affairs could be maintained or institutionalized.

In essence, the 'Secret Talks' have, after 9 months not yet gotten to step 1 – "Official Agreement to Enter into Negotiations" as outlined in *"A Possible Transition Plan for Burma/Myanmar"* dated January 2000 (Appendix II). Both sides are using the 'Secret Talks' to bargain and strengthen their position. Neither side is as yet convinced that the best solution for Burma is a negotiated compromise solution.

Without a firm commitment from both sides to try to find a solution to the crisis in Burma through dialogue, negotiations, and compromise, the 'Secret Talks' will fail.

The fact that ASSK did not attend the official ceremony on Martyr's Day on 19 July 2001 indicates that, notwithstanding SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung's claims that all is well, the talks are in serious trouble. It may require another visit in August by the UN Special Envoy Ambassador Razali to salvage the talks, as he did in June 2001.

Given the fact that the 'Secret Talks' have not progressed towards a 'Dialogue', other domestic actors and the international community are also beginning to lose patience and some domestic actors are beginning to make demands to be informed regarding the substance of the secret talks and/or to participate in the talks.

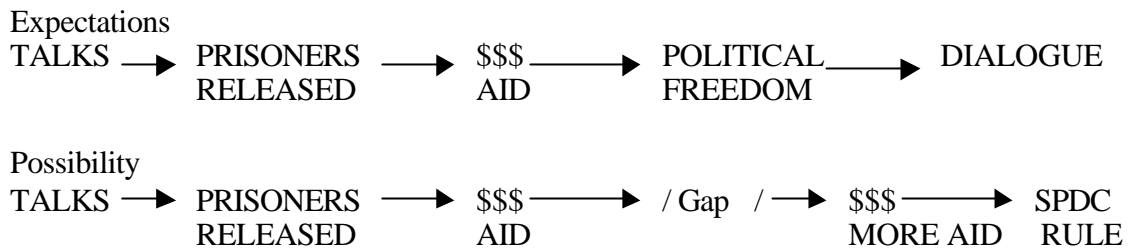
As for the international community, the United States is considering increasing sanctions against the SPDC with legislation to ban imports from Burma in order to speed up the 'Dialogue Process'; the European Union is also considering strengthening its Common Position on Burma in October 2001 if there is no progress; whereas Japan is considering relaxing sanctions and increasing aid in order to speed up the 'Dialogue Process'.

In other words, the initial momentum behind the 'Secret Talks' is faltering and, more and more actors are beginning to introduce their own initiatives to speed up the process. Such initiatives, if they are uncoordinated, could work at cross-purposes and complicate the already complicated political process in Burma. It is, therefore, urgent that an overall comprehensive strategy for Burma be put in place.

### **How can the 'Secret Talks' be further developed?**

Since both parties in the 'Secret Talks' are not yet negotiating a compromise solution, it may be necessary for the international community to adopt a strategy that will clearly show the participants that negotiating a compromise is the only viable solution.

An example of the necessity for a strategy can be illustrated by the current 'Talks'. It is the expectation that the current 'Secret Talks' will lead to a 'Dialogue Process':



However, the question is what will happen if the expected outcome of 'Political Freedom' is not forthcoming after aid is given?

If, as suggested, the SPDC is trying to use the 'Secret Talks' to decrease internal and external pressure and give itself more time to regroup and consolidate so that the military can continue to retain power with as little compromise as possible, what is to prevent the military from not allowing more 'Political Freedom' after it has received aid?

Another point to be considered is that it may also be necessary to provide a facilitator or mediator although neither side is currently requesting this. SPDC, for one, is quite adamant that the problem can be solved by the Burmese without any outside help.

### Basic Issues

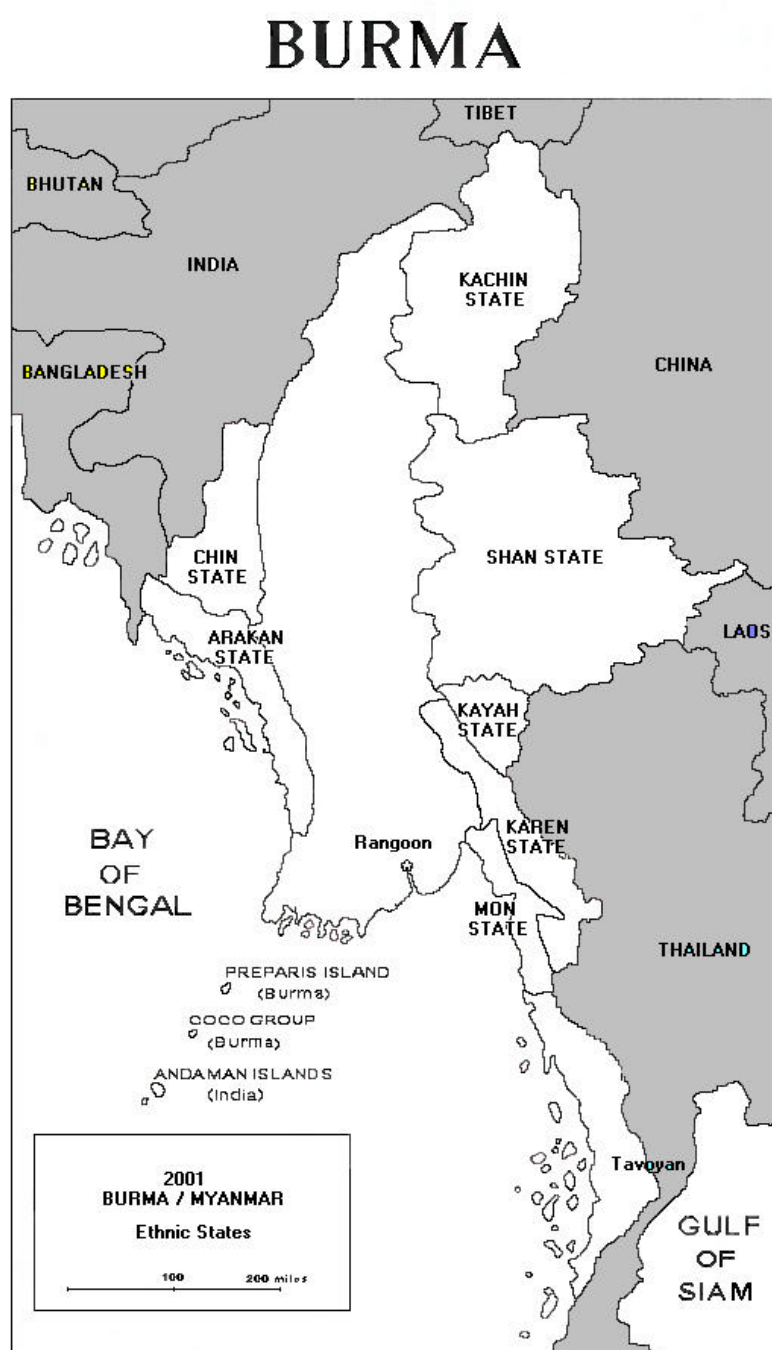
However, before the international community can propose or adopt a coordinated strategy for Burma, it is crucial that the basic issues be clearly understood.

To casual observers, the problem in Burma is a power struggle between authoritarian rule represented by the SPDC and democracy represented by ASSK. More knowledgeable ones say that, there is an underlying 'ethnic' problem.

In fact, the military likes to advertise that there are '135 races' in Burma implying that without a strong military to hold the country together, the country will fall apart. First, all Burmese are actually from the same 'Mongoloid' people group. They can be roughly divided into 3 major subgroups: Tibeto-Burman, Sino-Thai and Mon-Khmer.



In political terms, there are only 8 ethnic-based states, not 135 – Arakan (Rakhaing), Burman, Chin, Kachin, Shan, Kayah (Karenni), Karen, and Mon (It should be pointed out that the Burmans are also one of the ethnic groups of Burma). The so-called 135 races are actually the number of different dialects spoken by the 3 major sub-groups. The problem, therefore, is not as complicated as that painted by the military.



## **The Constitutional Problem**

Based on the Panglong Agreement, the 1947 Union Constitution was drawn up. The non-Burmans believed they were getting a federal system but in reality, while the Shan, Kachin, and Kayah States and the Chin Special Division were recognized, power was not devolved to the states. A concession made in the 1947 Constitution gave the Shan State the right to secede from the Union after 10 years if its people were not satisfied.

Given the assassination of General Aung San, the unwillingness of the British to continue to rule Burma, the post-World War II uncertainty and Cold War, and the mutiny of the Burma Army following the Burmese Communist Party taking up arms immediately after independence in 1948, the non-Burman leaders decided to support the newly independent Government of Burma and try to make the best of a bad deal.

At that time, the Kayah or Karenni people felt that they had been forced into a union without adequate consultation or recognition of their independent status and took up arms against the government of Burma.

Separate negotiations with the Karens also broke down. Atrocities committed during World War II against the Karens who had remained loyal to the British by the Burma Independence Army did not help matters. The Mon and Arakan people also joined the rebellion and Burma was thrown into a civil war which continues to this day.

In 1958 the Commander-in-Chief of the Burma Army General Ne Win was invited by the then Prime Minister U Nu to take over the reins of government. The rationale given was that the 'Caretaker Government' was necessary to stabilize the political situation in Burma after the ruling Anti-Fascist Peoples Freedom League split into two factions.

Non-Burmans, however, saw it as a constitutional crisis - an attempt by Burman nationalists to prevent the Shan people from exercising their constitutional right to secede. This led young impatient Shan nationalists to take up arms against the central government while their elders attempted to legally amend the constitution instead.

Burma's constitutional crisis finally came to a head in 1962. Convinced by non-Burman leaders of the 'Federal Movement' that the constitution needed to be amended, Prime Minister U Nu convened a National Convention. While all of Burma's political leadership assembled in Rangoon, General Ne Win launched a coup d'état and arrested them all. Ne Win claimed that he had to act to prevent the nation from breaking up.

Ironically, while General Ne Win was able to prevent the amendment of the 1947 Constitution, he actually pushed the nation closer to disintegration. As seen above, the non-Burmans saw the 1947 Agreement and the 1947 Constitution as the legal basis binding them to the Burmans. When Ne Win discarded the Constitution in order to rule through the Revolutionary Council, the non-Burmans no longer felt bound to the Union.

In fact, the Shans argued that since they were no longer legally bound, they were independent and that the Burma Army in the Shan State was an illegal army of occupation. As a result, the Shan State Independence Army, which was founded in 1958 was transformed into the Shan State Army to defend the homeland from the invaders.

Following the example of the Shans, other non-Burman nationalists armies were also formed and plunged Burma into a deeper and wider civil war.

Therefore, it is clear that in order to find a solution to the problems in Burma, it is not sufficient to just replace military rule with a democratic government. The basic constitutional problem also has to be resolved.

This problem has been recognized by the United Nations General Assembly which has called for a 'Tripartite Dialogue – the military, the democracy forces led by ASSK, and the non-Burman peoples' in order to restore democracy to Burma.

### **A Comprehensive International Strategy**

In order to ensure that the 'Secret Talks' develop into a 'Dialogue':

1. The international community should not be seen to be divided. When the unity of the international community was demonstrated in the aftermath of the UN-sponsored 'Seoul Meeting on Burma' in March 2000, the 'Secret Talks' became a reality. A divided international community invites the Burmese to play one nation off against another to delay actually having to negotiate a political compromise.
2. All international actors need to clearly show the Burmese participants that they support the comprehensive strategy for a compromise solution and will act in concert to promote the development of a 'Dialogue Process' in Burma, regardless of their 'special interests' or 'special relationships' with the participants.
3. The international community needs to agree on having only one comprehensive strategy and only one facilitator or mediator to manage the 'Dialogue'. This could possibly be the UN Special Envoy for Burma. His role could be enhanced to make him more effective in encouraging the 'Secret Talks' to develop into a 'Dialogue'.
4. There is an urgent need to establish an 'irreversible process', which is not dependent on the goodwill of one or more parties, and can be expanded to include all.
5. There is a need to urgently revitalize the 'Secret Talks' and boost the confidence of all political actors in Burma and the international community that the 'Talks' will actually lead to a 'Dialogue Process', and in time political and economic reforms.

To boost confidence in and to ensure that the 'Secret Talks' actually lead to a 'Dialogue Process', the following steps are recommended -

If it is agreed in step 3 above that the UN Special Envoy for Burma should be the sole facilitator, he could convey to the Burmese participants of the ‘Secret Talks’ that:

- A. Ultimately, Burma’s problems cannot be resolved except through political dialogue, negotiations and compromise.
- B. The process must be inclusive rather than exclusive; and that a Tripartite Dialogue to address the constitutional problem will be necessary (as per UN General Assembly resolutions since 1994) before new elections can be held.
- C. The pace of progress and the manner in which the ‘Secret Talks’ have been conducted to date is not acceptable.
- D. A minimum level of ‘results’ from the ‘Secret Talks’ is required to keep individual nations or group of nations from imposing unilateral action to speed up the ‘dialogue process’. In other word, if the Burmese want minimum ‘interference from the outside’, certain basic steps need to be implemented.
- E. The international community needs to clearly state that without these steps further aid – humanitarian or otherwise, would not be forthcoming.

### **Recommended Basic Steps**

The participants in the ‘Secret Talks’ need to agree on the following basic steps without which it cannot be deemed that there has been progress:

1. Make an official joint statement in Burmese on the status of the ‘Secret Talks’.

*Example: “The talks since October 2000 have enabled SPDC and ASSK to understand each other’s position better. To date we have met X times. No substantive issues such as power-sharing or new elections have been discussed. Prisoners are being released to show our commitment to a dialogue and to enable us to continue with the talks. All sectors need to work together for the good of the nation”.*

2. Commit to make Joint Statements in Burmese on the status of the ‘Secret Talks’ in a similar vein on a regular basis – i.e. at the beginning of each month. Such regular announcements will build confidence, keep the ‘Talks’ alive, assure others that they are part of the process, and dispel fears that the ‘Secret Talks’ are being manipulated.
3. Make a public commitment that substantive issues will not be discussed without proper and wide consultations with appropriate bodies. This will allow the ‘Secret Talks’ to develop at an appropriate pace without undue pressure to immediately include other parties, which could jeopardize the ‘Talks’ if it is done prematurely.
4. Schedule regular visits by the UN Special Envoy for Burma – i.e. once a month at the time of the announcement of the Joint Statements. Such visits will give more

credibility to fact that the ‘Secret Talks’ are progressing well. Recurring delays seemingly at the whim of the SPDC do nothing for the credibility of the ‘Talks’.

5. Agree to discuss ‘difficulties’ or ‘sensitive’ issues with the UN Special Envoy for Burma to enable the international community to respond appropriately to the perceived difficulties by agreeing to provide aid – humanitarian or otherwise; or agreeing to not impose more sanctions against the regime. This will enable specialists from various countries with similar ‘transition’ experiences to provide technical input to both parties to help bridge differences. However, to have credibility, the UN Special Envoy will also need a clear mandate and framework within which to work. He must be seen to be an honest broker, and not a shady backroom dealmaker.

If the participants in the ‘Secret Talks’ can agree to implement the above basic steps, it will do much to revitalize the ‘Talks’ and ensure that they will not fail.

Only when the basic steps are taken will it be possible to look at various ways to encourage the participants to continue with the ‘Dialogue Process’.

## **Conclusion**

To ensure that the ‘Secret Talks’ do not fail and that they actually develop into a ‘Political Dialogue’, the international community, especially the UN Special Envoy for Burma needs to develop a comprehensive strategy for Burma.

It is recommended that he convene a small group of experts to assist him to brainstorm and further develop the plan outlined above and in “*A Possible Transition Plan for Burma/Myanmar*” dated January 2000 (Appendix II). There is still much good will towards Burma and a practical plan that can be acceptable to all is possible.

The UN Special Envoy could then present the proposal for further input to the Burmese participants in the ‘Secret Talks’ as a recommendation. At this point, it would be crucial to stress that the proposal’s acceptance by the Burmese will benefit Burma and ensure that control of the ‘Dialogue Process’ remains in Burmese hands.

The UN could then convene another ‘Burma’ meeting such as the one held in Seoul in March 2000 to enable all international players including ASEAN, China and India to acknowledge the proposed international strategy for Burma.

The ‘Secret Talks’ present a unique opportunity to solve Burma’s crisis by non-violent means. The opportunity should not be missed. If these recommendations are followed, there is strong reason to believe that the challenge can be met.

**End.**

### **Notes - Various Factors that Could Facilitate the 'Talks':**

1. Humanitarian Aid - It has been suggested that giving humanitarian aid for HIV-AIDS could be a first step to encourage the 'Secret Talks' even if a substantive political agreement cannot yet be reached. Difficulties that have to be surmounted include:
  - a) Funding for SPDC's Ministry of Health,
  - b) SPDC allowing international NGOs to implement the programmes,
  - c) SPDC allowing the aid into the areas of most need – non-Burman ethnic areas,
  - d) A nation-wide ceasefire to ensure that aid can be delivered.
2. In addition to HIV-AIDS, humanitarian aid in terms of medicine, immunization, food, clothing, shelter, etc, for internally displaced populations especially in non-Burman ethnic areas and cross-border operations should also be considered.
3. Forced labour cannot be eliminated in Burma as long as the military structure in Burma remains the same – porters are required when the military launches an offensive. To satisfy ILO requirements and also indicate the military's seriousness about a dialogue, SPDC should declare a unilateral nation-wide cease-fire.
4. A National Reconciliation 'movement' or Council to support the talks has been proposed. Organizing a 'movement' overseas is feasible and might be desirable to consolidate international support - India, China, Japan- for the UN initiative but a domestic council might be too threatening to the military. It needs a context or the Council could become too political and intrusive. The timing and the definition of the role of the Council would also be crucial. It may only be possible after the 'Dialogue Process' has been established and a 'transition' mechanism has been agreed upon by both sides. The Council representing all walks of life - religious, ethnic, professional and political - could perhaps then lend moral legitimacy to the 'transition' mechanism. It could be a sort of council of eminent 'wise' men/women.
5. It is going to be very difficult to lift sanctions against the SPDC to facilitate the talks if no substantive agreement is reached. This is especially so since all sanctions are based on the human rights and democracy situation in Burma. The conditions in these areas have not changed. The only possible relaxation might be visa restrictions for specific individuals involved in the 'Talks'.
6. In the longer-term, after some substantive political agreement has been reached, it may be useful to invite General Maung Aye and a few key field commanders to observe UN Peace Keeping operations in East Timor. Myanmar is on the UN's Standby List for Peace Keeping. A visit will 'reward' the SPDC and at the same time expose them to how other modern armies function and cooperate. It will also give them ideas about alternate roles for the Army in the future.

### Notes – Some Definitions

BURMAN' or 'BURMESE'? – 'Burman' and 'Burmese' are often used interchangeably in the English language. In this article, 'Burman' is used to refer to the majority ethnic population, and 'Burmese' refers to all the citizens of Burma.

'BURMA' or 'MYANMAR'? - It has been argued by the military that 'Burma' refers only to the majority Burman population, whereas 'Myanmar' is more inclusive and therefore, more appropriate because it refers to all the peoples of Myanmar. Ironically, Burmese nationalists fighting British colonialism in 1936, argued the reverse.

DIVISIONS & STATES - The constituent states of Burma are:

'Burma Proper'	287	thousand sq kms	43.2% land area
Shan State	156	thousand sq kms	23.4%
Kachin State	89	thousand sq kms	13.5%
Karen State	37	thousand sq kms	5.6%
Arakan State	37	thousand sq kms	5.5%
Chin State	36	thousand sq kms	5.4%
Mon State	12	thousand sq kms	1.8%
Karenni State	12	thousand sq kms	1.8%

'Burma Proper' is divided into 7 administrative divisions –Irrawaddy, Magwe, Mandalay, Pegu, Rangoon, Sagaing, and Tenasserim.

### HISTORY OF BURMA

- 146 Arakan Kingdom of Dinnya-wadi
- 754 Nanchao (Shan?) dominion over northern Burma
- 825 Mon Kingdom of Hanthawaddy
- 1044 Burman Kingdom of Pagan.
- 1287 Shan Kingdom of Ava.
- 1531 Burman Kingdom of Toungoo.
- 1752 Burman Kingdom of Shwebo.
- 1824 British begin annexation of Burma and neighbouring principalities.
- 1886 Burma is annexed to British India
- 1937 Burma is separated from British India

- 1941 Japanese occupation of British Burma.
- 1945 The British return to Burma.
- 1947 Panglong Agreement to form the 'Union of Burma'.
- 1948 Independence from Britain, civil war, parliamentary democracy
- 1958 Caretaker Government of General Ne Win
- 1960 Return of Parliamentary Democracy
- 1962 Coup d'etat by General Ne Win
- 1968 Anti-Chinese riots. Chinese support for the Communist Party of Burma.
- 1974 New constitution - one-party rule by Burmese Socialist Programme Party
- 1987 United Nations classifies Burma as a 'Least Developed Country'.
- 1988 Democracy uprising. State Law and Order Restoration Council seizes power.
- 1989 SLORC cease-fire negotiations with non-Burman ethnic armies
- 1990 General Elections organized by SLORC. NLD wins but is denied power
- 1991 Manerplaw Agreement to establish a Federal Union of Burma (in exile)
- 1992 Establishment of the National Council of the Union of Burma (in exile)
- 1993 SLORC convenes the National Convention.
- 1994 UN General Assembly calls for Tripartite Dialogue to resolve Burma's future
- 1995 Aung San Suu Kyi's statement - 'No Secret Deal'.
- 1997 Maetha Rawhta Agreement – non-Burmans agree to work with Burmans (exile)
- 1998 UN-World Bank \$1 Billion Proposal for Dialogue
- 1999 National Reconciliation Programme established (exile)
- 2000 UN Seoul Meeting. SPDC and ASSK begin 'Secret Talks.