number of these events, along with my staff assistant, Paul Berkowitz. In December of 1999, at one of the Congressional Forum sessions, I was pleased to participate along with Major General Vang Pao and other distinguished guests, and presented a joint report about our Congressional Staff Delegation research mission to Southeast Asia in the summer of 1999. In our report, issued jointly by the International Relations Committee and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, we discussed the serious ongoing plight of the Hmong and Lao people still suffering in Laos. Other speakers and participants at the forum series on Laos included distinguished Members and staff from many offices including: Representatives DANA ROHRABACHER, GEORGE RADANOVICH and WILLIAM DELAHUNT, of the House International Relations Committee, on which I serve as Chairman, as well as Chairman JESSE HELMS, Senators BOB SMITH, RUSSELL FEINGOLD, PAUL WELLSTONE, Representatives MARK GREEN, PATRICK KENNEDY, CALVIN DOOLEY and the late Bruce Vento, who passed away earlier this month. Congressman Vento's leadership on human rights and with the forum series on Laos will, indeed, be sadly missed by so many in this Chamber and in the Laotian community.

Mr. Speaker, the U.S. Congressional Forum series on Laos is making a significant impact in helping to provide vital information and to formulating policy toward Laos. It has helped generate numerous breaking stories in news services around the world, including the Washington Post, Washington Times, Agence France, Associated Press, the South China Morning Post and others. Radio Free Asia, Lao Service, as well as the Voice of America have also provided coverage. Historic legislation on Laos has also been enacted with the important information that has come from these Forums in Congress including H. Con. Res. 169, condemning, for the first time, the Communist regime in Laos for its human rights violations and other matters. I was proud to have worked with Representatives GEORGE RADANOVICH, MARK GREEN and former Congressman Bruce Vento to help pass this important legislation in the International Relations Committee.

Mr. Speaker, thus far, distinguished panelists and participants in the Congressional Forum on Laos have also included important Laotian and Hmong leaders as well as Lao experts from around the world, including: T. Kumar, Asia Director for Amnesty International; Markram Ouaiss, The National Democratic Institute's (NDI) Senior Program Officer for Asia; Dr. Jane Hamilton-Merritt, Noble Prize nominee and distinguished Lao and Hmong scholar; Dr. Chou Norinh, of the United League for Democracy in Laos, and distinguished professor at Assumption University, Bangkok, Thailand; Dr. Bounchaloune Phouthakanthy, of the University of Quebec, and Secretary General, United Lao Association of Canada; Dr. Khamphay Abbai of Australia; Dr. Bounthone Chanthavixay, with the World Wide Coordinating Committee on Laos, Hagen, Germany, and former Lao student protest leader in Eastern Europe; His Royal Highness Prince Sayavong, of the Lao Royal Family, in France; Major General Vang Pao, Hmong leader; Colonel Wangyee Vang, President of the Lao Veterans of America; Thongsavanh Phongsavanh, of the Lao Representatives Abroad Council; General Thonglit Chokhbenbun of France; Thongkhoune Phathana, President, The Laos Institute For Democracy; Ms. Sothida Bounthapanya Lao Progressive Party; The Lan Xang Foundation, of Atlanta, Georgia; Col. Ngeunsamilth Sasorith, France, President, of the Paris-based, Association of Deportees and Escapees of Communist Concentration Camps in Laos; Mr. Vanida Sananikone Thephsouvanh, President, of the Paris-based, Lao Movement for Human Rights, France; Stephen Vang, of the United Lao Congress for Democracy; Chao Opat NaChampassak, of the Royal Lao Family; Princess Moune Souvanna-Phouma, of the Royal Lao Family; Mrs. Houa Ly and Ms. Yer Ly, wife and daughter of a Hmong-American from Wisconsin who disappeared in Laos in 1999; Mrs. Suzie Vang, wife of Mr. Michael Vang of Fresno, California who disappeared in Laos in 1999; Reverend Shongchai Hang, of Philadelphia who testified on behalf of Hmong and Lao Christians persecuted in Laos.

Mr. Speaker, it is impossible to thank all of the Members of Congress, staff and participants from around the United States and the world who have made the U.S. Congressional Forum on Laos such an important success in the 106th Congress. The winds of intense turmoil and change are now blowing in Laos. The United States, with the help of the U.S. Congress, needs to do more to support democracy and free and fair elections in Laos during the upcoming vote in 2002.

Mr. Speaker, toward this end, on December 1st, while the Communist Regime in Laos celebrates its dark anniversary of totalitarian dictatorship, it is important to note that a major installment of the Congressional Forum on Laos will be held in the U.S. House of Representatives with witnesses and participants from around the world, including the slated testimony of a group of student demonstrators who escaped from Vientiane, Laos recently and were just granted political asylum several days ago in America. A special ceremony will follow in Congress, during the evening, to mark the grim oppression of the Laotian people after 25 years of Communism. Laotian victims of communist oppression will share their testimony. I encourage my colleagues to continue to aggressively support these important activities and the efforts of Laotian people in their struggle to bring freedom, democracy and human rights to Laos.

HUMAN RIGHTS IN BURMA

HON. JOSEPH R. PITTS

OF PENNSYLVANIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, October 27, 2000

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, ethnic and religious minorities around the world suffer because many governments fail to protect fundamental human freedoms such as freedom of conscience, freedom of speech, and freedom of assembly. Or, a government fails to concede to the will of the people and imposes its will upon the people. When a government fails to uphold international human rights standards, to respect the wishes of the people expressed through voting or other legitimate mechanisms, or to protect people's basic freedoms from violations, individuals and groups often are harassed, imprisoned, tortured, and even killed. Serious violence and human rights abuses have occurred in Burma through the actions of the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). On September 26, 2000, I chaired the Congressional Human Rights Caucus Briefing on Human Rights Concerns in Burma. I would like to submit for the RECORD the testimony of Mr. David Eubank, Saw Htoo Htoo Lay, Pastor Edmund Htokut, Saw Ka Law Lah, Mr. Stephen Dun, and Major Larry J. Redmon.

TESTIMONY OF DAVID EUBANK BEFORE THE CONGRESSIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS CAUCUS, SEPTEMBER 26, 2000

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you about the situation in Burma, and for the opportunity to ask for action to restore democracy in Burma, protect minority rights, and provide immediate humanitarian assistance for the Internally Displaced People (IDP).

CURRENT SITUATION IN BURMA

The dictators of Burma, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), continue to oppress the people of Burma, reject the 1990 democratic elections, hold over 1,300 political prisoners (55 of whom are members-elect of parliament), and brutally violate the human rights of ethnic minority peoples as well as ethnic Burmans. This has resulted in over 1 million refugees that have fled Burma since 1990, and 2 million Internally Displaced People (1 million ethnic Burmans are displaced for government projects, 1 million are ethnic minority peoples displaced by the attacks of the Burma Army and SPDC forced relocation programs.) The ethnic minority IDPs in particular are in immediate need of help. They face starvation, disease and the constant threat of attack by the Burma Army. Those who have been able to escape the SPDC forced relocation sites, are scattered in jungle hiding places, living in fear. If discovered they are brutally attacked by the Burma Army. Their home villages have been plundered and burned and the Burma Army has scattered land mines in and around their villages to strike terror and discourage their return. (In last year alone there were over 1,500 new landmine victims.) The IDPs live in fear with very little hope. HIV infection is on the rise with over 440,000 infected and little State response.

Narcotics production and export has increased with profits from the heroin and amphetamine traffic being shared with the SPDC. In 1999, over 500 million amphetamine tablets were smuggled into Thailand. Most of these were produced in the 55 amphetamine laboratories across the border in eastern Burma. 1,750 tons of opium was also produced making Burma the worlds number two producer of opium and heroin. The SPDC has been closely involved with groups that produce and traffic narcotics, helping in 2000 alone, to move over 100,000 form one group to a area adjacent to the Thai border, thus creating a major increase of narcotic traffic into Thailand.

The U.S. Department of State 1999 Country Report on Human Rights, the 2000 Annual Report on Religious Freedom, as well as current Amnesty International and International Labor Organization reports all condemn the human rights record of Burma and appeal for change.

RATIONALE FOR ACTION

(1) The people of Burma are oppressed, tortured, and murdered by the dictator's army, and this is wrong.

(2) There was a free and fair election in 1990 and the results should be recognized and democracy restored.

(3) The dictatorship allows narcotics production and prospers from its sale.

(4) Burma is a client state of China and in return for weapons and other military hardware, allows China to establish SIGINT facilities and naval installations in Burma. This is not good for the people of Burma or for regional security.

(5) The people of Burma, in particular the Kachin, Karien, Shan and Karenni, helped the allies drive the Japanese Army out of Burma during WWII. They deserve our friendship and help.

ACTIONS RECOMMENDED

(1) Immediate humanitarian assistance to the 1 million ethnic minority Internally Displaced Persons of Burma (IDP), Assistance includes medicine, food, clothing, shelter, and education supplies.

(2) Immediate security for these IDPs. This requires support of the pro-democracy resistance force who make aid delivery and security possible, or international intervention to protect the IDPs or both, international military intervention to protect the IDPs, or both.

(3) Call for tripartite dialogue between the SPDC, the Ethnic Groups and the Burma Democracy groups.

(4) Implement increased political, economic, and if necessary, military (indirect by support of resistance forces, or direct by international intervention) pressure until the dictators restore democracy, human rights, and minority political rights.

(5) Bring those guilty of war crimes in Burma to justice.

TESTIMONY OF SAW HTOO HTOO LAY

Mr. Chairman, I am honored and grateful for this opportunity to present the current human rights situation in Burma to the congressional human rights caucus.

I. THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION

Most of the recent attention on Burma's human rights situation has only looked at the SPDC military junta's persecution of the National League for Democracy. While this is bad, the human rights situation of ordinary villagers is much worse. In our Karen areas and also in Karenni and Shan areas of eastern Burma, the SPDC is doing everything it can to gain complete control by subjugating the entire civilian population. They use what they call the Four Cuts policy—to cut off supplies of food, funds, recruits and intelligence to resistance forces by destroying villages, farms and food supplies until the civilians are so destitute and starving that they could not possibly support any opposition group. As far as the junta is concerned, the suffering and death which this inflicts on millions of villagers is not a problem, because they would really like to see the end of the Karen, Karenni and Shan peoples.

Since 1996, the junta has systematically destroyed at least 1,500 villages in Shan State, displacing over 300,000 people; 200 villages in Karenni (Kayah) State, displacing at least 50,000 people; and at least 300 or 400 villages in our Karen areas stretching from Pegu Division and Karen State in the north to Tenasserim Division in the far south of Burma. Hundreds of thousands of our Karen people have been displaced by these operations since 1997, and they remain displaced today.

II. THE POLITICAL SITUATION

The political situation between the SPDC and the National League for Democracy (NLD) in Rangoon remains at a stalemate, with the junta refusing to reform or to participate in any meaningful dialogue with any democracy advocates and vowing to crush all opposition. The KNU and most other groups in the country are calling for tripartite dialogue involving the SPDC, the NLD, and the non-Burman ethnic leadership which represents the non-Burman half of the country's population. However, the SPDC has shown no willingness to engage in any such dialogue.

The junta claims falsely that it has already brought peace and unity to the country by signing military ceasefires with many of the ethnic-based armed opposition groups. Firstly, it is important to point out that none of the 'ceasefire deals' are peace treaties. They are simply temporary deals whereby the two military forces agree not to shoot at each other. No political issues have been addressed in any of these ceasefire deals, and most of the opposition groups who have signed them are not happy with the results. In most of the ceasefire areas, SPDC human rights abuses have continued.

The SPDC now claims that the Karen are the only group left fighting the junta, but this is also not true; in addition to the KNU, the Karenni National Progressive Party, the Shan State Army, the Chin National Front, and several other groups continue to fight actively against the military regime. At present, the junta is refusing to negotiate at all unless opposition groups agree to surrender unconditionally beforehand.

The KNU recognizes the suffering brought on the villagers by the current state of civil war and is determined to resolve this conflict by means of negotiation. However, we are not prepared to surrender unconditionally as demanded by the SPDC, because the result would only be endless suffering for the Karen people

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TESTIMONY OF EDMOND HTOKUT

My name is Edmond Htokut. I am a pastor, I am working and living together with displaced person.

We know that only very few people in the USA know about Burma and what is happening in Burma now. As for us Karen people who have been suffering from all kinds of atrocities under the Burmese military regime which is being recognized as one of the most brutal and most oppressive regime in the world we received very little international attention, interest and awareness. Therefore I would like to take this opportunity to give you some information about our people, our life and situation.

The church in Burma Christians from every group face forced persecution, destroying houses, schools, bibles and churchs. It is not only Christians who are persecuted but Muslims and even Buddhists if they protest of the dictators actions. As a Christian pastor I will focus on the persecution my people face. It is important to remember our brothers and sisters of all faiths and ethnic groups who suffer under the SPDC.

Consequently many civilians were forced to leave their villages and resettle in places totally under military control. Due to the atrocities committed by the military group, the villagers dare not go back to rebuild their homes, schools and churches. But were forced to flee into neighboring country for survival and some are scattered in every corner and being separated from their churches. Those are the ones who do not live in the refugee camps. They are living in the jungle and do plantation. Some places are they lived two or three families and some are seven to ten families. They are living quietly in fear and anxiously.

They have not protection, no healthcare and no churches and no schools. They lost all their rights. When we tried to meet them we went to very difficult because land mines are around the area and the way we tried to go carefully to meet the people hiding in the jungle. When they meet us they are very afraid because they believe nobody. At the time I told them ''I am not a soldier. I am not a political man. I am a servant of Christ and God send me for help you. What can I do for you.'' They told me ''we need medicine, we need some clothes, some food, we need security. We want to go back home, go back to our own land''. I answered them ''I don't know but don't be anxious. Believe God. God can do every things. Now over 56 countries pray for you. I hope we can go back home soon.''

We are attempting to bring love and relief assistance to all internally Displaced Persons regardless of religion, ethnicity or political bias. But there are still many needs to be met and most of all the need for help of international community to change the political situation in Burma. For this is the real cause or the real source of all the problems.

We need the help of the international community, please for our people, our country. Help us in ways and means as you can. Please pray that God will intervene and change the situation in Burma so we will have peace and return to our own land. In God we trust.

Thank you so much.

TESTIMONY OF SAW KA LAW LAH

REFUGEES

For Decades, wave after wave of Burmese refugees have fled war and oppression in their native land to seek uncertain exile in neighboring countries. The toll in human suffering is incalculable, and the continual mass migrations have created serious regional disruptions and tensions.

Around 300,000 Burmese are now refugees in Thailand, Bangladesh, and India. As many as one million Burmese people have become internally displaced because of the Burmese army attacks and forced relocations aimed at cutting local links to armed resistance groups or seizing their lands for state-run farming and logging.

After the bloody suppression of the 1988 pro-democracy movement, thousands of students and political activists evaded army round-ups and escaped to Thailand and India. Ethnic minority peoples, comprising about 40% of Burma's population, are special targets for abuse. Their indigenous lands along Burma's frontiers have for decades been consumed by rebellions that have flared and simmered in a quest for autonomy or independence.

Many villagers have been forced to move to new ''satellite towns'' that often lack services or communications and are sometimes located on disease-prone and infertile lands. Localized protests against such actions have been reported, but Burma's civilian population is basically defenseless against the regime's well-armed and fast-growing army.

Mr. Chairman:

1. My earnest request is to consider the above mentioned refugee problems and extend your protection for all the refugees along the Burma border and for all internally displaced people.

2. The Government of Burma may be considered guilty of a crime against humanity, punishable under international law.

EDUCATION

In Burma the law is what the generals say it is. It can and does change from day to day. There is no freedom of expression. Nearly all Burma's universities and colleges have been closed since student protests in Dec. 1996. There are two types of schools in Burma; one is for the children of the military members and is well funded. The other is for civilians and is poorly supported. Civilian schools have insufficient teachers and lack funds.

All curriculums, both civilian and military, must be approved by the military and

student activities are very closely monitored by military intelligence. Ethnic people are not allowed to teach in their own language in schools. In some rural areas even primary schools are not allowed to open. The Burmese soldiers come regularly to burn down all villages, schools, and churches. They even told villagers not to open any schools if they want to live in peace. But most of the internally displaced people build schools whenever they have a chance.

In refugee camps there are schools from nursery school through high school. We do not have qualified teachers and lack teaching materials, but most of the students are very keen to learn. In Karenni and Karen camps there are nearly thirty thousand students and one thousand teachers.

To upgrade our education some further study programs are needed for students who have finished high school. They need to have an education so that they can help to fill the gaps and rebuild their country in the coming future.

What we need for IDP schools in Karen and Karenni areas:

1. Basic school supplies and text books.
2. Salaries for teachers.
3. Scholarship programs.
4. Travel passes.
5. Good communications programs.

TESTIMONY OF STEPHEN DUN

Mr. Chairman, Thank you for giving me a chance to again represent to you the situation in Burma.

My colleagues have vividly described the different problematic situations leaving no doubt that the military regime has, and continues to, systematically oppress all minorities in Burma, whether ethnic or religious using it's military force.

I am a Karen who was born in Rangoon and had to flee with my parents to the border because of this type of oppression. I grew up on the mountains bordering Thailand & Burma and witnessed and experienced the seasonal military attacks of the then called State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), the ruling military junta. I have had close friends and relatives killed and as well as my home destroyed on three occasions.

The reason that this military regime is able to continue their hold on to power is because external interests focused on the region. A few of these instances are as follows. Jane's Intelligence review has been the main source for all of the following information.

CHINA

While Burma remains shunned by the West, the country's two giant neighbors, India and China, are jockeying for influence in Rangoon. Since the beginning of the year, India's army chief, General Ved Prakash Malik, has made two trips to Burma and his Burma counterpart, General Maung Aye, has visited both India and China.

These top-level exchanges have highlighted Burma's importance in the strategic competition between Beijing and New Delhi. China enjoys a considerable head start in the race to woo Rangoon's military leaders.

Since 1988, Burma has become China's closest ally in South-east Asia, a major recipient of Chinese military hardware and a potential springboard for projecting Chinese military power in the region.

During General Maung Aye's trip to Beijing in June to mark 50 years of diplomatic ties, has host, Chinese Vice-President Hu Jintao, noted that strengthening Sino-Burma relations was ''an important part of China's diplomacy concerning its surrounding areas''.

Burma emerged as a key Chinese ally on August 6, 1988, when the two countries signed an agreement establishing official trade across the common border—hitherto—isolated Burma's first such agreement with a neighbor. Significantly, the signing took place while Burma was in turmoil.

China was eager to find a trading outlet to the Indian Ocean for its landlocked inland provinces of Yunnan and Sichuan, via Burma. The Burma rail-heads of Myitkyina and Lashio in north-eastern Burma, as well as the Irrawaddy River, were potential conduits.

By 1990, trade between the two countries was flourishing and Burma had become China's principal political and military ally in South-east Asia. China poured arms into Burma to shore up the military government.

The isolation and condemnation experienced by both countries in the wake of the Rangoon massacre of 1988 and the violent suppression of the Tiananmen Square protests the following year helped to draw them closer together.

But China's calculations were also strategic. Close to the key shipping lands of the Indian Ocean and South-east Asia, Burma could help China to extend its military reach into a region of vital importance to Asian economics. The bulk of Japan's Middle East oil imports, for example, pass through the area. China also wanted to check India's growing strategic influence.

By late 1991, Chinese experts were helping to upgrade Burma's infrastructure, including its badly-maintained roads and railways. Chinese military advisers also arrived that year, the first foreign military personnel to be stationed in Burma since the 1950s.

In August 1993, Indian coastguards caught three boats ''fishing'' close to the Andamans, where last year the Indian navy established a new Far Eastern Naval Command in a move viewed as an attempt to counter Chinese influence in Burma. The trawlers were flying Burma flags, but the crew of 55 was Chinese. There was no fishing equipment on board—only radio-communication and depth-sounding equipment. The Chinese embassy in New Delhi intervened and the crew was released.

Burma was becoming a de facto Chinese client state.

One of China's motives for arming Burma was to help safeguard the new trade routes through its potentially volatile neighbor.

Intelligence sources estimate the total value of Chinese arms deliveries in Burma in the 1990s at $1 billion to 2 billion, with most of them acquired at a discount or through barter deals or interest-free loans.

Chinese support for the upgrading of Burma's naval facilities included at least four electronic listening posts along the Bay of Bengal and in the Andaman Sea: Man-aung, Hainggyi, Zadetkyi island and the strategically-important Coco Islands just north of India's Andaman Islands.

Although China's presence in the Bay of Bengal is limited currently to instructors and technicians, the new radar equipment is Chinese-made and operated probably, at least in part, by Chinese technicians, enabling Beijing's intelligence agencies to monitor this sensitive maritime region. China and Burma have pledged to share intelligence of potential use to both countries.

ISRAEL, PAKISTAN AND SINGAPORE

Over the past 12 years Burma has been branded a pariah state by the West and made to endure a range of political, economic and military sanctions. The Burma armed forces (or Tatmadaw) have lost their access to the arms, training and military technology of most of their traditional suppliers.

Three countries were quick to come to the SLORC's assistance. The first was Singapore. Two shiploads of arms and ammunition were sent to Rangoon in October 1988 to fill an urgent order for mortars, small arms ammunition, recoilless rifle rounds and raw materials for Burma's arms factories. Israel too seemed prepared (through a Singaporean intermediary) to provide weapons to its old friend and ally (See JIR March 2000, pp 35–38). A shipment of captured Palestinian weapons and ammunition (mainly grenade launchers and recoilless guns) arrived in Burma in August 1989. Before the Israeli arms arrived, however, the SLORC received at least one shipment of arms and ammunition from Pakistan.

Pakistan seems also to have provided Burma with a wide range of military training. In the early 1990s there were reports that Pakistan had helped members of the Tatmadaw learn to operate and maintain those Chinese weapon systems and items of equipment also held in Pakistan's inventory. There were also reports that Pakistan Army instructors were based in Burma for a period to help train Burma special forces and airborne personnel.

While these reports remain unconfirmed, they are given greater credence as a number of Burma Army officers are currently in Pakistan undergoing artillery and armour training, and attending Pakistan's Staff Colleges. The BAF and Burma Navy also have officers undergoing training in Pakistan. It is possible that Pakistani military personnel have also been sent to Burma to help the Tatmadaw learn to operate and maintain its new K–8 jet trainers, and possibly even the 155mm artillery pieces that the SPDC acquired from Israel last year.

STATEMENT OF LARRY J. REDMON

Good afternoon Mr. Chairman, it is my distinct honor and pleasure to appear before this panel of the US Congress today. My name is Larry Redmon, I am also a Major in the U.S. Army Special Forces currently serving with the 1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) at Fort Lewis, Washington.

Insurgencies form for many reasons. One common reason is when a government fails to meet the social, political, economic, military or psychological needs of the people. Based upon my study and observations, I have concluded that some of the following help explain the insurgency in Burma: the government is unresponsive to the aspirations of the people; the government is tyrannical, repressive, and corrupt; the government has inefficient leadership; and the government is unwilling to tolerate responsible opposition. The widespread economic poverty; and failure of the inept, ultra-nationalistic leaders to develop a viable economy are also leading causes for these movements.

The Burmese military has largely disassociated itself from the people and is feared and looked upon as more of a weapon of tyranny. Psychologically, there is a lack of faith in the current government and widespread belief in injustice of the current system and its leaders. So these groups are in fact insurgent organizations that are fighting a war against the Government of Burma. However, it is my understanding that these insurgent organizations do not advocate an overthrow but rather a change to democracy with limited autonomy by the various groups. One hundred and eleven delegates from fourteen ethnic groups signed the Mae Raw Tha Agreement in Jan 1997. These delegates all agreed to a type of federation with shared power based upon the Swiss model. No one group wants sole power, they simply want a better way of life and change to democracy.

I am reminded that over 200 years ago a group of insurgents who sought change for in fairness for more participation in their own

governmental affairs were also labeled rebels and insurgents, the American Colonists. The colonists fought a very bloody and brutal war because they too wanted change and a voice in government. The ethnic minority groups of Burma seek the same.

While some of these groups do traffic in drugs, some, such as the Karen, are not involved with drug production. Some groups rely on legitimate means such as logging or taxing goods that travel through their areas to develop income. The income generated is used to finance the war, but it is also used to pay for education, roads, schools and temples. In short, the money is used to build a better way of life for their people, a way of life that the Burmese Government has thus far been unable or unwilling to provide. Based on my discussion with a leader of the Shan State Army these groups believe they have no real choice, but to rely on income from the drug trade. The Shan leader I spoke with candidly stated that if he could get income by another means he would gladly switch. He realizes that drug production is not good for his cause and he also knows that it keeps his cause from being legitimized by the international community, but so far he has not received financial assistance from any source.

These groups are fighting a war of survival. Some of these groups are at the very point of extinction. Based upon my study and observation, the SPDC is winning this war through its mass terror and massive human rights abuses. The SPDC practices mass terror by employing SS-type death squads called the ''Saa Tho Lo'' or Guerrilla Retaliation Units. These units often appear in the villages during the night and spread mass terror by abducting those who are suspected of associating with the KNLA or KNU. Often those abducted are killed very brutally, often beheaded or otherwise mutilated. The Karen Human Rights organization has eyewitness proof that since these death-squads first appeared in Sept 1998 and up to May 1999, they have committed over 100 murders among the Karen people.

The Tatmadaw itself has systematically raped and tortured villagers for not being able to pay cash or provide their rice quotas. They use forced labor for porters and labor for their army. They demand quotas in labor from villages, often small boys and even old men. If these individuals refuse or are unable to keep up with the Army; are killed or left to rot, on the trail.

I learned that the SPDC will enter the homes of their own citizens and take young boys at night and force their induction into the Army. This January, I interviewed one such 15-year-old Burmese boy. He recently had defected to the Karen and was being helped in a Karen reeducation center. He told me that when he was 13, he had been taken during the night from his parents in Rangoon. He has not seen them since. During my interview, this boy never smiled or laughed, instead projecting only a solemn look of despair reflecting the loss of his childhood.

My observations and study confirm the findings of the Department of State that the SPDC engages in a variety of human rights abuses, such as forced relocation, religious and ethnic persecution, extra-judicial killings, heavy crop quotas, cash extortion, arrest and detention, rape and murder. The SPDC has attacked and burned villages of the ethnic minorities. The displaced persons are forced into the jungle or driven by force across the border into Thailand where they become refugees. Approximately one million refugees of various ethnic groups currently reside in Thailand. Some live in government refugee camps, others live in the jungles and mountains along the border, and still others live in Thailand's cities and rural areas.

His Majesty, the King of Thailand, and the Royal Thai Government have shown a tremendous amount of charity, love and generosity to these refugees, but given the current economic crisis and severity of the situation they can hardly do more. Once these ethnic groups are forced across the border by the SPDC, they are not left alone, the SPDC continues to terrorize these people by attacking them across the border, thereby violating Thailand's sovereignty. The Thai Army has lost many soldiers trying to protect these people. In 1998, the Thai Army had over twenty soldiers killed while trying to protect the Mae La refugee camp.

Human Rights abuses by the SPDC on the ethnic peoples are just a small part of a much larger problem. The SPDC has realized that they cannot gain international aid or support by their brutal tactics so they have turned to drug production to finance their army and country. The SPDC is producing heroin and methamphetamine, which is being sent to Southeast Asia and to the rest of the world. Thailand has been forced to direct many of the Army's already thin resources to fight this trafficking.

I believe that more humanitarian aid, assistance, and support to the Thai Government, a proven ally and friend to the United States, is urgently needed. We can try to influence and become more involved in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN). The United States and other members of ASEAN should pressure Burma for dialogue and raise these issues through all available international forums. We could possibly re-evaluate our recognition of the Government of Burma. We could also support the formation of an international investigative body, sanctioned by the UN and ASEAN, that would investigate and document human rights violations by the Burmese Regime and use it as evidence in an International Tribunal.

I finally believe it is in our best national interest for the United States to use all reasonable means to restore democracy to the people of Burma. As long as the brutal regime continues to hold power in Burma, the region will remain unstable thus causing tensions with the Kingdom of Thailand and the rest of Southeast Asia. In my view, we simply can't allow this to continue. Rather, we have a moral responsibility to the people of Burma, to the displaced ethnic minorities, and to the country of Thailand to take appropriate action now.

On January 6, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt said, ''Freedom means the supremacy of human rights everywhere. Our support goes to those who struggle to gain those rights and to keep them. Our strength is our unity to that purpose. To that high concept there can be no end save victory.''

Recommended Actions, September 26, 2000, Burma Ethnic Delegation (Karen National Union, Karenni National Progressive Party

1. Provide immediate relief (medical, food, shelter, clothing) to the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP). Relief can be coordinated and sent through ethnic IDP relief organizations.

2. Provide security for the IDP's from the attacks of the SPDC army.

3. Continue the assistance to refugees in camps and provide assistance to all refugees not yet in camps or with no access to camps.

4. Increase assistance for education programs for IDP and refugees schools and provide for schooling and education abroad.

5. Implement a counter narcotics program in Burma that in return for cessation of narcotics production and trafficking will provide for the following;

a. Provide for a crop substitution and economic development program for the opium growing and amphetamine producing groups such as the Shan, Kokang and Wa. This should be done directly with these groups and not through the SPDC.

b. Provide relief and educational support for these groups.

c. Provide for training and supply of ethnic counter narcotics forces to enforce the counter narcotic program.

6. Establish a tri-partite dialogue between the SPDC, Burma democracy groups and ethnic groups. Through the Ethnic Nationalities Seminar of 1997 and the National Solidarity Seminar of 1998, the Burman and ethnic democracy groups have agreed on a framework for a democratic Burma. Their appeals for dialogue with the SPDC so far have been rejected.

7. Take the necessary economic, political and military actions to restore democracy and all human rights in Burma. This can be done indirectly by fully supporting the democratic resistance or directly by international intervention or both. The 10 ethnic democratic groups still resisting the SPDC (KNU, KNPP, NUPA, ALP, SSA, CNF, LDF, WNO, PHLO, PSLO), field between 14,000 and 15,000 groups. They are motivated and with support could easily increase in number, helping to provide security for the IDP's and helping to bring the SPDC to dialogue. Cease fire groups such as the KIO and the USWP have over 40,000 troops. And with support could be reunited with the pro democracy groups. With more support Burman pro democracy forces and ethnic forces could better unite.

8. Help establish a safe area for defectors from the Burma army and implement a program to receive these soldiers. There are thousands of Burma army soldiers who would leave their commands if there was a safe place for them.

9. Establish a war crimes tribunal for Burma to bring the perpetrators of war crimes and other human rights violations to justice. With the consent of Congress, this administration and the next, should setup a task force to monitor the crimes against humanity that the military regime in Burma is committing. What, Where When, to whom, by whom and under whose command atrocities were committed. Also posting the results of the findings on a .gov website will further establish credibility to the SPDC's part in the crime. This will be the building blocks for either prosecution by the international war crimes tribunal or a human rights commission so justice can be served.

10. That Congress request that the next Administration appoint an interagency task force to:

a. Assess the implications of China's actions in Burma.

b. Develop a plan for bringing about democracy in Burma.

c. Present the assessment and plan to the appropriate Congressional intelligence committee(s) before the end of 2001.

11. With the urging of Congress, the current and next Administration should actively discourage Pakistan, Israel, Singapore and China from providing military assistance to Burma.

12. Increase Sanctions against SPDC and continue to encourage other countries to do the same. Make all investment in Burma by US companies illegal. For example bring a close to UNOCAL's operations in Burma. Over 40% of foreign investment goes to the military a military whose only enemy is its own people.

13. Continue to recognize the dedication and courage of Burma democracy leaders such as Aung San Su Kyi.