

Burma

The Development Challenge: Conditions in Burma continue to reflect the State Peace and Development Council's (SPDC, formerly called SLORC) thus far successful effort to maintain political and military control of the country. Despite multiparty elections in 1990 that resulted in the main opposition party, the National League for Democracy (NLD), winning a decisive victory, SPDC refused to hand over power.

The military believes that it is the only institution capable of keeping Burma united as a single country, and that pluralism is destructive to national unity. It views economic progress, reform and liberalization as secondary to the maintenance of political control. The military is now more powerful than it has ever been, due to an aggressive recruitment program, improved weaponry, and cease-fire agreements with several ethnic armies that have allowed troops to be concentrated in fewer areas. The SPDC has signed cease-fire agreements with all but three armed insurgent groups representing the Shan, Karenni, and Karen ethnic groups. Extra-judiciary killings, torture, forced labor, portering, forced relocation, rape, and other abuses still commonly occur in most of the ethnic states of Burma.

U.S. Government policies are increasing pressure on the SPDC to engage in meaningful dialogue with the democratic opposition leading toward a peaceful transition to civilian rule. In 2002, the regime released NLD leader Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest and freed of political prisoners. However, on May 30, 2003, Suu Kyi's convoy upcountry was attacked; several NLD supporters were killed or injured. This prompted the arrest of Suu Kyi and many party leaders as well as closure of all NLD offices and activities. As of this writing, Suu Kyi has been moved from jail to house arrest. This has been an enormous setback for the opposition and the potential for any type of reconciliation or talks about power sharing. The SPDC has since presented its own 'roadmap' to democracy, which has been met with much skepticism by the international community.

Economic policies and management by the Burmese Government have resulted in a deteriorating social and economic situation. U.S. sanctions following the May 30 attack of Suu Kyi's convoy and her subsequent arrest have intensified the regime's economic problems by causing closure of several factories and making it much more difficult for Burma to operate in the international arena due to restrictions on use of dollars. While statistics are hard to verify, most agree that at least 13 million of Burma's 48 million people (more than 25 percent of the population) live below the subsistence level of \$1 per day. Health care facilities are eroding and HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases are becoming endemic. Universities are sporadically open and the public education system is in very poor condition.

As a result of ethnic fighting and deteriorating economic conditions in Burma, more than 1.6 million people have fled the country, and an estimated 1.5 million more remain inside Burma as internally displaced people. Of the population that fled Burma, approximately 180,000 reside in refugee camps in Thailand and Bangladesh, while the majority live as illegal migrants in Thailand, Bangladesh, India, China, and Malaysia. Thailand alone hosts more than one million Burmese outside the camps.

U.S interests in Burma include promoting democracy, supporting human rights and religious freedom, fighting HIV/AIDS, furthering effective counter-narcotics efforts, recovering World War II remains, and promoting regional stability. The United States also pursues a global strategic goal of preventing or minimizing the human costs of conflict and natural disasters.

The USAID Program: USAID suspended assistance to Burma following the 1988 suppression of the pro-democracy movement. A FY 1993 earmark of \$1 million reinstated USG assistance, initially through the Department of State's Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor (State/DRL). Since 1998, USAID has co-managed the Burma assistance program with the Department of State. Funding has been used to support democracy in Burma and pro-democracy groups outside Burma, and to meet the humanitarian needs of Burmese who reside in Thailand.

Currently, USAID administers the following activities:

- Humanitarian assistance activities that provide primary health care and basic education support to refugees living in refugee camps on the Thai-Burma border;
- Humanitarian assistance to provide access to health care for out of camp Burmese in Thailand; and
- Democracy activities that finance training for Burmese journalists and public information workers to improve the quality and dissemination of news and information on the situation inside Burma and fund scholarships for Burmese refugees to study at colleges and universities in Asia, Europe, Canada, Australia, and the U.S.

Other Program Elements: USAID carries out programs to address HIV/AIDs in Burma, and to reduce the spread of infectious diseases such as tuberculosis and malaria along the Thai-Burma border through the regional "Stabilize Population Growth and Protect Human Health" program (498-022). These activities are funded and managed by the Regional Development Mission/Asia. In addition, the Department of State's Population, Refugees and Migration Bureau funds refugee assistance programs that complement USAID activities on the Thai-Burma border. State/DRL also supports a grant to the National Endowment for Democracy and Prospect Burma.

Other Donors: The activities being funded under the earmark operate independently of the Burmese regime and are coordinated with more than 30 other donor agencies through either the Burma Donors Forum or the Coordinating Council for Support to Displaced Persons in Thailand. There are regular coordinating meetings, led by UNAIDS, among HIV/AIDS donors to try and maximize use of funds. Bilateral donors that focus on humanitarian assistance to Burma and to Burmese refugees include the Netherlands, Denmark, Sweden, Australia, and the United Kingdom. Multilateral donors with activities in Burma include the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Program, the World Food Program, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Burma PROGRAM SUMMARY

(in thousands of dollars)

Accounts	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Current	FY 2005 Request
Child Survival and Health Programs Fund	0	2,000	0	0
Economic Support Fund	6,500	6,954	12,923	7,000
Total Program Funds	6,500	8,954	12,923	7,000

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE SUMMARY				
482-002 Promote Democracy and Aid Burmese Refugees				
ESF	6,500	6,954	12,923	7,000
482-XXX ANE Regional HIV/AIDS Program				
CSH	0	2,000	0	0

Acting Mission Director,
Leon Waskin

Data Sheet

USAID Mission:	Burma
Program Title:	Promote Democracy and Aid Burmese Refugees
Pillar:	Democracy, Conflict and Humanitarian Assistance
Strategic Objective:	482-002
Proposed FY 2004 Obligation:	\$12,923,000 ESF
Prior Year Unobligated:	\$2,000,000 CSH; \$4,454,000 ESF
Proposed FY 2005 Obligation:	\$7,000,000 ESF
Year of Initial Obligation:	FY 1996
Year of Final Obligation:	FY 2006

Summary: USAID and the Department of State jointly implement democracy and humanitarian assistance programs for Burma. In addition, USAID's regional HIV/AIDS program (498-022), managed by the Regional Development Mission/Asia in Bangkok, allocated additional funding to address malaria and other infectious diseases along the Thai-Burma border.

Inputs, Outputs, Activities:

FY 2004 Program:

Democracy and Humanitarian Assistance (\$12,923,000 ESF; \$4,454,000 ESF Prior Year Unobligated). The program will continue and expand activities that assist Burmese refugees, internally displaced people, and pro-democracy groups. These activities will support training and advocacy for a transition to a democratic government in Burma as well as humanitarian assistance to refugees living along the Thai-Burma border. Humanitarian activities will continue to improve access to primary health care, help maintain the nutrition and food security of the refugee population, improve the quality of education provided to refugee children, and provide access to health care for the large out of camp Burmese population in Thailand.

USAID and the Department of State are looking for creative and innovative opportunities to expand support for pro-democracy activities inside Burma. USAID will continue to refocus its humanitarian activities to benefit more disadvantaged Burmese living outside of official refugee camps. This will include access to health care as well as educational opportunities for Burmese children outside the camps. USAID will also look for opportunities to provide assistance to the large internally displaced population inside Burma.

Principal grantees include the National Endowment for Democracy; the International Rescue Committee; World Education/World Learning Consortium; International Organization for Migration; Open Society Institute; Internews; and Prospect Burma.

HIV/AIDS Prevention (\$2,000,000 CSH Prior Year Unobligated). USAID will continue HIV/AIDS prevention efforts inside Burma. Funding and management will be carried out by Regional Development Mission/Asia through program 498-022.

FY 2005 Program:

Promote Democracy and Humanitarian Assistance (\$7,000,000 ESF). The program will maintain activities to support refugees in the camps along the Thai-Burma border and continue to expand activities to support the population outside the camps along the borders. USAID and the State Department will continue to coordinate closely and integrate program activities. There will be a continued and upgraded focus on preparing the Burmese population in and out of Burma to participate in a free and democratic society in the future. USAID expects that democracy initiatives inside Burma will continue to expand.

Performance and Results: This program supports democracy, while helping to provide critical assistance to the growing number of refugees and displaced people living inside Burma and along Burma's borders. In 2003, performance highlights of USAID funded health, community development, and education programs working under these objective goals were as follows:

The on-going skills upgrade training for more than 80 medics in the camps has been implemented throughout 2003 to sustain levels of maternal and child survival (an infant mortality rate of 29 deaths/1,000 live births) on par with those of surrounding Thai communities and to further increase the survival rate. Health care services have also been extended to out-of-camp migrants and internally displaced persons (IDPs). At present, more than 9,000 migrants and IDPs living along the Thai-Burmese border in Thailand and around 30,000 IDPs inside Burma can access these services.

USAID-funded education activities are contributing significantly to the goal of increasing educational capacity in the refugee camps. By the end of 2003, more than 100 participants had received school management training, increasing the ability of school directors and head teachers to evaluate their own school programs and to come up with suggestions for improvement. Nearly 300 refugees participated in teacher preparation and training activities. In addition, adult literacy classes trained close to 200 students in seven languages. These classes are helping to change attitudes among parents about the value of education. Education activities are also being extended to Burmese populations outside the refugee camps. Other educational assistance has been provided through scholarships and training courses. To date, more than 500 students including women from inside Burma and exiles have attended universities and participated in the training courses in Thailand, India, and the United States. Additionally, more than 250 Burmese students and media professionals have participated in journalism training in Thailand in order to improve the quality and dissemination of news and information to Burmese citizens inside Burma, refugees, and exiles as part of the democracy program.

US Financing in Thousands of Dollars

Burma

482-002 Promote Democracy and Aid Burmese Refugees	CSH	DA	ESF
Through September 30, 2002			
Obligations	6,460	4,033	15,023
Expenditures	4,366	3,876	12,468
Unliquidated	2,094	157	2,555
Fiscal Year 2003			
Obligations	0	0	7,969
Expenditures	2,094	157	7,230
Through September 30, 2003			
Obligations	6,460	4,033	22,992
Expenditures	6,460	4,033	19,698
Unliquidated	0	0	3,294
Prior Year Unobligated Funds			
Obligations	2,000	0	4,454
Planned Fiscal Year 2004 NOA			
Obligations	0	0	12,923
Total Planned Fiscal Year 2004			
Obligations	2,000	0	17,377
Proposed Fiscal Year 2005 NOA			
Obligations	0	0	7,000
Future Obligations	0	0	0
Est. Total Cost	8,460	4,033	47,369