

cease-fires, opium production in the ethnic areas continues to expand and Burma remains the largest source of illegal heroin entering North America.

Both the UN General Assembly and UN Commission on Human Rights have passed unopposed resolutions (co-sponsored by Canada), calling on SLORC to respect human rights and proceed with democratic reform. In July 1995, the International Committee of the Red Cross pulled out of Burma, claiming SLORC was impeding its work and denying access to political prisoners.

Burma continues to develop its relations with Asian countries, in particular the members of ASEAN. The SLORC chairman was invited to meet ASEAN heads of government in Bangkok on 15 December 1995, following the Fifth ASEAN Summit.

CANADIAN POSITION

Like other Western countries Canada welcomed the release of Aung San Suu Kyi as a first step towards democratic reform and national reconciliation. Canada would like to see movement on the "benchmarks" established by the international community in successive UNGA and UNCHR resolutions, in particular the release of all political prisoners and the commencement of negotiations with representatives of Burma's democracy movement. This message to SLORC was reiterated in the Halifax G-7 Summit Chairman's Statement. We also make known our concerns with the situation in Burma in our CHR and UNGA Third Committee country situations speeches.

Canada's relations with Burma are limited because of our human rights concerns. CIDA's bilateral aid programme was suspended in 1988 after the army's massacre of thousands of pro-democracy demonstrators in Rangoon. Military sales are not allowed and exports of all controlled goods are scrutinized closely. No assistance or encouragement is provided to Canadian firms doing business in Burma. Bilateral trade is minimal and has remained flat over the last five years. In response to inquiries about trade with Burma, Canadian officials warn Canadian companies about the country's unstable political and economic situation and about pressure from human rights groups, as well as the possibility of product boycotts. Total Canadian exports to Burma in 1994 were worth only \$477,000 while Canada imported goods worth \$16 million, mostly textiles and seafood. In November 1994, Canada and Burma signed a textile restraints agreement which will have the effect of reducing the level of imports.

Canada recognized Burma at the time of independence in 1948 and established diplomatic relations in 1958. Canada has no resident diplomatic presence in Rangoon. The Canadian Embassy in Bangkok is accredited to Burma. Burma opened an embassy in Ottawa in 1966, closed it in 1978 and reopened it in 1985.