

more chance of aiding democracy in Burma with or without Canadian economic sanctions”?

3 Participants present knew of no other country which has imposed economic/trade sanctions on Burma.

4 The unpredictability of SLORC's reaction makes ascertaining the effect of sanctions on Burmese people (including refugees on the border) difficult. The imminent admission of Burma into ASEAN has fueled this concern, as it is believed that as a recognized member of ASEAN, SLORC will be less exposed to international pressure. Foreign Ministers of most major ASEAN members have already stated that the imposition of a US ban on new investment (after 23 April) would not alter the timetable of Burma's joining ASEAN in the near future. (Minister Axworthy had already raised with his ASEAN counter-parts the question of delaying membership in ASEAN until certain milestones had been achieved.

5 A key argument against the imposition of trade sanctions has been that sanctions would in all probability affect the Burmese people more immediately and severely than they would affect SLORC, if sanctions had any effect at all.

6 As was evidenced in the case of South Africa, some said, it is difficult to persuade business to act against its own perceived self interest. The best way business can be persuaded to cooperate with any movement to isolate and/or influence SLORC is if it is perceived to be in the long term interest of companies, showing that Burma would be a better place to do business if it is more respectful of the rule of law, would be more democratic, and Burmese would be more receptive to companies which maintained such a position. There was consideration of the potential of a sector by sector application of