

party members. However, another 1,300 “security detainees” still remain in detention, including approximately 110 NLD party members and 17 elected MPs.

There were also new arrests. Approximately 60 political activists, mostly teachers, lawyers, and students, were detained by the government between August 2002 and March 2003 on charges including conspiracy to commit terrorist acts for the simple peaceful expression of political dissent. Due to international pressure, most of these activists were released within days, but one died while in detention (apparently from a lack of medical care), while several were convicted of offences carrying sentences of seven years or more.

In February 2003 Aung San Suu Kyi was involved in a minor civil law suit brought by a relative that appeared to be politically motivated. Aung San Suu Kyi counter-sued. Both were found guilty. She and other NLD leaders characterized the initial suit as being instigated by the regime and politically motivated. She was given a choice of paying a small fine or being jailed for a week. She refused to admit guilt by paying the fine and indicated her willingness to be jailed for a week as a result. The government then issued a “suspension of judgment” decree as several thousand NLD supporters gathered outside the courthouse.

Most seriously, the regime has shown no inclination to engage the democratic opposition in meaningful political dialogue. The government arranged meetings between Aung San Suu Kyi and the Minister of Education and others, but the NLD leader made clear to UN Special Envoy Razali in October that there was “no real dialogue” with the regime. There were also signs of Senior General Than Shwe’s frustration with the lack of increased aid or reduced sanctions.

The hamstrung status quo has frustrated a number of concerned countries. Australian Foreign Minister Downer, Japan’s Deputy Foreign Minister Tanaka, and the EU Troika visited Burma over the past several months and Japan’s Prime Minister Koizumi reportedly weighed in on behalf of reform at ASEAN Summit in Phnom Penh in November; however, no one has yet been able to move the process forward. At the most recent meeting of the U.N. Contact Group on Burma, held in Tokyo in February, there was little consensus on next steps and what new strategies could be effective. Both the EU and the United States are now considering the advisability of increasing sanctions on Burma.

Counternarcotics

The United States judged earlier this year that Burma had “failed demonstrably” to make substantial efforts to cooperate on narcotics matters, primarily due to the failure to stem the production and flow of amphetamine-type stimulants into neighboring countries. At the same time, the USG has sustained a successful program of cooperation between police authorities in Burma and the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration. Since 1993 the USG and GOB have cooperated on annual opium yield surveys in Burma and with UNODC and other donors on opium reduction and crop substitution programs. In June 2002, the United States pledged an additional \$700,000 to support UNODC’s Wa Alternative Development Project, which helped reduce opium production in the territories of one of the most notorious former insurgent groups, the United Wa State Army.

While Burma is the world’s second largest producer of illicit opium, its overall production in 2002 was only a fraction of its production in the mid-1990s. According to the joint U.S./Burma opium yield survey, opium production in Burma totaled no more than 630 metric tons in 2002, down 26 percent from 2001, and less than one-quarter of the 2,560 metric tons produced in Burma in 1996. Burma’s success in reducing the production of opium and heroin, however, has been offset by increasing production of amphetamine-type stimulants, particularly in outlying regions governed