

body, the appointment of an independent ombudsman to report on violations, and the elimination of forced labor in law and practice. The use of forced labor to build infrastructure for tourist sites appears to be reduced from levels reported in the late 1990's. In recent years, there have been isolated reports of forced labor at tourist sites.

Burma was ranked as a Tier 3 country in the Department's 2002 Trafficking in Persons Report. Since the publication of that report, the GOB has tried to make more transparent that it is taking steps against sexual exploitation trafficking, which most often involves the clandestine movement of Burmese women and children from ethnic minority areas into Thailand. The Myanmar National Committee on Women's Affairs has taken measures to help educate vulnerable populations on the dangers of trafficking by distributing booklets, producing some media programming and organizing community talks. The Ministry of Home Affairs and the Attorney General's office have carried out arrests and prosecutions of traffickers. The effectiveness of these efforts appears to be uneven and difficult to evaluate given the government's overall credibility and the political climate in the country, but this represents what seems to be a genuine engagement of some senior government officials to fighting sex trafficking. The GOB has also allowed some limited but important NGO and international organization activity to assist returning trafficking victims and educate officials, but the government needs to be open to much more of this kind of cooperation. The GOB has concentrated its efforts in fighting sex trafficking, although officials are aware that the international definition of trafficking in persons also encompasses labor exploitation.

The regime did allow a visit by Amnesty International (AI) in February 2003. During the visit, the AI delegation met with government ministers and other officials, as well as with Aung San Suu Kyi and other members of the NLD. AI used their meetings with government officials to discuss the conditions under which political prisoners are held and to call for the immediate release of 19 prisoners on humanitarian grounds.

**The Environment:** Illegal logging and illicit trade in wildlife and wildlife products are overwhelming efforts at protection. To help deal with both of these issues, the Ministry of Forestry has instituted a program to increase the size of protected areas, but pressures are mounting as agricultural lands expand. Other concerns include threats to reefs and fisheries and overall water resource management.

### **Development of a Multilateral Strategy**

U.S. policy goals in Burma include a return to constitutional democracy, the institution of a rule of law, improved human rights, national reconciliation, counterterrorism efforts, regional stability, HIV/AIDS mitigation, combating trafficking in persons, accounting for missing servicemen from World War II, and more effective counternarcotics efforts. We encourage talks between Aung San Suu Kyi and the military government in the hope that it will lead to meaningful democratic change in Burma. We also consult regularly, at senior levels, with countries with major interests in Burma and/or major concerns regarding Burma's human rights practices.

The United States has co-sponsored annual resolutions at the UN General Assembly and the UN Commission on Human Rights that target Burma. We have also supported the ILO's unprecedented decision on Burma given its failure to deal effectively with its severe and pervasive forced labor problems. Most importantly, we strongly support the mission of the UN Secretary General's Special Representative for Burma, Razali Ismail, whose efforts are key in facilitating the start of any meaningful political dialogue between the regime and the NLD.

In coordination with the European Union and others, the United States has imposed sanctions on Burma. These sanctions include an arms embargo, a ban on all new U.S. investment in Burma, the suspension of all bilateral