Whither Burma?

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To arrive in Burma[1] from Thailand is to go back in time. The contrast between bustling, ultra-modern Don Muang airport and the small, somewhat shabby group of buildings at Mingaladon prepares one for Rangoon itself. The wide streets are uncluttered by traffic. What public transport there is is decrepit and grossly overcrowded. Most of the downtown section of the city is badly in need of repair and paint. People are neatly, but poorly dressed. The overwhelming impression is one of Third World poverty, the poverty of one of the UN's Least Developed Countries (LDC), where the per capita income of its population of 42.5 million stands at only US$278.[2]

A few days' stay and travel outside Rangoon allow one to form other impressions. The first is that Burma is potentially a country just as rich as Thailand, blessed with an even greater abundance of natural resources. It is also a strikingly beautiful country whose characteristic pagodas, ancient monuments, fertile countryside, and gracious people combine to provide an enchanting experience for traveller and tourist. A second realization is that beneath this beautiful exterior, Burma is a country fraught with tension, discontent and resentment. It is a country where military repression stifles almost every freedom; where people are afraid to speak openly, especially to foreigners; where none but government publications are printed, and no public debate on government policies is permitted; and where the threat of arbitrary arrest is ever-present.[3]

In Burma today, all power is concentrated in the hands of the Burmese Armed Forces (the Tatmadaw) in the guise of the State Law and Order Restoration Council, known by its unfortunate acronym as SLORC. The Council consists of eighteen generals, only four of whom have completed any form of tertiary education. Council chairman, Senior General Saw Maung, who now acts as Burma's chief of state, attended only five years of primary school. The most influential member of the SLORC is not Saw Maung, however, but its first secretary, Major General Khin Nyunt, the devious and ruthless head of the Directorate of Defence Services Intelligence, the feared and hated secret police whose agents are as ubiquitous as in any totalitarian state. In Burma the Tatmadaw does not simply direct the government as in Indonesia or Thailand: it is the

government. Every ministry is headed by a military officer, most of them members of the SLORC. Few possess even minimal qualifications for the job. Ministries are run on military lines: orders come from the top down, and ministers do not welcome anything that might be construed as criticism from subordinates. Expert civilian advice, what there is of it, tends therefore to have minimal impact. In fact, one of the characteristics of the present Burmese government is its imperviousness to advice of any kind.

While the military may be firmly in power, however, it is also under pressure. In refusing to relinquish power to civilian politicians elected in relatively free and fair elections in May 1990, the Tatmadaw has been all but universally condemned by foreign governments. The overwhelming vote for the anti-military opposition in those elections makes it clear that the military lacks legitimacy to govern in the eyes of the majority of Burmese. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the military's response to both internal and external pressure has been to reinforce its monopoly of power, through repression and propaganda, and to retreat into isolation from world opinion.

The Background to Recent Events

Before examining why the military responded in this way and what political options are now open to it, let us pause at this point to recall briefly how the present situation arose, and why the Tatmadaw is in the predicament, and the country in the state, they are. By 1987, the Burmese economy faced a serious crisis. As a result of declining commodity prices on the international market, the value of Burmese exports had fallen to the point where they were quite insufficient to cover the costs of both imports and interest payments on the country's foreign debt. Foreign reserves fell to an alarmingly low level, necessitating the reduction of official imports. This limited the availability of consumer goods just when the military had succeeded in closing off some of the black market supply routes from Thailand. As a result, prices rose and living standards fell. Both internally and externally, particularly from Japan, Burma's largest aid donor, the government came under increasing pressure to put its financial house in order.

In August 1987, President Ne Win publicly admitted that the government had made mistakes, and that fundamental changes might be necessary. The government's first move was to eliminate controls on what farmers could grow and the procurement prices to be paid for their crops in the hope that this would stimulate exports. In the urban areas this resulted in price rises and food shortages. In the second place, the government applied to the UN for LDC status in order to be eligible for financial assistance on

optimum terms. This was granted, but the country's relegation to the level of an LDC brought home to the Burmese people the extent to which economic mismanagement had reduced one of the richest countries in Southeast Asia to penury. After twenty-five years of the Burmese way to socialism, Burma was all but bankrupt. Then, presumably in an attempt to reduce inflation by limiting the money supply, while at the same time penalizing black market profiteers, the government suddenly demonetized eighty per cent of the country's bank notes. Popular response was immediate. Demonetization devastated the urban middle class and destroyed what little remaining faith people had in the government's economic competency. Families struggling to educate their children suddenly lost a substantial part of their savings. Students protested in Rangoon, resulting in a six-week closure of the universities. As discontent grew, retired Brigadier General Aung Gyi, a former member of the 1962 Revolutionary Council subsequently cashiered from the Army, wrote an open letter to President Ne Win warning of social unrest unless the government addressed the deteriorating economic situation.

On 12 March 1988, an incident in a Rangoon tea shop resulting in the death of a student sparked student protests which were brutally quelled by the hated riot police (the Lon Htein). In a rapid escalation of protest and violent suppression, dozens of protesters were killed and hundreds arrested. Schools and universities were again closed, not to re-open until 30 May in time, so the government hoped, for students to do no more than study for final exams. However fresh protests led to another round of clashes on 21 June, as unrest spread to other major population centres. All public gatherings were thereupon banned, and a curfew imposed.

In the midst of all this turmoil, the discredited Burma Socialist Program Party (BSPP), the military controlled sole legal political organization in the country, met in emergency congress.[4] Ne Win, in his speech to the congress, amazed delegates by not only announcing his own retirement, but also proposing a number of economic reforms and calling for a referendum to decide on whether Burma should move to a multiparty political system. The last of these the party rejected, to the disgust of the students, and then made the added mistake of appointing as its new Chairman General Sein Lwin, known to the students as the "Butcher of Rangoon", the commander of the riot police responsible for shooting down demonstrators. New demonstrations broke out, which were again suppressed with dozens, perhaps hundreds, of civilian casualties. A general strike paralysed Rangoon. After eighteen days Sein Lwin was forced to resign. His place was taken by Dr Maung Maung, a long-time apologist for the military regime.

Over the next month strikes and demonstrations became daily events. The government tried to placate the protesters by promising to introduce a multiparty system, but by then the political opposition which had coalesced around Aung San Suu Kyi, daughter of Aung San, hero of Burma's independence struggle, and two former generals (Aung Gyi and former Defence Minister Tin Oo), was calling for the immediate replacement of the government by an interim administration. By mid-September, despite the virtual dissolution of the BSPP, and the decision of parliament (the Pyithu Hluttaw or People's Assembly) to hold multiparty general elections, the momentum of opposition had escalated to the point where the internal cohesion of the armed forces themselves was threatened. Some 200 air force personnel from the Mingaladon air base outside Rangoon joined the demonstrations. So too did some police. At this point the Tatmadaw acted. On 18 September 1988 General Saw Maung announced the formation of the SLORC, banned all demonstrations and imposed a curfew. Hundreds of demonstrators defying both ban and curfew were gunned down by security forces. Mass arrests and an unknown number of executions followed, while as many as 10,000 students and activists fled to border areas to escape the crackdown. All international protests over the killings were ignored, even though this led to most financial and development aid being frozen by major donor countries, including Japan, Britain and other EEC countries, Australia, and the United States.

Somewhat surprisingly, however, the new military government announced its intention of going ahead with the promised elections, providing all parties "abide by the regulations, disciplinary rules, laws and declarations"[5] promulgated by the SLORC. In response, major opposition leaders formed the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Tin Oo and Aung San Suu Kyi. A date was set for elections and a new electoral law drawn up. Although political parties were given some opportunity to present their platforms, military repression was particularly concentrated against the NLD. Both its chairman, Tin Oo, and its general secretary, Aung San Suu Kyi, were placed under house arrest. The former was subsequently sentenced to three years' hard labour, while the latter was debarred as a candidate because her husband was English and she was alleged to be in contact with certain insurgent groups. Many local NLD activists were also harassed and arrested, as was former prime minister U Nu who had formed his own political party and "parallel government".

In the run-up to the elections of 27 May 1990, the SLORC moved on three fronts to enhance its standing. Militarily it increased pressure on insurgent groups; economically it reduced socialist controls to stimulate economic activity; and internationally it sought cooperation from

neighbouring states in order to offset strained relations with the West. Military operations were pursued especially against the Karen National Defence Organization (KNDO) bases along the border with Thailand, where most student activists had fled. The Tatmadaw thereby reinforced its image as protector of the nation from disintegration, while accusing the NLD of having close links to the insurgents. Its military task was made easier by the capture by rebellious Wa troops of the headquarters of the Burma Communist Party (BCP) at Panghsang near the Chinese border, which put an end to the four-decade-old BCP insurgency. These military successes opened the way for agreements with both China and Thailand on legal cross-border trade, thereby increasing the supply of consumer goods available in Rangoon and other centres. Government capture of the Three Pagodas pass effectively reduced Karen control of the black market trade with Thailand. Introduction of a free market in agricultural produce and changes in rural taxation had already gone a long way towards alleviating peasant grievances. At the same time the government introduced its so-called "open door" policy. Banking was made more competitive, while foreign joint venture capital was welcomed. Nine major international oil companies were granted prospecting rights and signed production sharing agreements. The government anticipates receiving up to US$1 billion in revenue from oil by the year 2000, while in the short term it has benefited from up-front payments to shore up its financial position.[7]

Improved relations with China and Thailand enabled the government to conclude agreements on the exploitation of resources that have taken some of the pressure off its balance of payments problems, and enabled it to make new arms purchases. Contracts with Thai companies in particular have granted rights covering timber extraction and fishing in exchange for much needed foreign exchange.[8] Because of such cosy deals, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has been reluctant to condemn the Burmese military for its violation of human rights and failure to hand over power to a civilian government. South Korea is another state with which the SLORC regime has developed friendly relations, and a number of joint Korean-Burmese investment projects are under way or in the planning stage. These new foreign contacts have gone some way towards compensating for Burma's ostracism by the West.

The General Election of 1990

In retrospect, it is hard to see why the SLORC permitted the elections of 27 May 1990 to go ahead at all. The army high command was certainly aware that the National Union Party (NUP), the military-endorsed successor to the

BSPP, enjoyed little popular support, and that the NLD stood to win a considerable number of seats. What they did not foresee was the massive landslide that eventuated. The NLD won 392 seats in the 485 seat legislature, though it contested only 447 under agreement with allied regional parties which won another 35 seats. The NUP won ten seats, though gaining 21.2 per cent of the total vote as against 59.9 per cent for the NLD.[9]

A number of factors clearly contributed to the military's miscalculations over the elections. To some extent at least the SLORC leadership was the victim of its own propaganda. It was convinced that a close and enduring bond existed between the Tatmadaw and the Burmese people. It believed that the army really did have to step in to prevent national anarchy and disintegration, and that people recognized that. Also the leadership had given its word that elections would be held. Its honour was on the line, and it was under strong international pressure to keep its promise. The SLORC may have believed that the disparate groups making up the NLD would not hold together for long enough to fight the elections. In the event, resentment and distrust of the army was a sufficient common bond. SLORC also underestimated the popular appeal of Aung San Suu Kyi. Her name carried with it the mythic stature of her martyred father. Her almost messianic image promised a better world and played upon deep chords in the Burmese psyche.

Ninety-three political parties contested the elections. Twenty-eight won seats. The military could be forgiven for believing that even though their intelligence told them that the NLD would emerge as the leading opposition party, other parties would win enough seats for the NUP to cobble together an anti-NLD majority. That they were so wrong came as a stunning shock to the SLORC leadership, as indicated by its initial response. For a week the troops remained in barracks while commanders met behind closed doors. Then it was back to military government as usual, as troops again suppressed all popular demonstrations calling for the immediate transfer of power to the NLD. The army justified its actions by claiming that, while it had fulfilled its promise to hold elections, it still had a duty to maintain law and order and ensure the people's livelihood.

The Military Reaction

The political tactics by which the SLORC intended to retain its power became evident in the months following the elections. Demands by the NLD for transference of power on the basis of an amended version of the 1947 constitution were rejected on the grounds that it was a fatally flawed

document that had already proved inadequate to preserve national unity — which is why the Tatmadaw had had to assume power in 1962. Various other spurious reasons were also advanced: the electoral commission had not formally announced the results of the elections; SLORC was a military, not a political organization, so could not simply hand over power; and as the NLD was factionally divided, there was no one clear leader to whom to hand power. (Aung San Suu Kyi was not an elected member, and was anyway under house arrest; Tin Oo was serving a prison sentence; Aung Gyi had left the party.)

There were, of course, other reasons for military intransigence. The military had been in power for just on thirty years, during which officers had grown used to the perquisites of authority and office. The prospects of being at the command of civilian politicians for whom most officers felt little but contempt and distrust, of wielding no further political influence in the affairs of the country, of being reduced to surviving on meagre official salaries, were not appealing. As in the case of Indonesia and Thailand, the Tatmadaw saw itself as having a right, by virtue of its role in gaining and maintaining Burmese independence, to continue to exert political influence. And finally there was the fear that the military itself would be the target for reprisals — that senior officers would be dismissed, and that those responsible for ordering the massacre of civilians would be made to stand trial.[10]

The military response to the NLD's election victory was spelled out in its Declaration 1/90 of 27 July 1990. In it SLORC rejected any transfer of power until a new constitution had been agreed upon. Once residual election formalities were concluded — such as the investigation of claims of electoral misconduct and verification of all election expenses which are still going on — the election commission would officially declare the results. Even then the Pyithu Hluttaw would not meet. Instead a national convention would come together with representatives from ethnic minorities, professional organizations and the military, as well as political parties, to draw up guidelines for a new constitution. This would be drafted by the new Pyithu Hluttaw, but would still have to be approved by the people, possibly through a referendum, and agreed upon by all 135 "national races". In this way the preponderant influence of the NLD would be watered down — especially as some fifty elected NLD members have already been disqualified for one reason or another from taking their seats in parliament. And as the whole process could take a number of years, the military has given itself the option to retain power for some time to come.

The NLD response to Declaration 1/90 was to reject its terms, and to reiterate that those elected should meet, form a government, and draw up a

constitution. This was in turn rejected by the military, and there the impasse rests. Twenty-one ethnic and regional parties endorsed the NLD statement, and called for release of political leaders and an end to restrictions on political activities, but to no avail. Nor has international pressure been able to sway the military. Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest in Rangoon, refusing to leave the country to rejoin her husband and son in England unless the SLORC accepts her conditions — the release of all political prisoners, the right to address the nation, and permission to walk to the airport. In the meantime all political opposition continues to be suppressed. Hardly a day goes by without the arrest of yet more NLD workers, students or monks. The military denies there are any political prisoners in Burma, only criminals who have transgressed the laws of the land. Foreign observers place the number at between two and five thousand.[11]

In order to shore up its diminished political legitimacy, the Tatmadaw has embarked upon a concerted programme of distortion and propaganda via its complete monopoly of all media. History is already being re-written regarding the events of 1988. The army simply denies that any massacres of civilians took place. Incidents where demonstrators beat, and even killed, military personnel or police spies have, by contrast, been recounted in gory detail and denounced as terrorist attempts to destroy the state by attacking the forces of law and order. The army's crackdown in 1988 is justified in terms of its national responsibility to defend the state from regional insurgencies and civil unrest. Articles constantly refer to the role of the Tatmadaw in responding to four great national crises: 1948 when communist and Karen insurgencies threatened the newly independent Burmese state; 1958 when civilian politicians asked the military to run the country prior to new elections; 1962 when the military seized power to prevent negotiations on regional autonomy that threatened to undermine the unity and integrity of the state; and 1988 when SLORC saved the country from the anarchy of the pro-democracy movement.[12]

The legitimacy of the army is also being reinforced in a characteristically Burmese way — through its meritorious support for Buddhism and the Burmese *Sangha*, the order of monks.[13] Everywhere the military is contributing to the building and repair of monasteries and pagodas. Every Buddhist ceremony is attended by military personnel. Every Buddhist delegation is met and farewelled by army officers. Buddhist processions are escorted by the army. The official media covers these events *ad nauseam*. As one Burmese remarked: we get sick of green and gold. Nevertheless, the identity of the army with religion carries a powerful message for Burmese,

for there is a widespread belief that men in power must possess the *karma* to be where they are.

SLORC has increased the size of the armed forces to around 250,000 men. New weapons have been purchased from China, Yugoslavia and Singapore. At the same time the military has entered into agreements with a number of insurgent groups which exchange a cease-fire for *de facto* recognition of a degree of autonomy. While these agreements do not solve the problem of the relationship between the minorities and the central government, they do take pressure off the army for the time being, thus permitting further negotiations to take place. The latest SLORC proposals for a limited form of *de jure* autonomy while maintaining "centralization at the State level that ensures unity"[14] is unlikely to meet minority aspirations, and goes nowhere near the NLD promise to discuss formation of a federal state conceding minority self-government in all but such matters as currency, defence and foreign relations. As this is much further than the military is prepared to go, the minority insurgencies that have plagued Burma for most of its independent existence seem set to continue.

SLORC's Dilemma

On the economic front, the SLORC regime has inaugurated what it calls its "open door" policy, reversing its previous virtual economic autarky. In doing so, it has had to make a virtue of necessity, since the country is in desperate need of hard currency. Limited reforms have encouraged foreign investment, particularly in joint enterprises; liberalized foreign exchange controls to some extent; and eased restrictions on border trade. However, the government continues to control the allocation of key resources such as energy, agricultural inputs, foreign exchange, and financial credit. Import and export levels continue to be determined through strict licensing procedures. All such controls seriously impede entrepreneurial initiatives in the private sector. Not surprisingly a confidential World Bank report issued in May this year concluded that the "open door" reforms "have been largely ineffectual in achieving their intended objectives" due to "the piecemeal and incomplete nature of the reform program".[15]

The problem facing the SLORC regime is that it cannot undertake the extensive reforms necessary to turn the economy around for fear of their social and political repercussions. The economic situation is one of declining revenues (due in large part to the inability of the government to tax the still considerable black economy), contracting economic activity, and reduced foreign financial assistance. The budget deficit is consequently increasing, two-fifths of it due to massive losses by inefficient state

enterprises, running to 6.898 billion kyats in 1989-90.[16] The government's only recourse has been to print more money, thus adding to inflation at a time when the official rate for the kyat is already grossly overvalued.

This, as the World Bank report points out, is the crux of the problem. The official rate of the kyat is just over six to the dollar, while the black market rate reflecting its real value has been rising rapidly and now stands at around eighty to the dollar. Continuing inflation simply widens the gap. This spiral, according to the World Bank, "cannot be broken until credible efforts are taken to raise public revenue collection and reduce the deficit".[17] The two essential reforms singled out by the Bank are to improve the efficiency of state enterprises to reduce the deficit, and to devalue the kyat to reflect its true market value. These were the hard decisions Vietnam was forced to take under similar circumstances, but with encouraging results. But they are not decisions the SLORC is prepared to take because in the short term the economy gets worse before it gets better, as employees in inefficient state enterprises lose their jobs and prices rise. The military fears that, as in 1987-88, a further downturn in the economy would provoke renewed popular demonstrations, and place the very survival of the regime in question.

The only way out of this dilemma would be through massive foreign financial assistance to cushion the impact of economic reform. This is what the Suharto government received (from the Inter-governmental Group for Indonesia — IGGI) in a similar situation in the late 1960s. But for Burma, such assistance, which can only be provided by the West and Japan, will not be forthcoming until it agrees at least to share power with the duly elected NLD — and this it refuses to do. The SLORC has thus painted itself into a corner from which it will be difficult to escape. On the economic front it is introducing only minor reforms in the hope that resource extraction agreements will provide sufficient foreign exchange to meet government needs until oil is flowing from what it hopes will be many new wells.

On the political front, however, time may not be on the side of the regime. SLORC may believe that it now has a comfortable hold on power. But neither time nor propaganda is going to solve the problem of political legitimacy. The election results amply demonstrated that in the eyes of the Burmese people the military does not have a legitimate right to govern the country, and the military has admitted as much. Yet the SLORC obviously has no intention of relinquishing power to the NLD, and there seems to be no way short of massive popular insurrection to force it to do so.

The only way around this impasse, and one which the military seems to be moving towards on its own terms, is for some kind of constitutional power sharing. The election results do not necessarily mean that most

Burmese would refuse to concede the military some continuing political role.[18] It might therefore be possible for the Tatmadaw to exercise the sort of influence the military enjoys in Indonesia. The SLORC is reported to be carefully examining the Indonesian constitution, and it seems very likely that whatever new constitution emerges from the current political process will enshrine some Burmese equivalent of the Indonesian "dwi fungsi", or dual function — defensive and socio-political — for the Tatmadaw. If this is what the SLORC leadership has in mind, it has not yet made its intentions clear, and no political timetable has been set. The question is whether an acceptable constitution can be drawn up, agreed upon and promulgated before popular discontent over a declining economy flares again into violence. This of course is what the regime fears. Yet its concerted efforts to discredit and destroy the NLD could well backfire if in the process it destroys the political consensus necessary for a new constitution (including a "dual function" role for the army) to be acceptable to majority Burmese opinion. Also, only if foreign governments are convinced that such a constitution does have broad popular support would they be prepared to put together the sort of financial support package needed to facilitate a radical restructuring of the Burmese economy. If something along these lines cannot be achieved, the outlook would seem to be for the cycle of violence and repression to continue.

Postscript: Since this address was given Aung San Suu Kyi has been awarded the 1991 Nobel Price for Peace. This will undoubtedly raise her standing even further in the eyes of most Burmese, but be bitterly resented by the narrow-minded inward-looking group of generals comprising the SLORC. Response to the award by the SLORC regime has been predictably boorish. No word of it has leaked into Burma's tightly controlled press, and it is not even certain whereabouts Aung San Suu Kyi is now being held. The effect of the award is likely to be in the international sphere where pressure can be brought to bear on countries such as Thailand, China and Singapore to limit their support for the SLORC. Internally it is likely to produce the same old knee-jerk response of isolationist rejection with which the generals greet every case of "foreign interference" in Burmese affairs. Sadly, therefore, Aung San Suu Kyi's richly deserved recognition by the Nobel Committee is unlikely to have any impact inside Burma, at least in the short term. In the longer term, in the perspective of Burmese history, Aung San's daughter represents a standing challenge to the military that eventually they will have to find the courage to face.

NOTES

* Text of an address delivered to the Queensland Branch of the Australian Institute of International Affairs in Brisbane on 19 September 1991.

1 The official name of the country is now Myanmar, a transliteration much closer to the Burmese pronunciation than Burma. But just as English speakers refer to Germany rather than Deutschland, so Burma and Burmese will be retained in this article. Similarly Rangoon is now spelt Yangon, and many other towns and geographical features have had their names altered.

2 Economic indicators, *Asiaweek*, 9 August 1991.

3 As Robert Taylor has noted, no free discussion is permitted because the military is unable to distinguish debate from treason. See Robert H. Taylor, "Burma's Ambiguous Breakthrough", *Journal of Democracy* 1 (1990), p. 68.

4 As Robert Taylor has pointed out, the BSPP never became a mass political party, nor did its ideology become broadly accepted as central to Burmese nationalism — as did, for example, communism in Vietnam. This was one reason for the collapse of military power. On another level, however, it is Taylor's thesis that "the over-concentration of effective power in state institutions without the financial capability of these institutions to manage the economy effectively led to political collapse". Robert H. Taylor, "Change in Burma: Political Demands and Military Power", *Asian Affairs* 22 (1991), p. 133.

5 Quoted in Bertil Lintner, *Outrage: Burma's Struggle for Democracy* (London and Bangkok: White Lotus, 1990), p. 200.

6 See Bertil Lintner, *The Rise and Fall of the Burma Communist Party* (Singapore: Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 1990).

7 See Jonathan Friedland and Bertil Lintner, "Licensed to Drill", *Far Eastern Economic Review*, 8 August 1991.

9 James F. Guyot, "Myanmar in 1990: The Unconsummated Election", *Asian Survey* 21 (1991), p. 210.

10 R. H. Taylor makes this point in "Myanmar 1990: New Era or Old?", in *Southeast Asian Affairs 1991*, p. 202

11 For a damaging indictment of the military's civil rights record, see Amnesty International, *Myanmar "In the National Interest"* (London: November 1990). A United Nations mission investigating human rights abuses in 1990 was systematically prevented from meeting opposition representatives to whom it requested access.

12 See, for example, Maung Dawna, "For Non-Disintegration of National Unity", *The Working People's Daily*, 19 July 1991.

13 The military has been assiduous in mending its fences with the *Sangha* after reacting harshly to a short-lived refusal by some monks to perform Buddhist ceremonies for military personnel. The army raided monasteries, arrested monks, and forced activists to disrobe.

14 *Weekend Australian*, 10-11 August 1991, p. 14.

15 World Bank report, Myanmar, 30 May 1991. Executive summary and conclusion, p. i.

16 Taylor, "Myanmar 1990", p. 213 and World Bank report, p. iv.

17 World Bank report, p. iv.

18 Taylor maintains that "The army is so deeply embedded in Burma's political and administrative institutions that its immediate withdrawal would leave behind an enormous structural vacuum, making another coup virtually inevitable". Taylor, "Burma's Ambiguous Breakthrough", p. 71.