5. (C) The DFM appealed for "patience" from the U.S. in addressing the SPDC's decision to receive East Timor's membership in ASEAN--and also left a letter for Planning and Administration, U Linn Myaing (former Ambassador to Washington).

DETENTION OF ASSK AND OTHER DEMOCRACY LEADERS

3. (C) The DFM acknowledged that Burma's National Convention would set the country back on track. "We can't allow any disruption to this process," he said, referring to Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK) and other detained leaders of the democratic opposition. The COM said that the best thing Burma could do would be to free ASSK and other detainees, observing that "without them, you'll never have a credible process." The DFM complained that the GOB had invited ASSK to the Convention, but she and her NLD party "refused." The COM dismissed this standard regime argument and stated, "It's impossible to participate from jail."

VISIT OF EAST TIMOR FM RAMOS-HORTA

4. (C) Addressing the SPDC's decision to receive East Timor Foreign Minister Jose Ramos-Horta, a vocal critic of the regime's human rights abuses who visited July 21-24, DFM Maung Myint said that the visit was desirable because the Nobel Laureate "opposes economic sanctions." DG for Political Affairs Thaung Tun told A/DCM that he had briefed Ramos-Horta on Burma's political situation and asked the FM "not to request a visit to ASSK, because the answer will be 'no.'" He said that Ramos-Horta, who met with Prime Minister General Soe Win, discussed establishing relations with Burma and East Timor's membership in ASEAN--and also left a letter for ASSK, "which we (the GOB) will deliver."

PRESSURE AGAINST THE SPDC

5. (C) The DFM appealed for "patience" from the U.S. in letting the GOB resolve its political problems, and complained that Burma gets singled out for poor treatment, adding that "everyone talks to (Pakistan's President) Musharraf, but not to us." The COM replied that 43 years of military rule, including 17 years by the current regime, has usurped all patience; the GOB itself has moved the country backwards and the time for fundamental change is long overdue. "You need to reach out and have a dialogue," said the COM, "that's how other countries are dealing with their crises." The DFM accepted this point, and surprisingly
responded, "The (SPDC) generals are not very clever in this regard."

AMCIT ISSUES

6. (C) The COM raised three ongoing cases involving U.S. citizens and appealed to the DFM for improved communication and responsiveness. DFM Maung Myint indicated that he was fully briefed on each of the three cases and promised an imminent response to each. He did not comment immediately on two of the cases (a 20-year prison sentence for possession of a small quantity of drugs; and a complex immigration fraud allegation).

7. (C) However, regarding the third case—which involves the GOB's cancellation of the re-entry visa for an Embassy contract employee who teaches at our American Center—the DFM said "she violated restrictions on political activities." The COM appealed for the teacher's return and the DFM said he would address the case in a subsequent meeting. The DG for Political Affairs told A/DCM that the employee had been deported because "she was teaching members of the NLD party." A/DCM observed that the NLD is a legal political party and that language instruction at the American Center is open to all members of the public. The DG, however, demurred and replied, "this is not my issue, it's for our Consular Affairs division."

COMMENT: MORE DIALOGUE?

8. (C) Although we expect few of our messages will be transmitted to the SPDC's senior leaders, we viewed this opportunity as a valuable one to deliver key policy messages to a senior GOB official. DFM Maung Myint is a career military officer—he held the rank of Brigadier General prior to his MFA appointment in 2004—and he is showing some signs of having influence, or at least input, on various regime decisions. The COM pressed for a regular dialogue and Maung Myint agreed. We'll continue, as always, to seek out similar opportunities. End Comment.

Martinez