

**When Burma entered ASEAN in 1997 it gained access to AUSAID's \$45 million ASEAN-Australia Development Cooperation Program - the AADCP. In 2004-2005 \$480,000 of AUSAID money under the AADCP was granted to an Australia-based security company, 'The Distillery', to run courses 'for senior officials in the theory of counter terrorism recognition and collaboration for combating terrorism'.**

The AUSAID Project funded counter-terrorism workshops, including a workshop in Burma attended by 30 Burmese government officials. The Burmese government reported the course was later delivered to 600 government personnel in Burma.

Since 2004 the Australian Government has funded Burmese intelligence training through the 'Jakarta Centre for Law Enforcement Cooperation', an arm of the Indonesian National Police Academy. The Centre receives \$6 million a year from the Attorney Generals Department, funds attributed to the Australian Government aid effort.

The Centre now plays an important role in training Burmese police and intelligence officers. Police from Burma participate in the yearly senior police officers courses and in regional workshops for instance in September 2006, on the theme of 'Terrorism: Regional Threat - United Response'. In November 2006 20 senior intelligence officers from the Burmese government were trained by three Australian Federal Police at the Centre.

The officers were photographed outside the Centre after the training:



[Photo courtesy of the JCLEC, [www.jclec.com](http://www.jclec.com)]

In addition to its involvement in the Jakarta Centre, the Australian Federal Police maintains a Liaison Office in Rangoon, which trains local police officers. AUSTRAC helps the Burmese military Government 'develop capacity in detecting and dealing with terrorism financing and money laundering' under a project funded by DFAT which provides 'in-country mentoring to counterpart Financial Intelligence Units'.

Intelligence and police training for the Burmese Government, paid for by Australian taxpayer, directly implicates the Australian Government in Burma's human rights abuses. Police intelligence training directly serves the military regime. In Burma there is no civil command:

since 1995 the Police force in Burma has come under the control of the military, the

*Tatmadaw* Police intelligence and the 'Special Branch' is subordinate to regional military command structures.

Human rights groups such as the New York-based Human Rights Watch and the Brussels based International Crisis Group highlight the increased use of police intelligence against pro-democracy groups in Burma, especially since 2004.

The Brussels-based International Crisis Group has documented the growing importance of police surveillance and intelligence in Burma since the breakdown in the reconciliation process in 2003. In 2004 the Group reported a major reorganisation of Burma's intelligence apparatus, with 'thousands of officials' reassigned to the Police Special Branch. As a result 'The regime relies now less on the army and more upon its comprehensive organisational reach through military intelligence, police, and other informer and control networks to suppress dissent and ensure that any stirrings of unrest are quickly dealt with'. In 2006 it confirmed these tendencies, documenting 'more intrusive intelligence surveillance' of humanitarian aid through the police Special Branch.

The New York-based Human Rights Watch also documents the growing centrality of intelligence agencies in Burma. Since 2004 Human Rights Watch documents a deteriorating human rights situation, especially for ethnic minorities. In its World Report released in January 2007 the group noted there were 1200 political prisoners, that political party offices remain closed, with members under strict surveillance, and political activities generally curtailed. In its chilling report, "They Came and Destroyed Our Village Again", published in 2005, Human Rights Watch detailed the *Tatmadaw's* strategy:

'The *Tatmadaw's* often brutal counter-insurgency strategies set the tone for coercive methods of dealing with dissent—whether armed revolt, nonviolent political dissent, or apolitical civilians—over the following decades. The *Tatmadaw's* "Four Cuts" (*pya leypya*) counter-insurgency strategy, used since 1963, best embodies the state's approach to suppressing ethnic minorities. A rebel group has been fully "cut" if it no longer has access to new recruits, intelligence, food, or finances. This approach aims to transform "black" (rebel-held) areas into "brown" (contested/free fire) areas, and then into "white" (government-held) areas.'

The senior police and intelligence officers trained by the Australian Federal Police are by definition part of the *Tatmadaw*. There has to be a strong possibility these Burmese officers are currently using the techniques they learnt from the AFP to repress the pro-democracy movement in Burma.

*Report compiled by Dr James Goodman, Chair, AIDWATCH*