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November 17, 1997.

President William Clinton  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington DC 20500  
United States of America

Dear Mr President:

re: United Nations protection of Burma's refugees in Thailand.

I am writing to Mr President for your helps in regards to United Nations protection for Burma's ethnic minority refugees in Thailand. I urge Mr President to encourage the Prime Minister of Thailand, Mr Chuan Leekpai, and the Royal Thai Government to make appropriate measures in regards to protection of our refugees. I am aware that, because of recent changes in Royal Thai Government, there are much less possibility of our refugees in Thailand being forcibly repatriated. However, it is strategically important for our refugees in Thailand to have the protection of United Nations. Such move will provide the necessary legal framework to the UNHCR in solving refugee and human rights problems in Burma.

I also like to draw Mr President's attention to the current international political environment in connection with the political and human rights struggles in Burma. Our efforts to solve Burma's refugee problem, in the post-ColdWar world's political context, can be seen as the oppressed people's movement for democratic and political freedom. It is noticeable that there are similar refugee problems in Asia, such as in Tibet and in East Timor. The governments concerned in these refugee situations, particularly from the refugee receiving countries (for example Thailand), have anxiety about United Nations and international community becoming involved. The United States, as the world's leader in post-ColdWar period, must therefore take a strong supportive role at the United Nations in solving these problems. I believe the United Nations and United States can tackle these problems, one at a time and over a longer period, in order to promote peace and justice in this region.

Along with the people of Burma, many communities within Asian region appears to be leaning towards more democratic systems. The United States, at this juncture, has a special role to play in encouraging these democratic changes in Asian societies. It is understandable that the United States, although being the world's military power, cannot possibly intervene in every conflict that may arise in the region. Nevertheless, the United States by herself and also in co-ordination with United Nations, can make good political influence in solving regional problems. It is therefore an appropriate time to enhance the legitimacy of the role of United Nations and to assert the leadership role of United States in solving these disputes.

Generally, there have been conflicts between business interests and promoting human rights in Burma. However, in the particular case of the operation of oil companies (i.e. the Unocal and TOTAL) in Burma, there have been ways for businesses to positively contribute democratization process in Burma. Other types of businesses should be more patient and more cautious about working in Burma.

Finally, there have been continuing concerns about drug-money laundering by Burmese military authorities. To tackle this problem, however, there are some technical difficulties. Firstly, there is a lack of accurate information about how financial transactions are being made. Secondly, the United Nations system doesn't seem to have proper mechanism to deal with the drug-money laundering problem. The United States Agencies, nevertheless, seems to have considerable intelligence apparatus as well as diplomatic connections to counter this problem. I wish the United States authorities consider to promote a special task-force to deal with possible drug-money laundering by the Burmese military.

In closing, I thank Mr President for your kind attention to these matters. The continuing supports by United States Government and Congress and especially by Mr President to our struggle for democracy in Burma are greatly appreciated by the Burmese people.

Yours respectfully and sincerely

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*17/11/97*

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