

# U.S. MAY STOP AID TO BURMA

WASHINGTON — The United States is considering ending financial aid to Burma following the military's takeover there and its violent repression of demonstrations, the White House said on Monday.

"In light of developments over the last 48 hours we are reviewing our assistance programs to Burma... With an eye to whether they should be eliminated or changed in any way," White House Spokesman

Marlin Fitzwater told reporters.

Fitzwater said the United States deplored the violence and urged Burmese military authorities to begin talks with opposition leaders "on arrangements for an early transition to multi-party democracy which Burmese in overwhelming numbers are demanding and which the authorities say they are prepared to grant."

Violence erupted in some Burmese cities after the army seized power on Sunday saying it wanted

to "halt deteriorating conditions all over the country and for the sake and interest of the people."

"Whatever the country's political problems, they cannot be solved by Burmese killing one another," the White House spokesman said, urging the military to stop shooting at demonstrators and demonstrators "to refrain from provocative actions."

On Monday troops in Rangoon opened fire on protesters, killing a man and demonstrating. Wit-

nesses said at least 69 people were killed in the violence.

Meanwhile, Assistant Secretary of State Gaston Sigur recommended Monday a cutoff of the US\$12.2 million in US aid to Burma to express disapproval of the new military government there, a department official said.

The official, who asked not to be identified, said he expects the administration in the next two or three days to act on the recommendation from Sigur, the assistant secretary of state for East Asian and Pacific affairs.

President Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz would have to approve the recommendation before the aid is halted.

"The key concern of the department is, 'Do we really want even minimal association with this regime, which is so widely opposed by the Burmese people?'" the official said. "There have been no dissenting voices."

In an interview, Representative Stephen Solarz, Democrat of New York, chairman of the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Asian and Pacific affairs, called Monday for an aid cutoff "both to protest this new wave of violence against the Burmese people and as a symbol of our support for the democratic aspirations of the people of Burma."

The State Department official said Sigur endorsed the aid cutoff Monday after deliberations by State Department, Agency for International Development and Pentagon officials.

US aid for fiscal 1988 consists of US\$7 million in development aid for agriculture and primary health care, US\$5 million for opium eradication and US\$260,000 for military training, according to State Department figures.

The official said no US aid to Burma had been delivered since July because many federal civil servants in the capital of Rangoon have skipped work to join anti-government demonstrations.

He said the department expects an aid cutoff to be a symbol that the Burmese people would "interpret as a sign the United States is behind them."

State Department spokesman Charles Redman said, "The United States is deeply concerned about and deplores the violence that has erupted once again in Burma."

He urged the Burmese military "immediately to stop shooting at demonstrators" and called on them "to enter into discussions with opposition leaders on arrangements for an early transition to multiparty democracy."

Asked about an aid cutoff, Redman said only,

"Obviously, as this kind of situation develops, we have to keep looking at a possibilities."

The department official said the State Department believes Ne Win played a role in Sunday's coup because "Sa Maung is Ne Win's cronie. We have reports of meetings between the two during the last few weeks."

The official said Burt Levin, the US ambassador to Burma, tried to contact Burma's leader Monday "to deplore the violence" against protesters but was told they were too busy to talk with him. He said Levin would convey US disapproval. Reuter/UPI

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