

EDSG

Confidential

13

Update Note for the Secretary-General  
28 January 2008 *Amal*

1. Iraq

De Mistura reports<sup>1</sup> on DSRSG Shearer's meeting with US Amb. Crocker, Deputy Chief of Mission Butines, Head of US Aid Chris Crowley, General Rollo and Maj-Gen Bergner

Crocker stressed the need for more coordination on displacement generally, and on resolving returnee property issues in particular. Many different parties are trying to deal with the displacement problem simultaneously, including Ahmed Chalabi, who is working with the US military to draft a pro-active approach by ISF on evicting squatters. UNAMI confirmed its strong commitment to supporting the Ministry of Displacement and Migration (MoDM) and increasing the number of staff in Iraq.

Rollo urged the UN to be more pro-active on returns and to encourage MoDM to include specific time frames, locations and action points in the forthcoming executive order. He was also concerned about the proposed budget allocation for the MoDM.

De Mistura comments that the MNFI is concerned about the possibility of violence that may ensue when returnees find their homes are occupied. However supporting the policy devised by Chalabi for large scale movements of IDPs risks being counter-productive. USAID and UNAMI share the view that there are not going to be mass returns of IDPs or refugees this year, unless the registration for elections creates a surge of returnees.

During each of the US or MNF meetings, counterparts gave examples of key field missions they had made to returnee or IDP areas. They are moving about Baghdad and the rest of the country more readily and more frequently than the UN is at present.

2. Lebanon

Following yesterday's popular demonstrations against electricity outages, seven people were killed and up to 40 were injured. Among those killed was Ahmad Hamza, a senior official of Amal (Speaker Berri's party).

Yesterday's violence occurred at the same time as the meeting of Arab FMs in Cairo. Media sources report that a majority of Arab League FMs rejected Syrian

<sup>1</sup> (CBX-001 of 27/01/08)  
28-00994

14

demands for more pro-Syrian representation in Lebanon's cabinet. Instead, the meeting called upon SG Amre Moussa to persist in his efforts to mediate between rival Lebanese stakeholders.

### 3. Equatorial Guinea/Gabon

Michel and Pascoe have sent a joint note to the SG<sup>2</sup> on the border dispute between Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. The note refers to the SG's separate meetings with the Presidents in the GA margins in September 2007. The SG requested Michel to hold further consultations with both parties to ascertain their respective positions on the issue of UN mediation in the border dispute between their countries. To that end, Michel met separately with the Vice PM and FM of Gabon, Jean Ping, and the FM of Equatorial Guinea, Don Pastor Micho Ondo Bile, but neither meeting led to clear conclusions.

Following these consultations, Pascoe and Michel met and came to the conclusion that the prospects for successful mediation were very limited, and that Equatorial Guinea and Gabon would likely prefer to invite the UN to assist them in reaching a peaceful settlement in another way, possibly through the ICJ.

Michel and Pascoe therefore recommend that the SG dispatch soon to Gabon and Equatorial Guinea a high-level DPA-OLA team to establish the wishes of the parties on how to proceed and how to assist them in finding a mutually agreeable solution. If agreeable to the SG, they would prepare ToRs and a strategy paper for such a mission. ) ok

### 4. Myanmar

Gambari has sent the SG a note on the implementation so far and next steps. Gambari suggests that the SG consider i) writing again to Than Shwe to reiterate key messages and stress the SG's expectations for Gambari's next visit; and ii) convening the Group of Friends in a restricted format to sound out their views on the proposed next steps. (Attachment # 1 with recommendations for approval) ) ok

### 5. Afghanistan

Asplund reports on President Karzai's speech at the inauguration of the new National Assembly term. While highlighting achievements (police reform, strengthening of the ANA, regional cooperation, counter-narcotics, private sector investment, etc.), he outlined the challenges, with terrorism as the primary challenge, stressing the importance of a continued strong partnership with the


<sup>2</sup> (28-00982)  
28-00994



international community and also of collective effort to combat terrorism at its "origins". He noted the improved coordination between international military forces and the Afghan security organs, resulting in the reduced number of civilian casualties.

He described administrative corruption as a problem not only for Afghans but also for the international community, stressing the need for transparency in international organizations and for working together to fight such corruption – a reference which Asplund sees as relating to the recent misunderstanding which had resulted in the withdrawal of UNAMA and EU officials. Karzai also spoke of Afghanistan as a proud independent and sovereign nation and commented on the "dangers of excessive reliance on regional neighbours and foreign assistance." Asplund interprets this as Karzai's message that it was time for Afghans to take hold of their own destiny while signalling to the international community that international involvement should continue in an Afghan-led environment.

Asplund describes Karzai's speech as "well-delivered with a confident tone, especially when speaking about the fight against terrorism", which, he adds, may be a sign of renewed vigour as he enters a year that may be defined by his re-election campaign and one where the international community more openly addresses Afghan claims of terrorist activities in Pakistan.

  
Political Unit  
28 January 2008

cc: DSG, VN, KWS

Trip Captain		SG	
For SG's approval	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>[Signature]</i>	Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
For SG's attention	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>[Signature]</i>	Noted	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <i>[Signature]</i>
For SG's information	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seen	<input type="checkbox"/>
For SG's signature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date		Date	
Comment (if applicable):			
Log number: <i>00394</i> [28-00994]			



in DPA

Note to the Secretary-General /

Attachment # 1

16

## MYANMAR: NEXT STEPS

JAN 25 2008

22-00961

1. The purpose of this note is to: (i) review the implementation so far of your good offices; (ii) identify key parameters and constraints for the UN's engagement; and (iii) outline next steps for your good offices in the short- and medium-term, in terms of both process and substance.

## Where we are

2. Although the slow rate of progress on key issues and in developing a regular process of engagement with Myanmar is a source of frustration, it is important to keep the good offices efforts in perspective. After three years without any political dialogue between the UN and Myanmar, high-level access was re-established in 2006 with both the SPDC and Aung San Suu Kyi (ASSK). Confidence-building efforts with the Myanmar authorities and extensive consultations with key Member States to build support for your good offices put the UN in a unique position to intervene at the height of the crisis in September. The UN succeeded in putting ASSK "back in the picture" by issuing a statement on her behalf and by persuading the Government to establish a liaison mechanism with her and allow her to meet with her party. These openings continue to make the UN good offices "the only game in town" in terms of engagement at the national, regional and international levels. It is therefore imperative to chart a realistic course forward that recognizes the parameters and constraints for the good offices.

## Parameters and constraints

3. At the national level, three key considerations inform our understanding of Myanmar's own expectations of the good offices: (i) the regime is undergoing a fundamental transition, both politically through the implementation of its seven-step roadmap, including the drafting of a new constitution that will redefine the role of the military, and in generational terms between the current leadership and the next generation of officials; (ii) the potential remains for renewed armed conflict between the Government and ethnic groups dissatisfied with the constitutional process and the prospect of their disarmament; and (iii) the recent crisis, including the repression of monks, exposed the Government's failed economic policies and questioned its legitimacy. While there are signs of an ongoing debate internally on the merits and costs of cooperation with the UN, the regime's internal focus is such that UN political efforts are likely to remain secondary to its priorities. It is thus essential for the good offices to continue to pursue a broad agenda, including political, human rights, humanitarian and socio-economic concerns, in order to maximize prospects for cooperation.

4. At the regional level, Myanmar's stated preference to deal with the UN as primary interlocutor clearly exposed the limits of ASEAN's collective action. Key ASEAN countries (Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam) should continue their individual efforts in support of the UN good offices. At the same time, ASEAN's weakness has exposed China as the main actor in a position to influence Myanmar, which in turn has exposed India to use its own influence. While China has already demonstrated its capacity to facilitate access to Myanmar, it has also explicitly endorsed the Government's roadmap as the basis for Myanmar's political transition. It is essential that both China and India facilitate tangible progress on the ground in substantive areas of concern.

5. At the inter-governmental level, despite the unprecedented level of support for your good offices, divisions among Member States continue to be exploited by the regime. While the good offices derive from the General Assembly, the Security Council's active involvement in the matter means that we have, in effect, become accountable to the Council in the implementation of your mandate. Behind expressions of support, however, fundamental divisions among Council members



17/12  
limit the potential for any further Council action at this point. In this context, the Group of Friends on Myanmar provides a vehicle for finding common approaches to implement the shared objectives of your mandate, including the possibility of developing a package of incentives at an appropriate time for the Government to cooperate with the UN. The EU's potential ability to assist in this regard is an additional constructive dimension which should be further explored in close coordination with the EU Special Envoy.

### Next steps

6. The slow progress is compounded by a lack of clarity regarding my return to Myanmar. While the last two missions were imposed on the Government under exceptional circumstances, an open and regular process of engagement is essential to avoid media attention that artificially raises the stakes of any visit and to ensure that process does not substitute for substantive progress.

7. Substantively, while the expectations borne out of the recent crisis remain very high, it is important to recognize that the good offices cannot be expected to deliver "spectacular" results at every visit and that any progress will necessarily have to be incremental. In this connection, my next visit to Myanmar should not be seen as a "make-or-break" exercise, but rather as the continuation of our efforts so far. In light of the above constraints, it is also important to recognize that the good offices process is likely to continue to meet obstacles. A key challenge that is likely to test the UN's credibility is the imminent completion of a new constitution under the Government's roadmap process. Whatever the UN's position vis-à-vis this political reality, it will likely define the future of the UN's engagement. I look forward to present you with recommendations in this regard.

8. In this context, while continuing to push for all the key objectives which you laid out before the Group of Friends, three basic objectives can reasonably be aimed at for my next visit:

- i. To explore ways of advancing the discussion between the Government and ASSK, with regard to: (a) the level, scope and content of a substantive dialogue, (b) the possibility of extending the dialogue to ethnic groups, and (c) options for the UN's role in support of a dialogue.
- ii. To reach agreement on (a) the establishment of a broad-based "poverty alleviation commission" to address socio-economic concerns with UN support, and (b) cooperation mechanisms with the UN in the humanitarian area.
- iii. To regularize the process of UN engagement, including: (a) agreement on regular good offices visits with maximum flexibility in terms of programme, and (b) the possibility of establishing a small and discreet liaison capacity in Yangon in support of the mission.

9. Notwithstanding the lack of response to your first letter to General Than Shwe, you may wish to consider writing to him again to stress your expectations for my next visit and reiterate key messages. Meanwhile, sustained and focused engagement will need to continue with key Member States to translate their support into action towards results on the ground. As agreed, following my last visit to Washington D.C. on 17 December, I plan to visit the EU in Brussels on 25 January and New Delhi on 29-31 January, followed by Beijing around 20 February, with a view to returning to Myanmar as soon as possible. In parallel, as discussed, it would be useful to convene the Group of Friends at your convenience in a restricted format to sound out their views on the above objectives.

Trip Captain		SG	
For SG's approval	<input type="checkbox"/>	Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>
For SG's attention	<input type="checkbox"/>	Noted	<input type="checkbox"/>
For SG's information	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 9/26	Seen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 17/12
For SG's signature	<input type="checkbox"/>	Signed	<input type="checkbox"/>
Date		Date	
Comment (if applicable):			



Ibrahim Gambari  
 24 January 2008