

Asia rejects control by 'human rights' mafia

by Lydia Cherry

Thailand, host country for a 47-nation planning meeting to prepare an Asian position for the June World Conference on Human Rights, created pandemonium by charging that western "human rights" organizations are run by the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency to destabilize Third World countries and prevent their economic development. Leveling the charges on March 30 was the former foreign minister of Thailand, Thanat Khoman, now a government adviser. He cited the U.S.-based Asia Watch and London-based Amnesty International, which he has been "watching for a long time, and I found out they are actually fronts for the CIA and are biased against Thailand." He demanded that these entities no longer be heeded as credible.

The Thai move was a direct hit on one of the pillars of the Anglo-American "new world order," and it was leveled by a former U.S. ally that is still reeling from being on the receiving end of the "Philippines treatment" last summer. As *EIR* exposed June 12, 1992, the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) functions as the financial angel for the entire so-called democracy movement in Thailand, which erupted into violent action on May 18-19, 1992 in Bangkok, leading to confrontation with the Thai military and the killing of probably a few hundred people. That protesters movement was organized by a plethora of "non-governmental organizations," which had been legalized in Thailand in 1989. These NGOs are in turn funded directly, and controlled both directly and indirectly, by the U.S. government, and are effectively agencies of the U.S. government.

Room to maneuver

Thailand is but one actor in what is now a multi-faceted play. It is as if a large number of developing-sector countries, particularly in Asia but also in Ibero-America and Africa, have learned from each others' experiences and have chosen the western "human rights" mafia as a weak flank in the geopolitics of the new world order. The old strategic arrangements have broken down, and the new ones are not yet consolidated; momentarily, they perceive that they have some maneuvering room.

Recognizing this, the *Wall Street Journal* editorialized on April 9: "If you're looking out to the horizon for a glimpse of oncoming disputes, keep your eye on the growing Asian impatience with western notions of democracy and human rights. The chief target at the regional conference on human

rights held recently in Bangkok wasn't Iraq, with its ritual slaughter of Kurds. It wasn't Burma, which has refugees fleeing on two fronts. No, the target was the West!"

It was simply a case of "dictatorships from the Middle East banding together with those in East Asia," lied the news service Agence France Presse. "The final declaration was totally dominated by Chinese views."

The *Wall Street Journal* was slightly more honest, acknowledging "the way Burma interprets individual rights—there are none—is very different from the way Malaysia does, with its high degree of economic and individual freedom," and that "Malaysia has criticized Rangoon's record."

An early indication that something interesting was in the works was that two countries in the geographical region were excluded from deliberations. Australia—a launching pad for Anglo-American operations in the region—and New Zealand were told that they could come to the Bangkok to "observe," but that they were to keep their mouths shut.

One of the key issues discussed, reflected in the final declaration, was that the geopolitical game to use human rights as a conditionality for extending development assistance must be countered. Here, the case of India is instructive, and Prime Minister Narasimha Rao, in an official visit to Thailand directly following the human rights meet, discussed his country's plight with Thai leaders.

India has been under the gun of the terrorists in Punjab and Kashmir, on the one hand, and international human rights organizations like Amnesty International, on the other. In the case of India, both terrorist groups and the human rights mafia tend to be primarily controlled, directly or indirectly, from London. Despite factual inaccuracies and blatant bias against India expressed in its reports, Amnesty International has maneuvered the issue of human rights violations into a criterion for disbursement of aid to India (and other Third World countries).

During Prime Minister Rao's visit to Thailand over April 7-9, Amnesty International, in spite of the former Thai foreign minister's broadside against it, had the gall to insist that the Indian government allow it to inspect all areas of the country where it suspects there might be human rights violations. Amnesty insisted that its priority was to visit Jammu and Kashmir state, scene of an insurgency fueled by Britain, but that it must also be allowed to go to Assam and the northeastern states and to visit Punjab, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Kerala states.

The final declaration hammered out at Bangkok is described by Amnesty as "a large step backward." The declaration says that efforts "toward the creation of uniform international human rights norms must go hand in hand with endeavors to work toward a just and fair world economic order." It urges that "national institutions" play "an important role" in promoting human rights, and that the establishment of such institutions is "best left for the states to decide." The delegates "discourage any attempt to use human rights as a

conditionality for extending aid and development assistance” and “emphasize the principles of respect for national sovereignty and territorial integrity as well as non-interference in the internal affairs of states, and the non-use of human rights as an instrument of political pressure.”

The next forum for the conflict will be the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in June.

Documentation

Thanat Khoman, the former foreign minister of Thailand and also former head of the Democrat Party, made the following statements as part of the official Thai delegation on the second day of the Asian Regional Meeting on Human Rights on March 30:

Private organizations which allow themselves the right to denounce [sic] others of human rights violations should be investigated regarding their impartiality and their independence and whether they have connections or receive support and directives from outside governmental sources.

This is necessitated by their dubious behavior when they vigorously denounce certain occurrences by becoming deaf and dumb on other occasions.

Self-appointed private, or even governmental sources, act as if they have the authority or mandate from recognized international authorities, such as the UNHCR [U.N. High Commission for Refugees], the Center for Human Rights, or any organ which may be set up for that purpose. Likewise, no measures devised by private sources should be deemed to have compulsory compliance force, especially when they are applied selectively and discriminately.

Parties which accuse others of committing human rights violations must be scrutinized to see whether they are clean and clear of such malpractices themselves.

Charges of human rights violations which are not authenticated by appropriate international authorities should be dismissed, denounced, and declared illicit.

Followed out of the hall by representatives of non-governmental organizations demanding that he clarify his remarks, Thanat continued:

What I was referring to was Amnesty International and Asia Watch. I have been watching these two organizations for a long time, and I found out they are actually fronts for the CIA and are biased against Thailand. These human rights violators of the North [Amnesty International and Asia Watch] have abused and misused their fundamental rights to service their own selfish purposes. They also use human rights as a means to make unfounded charges to extract and extort economic or political concessions.

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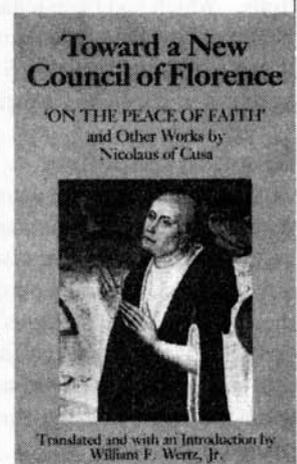
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