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020/1

BRITISH EMBASSY

RANGOON

3 July 1979

REFUGEES, BURMESE STYLE

SUMMARY

1. 170,000 out of 200,000 Muslim refugees have returned to Burma from Bangladesh, a remarkable success story.

(Paragraph 1)

2. The Arakanese frontier has always seen large scale migration in both directions and the Muslim presence in Arakan has sharply increased in recent years. The uneasy Muslim/Buddhist relationship.

(Paragraphs 2 and 3)

3. The exodus of 1978 and the reasons for it described (paragraphs 4 to 7). Successful bilateral negotiations (paragraphs 8 and 9) resulted in the Hintha Project, a determined Burmese effort to repatriate the refugees (paragraphs 10 to 13). The long term problem of resettlement was also tackled with UN aid.

(Paragraphs 14 and 15)

4. Ne Win's motives in agreeing to the repatriation examined. A lesson to South-East Asia and the world.

(Paragraphs 16 and 17)

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