BURMA ALERT No.12
(Volume 2, December 1991)

Burmese News:

NORWAY OFFICIALLY RECOGNIZES SEIN WIN GOVERNMENT
On 9 Dec, Norwegian Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg officially received Prime Minister Dr Sein Win and Foreign Minister U Peter Limbin of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), at the Foreign Ministry in Oslo. Prime Minister Gro Harlem Brundtland also met the NCGUB delegation on 11 Dec. The Norwegian government still maintains diplomatic ties with the military junta in Rangoon but recognized the NCGUB as the legitimate government elected by the people of Burma. To assist the NCGUB to internationalize its cause and provide humanitarian assistance to people under its care, Nkr 2 million (US$320,000) in aid was given to the NCGUB. Prime Minister Dr Sein Win was in Oslo to participate in the official ceremony to award the Nobel Peace Prize to his cousin Daw Aung San Suu Kyi [F911226 & IMTEC911211].

WATANABE WANTS SLCRC TO HONOUR 1990 ELECTION RESULTS
New Japanese Foreign Minister Michio Watanabe, speaking at his first press conference on 5 Nov, said that he will seek the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, General-Secretary of the National League for Democracy (NLD) and urge the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to hand over power to the NLD. He said, "I would like to urge Myanmar's rulers to submit to the results of the (May 1990) general elections, because they lost the election. If they refuse to accept the results, I believe they will duly have no alternative but to suffer sanctions from the international community" [KYO911106].

THAI P.M. - "BURMA NEEDS DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT"
Thai Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun said that Burma needed "above all, a government that abides by democratic rules". He made the statement in a keynote speech on 4 Nov to a regional security conference in Bangkok attended by more than a dozen countries. SLORC Ambassador to Thailand U Nyunt Swe who attended the conference declined comment but said that he needed to study the speech more closely. Thai Foreign Minister Arsa Sarasin, however, reaffirmed Thailand's official position that isolating SLORC internationally would not resolve the problem [N911105].

UNITED NATIONS REBUKES SLCRC AND EXPRESSES CONCERN
On 29 Nov, the 46th session of the United Nations General Assembly adopted a consensus resolution expressing its concern about the "grave human rights situation" in Burma. The General Assembly reaffirmed that all Member States have an obligation to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms stated in its Charter and elaborated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The resolution, which was sponsored by Albania, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bhutan, Bulgaria, Canada, Chili, Costa Rica, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, India, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Malta, Mauritius, Norway, Panama, Poland, Romania, Samoa, Sweden, U.S.S.R., the U.K. and Northern Ireland, and U.S.A., attracted widespread support even among ASEAN countries who, for the first time, publicly recorded their concern. It is also unprecedented that a resolution criticizing a member country by name for fundamental human rights abuses was unanimously adopted by the UNGA on its first presentation. Other resolutions in the past won approval only after several years of debate. Even China and Cuba, who traditionally view any criticism of a country's human rights record as unacceptable interference in its domestic affairs, went along with the consensus. The 'Myanmar' delegation strongly opposed the resolution but recognized the weakness of its position and did not call for a vote. The General Assembly reminded SLORC of its promise to the U.N. to take steps to establish democracy in Burma. The resolution called for an improvement in the human rights situation, and urged that all citizens be allowed to participate in the political process. The resolution also welcomed the U.N. Secretary-General's statement on the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and his repeated appeals for her early release. The U.N. will review the situation at its 47th session in September 1992. Diplomats at the U.N. acknowledged that lobbying by Dr Sein Win, U Peter Limbin and U Win Ko, Minister of Finance of the NCGUB, played an important role in assuring the passage of the resolution [CS911212, NCG911210, NY911129, DA911129, UN911129].
BURMA ALERT Volume 2, No.12 December 1991 Page 2

Burma News: (continued)

RANGOON UNIVERSITY UPRISING CRUSHED
On 10 Dec, hundreds of students at Rangoon University marched to demand the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. This was the first major demonstration against SLORC since 1988. Riot police and troops in combat gear and armoured personnel carriers immediately surrounded the campus and put up barbed wire barricades to prevent civilians from joining the students. About 300 soldiers took up position outside Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s house and troops with bayonets fixed to their automatic rifles guarded key intersections in the city. After two days of protests, riot police moved onto the campus and arrested about 400 demonstrators. Prison vans were seen repeatedly ferrying students away. Parents of arrested students have allegedly also been picked up and interrogated by military intelligence. A bomb exploded in Mandalay killing two people and a similar demonstration took place at Mandalay University but broke up as soon as troops arrived. No arrests were made. All 28 universities, medical & engineering institutes, colleges and 22 technical and agricultural schools in Burma have now been closed by SLORC to prevent further disturbances. High schools in Rangoon were also closed for a week. The institutions of higher learning had only been re-opened by SLORC in May 1991 after they were shut down for 3 years following nation-wide demonstrations in 1988 calling for a return to democracy [A920103, ABSDF911211, AFP911212, BUR911231, RE911212, UPI911212].

SLORC DELIBERATELY DESTROYING POLITICAL OPPOSITION
In its latest 55-page report on Burma, Amnesty International said that SLORC is stepping up its campaign to destroy the non-violent political opposition in Burma in the same way it is trying to eliminate armed resistance groups. Major General Phone Myint, a member of SLORC and a cabinet minister, is quoted as telling leaders of 58 political parties in Rangoon on 1 Feb.91 that SLORC will not tolerate political attacks on the military and attempts to transfer power to a civilian government. He said, “We will smash any enemy who plans to attack us.” Amnesty names some 200 people arbitrarily arrested in the first seven months of 1991, bringing to over 1,500 the list of political prisoners arrested since 1988 whom Amnesty has been able to identify by name. Most of those arrested in 1991 are NLD Members of Parliament, members or supporters of other legal political parties, students and Buddhist monks. “Union of Myanmar (Burma): Arrests and trials of political prisoners, January-July 1991” (AI Index: ASA 16/10 /91), December 1991, is available from your national Amnesty office or its International Secretariat, 1 Easton Street, London WC1X 8DJ, United Kingdom. Another 10-page report, “Myanmar (Burma): Unfair political trials” (AI Index: ASA 16/06 /91), was issued in September 1991.

“SLORC HAS NO RIGHT TO HOLD POWER” - JURISTS
The International Commission of Jurists said in its 95-page report that human rights are being systematically violated in Burma and that, “Neither under the principle of law nor the constitutional law of Myanmar has SLORC any right to hold power after the people have expressed their wishes in favour of a NLD government”. It called on the international community to impose “strict economic sanctions” until power is transferred in accordance with the 1990 election results. The Geneva-based ICJ is a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the U.N. Economic and Social Council, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the OAU. Its task is to defend the rule of law. “The Burmese Way to Where?”, can be obtained from ICJ, P.O.Box 145, CH-1224 Chêne-Bougeries, Geneva, Switzerland.

ARBITRARY LAWS USED BY SLORC TO CONTROL DISSENT
Article 19, the London-based organization that opposes censorship worldwide, states that SLORC enacts seemingly arbitrary laws to control dissent. “If those perceived as enemies .. cannot be prosecuted under ... (existing laws) .. then a new law may be retrospectively applied. The latest law against ‘moral turpitude’ effectively ensures that those who cannot be charged under existing laws will be ensnared by this catch-all legislation.” The 110-page report entitled, “State of Fear - Censorship in Burma”, calls for the 1990 elections to be honoured, the release of all political prisoners, the repeal of all restrictive press laws, that publication of literature in ethnic minority languages be allowed, journalists be given access to restricted areas, and that academic freedom be respected. Article 19 also called on the U.N. to ensure that SLORC does not misuse its aid programmes. The report is available from: Article 19, 90 Borough High St., London SE1 1LL, U.K. Tel: 44 (71) 403-4822 or Fax: 44 (71) 403-1943.
Human Rights:

YE SOE AUNG, 18, TORTURED AND MURDERED BY THAI POLICE


**************

THE NATION, Wednesday November 20, 1991

1 Burmese killed on border

“Burmese students accused Thai police of torturing and killing an 18-year-old student on the border.... Thai Border Police denied the report saying Ye Soe Aung was killed by a village headman. A spokesman for the national police in Bangkok said he was unaware of the incident.... The body was found on November 10.... A UNHCR official in Bangkok said he had no information about the case but said the UN body was responsible for protecting Burmese in Bangkok who had been granted refugee status.”

**************

Ye Soe Aung, 18, a high school student who took part in the 1988 demonstrations in Burma, fled to Thailand to avoid being arrested. He was recognized by the UNHCR in Bangkok as a “person of concern” (equivalent to refugee status), given an I.D. - N.I. No.4123, and placed under UNHCR protection. Following a crackdown by police in Bangkok of ‘illegal’ Burmese including those under the ‘protection’ of the UNHCR, Ye Soe Aung left for the village of Ban-I-Tuang on the border.

According to local villagers, Thai police went on 4 Nov, around 9 p.m., to the house where Ye Soe Aung was staying. The policemen took Ye Soe Aung to the house of the village headman and reportedly beat, kicked and stabbed him several times while holding him in front of the headlights of a car. He was then taken to the front of the house and tortured again. Witnesses in nearby houses heard Ye Soe Aung screaming and the policemen shouting obscene language. Two gunshots were heard and there was silence. Motorcycles then started up and drove away. There was no sign of Ye Soe Aung.

Hearing about the incident, the All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF) and the Karen National Union (KNU), on 5 and 6 Nov, repeatedly requested the Thai police, Thai intelligence officers, the Thai Army, the Thai Border Patrol Police and Thai civil administrative officers for the release of Ye Soe Aung. They were told that Ye Soe Aung had been released on the evening of 4 Nov.

Ye Soe Aung’s body was found on 10 Nov, four kilometers from Ban-I-Tuang. The body was difficult to identify because of the many injuries it had sustained. Deep knife wounds were found on the chest, abdomen, upper arms and legs. The whole body was covered by black bruises and the corpse had no teeth left. Ye Soe Aung had been shot twice. One bullet entered the left cheek and exited the back of the skull on the right side. The other bullet entered the right abdomen.

Thai authorities now say that the policemen involved were ‘village police’ and that they have been transferred to another district. It is unclear whether they have been charged with the crime.

This is not the first time a Burmese student refugee has been killed by Thai police. On 29 July, Min Thein, a student leader, was shot by police while ‘trying to escape’. Burmese refugees in general live a precarious life in Thailand because they are not recognized as refugees but as ‘illegal immigrants’. The incidence of human rights abuses against Burmese refugees is increasing - extortion, rape, forced labor, arrest and repatriation are said to be common place.

In Oct.91, the U.S. Committee for Refugees estimated 53,000 Burmese refugees in Thailand. The Thai government has now released details about its long awaited ‘safe’ camp for Burmese refugees in Ratchaburi which will have a capacity of 1,500. Many question how ‘safe’ the camp will be. Students in previous camps were forcefully repatriated to Burma and arrested by SLORC. Concerned readers are urged to write to:

Mrs Sadako Ogata, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Palais des Nations, Geneva 10, Switzerland.

Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, Government House, Bangkok 13000, Thailand. Fax: 66(2) 280-1443

International News:

CANADA:
From 24-27 Nov, the CENTRE FOR DAYS OF PEACE, CANADIAN PHYSICIANS FOR THE PREVENTION OF NUCLEAR WAR, CANADIAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION and UNICEF CANADA hosted a conference in Ottawa, entitled ‘Humanitarian Ceasefires: Peacebuilding for Children’ to facilitate the implementation of the Plan of Action adopted by 71 world leaders at the World Summit for Children held in New York in Sep.90. The conference examined the feasibility of implementing humanitarian ceasefires to allow the delivery of relief supplies and healthcare services to children and non-combatants in conflict zones in Afghanistan, BURMA, Cambodia, the Horn of Africa and Sri Lanka.

FRANCE:
At a joint press conference in Paris on 16 Oct, the FRANCE-BURMA ASSOCIATION, the GEOPOLITICAL DRUGS OBSERVATORY, and ACT TOGETHER FOR HUMAN RIGHTS (AGIR), denounced SLORC as a ‘narco-dictatorship’ which is deeply involved in drug trafficking.

NORWAY:
The INTERNATIONAL PEACE RESEARCH INSTITUTE, NORWEGIAN INSTITUTE OF HUMAN RIGHTS, UNIVERSITY OF OSLO, INTERNATIONAL LEARNING COOPERATIVE, NORWEGIAN PEN and the International Solidarity Committee of the NORWEGIAN LABOUR MOVEMENT organized “Burma Days in Oslo” from 6-11 Dec to celebrate the awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Several seminars on Burma were held. Speakers were: NCGUB Prime Minister Dr Sein Win; journalists and authors Bertil Lintner and Martin Smith; and scholars Dr Aung Kin from the UK, Dr Michael Aung-Thwin from the USA and Dr Sulak Sivaraksa from Thailand. The highlight was a Burmese cultural evening with U Tun Aung and Dr Mya Maung from the USA; the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony; and a torchlight procession through Oslo which was organized by AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL.

On 9 Nov, nine former Nobel Peace Laureates wrote to General Saw Maung urging SLORC to enter into dialogue with their fellow Nobellist Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other detained political leaders in order to restore human rights and democracy in Burma and bring about peace. They also called for an arms embargo, sanctions on trade and investments, and a moratorium on all economic assistance to SLORC. The signatories were: the Dalai Lama of Tibet (1989), Dr Oscar Arias, former President of Costa Rica (1987), Dr Elie Wiesel, USA (1986), Dr Bernard Lown, International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, USA (1985), Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa (1984), Mrs Mairead Maguire, Northern Ireland (1976), Dr Willy Brandt, Germany (1971), Dr Linus Pauling, USA (1962), and Ms Mavis Robertson, International Peace Bureau, Switzerland (1910).

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
On 10 Dec, a rally was held in front of the United Nations in New York to honour Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Speeches were delivered by U.S. Congressmen Steven Solarz and Charles Schumer, Czechoslovakian Ambassador H. E. Edward Kukan, Norwegian Ambassador H.E. Martin Huslin, the Dalai Lama of Tibet’s representative Richen Dhaslo, New York City Council President Andrew Stein, New York Councilman Thomas Duane, Amnesty International’s Bill William, the Lawyers’ Committee for Human Rights’ Jim Ross, USA PEN’s Karen Swanson, New York Rain Forest Action Group’s Noah Madlin, Human Rights in China General Secretary Xiao Qiang and Daw Aye Aye Thant, daughter of the late U.N. Secretary General U Thant. The rally called for the prohibition of military equipment to SLORC, trade and investment sanctions and the ending of existing economic assistance programs to SLORC.

On 17 Nov, the SOCIETY FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF BUDDHISM in Fort Myers, Florida, dedicated a Kathin Robe ceremony to the people of Burma and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

On 9 Nov, the FEDERATION FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND DEMOCRACY IN BURMA held a luncheon at the home of U Hla Shwe in Long Beach, California to honour Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. Congressman Dana Rohrabacher and Mr Magdeleno M Rose-Avila, Western Region Director of AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA were guest speakers. Other Burmese groups represented included the NCGUB, the BURMA BULLETIN, CITIZENS FOR A FREE BURMA, COMMITTEE FOR THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN BURMA, and the FEDERAL FREEDOM FRONT (BURMA).
Foreign Investments & Trade:

JAPAN:
NISSAN, ISUZU and TOYOTA have over the past 18 months shipped a large number of trucks for 'commercial' use to Rangoon. The trucks, however, were painted military green prior to being exported and SLORC is reported to be using them for the military [F911107]. Address: Toyota Motor Company, Chairman Toyoda Eiji, 1 Toyota-cho, Toyota City, Aichi Prefecture, Japan.

KOREA:
*DAEWOO CORP and SAMWON ENTERPRISE have formed Myanmar Korea Timber International, a joint venture with state-owned Myanmar Timber enterprise to produce plywood and other wood conversions. Initial capital was Kyat 20 million (US$3.2 million) [F911128]. Address: Daewoo Corporation, Chairman Kim Woo Choong, 541, 5-ga, Namdaemun-no, Chung-gu, Seoul, S. Korea.

PAKISTAN:
In Nov.91, a six-man SLORC military delegation including officers from the procurement directorate visited Pakistan. SLORC's deputy intelligence chief Lieut-Col Than Tun had also visited Islamabad earlier as a guest of Pakistan's Inter-Service Intelligence. It is reported that Pakistan wants to take over Fritz-Werner's role in the Burmese defence industry. Fritz-Werner which owns an arms manufacturing joint venture in Burma is said to be under pressure from Bonn to withdraw its interest [F911128]. Address: Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Government House, Islamabad, Pakistan.

SWEDEN:
The THAI-SWEDEN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE cancelled a controversial visit to Burma by a 15-man delegation comprising Bangkok-based representatives of private Swedish companies. The visit scheduled for 25-28 Nov was criticized by the Swedish government, the Burmese pro-democracy opposition movement and international human rights groups [F911114].

THAILAND:
Thai Agriculture Minister Anat Arbhabhirama led an 19-man delegation to Rangoon 28-30 Nov.91 for bilateral trade talks. The visit was postponed from August because of international criticism of SLORC's human rights record. Anat said that in the future, SLORC wants Thai government-owned agencies like the FOREST INDUSTRY ORGANIZATION (FIO) and the THAI PLYWOOD COMPANY to participate in logging concessions it grants, rather than allow private Thai firms to have sole rights as in the past. SLORC also requested technical help in forestry and Thailand will send experts or accept Burmese officials for training. SLORC extended fishing concessions granted to Thai firms in 1990 to allow three Thai companies to fish for 41 days in Burmese waters per trip instead of 35. A joint committee to control cross-border cattle trade and the need to prevent hoof and mouth disease was discussed. Thailand imports about 200,000 head of cattle from Burma annually [B911201 & F911212].

*RICE ENGINEERING SUPPLY CO. which formed Myanmar Rice Engineering Supply in Oct.89 ("Alert" No.1, Vol.1) with the Myanmar Agricultural Produce Trading Co. to manufacture rice-mill and other farm machinery has launched a US$3 million project [F911128].


The "Burma Alert" is published monthly by the ADDB. It monitors foreign investments and trade with Burma to provide the Burmese democracy movement with data for their campaigns against the military dictatorship in Rangoon. Readers wishing to support the work are invited to become 'Associates' by contributing US$100.00 annually. The ADDB is partially funded by subscriptions to the "Burma Alert", by associates and by a grant from the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montreal, Canada. Subscription to the "Burma Alert" is US$25.00 per annum payable to ADDB, c/o Harn Yawnghswe, RR.4, Shawville, Quebec J0X 2Y0, Canada. Fax: 1 (819) 647-3088
FREE SUU KYI, FREE BURMA

Participants at the international conference on Burma in Washington DC from 15-17 Nov ("Alert" No. 10, Vol.2, Oct.91) launched an INTERNATIONAL BURMA CAMPAIGN (IBC) to obtain the release of Nobel laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners, and to assist in the restoration of democracy in Burma. While the IBC is a broad-based network of organizations working in different areas of concern such as human rights, the environment, etc., a separate campaign dedicated to seeking the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners known as the "FREE SUU KYI, FREE BURMA" campaign was also formed by the IBC. The ADDB endorses the goal of this campaign and information is reproduced below to facilitate the campaign:

CAMPAIGN GOAL:
By non-violent means, to obtain the unconditional release of Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners in Burma.

CAMPAIGN STRATEGY:
* Education/consciousness-raising among the general public (media exposure, advertisement, etc.);
* lobbying governments and organizations to use diplomatic and economic means to influence SLORC;
* lobbying companies investing in or thinking about investing in Burma (boycotts, etc.);
* organizing tourist boycotts of countries which support SLORC;
* asking sympathetic national leaders to exert their influence on SLORC;
* direct pressure on SLORC by letter, telex, fax;
* asking legal experts to construct (pro-bono) a legal defence for Aung San Suu Kyi and other prisoners.

SUPPORT NEEDED:
* ENDORSEMENT of campaign;
* FUNDING (Cheques to "FREE SUU/NI", Box 39127, Friendship Stn, Washington DC.20016, USA);
* FACILITIES and SERVICES (Office space, equipment, research, etc.);
* PUBLICITY for the campaign;
* PARTICIPATING IN and encouraging others to participate in the campaign.


To support the campaign or get more information, contact: "FREE SUU KYI, FREE BURMA" Campaign, David Arnott, c/o UMOUN, 11 Floor, 777 UN Plaza, New York, NY.10017, USA. Tel: 1 (212) 682-3633, Fax: 1 (212) 682-5354.

Those wishing to campaign for democracy in Burma beyond the scope of the "FREE SUU KYI, FREE BURMA" campaign should contact IBC, c/o Executive Director Daw Tin Nu Raschid, 307 Yoakum Parkway, Suite 1726, Alexandria, VA.22304, USA. Tel: 1 (703) 823-1937, Fax: 1 (703) 823-1938.