

B. U. R. M. A.

BURMA RIGHTS MOVEMENT FOR ACTION

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Along with hundreds of thousands of other people in Burma, the Rohingya's continue to live as displaced persons without hope of a secure and permanent home.

"The Burmese democracy movement has been essentially non-violent. But against the unrestrained use of force, non-violent action requires the help of the world community, but very few people seem to be listening. When Iraq invaded Kuwait, the US and its allies responded with violence, but now we see the tragic and unexpected consequences of this strategy. Perhaps if other means had been used, the tragedy of the Kurds and Shiites would not have happened. Now some of the young Burmese students who were using non-violent means have fled to the border and have taken up arms in desperation. In my view it is more the responsibility of the international community to use whatever means it has at its disposal, such as economic sanctions, to solve this problem than it is of these young people. The world community should be strong in non-violent action before more violence occurs."

"Buddhism, Human Rights and Justice in Burma", Ven. Rewata Dhanima

P.O. Box 1076, Silom Post Office, Bangkok 10504 Thailand

CIVIL WAR

The following report was given by Slorc outlining total casualties on both sides during the summer offensive from 21 March 1992 to 20 March 1993. However the number of guerrilla casualties is much higher than those of the Burmese army and it is probable that innocent civilian casualties are also listed as guerrilla casualties by Slorc. The Slorc operates on the principle that civilians living in guerrilla active zones are collaborators, sympathizer or relatives of the guerrillas and thus are all subject to harassment and persecution. Whenever military operations take place, casualties of civilians are always higher than armed dissidents in the ethnic minority areas.

Northern Military Command (Kachin State)

The area is under Kachin Independence Army (KIA) control. Slorc carried out two counterinsurgency offensives called Operation Thu Yein Tun (Bright Sun) and Min Thi Ha (Lion King) in the area. A total of 35 heavy and 254 minor clashes took place.

The Slorc report said that the Burmese Army (BA) killed 127 KIA and captured 87. Another 18 KIA surrendered to the BA. A total of 3 Burmese army officers and 24 other ranks were killed, and 45 officers and 52 other ranks were wounded.

Northeast Military Command Area (Northeast Shan State)



Two young Burmese soldiers captured in battle. They are young, fearful and longing to return to their families.

This area is under KIA and Shan United Army (SUA) control. Slorc carried out Operation Aung Hein Moe in this area. During the military operation, 16 heavy and 116 minor clashes broke out.

The BA claimed to have killed 72 guerrillas and captured 22. Another 26 guerrillas surrendered to the BA. A total of 2 BA officers and 15 other ranks were killed and 3 officers and 16 other ranks were wounded.

Eastern Military Command (Shan, Karenni & Karen State)

These areas are controlled by the SUA, Karen National Union (KNU) and Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP). Slorc carried out two military offensives called Operation

Kyaw Naing Tun (success overcome) and Pyi Yan Aye (peaceful nation) in the area. During the military operation, a total of 17 heavy and 355 minor exchanges broke out.

The BA claimed to have killed 291 rebels and captured 14. Another 82 surrendered to the BA. A total of 6 BA officers and 119 other ranks were killed and 9 BA officers and 215 other ranks were wounded.

Southern Military Command (Karen State)

This area is KNU territory. Slorc carried out two major military offensives here called Operation Yan Myo Aung (conquering all enemies) and Aung Thi Hai Operation. A total of 231 heavy and 357 minor exchanges of fire broke out.

The BA said they killed 212 KNU and captured 4. A total of 7 BA officers and 203 other ranks were killed while 18 officers and 468 other ranks were wounded.

South East Military Command (Karen and Mon state)

This area is KNU and New Mon State Party (NMSP) territory. A total of 12 battles broke out here.

The BA claimed to have killed 508 guerrillas and captured 102. Another 288 surrendered to the BA. A total of 70 BA officers and 128 other ranks were killed and 12 officers and 192 other ranks were wounded.

Summary

The Slorc announced that during the overall operations, Slorc killed a total of 1292 guerrillas and captured 106 while another 226 surrendered to Slorc. A total of 514 Slorc troops were killed and 689 wounded and another 11 were missing. Slorc's "war of numbers" is probably meant to convince the urban populations that they are winning the struggle with few losses. Yet they never report on the numbers of civilian peasants forcibly relocated, raped, forced into slave labor or simply killed. These figures would tell a totally different story.



HUMAN RIGHTS

Slorc Conscripts Youth into the Army

Slorc has reportedly decided to raise the strength of its armed forces from the current number of 300,000 to 500,000. To accomplish this, they are conscripting many youth from townships in the Tennasserin Division for service in the army, but conscription is reported throughout the country.

Allocation for the number of conscripts in an area varies based on the number of houses in the village. Two youth for every village of 100 to 200 houses must join the army while three youths are required for a village of 200 to 400 houses. For a village of over 400 houses five youth must join up. They are immediately sent to the nearest army training camp. Many young people, fearing for their lives in the current civil war are leaving their homes and illegally crossing into Thailand to escape this conscription.

Slorc consequently instructed the heads of villages to use a lottery system to select youth to be sent to army. If this does not get the quota of conscripts needed, the military will force villagers to provide an initial 25,000 kyats to any volunteers with an additional 5000 kyats to be paid yearly by those village families who have not provided a conscript to the military. The army will also pay a monthly salary for the conscripts but has not indicated clearly how long each conscript must serve.

Currently, people are still seeking a way to solve this issue and no youth in the area has yet been conscripted.

• Source:

ABSDF

Forced Relocation

Although there is no intensive fighting in the war zones this summer, Slorc's massive relocation strategy has been accelerated even in areas which are fairly secure under Slorc control. The following is a brief story which

reflects the realities of Slorc's village relocation activities in ethnic minority areas.

Four ethnic Karen villages, named Inn Tain Gone, Thaung Pu, Kywe Ta Lin Ywa Ma and Kywe Ta Lin Ywa Thit in Kyaukgyi township of Pegu Division were forced to relocate on the 4th of February by Slorc in order to isolate these villages from the armed dissidents. The total population in the villages is about 2,000 and all are simple farmers. Most of them are Christians and some are Buddhists.

On the 3rd of February, heads of the villages received a message from the Chairman of the Kyaukgyi Township Slorc office to move to a place about two miles to the north. The new place is at the end of the motor road which is used by the Burmese Army for transportation. The next day, about 200 troops from Light Infantry Regiment No (350) entered the villages and ordered the villagers to move within four days to the new area. The soldiers said that after four days, if

anyone is seen in the area, they will be considered as guerrillas and will be shot immediately.

The villagers were forced to abandon the rice in their fields which was soon ready for harvest. It was also time for more than 200 students to take their final examinations, but the army did not care about the children's education. The villagers are now facing severe poverty since they were forced to abandon their rice fields. Health problems such as malaria, dysentery and malnutrition are also spreading rapidly throughout the relocation camps.

Slorc continues to deny that it abuses the human rights of the people of Burma. Yet the present Slorc activities violate Article 3 & Article 17, No.2 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Article 16, No. 2 of the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal People.

Article 3 of Universal Declaration of Human Rights states:

- Everyone has the right to life liberty and security of the person.

Article 17, No. 2 states:

- No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his properties.

Article 16 of the Rights of Indigenous and Tribal People says:

- Where the relocation of these peoples is considered necessary as an exceptional measure, such relocation shall take place only their free and informed consent. Where their consent can not be obtained, such relocation shall take place only following appropriate procedures established by national laws and regulations, including public inquiries where appropriate, which provide the opportunity for effective representation of the people concerned.

• Source:

Saw Nyi Nyi, KNLA No.9



A young mother and child without a future. They are two of the hundreds of thousands of displaced persons in Burma whose plight is almost totally hidden from



ECONOMY

Thai Logging in Burma

During the last week of March, Gen. Chit Swe, Forestry Minister of Slorc, sent a letter to Thailand stating that all Thai logging concessions in Burma would be ended by end of 1993. According to Slorc, this is being done in order to stop the intensive deforestation presently taking place in Burma.

In fact, Slorc's reason probably is not at all related to a concern for forest conservation, but rather is a tactic to tighten the screws on Thai logging companies in order to force them pay more for their concessions. Currently Thai companies are negotiating with Slorc to work out a deal so that they can continue their extraction of logs by more equal sharing through joint ventures.

More than 40 Thai logging companies have been raping the forests of in Burma since 1989 and have earned more than US\$100 million from their concessions in Burma. The Slorc has requested that Thai companies invest in wood processing industries in Burma rather than extraction, but the Thai companies are reluctant to do this as they fear their profits will be less.

(TN 930325)

(BP 930327)

(MW 930409)

Thai Tourism & Trade

Thailand's Northern Star tourism and trade company held a meeting with Slorc in Yunnan China on 8 April. The meeting was held to discuss the opening of trade routes and tourism originating in Chiang Rai, Thailand and going up to Mandalay, Burma via Yunnan province of China.

The Thai team was led by company board chairman, Viroon Kamphilo who said that the meeting was an initial meeting to plan a further meeting at which details would be worked out.

The Northern Star Co. is a branch of the Asia International Transport and Trading Co. based in Thailand which also has links with Friendship Star company with access to funds from international business groups.

(KTT 930409)

Thai Cement Co.

Siam Cement Co. has a plan to set up a distribution unit for its products in Burma to supply the growing demand for construction materials in the country. It is studying the possibility of investing in a cement and construction material plant.

(BP 930329)

Thai-Burma Border Bridge

The president of the Chamber of Commerce in Tak province of Thailand, Mr. Niyon, said on 25 March that both Thai and Burmese private sectors had agreed to go halves on the three million baht construction cost of a temporary bridge across the Moei river linking Mae Sod with the Burmese border town of Myawaddy.

(BP 930326)

Oil Investments in Burma

Total company of France and PTTEP of Thailand are the most active oil firms at the present time among the ten foreign oil companies in Burma.

Total has invested 500 million baht for drilling in the gulf of Martaban which has one of the largest gas deposits in Burma. The Petroleum Authority of Thailand's Exploration and Production (PTTEP) company is now starting to privatize 30% of the total shares in Total's oil concession in Burma. Further more, PTTEP has been planning to pipe gas from the Gulf of Martaban to Thailand in order to supply Thailand's growing demand for power generation.

All of the foreign oil companies each paid US\$5.5 million to Slorc in signature bonuses and at least another US\$320 million has already been invested in the concessions. Due to lack of success in their drilling, Shell of Holland and Unocal of the USA are preparing to pull out of Burma. Another company, Petro Canada, announced on 2 November 1992 its plan to discontinue exploration.

(BP 930325)

(TN 930327)

Burmese Minister Visits USA

On April 11, Burma's Minister of Fisheries Brigadier-General Maung Maung began a private visit to the USA to discuss increasing Burmese exports of fisheries products.

Maung Maung was invited to the USA by a private American association which was not named.

While in the US, Maung Maung was asked about the situation inside his country. He said that there are many good changes taking place in Burma, and he invited people to come see for themselves. "Seeing is believing", he told reporters.

(BP 9304114)

China and India

Thailand may be a little fearful of what China has in mind with their close relationship to Burma. Recently, during Indian Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's visit to Thailand, Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai raised the issue of India as a possible strategic counterbalance to China in Asia. India and China have Asia's largest armed forces and each has a blue-water navy.

It has been reported that China is building naval bases in Burma which would give it easy access to the Indian Ocean.

(FEER 93/04)



SOURCES IN THIS ISSUE: PB = Bangkok Post, TN = The Nation, FEER = Far Eastern Economic Review, ABSDF = All Burma Students' Democratic Front, KNLA - Karen National Liberation Army, KTT = Kurengthep Thurakit, MW = Mathichon Weekly

REFUGEES

At about 3 pm on April 7, 1993, around 40 soldiers from a Thai army battalion entered two Karen and Burmese refugee camps inside Thailand about 10 kilometers from the Thai town of Nat Ei Tong. The villages are called Democracy Village and Aung Tha Bye Village. The soldiers ordered the refugees to pack up all their belongings and bring them to the center of the village. The villagers were told that they must prepare to leave the villages as soon as possible.

When villagers approached some Thai officers, they were told that higher Thai authorities had given the order to drive all the villagers (refugees) back to Burmese territory and to burn all the houses. The villagers appealed for time to dismantle their own homes in order that they could salvage some of the building materials for constructing new homes on the Burmese side of the border. The officers replied that only a few houses would be burned and the people allowed to dismantle the rest within a limited time.

Both of these villages are about one kilometer from the Thai/Burma border.

At about 4 pm, a senior Thai officer came to the area and ordered the villagers to leave the place within 15 minutes or be shot on sight. The villagers fled carrying only what they could quickly collect.

The soldiers began to burn Democracy Village at about 4 pm after a signal given by a whistle was given. Within 45 minutes the village was reduced to ashes. The people requested that at least the school and clinic be left, but the officer said that he had specific orders to destroy those two buildings first.

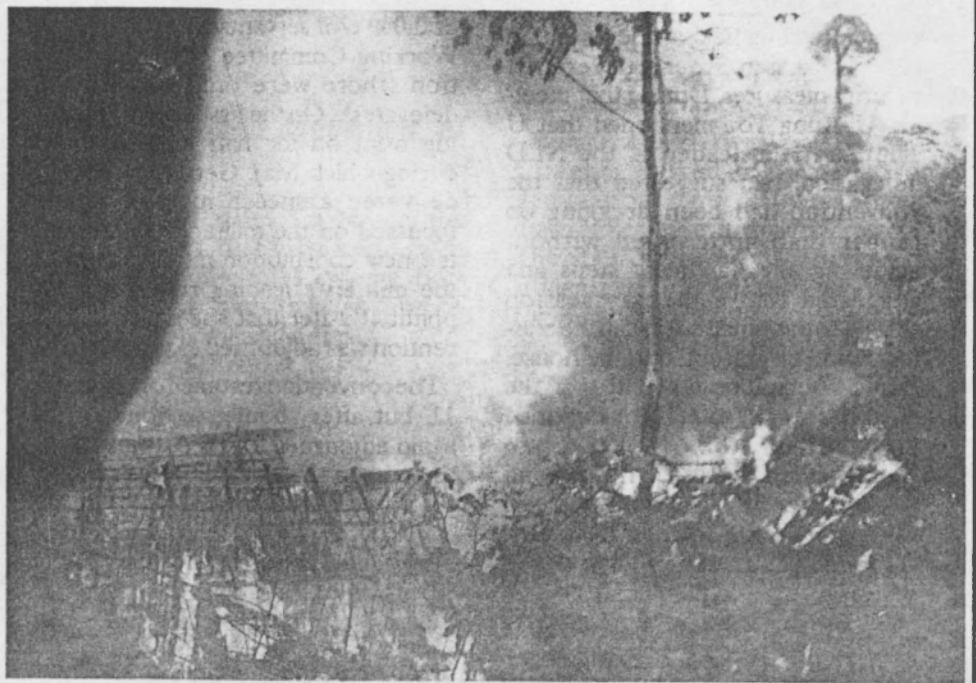
Aung Tha Bye village was burned at about 5 pm and was totally destroyed in 15 minutes.

It has been learned that more than 1,500 Thai soldiers came to this area in early April and divided into two groups to cover the entire area. On April 6, some local officers visited some of the villages and asked the villagers where they would go if ordered to move. The villagers explained that if they returned to Burma, the Slors would attack and kill them and so they appealed to be allowed to stay in the refugee camp. The Thai officers then left without saying anything more.

The two villages which were burned are situated at the base of a hill which sets on the border of Thailand and Burma. ABSDF battalions 102 and 201 are stationed at the top of this hill on the Burma side. Students from these two battalions helped the vil-

lagers with shelter after they fled their homes.

Several other refugee camps, namely Pyi Thein, No. 9 Mine Camp, Ale Store Camp and Kanaung Se Camp were also burned by the Thai soldiers at the same time. These camps were situated between a 6-hour walk and a 30-minute walk of the Thai/Burma border.



Democracy Refugee Village going up in flames.

Change comes from the power of many, but only when the many come together to form that which is invincible, the power of one.

(From the film, "The Power of One")

POLITICS

SLORC's National Convention

"We have decided to adjourn the convention for two months. You will have enough time to study all the documents. We will meet again on June 7," concluded Lt. Gen. Myo Nyunt, chairman of the Steering Committee of the National Convention Committee, at 1 pm on April 7.

Two days later the Mirror Daily, Slorc's second Burmese language newspaper, stated in its editorial that the convention had been going on smoothly for three months and delegates had agreed on the titles of 15 chapters of the future constitution, and that "Everything has been decided by consensus."

But the inside story was totally different. On April 4 a joint meeting of the Convention Working Committee, led by committee chairman U Aung Toe and the 45-member Conveners Committee was held at the Saya San Hall, Kyaikkasan Ground, under strict security measures. During that meeting U Aung Toe mentioned that U Tha Zan Hla, leader of the NLD delegation, had suggested that the convention had been dragging on longer than anticipated without achieving any significant steps and suggested that a plenary session should be convened so that all the matters could be presented to the house. But U Aung Toe asserted that the plenary session would be summoned only when the NLD, Shan Nationalities Democratic League and Shan State Kokan National Democratic Party had sent their suggestions to the working committee. He said all other delegates had already agreed with what the working committee had presented. He also admitted that there were some differences related to the chapters titled Head of the State, Legislature, Administration, Prescriptions for Emergency Period and Prescriptions for Transitional Period. It is very clear that the suggestion to convene the plenary session presented by the NLD leader, was turned down out right.

Moreover, the chairman of that meeting, U Than Tint Aung, a peasant delegate selected by the junta, reaffirmed that the main forum would resume only after those delegations who had not yet sent in their suggestions, complied with the order. He also promised that the date of the main forum would be announced one day before the fixed date.

The National Convention was invented by the Slorc and was officially announced for the first time on July 27, 1990, just one day ahead of the Ghandi Conference of the MPs elected in the May 1990 elections. After three years of careful preparations which included abolishing about 200 registered political parties and arresting more than 1,000 politicians, the convention commenced on January 9 of this year. Security measures were intense with thousands of secret agents roaming the streets of Rangoon city. They were supported by an army of 2,000 civil servants assigned to the Working Committee of the convention (there were only 702 official delegates). On the first day, the meeting went on for half an hour only during which Maj. Gen. Myo Nyunt delivered a speech most of which focussed on the military's claim that the new constitution must recognize the military's leading role in future politics. After that speech, the convention was adjourned for two days.

The convention resumed on January 11, but after about one hour it was again adjourned for three weeks with the reason that the delegates needed time to study the documents. The real cause of the adjournment was the opposition of the majority of the people to the military's continued role in politics. It was so intense that the junta had to arrest more than 100 politicians and students, many of who were consequently sentenced to long prison terms. Meanwhile, two delegates, both of them MPs, were expelled from the convention and imprisoned.

The convention resumed again on February 1. It proceeded unevenly with postponement intervals every few days. Sometimes these postpone-

ments lasted a whole week. Most of the time was spent holding meetings in small groups to discuss various issues put forth by the Slorc organizers. Every evening each participant had to attend an evening session where military intelligence officers summed up the days proceedings. This was viewed by delegates as simply psychological pressure on them to accept the military's position.

It was during these group discussions when differences emerged, forcing the authorities to postpone the meeting for another 61 days.

During these group discussions a delegate named Khun Marco Bann, who was also an elected MP from the Pekon constituency, Southern Shan State, decided to leave the convention to join the dissidents in the border regions. He was formally welcomed by the dissidents on April 5, at Manerplaw. He summed up his experience in the convention by saying, "The convention is an attempt to deceive the public. I do not want to have a hand in committing a historical crime against the Union. That is why I decided to come here."

According to Khun Marco Bann, Slorc invited 702 delegates who were divided into eight different groups. Group 1 consists of representatives of the political parties, and group 2 the elected representatives. The remaining six groups were ethnic groups, peasants, labor, intelligentsia and technocrats, civil services, and special invitees. Representatives of these six groups made up 530 delegates, all being handpicked by the junta with the help of the notorious military intelligence. It is a remarkable incidence that out of 392 NLD-MPs, only 92 were allowed to participate. Khun Marco Bann also stressed that many delegates, even among those carefully selected by the junta, see the convention as an attempt to deceive the people and improve international opinion. So far Slorc's endeavor seems to be a failure since the postponements indicate lack of true commitment on the part of Slorc.



INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT

CYNTHIA JERVIS

Cynthia Jervis was born in 1960 in Montreal, Canada. She came to Thailand several years ago to find some way of making her skills in video production a useful resource for human rights struggles taking place in the region. In October of 1992 she agreed to help produce a video for B.U.R.M.A. which would tell stories of people in Burma who have become displaced persons in their own land. From that time until the middle of April, she worked tirelessly on the project, using all of her professional skills to the fullest.

Cynthia was unable to finish her work. On April 14, she succumbed to cerebral malaria in Bangkok. Her death was a great shock to her many friends in Thailand and Burma.

We wish to thank the family of Cynthia for helping her achieve the values and skills which she brought to the work here and we grieve with them during this difficult time. Cynthia's contribution to the struggle for human rights and justice in Burma will not be forgotten.

United Nation

The United Nations Commission on Human Rights has condemned SLORC for the continued seriousness of human rights abuses in Burma and extended for a further year the mandate of special rapporteur Yozo Yokota of Japan.

- (TN 930312)

Thammasat University

More than 50 lecturers of Thammasat University in Thailand signed an open letter on March 16, urging SLORC to introduce full democracy for the people in Burma and to release prominent dissident and Nobel peace prize winner Aung San Suu Kyi immediately.

- (BP 930318)

Japan Parliamentarians

A total of 354 parliamentarians from various parties of Japan signed a petition which was organized by Satsuki Eda of the United Social Democratic Party, calling for improvements in human rights in Burma and the release of Aung San Suu Kyi. The letter was submitted to the United Nations on 16 March.

- (TN 930318)

Thai Professor

A Thai professor of Thammasat University named Thira condemned the present Thai and ASEAN policy of constructive engagement with

Burma at a seminar on 16 March. He said, "Thailand has done nothing which could be called constructive engagement."

Another professor also criticized the Thai government for playing a double policy through out its history by accepting Burmese minorities as a buffer zone to avoid Burmese military attacks.

- (BP 930318)

International Network of Engage Buddhist

At a conference on 8 March, the INEB call on China to cooperate with other Asian countries to urge Burmese military rulers to begin talks on the country's political future.

- (BP 930309)

Pepsi Boycott

A leaflet to be given to PepsiCo shareholders for the May 5 PepsiCo shareholder meeting, has been prepared by several Burma action groups. The leaflet calls on PepsiCo shareholders to "divest themselves of PepsiCo, since it supports the incredible abuses of Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council or SLORC regime:

- waging wars of ethnic cleansing on all borders
- plundering the world's last great teak forests
- supporting the world's largest heroin production."

The leaflet goes on to call for more responsibility from PepsiCo. Among other things, the leaflet calls on PepsiCo to:

Respect Burmese Law - Pepsi's presence is a powerful "vote" for a regime declared illegal by the International Commission of Jurists. All political opposition has been ruthlessly crushed. Elected leader Aung San Suu Kyi, 1991 Nobel Peace Laureate, remains under house arrest.

Respect American values - Burma's students looked to America for democracy. Now Pepsi lets them down by dealing with their oppressors. The SLORC massacred thousands of students as they marched peacefully for democracy in 1988, many murdered right in front of the U.S. Embassy.

People wishing to write directly to PepsiCo to urge them to withdraw totally from Burma until SLORC ends their war against the people of Burma and allows a truly democratic system to evolve, can write to:

Mr. Wayne Calloway
PepsiCo Inc.
Anderson Hill Road
Purchase, New York 10577
USA



NEWS BRIEFS

Military Role in the Future

Gen. Than Shwe, head of Slorc, assured the Burmese people of the military's continued prominent role in the future politics of the country during a speech at the ceremony of the 48th Armed Forces Day on 27 March. More than 3,000 military personnel took part in the parade in Rangoon.

Gen Than Shew said that the military historically took part in reconstruction and had saved the country from falling into danger. Presently, the military is carrying out the heavy duty of taking responsibility for national affairs and in the future the military will remain in a leading role in order to prevent problems in the country.

- (BBS 930327)

Murder of an Elected Representative

U Win Ko, an elected member of the NLD party and minister of the

shadow government NCGUB, was found dead on a bed in his room at the "Tea Garden Hotel" in Kumin city of southern China on 27 February.

On March 21, the NCGUB issued a statement concerning the death, stating that U Win Ko was stabbed to death in China after returning from a trip to Kachin State in northern Burma.

The NCGUB said the death of Win Ko was an assassination by Slorc, but Rangoon radio denied being responsible. Rangoon radio claimed that the death was the result of unsolved problems existing between opposition groups.

The NCGUB did not state all the details of the death. China authorities are carrying out an investigation.

- (TN 930321)
- (TN 930322)

Muslim Refugees in Bangladesh

Bangladeshi communication minister, Oli Amed, said on his return from a four day visit to Burma that Slorc would have no objections if a small team from UNHCR visited Burma and if necessary Slorc would consider the stationing of a small UNHCR contingent in Burma to supervise the return of some 260,000 Rohingya refugees from Bangladesh.

Bangladesh officials have repatriated 22,188 Rohingya refugees since repatriation began in September 1992.

- (TN 930308)
- (BP 930324)



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