B. U. R. M. A.

BURMA RIGHTS MOVEMENT FOR ACTION

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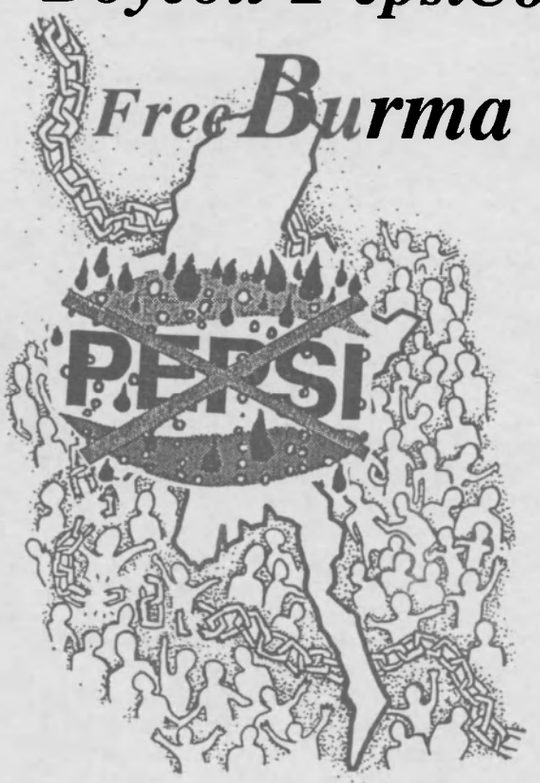

The above card was produced by a Hong Kong-based Burma campaign group. On the reverse side it is addressed to: Mr. Chris Sinclair, President, Pepsi Cola International, Routes 100 & 35, Somers NY 10589-2202, USA. In part, the card says, "*Peace," cry the Burmese People. We urge you [Pepsi] to suppor the Burmese people's struggle. Please stop your investments and business activities with the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC).*

Pepsi's bottleing plant in Rangoon pays 30% of their profits as taxes to the military regime. This provides some of the money the military needs to expand their military, and to purchase more weapons.

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

HUMAN RIGHTS

Women

In any kind of war, women and children are in much greater danger than men. In case of artillery attack or ground attack against a village, children tend to run to their mothers and hug their legs. This makes it almost impossible to move quickly to a safe place. At the same time, women usually stay at home with the children while the men are out searching for food. At this time the women and children are very vulnerable to abuse from soldiers who might be roaming through the area. It is almost impossible for them to protect themselves.

It is not uncommon in Burma for the military regime to also use women, even pregnant women, in the villages as porters, or to abuse them in order to get money or information out of other villagers. The following interviews illustrate some of the hell women in the rural areas of Burma must suffer.

Karen woman, 40 years old

"The soldiers grab any villager on the road anytime they like, and do anything they want to them. We heard that they raped one woman at a place called Kway To Kaw. There are only one or two houses around there. She's married with children, but one night she was home alone and they came and raped her. I can not believe it - even though she has a husband and children, they still raped her. She was so upset that she tried to kill herself. She did not eat for many days, but the villagers and her relatives tried to comfort her. If they hadn't looked after her she would have killed herself. We are all shocked that the soldiers can do such horrible things. We can not even mention all the horrible things they say and yell at us. But still they say that they always do good things for the civilians; they say, 'the Karen soldiers hurt you but we do you good.' But it is only the Slorc soldiers who treat us badly."

Karen widow with one infant, 26 years old

"My husband was walking behind me, and a soldier yelled at him to stop. He tried to run, but he could not get away. The soldiers grabbed me too, interrogated me and hit me with a gun. Then they dragged me to my husband. When I got there they were searching his friend. The soldiers spat at me and freed me, so I went back to the village and asked the village head to go and vouch for my husband. They tortured my husband for a week.

"After a week, the village head had vouched for my husband 3 or 4 times and they said they would free him, but the did not. Two or three days later they let us see him, and then they killed him that night. At the time I was 6 months pregnant with my child."

Karen women age 27

"They do not like anyone to speak against them. If you do, they threaten you with a gun. They abuse the villagers and say that if you are against them they will shoot you for sure. They even shot an old woman who went against them - she was very old and just a civilian. They arrest even the women to carry loads for them, and even the children all run away from them. No one dares wear any green clothes or a black watch because they will say you are a Karen soldier. If a woman wears new clothes, they accuse her of being the wife of a Karen soldier.

"They came to one woman's house to take all of her chickens and she told them, 'If you want you can take 2 or 3 of them, but you are very stupid if you take them all.' So they shot her, and she died. They took her body and buried it outside the village."

Karen man, age 30

"Once when I was a porter they also took my wife and my son along with them and made them march to Ko Ta Gyi. They made them walk in the sunshine at noontime. It was too hot. I was carrying a load of rice and I saw my wife and my son. My son was only 4 years old. It was hard for him to keep walking in the hot sun and he was moving very weakly, so I picked him up and went on. The village headman had tried to get them to free the children before that, but the soldiers had taken so many villagers, even the old men too, that there was nothing he could do. Since then, my son died of disease."

- Source:

Karen Human Rights Group

Victims of a never-ending civil war

ECONOMICS

Canadian Investments

Pratt & Whitney

Swiss-produced Pilatus aircraft have often been used by the Burmese military to bomb and strafe villages along the border areas. These aircraft are advertised to be only training aircraft. However, those sold to the Burmese military regime have been modified to carry a variety of bombs and missiles. The Pilatus PC-7 trainers used extensively by the Burmese military, use engines manufactured by Pratt & Whitney of Canada.

Litton Canada

Among other military equipment sold to the Burmese military by China are Shaanxi Y8-D military transport aircraft. Two have already been delivered, and another four are in the pipeline. The guidance systems for these planes is made by Litton Canada which also produces the guidance systems for the cruise missile.

International Petroleum Corp.

The International Petroleum Corp. of Vancouver is now involved in oil exploration in Burma.

- Source:

The ACTivist, April 93

Switzerland

Switzerland's Pilatus Aircraft Ltd., has long been providing the Burmese military regime with aircraft. These aircraft are used in military operations against civilian villages in the border areas (see B.U.R.M.A., March 1993, Vol 3 Number 3)

Due to hard work by a Swiss group called Arbeitsgemeinschaft fur Rustungskontrolle und ien Waffenausfuhverbotm Switzerland, the dealings of Pilatus with dictatorial regimes around the world was brought to public attention. Consequently, the director of Pilatus has been dismissed.
Source:

The ACTivist, April 93

Burma and Singapore

At the end of May, Major General Khin Nyunt, Secretary 1 of Burma's military junta, paid a four-day visit to Singapore. He was accompanied by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Transport, Minister of Tourism and the Minister of National Planning. This is the first official visit to an ASEAN country by Slorc officials. (TN 930525)

During the visit the Slorc delegation visited a variety of projects in Singapore including tourism and hotel centers, mass transportation, and manufacturing. (Burmese TV news)

Many opposition groups and Burma watchers fear that Slorc may use Singapore as a model for future development. ASEAN nations have long urged Slorc to focus attention on improving the economic situation of the people as a way of pacifying public (especially urban) dissent. Under the ASEAN system, democracy and human rights are kept separate from economic development. This obviously is something which Slorc would relate well to.

At the end of the visit, Khin Nyunt said in a statement, **"Singapore hopes that economic development will enable Burma to establish an orderly progression towards an open government and an open economy, so that Burma can rejoin the regional community and thereby contribute to regional stability. To this end, Singapore is ready to help Burma open up its economy and move back to normalcy and eventually evolve, like Indonesia and Thailand have, into representative constitutional government."**

- Source:

TN 930530

Brunei

Royal Brunei Airlines is leasing a Boeing 757 aircraft to the national airlines of Burma. Some opposition members expressed dismay at this report since Brunei is a Muslim country and as such would be expected to keep a distance from Slorc due to its terrible treatment of the Royingya Muslims along the Burma-Bangladesh border. The ASEAN "constructive engagement" policy seems to be not only thicker than human rights, but thicker than religion as well.

- Source:

FEER 930520

Asian Development Bank

The Asian Development Bank has been involved in a study of the countries in the Mekong River basin - Cambodia, Laos, Burma, Vietnam, China and Thailand. The study focuses on economic development of the region, with emphasis on transportation. Seven major road projects throughout the area have been proposed as well as a rail line linking the countries. Experts from China, Laos, Burma and Thailand are also proposing the dredging of the Mekong River in order to allow navigation of 300-ton ships by the end of the decade.

- Sources:

TN 930515

TN 930521

United States

Ms Miriam Marshall Segal of the USA has been spending time in Burma visiting Slorc officials and apparently involving herself in various investment programs. Recently she was seen on Slorc television signing a co-operation contract with Su Yan Yu of Tian Jin Ocean Fisheries Co Ltd and Chao Ri King of Dalian Pelagic Fisheries Co Ltd (China). Ms Segal was at the signing representing Myanmar-US Fisheries Co Ltd. Details of the contract were not made clear, but involved cooperation on producing marine products.

- Sources:

Myanmar TV

NLM, 930525

POLITICS

Central Public Service Institute

Last year, all members of the teaching profession in Burma were ordered to attend a training program to prepare them to carry out their teaching duties correctly and properly. (see B.U.R.M.A. February 1992, page 4) Since then, members of other service departments have had to go through similar training. The most recent was for doctors, and like all other training programs, was held in the Central Public Service Institute. In closing remarks to the trainee doctors, the Minister for Health Vice-Admiral Than Nyunt provides an insight into the objectives of these training programs. "It is believed that the trainee doctors, on completion of the course, have borne in their mind a sense of duty for organizing the nationalities so as to forge goodwill relations and consolidation among them." He further added that in order for the Union of Myanmar to stay united, the doctors who have attended Refresher Courses and gained experience, knowledge and new outlooks are **"to organize the public, making them instilled with the spirit of patriotism."**

Courses organized at the Central Public Service Institute follow a similar pattern for all service departments which must attend. The program was briefly outlined in a recent article in The New Light of Myanmar (the new name for the military's newspaper previously called The Working People's Daily).

"Separate training courses have separate aims but all training courses share the following fonr aims:

-to acquire military education to the extent of individual conduct to contribute to national defence;

-to acquire required minimum physical fitness and strength in order to be able to serve the interests of the people to the fullest safe;

-to acquire a good moral conduct, a better sense of discipline and a better social relationship;

-to train public service personnel in keeping away from party politics.

That is why all public service personnel whose professional tools are stethoscopes or pens pick up small arms and learn their handling at the Central Public Services Institute.

A geopolitically strategic country like Myanmar should always keep in touch with the peoples' war strategy. The duty to defend the country is everybody's duty and it is absolutely essential that all public servants are acquainted with basic military training."

In a country involved in a civil war which has already lasted for decades, training people to "defend the country" takes on some very fearful innuendoes.

The courses are not a time for professionals to raise questions, debate issues or reflect on realities. They are a time to listen, and learn to "respect" the authorities. A strange path, indeed, to take if democracy is to be achieved.

What secret objectives lie behind these training programs are only vaguely masked.

"Trainees do their physical exercise from four o'clock in the afternoon for forty minutes. They have their dinner at half past five o'clock in the mess rooms. They will of course remember, while having their lunch and their dinner, who is feeding them. The meal time pledge they recite at meal times will remind them that the State, and nobody else but the State, is feeding them. The pledge: "We will remain loyal to the State for giving us this rice and curry" is simply lovely."

The major goal of the institute, of course. is to create a public service force which will support and back up the military control over the country.

"The State Law and Order Restoration Council will no longer permit storms and waves to alter the course of the mainstream. A force that must help the Law and Order Restoration Council in this task is the force formed by public employees. The Central Public Services Institution is now providing necessary training to government employees. In future all government employees are to be trained in this Institute. Heads of Departments are officials responsible for employing 'correct persons in correct assignments' all those trained and nurtured by the Central Public Services Institute."

"We will remain loyal to the State for giving us this rice and curry."

Since 1988, the number of professionals leaving Burma has increased. A good number of them represent university lecturers, doctors and nurses. They seek employment in other countries, often taking jobs entailing much less responsibility than they would have in Burma. They say that it is better to do these more menial jobs than to be put through training courses by the military which belittle their dignity, and reduce their profession to simply being a tool of the military to control and manipulate the population.

The result is that, while Slorc may be gaining a few more ears within the professional community which will eavesdrop on everyday conversations of the people, the medical and educational services of the country are declining at a terrible rate. With few really qualified people to teach in the universities or run the medical facilities, the suffering of the people under the military dictatorship of Slorc, can only increase.

- Sources:

NLM 930528

NLM 930530

NATIONAL CONVENTION

On January 9 of this year, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (Slorc) convened a national convention comprised of 703 delegates carefully selected from around the country and representing various sectors and nationalities. The major purpose of this convention is to draft a new constitution. Presently the country is ruled by a military junta which recognizes no constitution, but rules by military decree.

An election in 1990 led to a landslide victory by the opposition National League for Democracy Party while the military's National Unity Party won approximately 1% of all seats. Instead of turning power over to this elected body, the military suddenly reversed their earlier statements and stated that the election was not to elect a new parliament, but rather to elect a body of people responsible for drawing up the new constitution. Once a new constitution is established, said the military, a new election would be held to finally elect a parliament. The present national convention is thus a part of this new military strategy to lead the country to "democracy".

At the beginning of the convention, six major objectives for the new constitution were spelled out for the delegates to keep in mind while mulling over the various items which were to be included. These six objectives are to insure the writing of a constitution which will guarantee:

-Non-disintegration of the Union;

-Non-disintegration of National Solidarity;

-Perpetuation of sovereignty;

-For a genuine multiparty democracy system to flourish;

-For the further burgeoning of the noblest and worthiest values such as justice, liberty and equality, and

-For the Tatmadaw to be able to participate in the national political leadership role of the future State.

Since the January 9 opening, the delegates have been sent home twice, the first time only hours after the opening speeches, so that they would have time to "think and study the documents". On June 7, the convention was reconvened for the second time following nearly two months of delegate "vacation".

As he has already done two times previously, Lt-Gen Myo Nyunt, National Convention Convening Commission Chairman, gave the opening remarks in which he made it clear to the delegates just exactly what the military had in mind for the constitution. Very early on in his speech he indicated Slorc's negative reaction to the idea of forming a federal system and thus suggested that the delegates not raise this possibility within the constitution. "I feel great honor and much gratification", he said, "because I have come to know that all the esteemed delegates are opposed to the concept of the so-called "genuine federalist" principles which in 1962 nearly resulted in the disintegration of the Union...." It was in 1962 that Ne Win took over State power claiming that Prime Minister U Nu was giving the ethnic nationalities too much freedom in the form of federal states and therefore setting the stage for these ethnic nationalities to separate from the Union of Burma.

Presently the exiled government of Burma, known as the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) and based along the Thai-Burma border, has called for the formation of a true federal state system in which each particular ethnic region could have a certain level of autonomy in local affairs, while participating equally and freely in the central government structure. It is only through this type of system that they believe the country of Burma can find unity and peace. The opposition forces believe that the Slorc fears the establishment of a federal state system, because such a system would limit their power considerably.

The Slorc argument, however, is that a federal state system would give too much power to the ethnic nationalities who would then separate from the Union, thus bringing about disintegration of the Union. It has been this argument which the Burmese military leaders have used since 1962 to keep the general public suspicious of the true intentions of the ethnic nationalities.

"We have no intention of killing the Burmans. We do not want to conquer the entire country.

Naing Tin Aung of the Mon National Relief Committee disputed this argument in a recent interview. "All our rights are rejected by the military. Oppression, subjugation, no peace and total neglect of our human rights results from the present system. If we could establish a Federal State system, all these misfortunes would disappear."

He went on to add, "We have no intention of killing the Burmans. We do not want to conquer the entire country. What we want is the right as a community, the right of individuals, democracy and equality for all citizens. We do not fight to kill or separate."

A second, and connected, point which Lt-Gen Myo Nyunt emphasized in his opening address was the importance of keeping the army (Tatmadaw) directly involved in the leadership of the country. "It will be necessary to lay down principles as to how many representatives of the Tatmadaw are to be included in the legislative sector which is that of the political leadership role of the future State, and also in the administrative sector, how many representatives of the Tatmadaw are to be included in the different levels ranging from the central to the districts and in what role they are to carry out their responsibilities."

The demand of the military to remain in political power has raised considerable international criticism, but is one major point on which the

Slorc has refused to budge even slightly. Slorc considers their military as the only organization in the country capable of holding the people together, and they create the threat of ethnic nationality secession from the Union as justification for their present and continuing power over political affairs. While it is true that they may presently be capable of keeping the people under control since they have one of the larger armies in the region, they have never been able to convince the international community that they have the ability to lead the country to democracy. Consequently they have loudly welcomed ASEAN's position that human rights (and indeed democracy) must not be placed as a higher priority than economic development. ASEAN has, in the past, encouraged Slorc to try to provide some economic improvements for the people to pacify them, and worry about democracy and human rights later. Slorc is taking this advice to heart, opening the country a little to foreign investments so that at least the urban people feel a since of improvement, while at the same time pushing through a constitution which will allow them to remain at the helm, syphoning off the major benefits any development or international investments might bring to the country.

Even many international friends of Slorc are having a difficult time seeing the present national convention as a true step towards democracy. In March and April of this year three Americans, two of whom are retired members of congress, visited Burma to assess whether or not the United States should improve relations with the military regime there. They reported back to a US congressional committee hearing on their "personal and unbiased observations..." during their week in Burma. (It should be noted that they did not visit the Thai/Burma border area to assess the needs there or to seek an understanding of the opposition's position on various important issues they were trying to understand.) Despite a very glowing report on Slorc's attempt to eradicate drug production in the country, and a statement that prisons in Burma appear to be cleaner than most prisons in the States, they had an extremely difficult time saying anything positive about the national convention which they had the privilege of visiting briefly during their trip. In their report they stated, "Our group visited the convention while it was in session and saw a meeting of 703 delegates that displayed very little of the give-and-take one would have expected. The speeches must all be pre-approved and members are not able to speak from the floor. While some elected politicians have been allowed to participate and speak publicly, the Slorc has made it clear that the military will continue to play a 'leading role' in the nation's politics even after a civilian government is established."

As the national convention plods along, few people within or without Burma really expect a very positive outcome. Slorc has not proven itself to be either reliable or truly open to a democratic form of government. While this is the reality facing Burma, many opposition leaders express dismay that the international community including the United Nations continues to refer to Slorc as the "Government of Burma". If the world sees elections as important to building up a democratic process (as reflected in the UN activities in Cambodia), why do they not recognize the elected government which resulted from Burma's 1990 election? This is a contradiction which is extremely difficult for the democratic struggle in Burma to either understand or accept. It also suggests that any constitution which might emerge from the present national assembly could easily be manipulated and changed by Slorc without much fear of international action other than some verbal criticism.

- Sources:

NLM 930607

NLM 930608

Report to the Honest Ballot Association byDonald A. MacDonald, Seymour Halpern, M.C. (ret) NY, and Robert L. Leggett, M.C. (ret) CA

Presidential Democracy

Slorc is now taking a more serious look at changing the political system in Burma to a presidential form of government. Although this may sound encouraging to people who believe in a presidential forms of democracy rather than parliamentary democracy, in Burma it becomes a bit ominous. The argument being put forth by Slorc is that Burma needs to mix autocracy, aristocracy and democracy into one system as did the Romans over 2200 years ago. In such a system, a president, representing the autocracy, would be elected by "an electoral college consisting of parliament members, intellectuals and intelligentsia, defence services representatives and senior State servants". The vast majority of the electoral college is military. The electoral college is the aristocracy aspect of the system as it is made up of those who have a power position within the country due to money or guns. Finally, the democracy aspect is represented by a "Lower House comprising representatives of the people elected in a democratic process." Slorc clearly states that their concept of a president is that of the role presently played by Khin Nyunt, commander-in-chief of the Defence Services.

Minye Kaungbon, in a recent article in The New Light of Myanmar newspaper states, "I want an emperor-like strong president, the Pyidaungzu Hluttaw comprised of all wise aristocracy, and a National Hluttaw comprising representatives of the people."

A democratic system in Burma, free from military manipulation, seems still be be a long way off. The military continues to demand to play a leading role in the country, and they have proven their willingness to even redefine the term "democracy" to ensure that they do keep their position of power and authority.

- Source:

NLM 930613

BORDER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

In 1988, poppy production in Myanmar [Burma] was about 1100 metric tons. This year [1993] the yield is expected to be in excess of 2500 metric tons. The Shan Plateau in the Shan State in the eastern part of the country produces more than half of the world's entire opium output. (Report to the Honest Ballot Association, May 6, 1993)

The tremendous increase of opium production in Burma has attracted much international interest. The opium produced in this far away country finds itself transported through Thailand or China and into the heroin markets of the western countries.

In response to the 1988 military coup in Burma most countries canceled their assistance programs to the Burmese military junta. A substantial amount of this canceled aid was money destined to the drug eradication program. Now more and more people, including the Honest Ballot Association report quoted above, are calling for a resumption of this aid in order to help the military regime deal with this escalating problem. Their argument is that opium production has increased because financial assistance has been cut back.

Opposition groups, on the other hand, claim that opium production has increased because the Burmese military needs the income in order to continue purchasing weapons and expanding its military to suppress internal discontent. The opposition groups point out that in recent years Slorc has been able to negotiate ceasefires with several groups who are known to be dealing in opium and heroin. Once ceasefires are signed, drug production in those areas appears to increase rather than decrease.

United Nations agencies have continued assistance programs in areas under Slorc control, and have often come under severe criticism for directly or indirectly legitimizing the illegal Slorc regime. The UNDP has been the most severely criticized because it has contributed much to Slorc's Border Development Program (BDP).

The BDP is touted as an effective "carrot and stick" approach to pacifying border discontent, bringing development to distant border regions, and introducing alternative income sources to opium growers. The program operates by beating the ethnic groups until they can no longer bear the suffering, and then offering them a carrot of schools, clinics and agriculture development. So far SLORC has signed ceasefires with the Shan State Army, the Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army (Kokang) and the United Wa States Army. UNICEF reports that following the ceasefires, Slorc invested nearly 240 million kyats during an 18-month period in economic and social infrastructure development. This included the building of roads, bridges, hydels, agricultural extension, gravity flow water schemes, and health, education and social welfare facilities. Recently UNDP's budget for Burma was significantly cut back suggesting that funding countries were not quite satisfied with the way UNDP's funds were being used in the BDP.

Now other countries are considering whether or not they should start providing Slorc with anti-narcotics funds again. Groups like the Honest Ballot Association have raised the issue with the US Congress, and are encouraging the resumption of aid. They claim that the "carrot and stick" approach is successful, and is the only way to solve the drug problem in Burma. With a mere US$50 million contribution a year, the US could provide assistance for infrastructure projects and "teach the peasants how to fish", they say. Perhaps the major issue is not to "teach the peasants how to fish", but rather to understand why the peasants have not been allow to fish in the past. Providing a "carrot" which the people may never really be able to grasp hold of will produce more problems than solutions.

UNDP and UNICEF are anxious to contribute to the development programs in these areas. They suggest that other UN funds and agencies could also later become involved. This would include UNCDF, IFAD, WFP, UNDCP, UNAFPA as well as WHO, FAO, UNESCO, UNIDO and perhaps the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

While development is a wonderful thing, it is important to determine who actually benefits from development efforts, and who ends up being manipulated. Groups opposed to the BDP point out that much of the infrastructure development does not much benefit the local people who do not have vehicles to drive or much need to travel into the urban centers, but rather benefits the military by providing them with more mobility in the area to control the populations. At the same time, as Slorc signs ceasefires with the smaller ethnic groups along the border, they are then free to transfer more troops to other areas where they can intensify their war against larger groups such as the Karen, Kachin and Mon.

For these opposition groups, the answer does not now lie in development. If the poverty stricken villagers along the border areas are to ever really benefit from development programs, the civil war must first be ended, and a federal state system established in which local communities will have more say in just how they want to develop.

In support of this, The Carter Center recently stated, "The role of UN development agencies in Burma needs to be assessed in light of increasing agreement on the importance of aid conditionality and to ensure consistency with the message coming from the UN Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly."

- Sources:

UNICEF March 1991 report

GOA Abstract-December 1992

International Negotiation Network News, March 1993

UNDP Sixth Country Programme for Burma 1992-1994

Report to the Honest Ballot Association May 6, 1993

NEWS BRIEFS

Htay Lwin

On April 9, Mr. Htay Lwin and 11 other Burmese students were arrested in Bangkok by Thai immigration police. They were taken to the Immigration Detention Center (IDC) and charged with illegal entry. Htay Lwin was suffering from an incurrable disease and a weak heart.

Burmese students in Bangkok claim that the UNHCR, which is responsible for the students, did not provide the protection or care necessary. After Htay Lwin became extremely ill, he was finally taken to the hospital where he died the following day.

The UNHCR denies the charge by the students and says that it monitored Htay Lwin's condition closely, and paid for all medical attention he needed.

However, student sources in Bangkok claim that Htay Lwin's friends were not notified of his death until a month later when they began searching for him. He still has not received a proper burial.

- Source:

ONSOB Statement

BP 930603

Burma-China Bridge

Burma and China have opened a bridge linking the two countries along the route of World War II's famous "Burma Road". The bridge links the Burmese town of Kyukok with the town of Wanting in China's Yunnan province. Kyukok marked the northern end of the "Burma Road" built in 1940 by the US and British governments as a backdoor American supply route for the Chinese Nationalist government fighting the Japanese army in China.

- Source:

TN 930531

Chavalit Visits Burma

On May 31, Thailand's Interior Minister Gen Chavalit Yongchaiyudh visited with officials of the Slorc military regime in Rangoon. He was accompanied by 50 people representing Thai government agencies and companies. Although details of the visit were not made public, it is believed that the visit was to discuss matters related to fishing, logging and security matters between the two countries. Burmese military authorities have stated that they will end all Thai logging contracts by the end of 1993 and this is a major concern to both Thai logging companies, and some Thai officials who have connections with logging operations inside Burma.

- Source:

TN 930601

Gas Exploitation

French oil company Total and Unocal from the US were recently holding discussion with Burmese military officials about how to exploit offshore natural gas reserves in the Gulf of Martaban. The Petroleum Authority of Thailand also took part in the talks.

One of the goals of the talks is to find ways to pipe the gas from the gulf into Thailand where it is needed for power generating plants. There is much controversy over the route the pipeline will have to take from the gulf to the Thai-Burma border since it will have to pass through either territory presently controlled by the Mon or by the Karen.

Premier of Britain, Texaco of the USA and Japan's Nippon Oil have also apparently found commercially viable quantities of oil and gas in their respective blocks off the Tenasserim Coast in the Andaman Sea.

- Source:

BP 930604

Miss Pepsi

The Pepsi company in Rangoon organized a Miss Pepsi contest in Rangoon during May of this year. Pepsi is taking the forefront in using women to market its products and to attract attention. The winners now adorn calendars and posters throughout Burma.

B.U.R.M.A.
P.O. Box 1076
Silom Post Office
Bangkok 10500, Thailand

AIR MAIL

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED