

BURMA ISSUES

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SPECIAL

INVESTMENTS: Which multinational companies currently have investments in Burma, and which companies have divested from Burma?

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Burma Issues, the monthly newsletter of Burma Issues, highlights current information related to the struggle for peace and justice in Burma. It is distributed internationally on a free-subscription basis to individuals and groups concerned about the state of affairs in Burma.

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ACTS OF DESPERATION

by C.E.K.

Wind stirs up dust along red dirt roads sprawled out over the remains of dry rice fields. Barefoot construction crews crush rocks, balance buckets of dirt on their heads and shovel asphalt out of a cart for other workers to hand place into pot-holes. Several black mud-covered children and men stoop down to catch fish from a stream that narrowly parallels the road. World War II era lorries negotiate single widths of pavement as trishaws and ox carts plod along the shoulders. To the right hand side, a billboard looms picturing a two-story, red roofed, white-washed home with lush garden landscaping surrounded by a secure-looking wall. The sign faces several distant, industrial-looking buildings connected only by more dusty roads and sparse, black powerlines. Further down the road, a couple of tilting, one room, bamboo and banana leaf huts have been constructed beside deserted fields. Around the huts the hard ground, speckled with weeds and dried-up rice stalks, has preserved the foot prints of buffalos, children and stray trucks. About one kilometer farther, the road passes through a small community of similar, stilted homes, a few covered with corrugated tin. Wooden planks extend from each home, spanning the narrow drainage canals that line the elevated road which has been transformed into an impassable market place. This is the industrial revolution in Burma, a new satellite town.

THE LABOR SHIFT

Eager for an economic boost through foreign investments and job creation, the government of Burma has awarded industrial development contracts to Singaporean, Thai, Korean, Malaysian, and Japanese companies. In return, the investors lease land around Rangoon at bargain prices and take advantage of a growing pool of unskilled labor.

Because the new industrial parks and resulting townships have replaced land previously used for agricultural purposes, the pool of unskilled labor will continue to grow in proportion to the amount of land appropriated for industrial usage. When the government designates a land zone for industrial development, it notifies the people living in the area to be industrialized that they must give up their lands. The people receive some monetary compensation and sometimes a smaller portion of land at a different location. Farmers who have enjoyed living at prime locations near the markets of Rangoon are forced to relocate their homes, often to plots not capable of sustaining them.

As farms are converted into industrial parks, economic pressures will force a growing number of families to find new occupations. The transition from skilled farmers to unskilled factory workers in the new industrial parks carries several implications. Under the agricultural system, farmers could maintain a higher degree of self-reliance and independence. For better or worse, they possessed the freedom to make economic decisions concerning the cultivation of their lands. As entry-level factory workers, they give up their occupational independence and

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work for the needs of foreign corporations that, in reality, do not share the same concerns as their laborers.

The lax labor regulations in Burma will also permit industrial plants to exert leverage on their employees – leverage capable of silencing calls for better working conditions and wages that keep up with inflation. Farmers who worried about poor growing seasons will now have fears related to job security and workplace manipulation.

ECONOMIC CHANGES

The new industrial parks, capable of employing tens of thousands, siphon people from village-level economic systems. Rural villagers drawn to Rangoon in search of better lives often learn that the only available jobs are in sectors using unskilled labor. As rural villagers move into the new townships to provide labor for industrial parks, village-level economic systems will slowly continue to erode. The trend is a shift away from community oriented economics towards a greater reliance on foreign investments and an export-based economy. Burma will remain attractive to foreign industries as long as it can offer competitively low labor costs – a scenario that does not promise much for the average laborer.

MIGRATION & OVERPOPULATION

Five industrial zones around Rangoon are now under development and promise to expand as investments increase. Each zone will require substantial amounts of labor to operate at full capacity. For example, the Shwepyitha industrial zone has been designed to house as many as 200 factories. Because most local transportation in Burma relies on people or animal power (ie. bicycles, trishaws, foot, buffalo cart, etc.), factory laborers set up shanty towns in close proximity to the factories in which they work. Each industrial park contains one or more squatter communities of tight-packed huts that grow as new workers relocate their

homes closer to work.

Local migration occurs when the government forcibly relocates people off land slated for industrial development. People who decide to take factory employment move to new areas where they are allowed to build again with whatever resources they possess. The resulting communities establish themselves on stretches of poor land and resemble the refugee camps in Thailand.

The satellite townships undergo population booms when completed factories become operational and new waves of people migrate to the industrial parks. Without advanced planning, the land around the townships can not support the high population densities created by the industrial parks. If affordable, residential areas for laborers are not created, problems of overpopulation such as a lack of vegetation and inadequate water supplies will become more chronic as the industrial parks expand.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

Some Rangoon residents fear that the industrial parks will propagate environmental degradation by not properly handling industrial wastes. Both local and foreign manufacturing companies are taking advantage of relaxed environmental standards. Industrial parks typically exert heavy loads on the local watertable by pumping high volumes of water and releasing contaminated effluents into local waterways. Inhabitants of the satellite towns also use the same waterways for waste water disposal. An unmanaged disposal of chemical wastes into the watertable has the potential to adversely affect neighboring agricultural areas and render Rangoon's watertable unsafe for domestic usage.

The lack of air quality standards could also pose a threat to the environment, especially if refineries, smelting plants and other fossil fuel burning factories enter the industrial zones.

Manufacturing industries have brought an increased need for overland goods transportation. However, the

current overland transport system contains many inefficient, old vehicles that add to the already increasing amount of automobile pollution on the streets. Rangoon's air quality has not been degraded to the extent of many other Asian cities, but increased, loosely-regulated industrialization has the potential to change this.

HEALTH ISSUES

Like other economic development programs in Burma, the people at the bottom of society bear heavy burdens for the transformation of segments of Burma's agricultural economy into a manufacturing economy. Daily laborers who live in satellite towns are the first people affected by overpopulation and industrial pollution. So far, satellite towns have not received much, if any, development attention and appear unplanned. As populations increase, sanitation issues, particularly waste disposal and water potability, become more important, yet more difficult to address. If sanitation conditions are not improved in the satellite towns, water borne diseases have the potential to run rampant through communities of factory workers and their families. Other infectious diseases may also reemerge with higher frequency.

Factory workers who live in satellite towns close to work are exposed to higher levels of industrial pollutants than the general population. In heavily industrialized parts of the world, air, water and noise pollution have caused a broad variety of ailments ranging from chronic respiratory diseases to birth defects to hyperallergic reactions. Burma's crippled health care system does not currently possess the capability to deal with an influx of health risks originating from the new industrial zones and their accompanying satellite townships.

Source: TN970117



TIES TO BURMA: A CORPORATE LISTING

*Burma Issues often receives requests for information about which companies have investment ties to Burma. The following country-based list contains the names of multinational corporations that had either • direct investment or employees; * non-equity ties (such as contracts and distribution agreements); or □ independently distributed products in Burma as of November, 1996, according to the Washington D.C.-based Investor Responsibility Research Center.*

ANTILLES

- Schlumberger Ltd.

AUSTRALIA

- Diversified Mineral Resources Ltd.
- Empire Oil Co. (Pacific) Ltd.
- Langreath Gold Oil Ltd.
- Pacific Arc Exploration
- * Broken Hill Proprietary Co. Ltd.
- * Worldcare Travel Insurance

BELGIUM

- * DHL International Ltd.
- Petrofina
- UCB S.A.

BERMUDA

- Sea Containers Ltd.

BRUNEI

- Royal Brunei Airlines

CANADA

- Consolidated Spectra Ventures
- Indochina Goldfields Ltd.
- International Panorama Resources Corp.
- Ivanhoe Capital Corp.
- Leeward Capital
- Mindoro Resources Ltd.
- Nova Gas International Ltd.
- Taiga Consultants Ltd.
- Teck Corp.
- * PortaCom Wireless Inc.
- * Uniking Enterprises
- BCE Inc.
- Northern Telecom Ltd.

CHINA

- Kunming Int'l Economic and Tech.
- National Machinery Import & Export Corp.
- Yunnan Machinery Import & Export Corp.
- * Aeolus (Dong Feng) Trucks & Buses
- * Dong Feng Motor Industry Im/Ex Corp.
- * First Automotive Works (FAW)

DENMARK

- Dalhoff Larsen & Hornemann (DLH)
- East Asiatic Co. SA
- Lego Group

FINLAND

- * Amer Group Ltd.

FRANCE

- Accor S.A.
- Alcatel Alsthom S.A.
- Banque Francaise Du Commerce
- Banque Nationale de Paris
- Compagnie de Suez
- Credit Commercial de France
- Total S.A.
- YWIL
- * Chanel
- * Croisiers Paquet
- * Michelin, Cie. Generale des Etablissements
- * Peugeot
- Evian

GERMANY

- A.P.G.
- C. Melchers GmbH & Co.
- Siemens AG
- * Alphatel Communications
- * BMW (Bayerische Motorenwerke)
- * Daimler Benz AG
- * Deutsche Lufthansa AG
- * Helm AG
- * Kuoni
- * Metallgesellschaft AG
- * West Deutsche Landesbank

HONG KONG

- Emerald Rose Garden Co. Ltd.
- Golden Shell Co. Ltd.
- Jade Enterprises
- Mandarin Oriental International
- Milesluck Co. Ltd.
- Myanmar Hotels International Ltd.
- Sum Cheong International Ltd.
- Victoria Group
- Wo Kee Hong Holdings Ltd.

INDIA

- Platinum Private Ltd.
- * Gainwell medimart
- * Indian Airlines Ltd.

INDONESIA

- PT Astra International
- * PT Cumawis

ISRAEL

- Koor Industries
- Telrad Telecommunications & Electronics Industries

JAPAN

- Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd.
- Chiyoda Corp.
- Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank
- Daiwa Institute of Research
- Daiwa Securities Co. Ltd.
- Eagle (Myanmar) Co. Ltd.
- Exe Design Co. Ltd.
- Fuji Bank Ltd.
- Fujita Corp.
- Hakuhodo Inc.
- Hanako
- Hazama Corp.
- Honda Motor Co.
- Japan Trade Service Inc.
- Kajima Corp.
- Konica Co.
- MASA Telcom Inc.
- Marubeni Corp.
- Mitsubishi Construction
- Mitsubishi Corp.
- Mitsubishi Materials
- Mitsui & Co. Ltd.
- Mitsui Construction Co. Ltd.
- Mitsui Engineering And Shipbuilding
- Mitsui Fudosan Co. Ltd.
- Myanmar MCG Corp.
- NTN Corp.
- Nikken Rentacom Co. Ltd.
- Nikko Shoji Co.
- Nippon Investment & Finance Co. Ltd.
- Nippon Kokan Kaisha (NKK Corp.)
- Nippon Oil

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FOLLOWING A DIFFERENT TREND: DIVESTMENT

Citing human rights violations, the Slor's links to narcotics production, consumer boycotts, selective purchasing legislation or a lack of profit, some companies have decided to withdraw their business from Burma.

AT&T: gave operations to Lucent Tech. in Oct., 1996.
Amoco Corp.: dissolved its former subsidiary in 1994.
Apple Computer: suspended all trading Sept., 1996.
Brent International PLC: sold interests in 1995.
Carlsberg International: divested July, 1996.
Columbia Sportswear: terminated orders March, 1996.
Dayton-Hudson Corp.
Disney Co.: stopped sourcing apparel in June, 1996.
Dragon Oil PLC: ceased activities in 1994.
Falconbridge Ltd.: hasn't invested since 1990.
Federated Dept. Stores: Nov., 1995.
Grant Geophysical: ceased contracts May, 1996.
J. Crew: terminated operations in Burma Jan., 1997.
Levi Strauss: stopped sourcing from Burma 1992.
Liz Claiborne: stopped sourcing from Burma 1994.

London Fog Corp.: stopped sourcing Aug., 1996.
Mamiye Brothers/American Character Classics: 1996.
Melville Corp.: sold Kay Bee toys in May, 1996.
Murphy Oil Corp.: no longer operates in Burma May, 1996.
Oracle Corp.: terminated operations in Burma May, 1996.
Oshkosh B' Gosh Inc.: stopped agreement July, 1996.
Parker Drilling Co.: left Burma in 1993.
Philips Electronics N.V.: terminated dealings Dec., 1996.
Pier 1 Imports Inc.: boycotted Burma since 1990.
Raytheon Co.: sold Burma subsidiaries in 1992.
Santa Fe Energy Resources: relinquished interests 1994.
Spiegel Inc.: stopped importing from Burma Oct., 1995.
Van Kloberg Associates: no longer has Slor as client.
Venture Stores: ceased orders Jan., 1996.
Wente Vineyards: suspended Burma activities Nov., 1996.

JAPAN CONT.

- Nissan Motor Co.
- Nissho Iwai Corp.
- Nouveau Marketing Co. Ltd.
- Obayashi Corp.
- Sanwa Bank
- Sanwa Trading Co. Ltd.
- Seiko Corp.
- Sony Corp.
- Sumitomo corp.
- Taisei Corp.
- Toyota Motor Corp.
- Yasuda Fire & Marine Insurance Co. Ltd.
- * All Nippon Airways Co. Ltd.
- * CBM Corp.
- * Canon Inc.
- * Fuji Photo Film Co. Ltd.
- * Isuzu Motors Ltd.
- * JVC Victor Co. of Japan Ltd.
- * M.O. Air System Inc. (M.O. Tourist)
- * Matsushita Electric Industrial Co. Ltd.
- * Mazda Motor Corp.
- * Meiwa Marine and Industrial Pte. Ltd.
- * Mita Industry Co. Ltd.
- * Mitsubishi Electric
- * Mitsubishi Heavy Industries
- * Mitsubishi Motors Corp.
- * Mitsui Marine & Fire Insurance Co. Ltd.
- * Pokka Corp.
- * Sharp Corp.
- * Tamasu Co. Ltd.
- * Toshiba Corp.
- * Yusen Air & Sea Service
- Ajinomoto Co., Inc.

LAOS

- * Lao Aviation Co.

MACAU

- * Myanmar Macau International

MALAYSIA

- Atlantic Outline Myanmar Co. Ltd.
- Bank of Commerce Malaysia
- Idris Hydraulic Bhd.
- Kelang Port Management
- Landmarks Bhd.
- Malayan Banking Bhd.
- Mamee-Double Decker (M) Bhd.
- Petroleum National Bhd. (Petronas)
- Prime Utilities Bhd.
- YTL
- * Chemical Co. of Malaysia Bhd. (CCM)
- * Kemayan Corp. Bhd
- * Malaysia Airline System Bhd. (MAS)

NETHERLANDS

- ABN Amro Bank Ltd.
- ING Bank
- Nutricia
- * Royal Dutch Petroleum Co.
- * Unilever N V

PAKISTAN

- * Pakistan International Airline

PHILIPPINES

- * Sy Cip Gorres Velayo and Co.

SINGAPORE

- A&S International Co. Ltd.

- AEA International
- Allied Container Services
- Amara International Singapore
- Ban Hock Hin Co. Ltd.
- Bousteadco Singapore Ltd.
- C&P Holdings Pte. Ltd.
- Comfort Group
- Development Bank of Singapore Ltd.
- Eastern & Oriental Express
- Fraser & Neave Ltd.
- Fulbrim (S) Pte. Ltd.
- Hotel Properties Ltd.
- Informatics Holding Ltd.
- Keppel Bank
- Keppel Corp. Ltd.
- Kuok Singapore Ltd.
- Myanmar Swan Investment Ltd.
- Overseas Chinese Banking Corp. Ltd.
- Overseas Union Bank
- Shangri-La Hotels Ltd.
- Singapore Technologies Industrial Corp. Ltd.
- Straits Steamship Land Ltd.
- System-Built Myanmar Ltd.
- Traders Yangon Co. Ltd.
- United Engineers Ltd.
- United Info Summit (UIS)
- Wing Tai
- * Cycle and Carriage
- * DP Intertrade
- * Diplomatic Business Pte. Ltd.
- * Newscom Pte. Ltd.
- * Singapore Airlines Ltd.
- * Wong Yin Chong Pte. Ltd.

SOUTH AFRICA

- Rembrandt Group Ltd.

SOUTH KOREA

- DaeWoo Corp.
- Korea Exchange Bank
- Pohang Iron and Steel
- Samsung Corp.
- Segye Corp.
- Ssangyong Group
- Yukong Ltd.
- * Bell Metal Industries
- * Hyundai Corp.

SWEDEN

- Ericsson Telecommunications Pte. Ltd.

SWITZERLAND

- Ciba-Geigy Ltd.
- Richemont, Co. Financiere
- * ABB Asea Brown Boveri Ltd.
- Mepha Int'l Co.
- Nestle S.A.

TAIWAN

- * Acer Inc.

THAILAND

- Adman Club Co. Ltd.
- Asia Associates Bangkok Ltd.
- Bagan Hotel Co. Ltd.
- Baiyoke Kandawgyi Hotel Co.
- Bangkok Bank of Commerce
- Bangkok Container Lines
- Bank of Ayudhya
- Central Floating Hotel
- Italian-Thai Development
- Krung Thai Bank Co. Ltd.
- L.P. Holding Co. Ltd.
- Royal Lake Hotel Co. Ltd.
- Siam City Bank Ltd.
- Siam Syntech Construction Co.
- Thai Farmers Bank Ltd.
- Thai Military Bank Ltd.
- United Communication Industry Public Co.
- * Earth Industrial PLC
- * Krong Sombat Co. Ltd.
- * Loxley Public Co. Ltd.
- * Thai Airways Int'l Ltd.

TONGA

- Bank of Tonga

UNITED KINGDOM

- B.A.T. Industries PLC
- Cordiant PLC
- Beta Funds
- General Electric Co. Ltd. PLC
- Glaxo Wellcome PLC
- HSBC Holdings PLC

- Premier Oil PLC
- Standard Chartered Bank
- Trafalgar House PLC
- * British Airways
- * Constance Carroll Collection 2000
- * EPG Travel Co. Ltd.
- * Guinness PLC
- * Mackie International Group PLC
- * Rolls Royce
- * Shell Transport & Trading Co. PLC
- * Unilever PLC
- * Venice Simplon Orient Express

UNITED STATES

- American Vision Professional
- Arthur Andersen Worldwide
- Atlantic Richfield Co.
- BJ Services Co.
- Baker Hughes Inc.
- Black & Veatch
- Cluett Peabody & Co. Inc.
- East Asia Gold Corp.
- First General Services
- Halliburton Co.
- Interdigital Communications
- Interpublic Group of Cos.
- KD Engineering Co.
- KMD Computer Ltd.
- McDermott International
- Newmount Mining
- Pan American Enterprises
- Servcorp
- Texaco
- United Technologies Corp.
- Unocal Corp.
- Zin International
- * Alza Pharmaceuticals
- * American Express
- * Angelina Hardwood Sales
- * Arvin Industries Inc.
- * Best Western International
- * Bradlees Inc.
- * Carlson Holdings Inc.
- * Caterpillar
- * Chase Manhattan Corp.
- * China Resource Development Inc.

- * Compaq Computer Corp.
- * Consolidated Stores Corp.
- * DHL Airways
- * Dean Hardwoods Inc.
- * Federal Express Corp.
- * Ford Motor Co.
- * Gaeltaryn Ltd.
- * HFS Inc.
- * Hewlett-Packard
- * Indo-China Express Inc.
- * Kellwood Co.
- * King Koil Licensing Co. Inc.
- * L.L. Bean
- * Leslie Fay Cos. Inc.
- * Lucent Technologies
- * Mobile Corp.
- * Ocean Cruise Line Inc.
- * Pacific Architects & Engineers
- * Penny (J.C.) Co. Inc.
- * PepsiCo Inc.
- * Proctor & Gamble Co.
- * Slamor Import Export
- * Sears, Roebuck and Co.
- * Silver Sea Cruise
- * Smith International Inc.
- * Stone & Webster
- * Surgical Laser Technologies
- * Teak Imports International
- * Textron Inc.
- * United Parcel Service
- * Zippo Manufacturing Co.
- Colgate-Palmolive Co.
- Estee Lauder Companies Inc.
- General Electric Co.
- Gillette Co.
- Lockheed Martin Corp.
- McGraw-Hill Co. Inc.
- Philip Morris Cos. Inc.
- Qualcomm Inc.
- WD-40 Co.

YUGOSLAVIA

- * Invest-Import Yugoslavia

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**

The Investor Responsibility Research Center's *Multinational Business in Burma (Myanmar)* report lists company names, addresses, specific ties to Burma and a list of the subsidiaries of the parent companies contained in the report. The report also contains excerpts from various selective purchasing laws and updates on Burma investment controversies. The next revision is due in February, 1997.

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THE INSIDE PERSPECTIVE

This is the account of some aspects of life in Insein, a major suburb of Rangoon, as told by a recent arrival at the Thai-Burma border. It suggests that economic development holds little benefit for many ordinary Burmese citizens, and that survival and material well-being are as elusive as ever in Burma's capital.

FOOD

BI: What kinds of problems have you observed in your area of Rangoon over the past year?

Friend: The biggest problem facing us is feeding ourselves and our families. Nearly everyone in Rangoon is struggling just to eat. If a household has ten people, all ten need to work every day just to have enough to eat. Since we need money for other things as well, usually we eat less or eat very simply. This is a general economic condition, not the problem of only poor people. My house, for example, could be called middle class, but we face the same problems with food as everyone else.

CORRUPTION

BI: How do people deal with these conditions?

Friend: Generally, there has been an increase in corruption and dishonest business practices. For example, in the office where I worked, many employees would take days off, claiming sickness or asking friends to cover for them, and then would do manual day labor. If a clerk has skill in carpentry, for example, he would sneak out of the office to do a day or so's carpentry work to supplement his monthly office salary. The pay is too low, and most of the people who can get these jobs are frustrated by the corruption and by working for the government, so they go to work overseas in Malaysia, Singapore, and Hong Kong. Nobody wants to work in the civil service.

BI: What about the police?

Friend: There is a lot of corruption throughout the legal system. Traffic police randomly fine people for driving violations, even if they didn't do anything wrong. The police are happy to see traffic accidents because the victims have to compete against each other

to win the policeman's judgement over who is at fault. Whoever pays more will win. I have a friend, actually my friend's brother, who was in an accident recently. A car drove off the road and crushed his legs as he was riding a trishaw on the side of the road. Both of his legs were amputated. The car driver paid off the police to avoid any judgement against him, even though it was so obvious who was at fault. When he got to the hospital, the doctor suggested to his family how much it would cost for treatment, and the family had to borrow enough kyats to bribe the doctor and nurses in the hospital to take care of him. His legs became infected and gangrenous while he waited. The money was paid directly to the doctor, not as part of an official hospital bill. The doctors sell the hospital's supplies to the pharmacies, then ask their patients to buy the medicine from the shops themselves. This kind of corruption in hospitals is very common. Anyone who doesn't personally know a doctor or nurse and who can't afford to bribe the hospital simply can't get medical treatment.

LAND

Friend: Another problem people in my area are facing is land-grabbing. Land prices in Insein are rising very quickly, and many people are trying to buy up land as fast as possible, especially land close to the airport and on the roads leading west. My family has lived on the same plot of land, in the same house for forty years. We and our neighbors moved there when there were no houses or buildings at all, and we don't have any deeds or land ownership documents. Now someone has claimed that our homes are on his family's land and is trying to evict us all. He has paid off the judge and lawyers, so even though we took him to court we have little chance of winning a fair judgement.

BI: Do you see it as a case of discrimination because you and your neighbors are Karen and the land owner is Burman?

Friend: No, that has nothing to do with it. This is all about money and becoming rich. He would do the same thing to anyone living there. We have heard rumors that Khun Sa has bought up a big area of land near where we live.

BI: Where are all the people who are getting evicted going to go?

Friend: Yes, this is a big problem. It is very difficult nowadays to go stay with relatives, because people all over the country are facing the same economic problems, especially over food, so you can't just bring a whole family to go live with relatives. Probably a lot of people who have nowhere else to go will come out to the refugee camps in Thailand.

BI: Do people in Rangoon know about conditions in the civil war zones?

Friend: In the Karen community we hear things, mostly through friends or relatives who have contact with the Karen rebels. When Burma army soldiers come back from the front lines they sometimes boast about rapes they have committed or other things they have done.

BI: Do people ever hear about the villagers and crops getting burned, the torture and execution committed by government soldiers?

Friend: We hear stories through the Karen community, but we don't always know what is true or not true. But most other people in Rangoon don't know what's going on. The soldiers don't boast about those things.



TIMELINE OF BURMA-ASEAN ACTIVITIES

Will Burma receive Asean membership in 1997? Over the past year, Asean's agenda has at times seemed sporadic, but viewing Asean's past diplomatic activities as a whole reveals a general trend toward 1997 Burma membership.

MARCH, 1995

- Than Shwe visits Vietnam (first high-level visit since 1975).

APRIL, 1995

- Thai foreign minister visits Burma.

JUNE, 1995

- Delegation of top Slorc officials visits Indonesia and Singapore.
- Indonesia, Singapore and Burma sign bilateral trade agreements.
- Singapore pledges to aid development in Burma.
- Vietnam joins AFTA.

JULY, 1995

- Asean claims credit for Aung San Suu Kyi's release.
- Asean decides not to give Burma observer status in 1995.
- Vietnam becomes an Asean member and Cambodia gets observer status.
- Indonesia voices support for Burma's Asean membership.
- Burma signs Asean Treaty of Amity and Cooperation.
- Thailand supports Burma's desire for unconditional, full Asean membership.

NOVEMBER, 1995

- Asean invites Than Shwe to the informal summit in Bangkok.

DECEMBER, 1995

- Than Shwe addresses meeting of Asean heads of government.

JANUARY, 1996

- Asean announces that Burma will receive observer status and ARF membership in July.
- Prime minister of Cambodia visits Burma.

FEBRUARY, 1996

- Burma-Cambodia diplomatic relations resumed.
- Vietnamese leaders invited to visit Burma.
- After diplomatic visit, Vietnam backs Burma's Asean membership.

- Slorc receives Indonesian ambassador.

MARCH, 1996

- Slorc receives Brunei delegation.
- Thai Prime Minister visits Burma.

MAY, 1996

- Minister of Industry visits Indonesia.
- Slorc approves new Indonesian ambassador.
- Burma granted ARF membership in Yogyakarta, Indonesia.
- Slorc receives Malaysian business delegation.
- Slorc receives Lao military attache.
- Indonesian foreign minister Ali Alatas refuses to comment on the arrest of NLD officials.

JUNE, 1996

- Alatas refuses to visit Burma and expresses concern over the current situation.
- Leaders of Laos, Cambodia and Burma invited to attend informal Asean summit.
- Slorc assures Asean it will adhere to Asean policies and resolve political tensions peacefully.

JULY, 1996

- Asean vows to stay out of Burma's internal affairs and officially gives Burma observer status.
- NLD sends letter to Asean heads of state.
- Asean rejects the NLD's letter calling for democratic dialogue and won't reconsider constructive engagement.
- Asean criticizes the EU for making Burma an emotional issue while ignoring other parts of the world.
- Asean Secretary General Ajit Singh plans to visit Rangoon to help Burma prepare for membership and AFTA integration.
- Slorc receives Thai foreign affairs delegation.
- Alatas says political issues in Burma are not Asean issues.
- Burmese foreign minister Ohn Gyaw confirms early entry bid.
- Asean says it intends to give Burma

membership in 1998.

- Slorc assures Asean that Burma can conform to Asean standards.

AUGUST, 1996

- Thailand and Burma sign memorandum on culture, tourism and tourism promotion.
- Malaysia invites Than Shwe and Khin Nyunt to visit.
- Than Shwe and Malaysian foreign minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi express interest in 1997 Burma membership.
- Than Shwe assures Asean that the U.S. has large investments in Burma and will not apply any sanctions.
- Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad expresses enthusiasm for 1997 membership. He says giving Burma membership would influence changes in Burma better than "arm-twisting" tactics of the West.
- Burma formally applies for Asean membership.
- Slorc cracks down on the NLD with arrests and roadblocks.

SEPTEMBER, 1996

- Ajit Singh and Burmese embassies confirm Burma's desire for 1997 membership.
- The Philippines expresses concern about giving Burma early membership. Thailand expresses similar sentiments. Singapore remarks that Vietnam was given membership despite doubts.
- Asean secretariate backs Burma's 1997 application.
- At an informal meeting in New York, Asean members presented papers that express concern about 1997 membership.
- 800 people arrested and Aung San Suu Kyi confined to her home.
- Asean foreign ministers decide that 1997 membership is too early and set 2000 as goal for all 10 countries to be members.

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POLITICS

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OCTOBER, 1996

- Asean, EU and US express concern about crackdown on NLD. The Philippines suggests reviewing constructive engagement.
- Malaysia and Thailand downplay the current situation and will not review their policies toward Burma.
- Mahathir and Suharto meet to defend constructive engagement.
- Vietnam supports Burma's full inclusion and claims rejection would be meddling in Burma's domestic affairs.
- Than Shwe visits Cambodia.
- Asean delegates decide Burma must follow a technical procedure for membership including a two year wait.
- Slorc opens a newly created Asean affairs office and arranged to open an embassy in Brunei.
- Thai army commander-in-chief visits Than Shwe, Maung Aye, and Khin Nyunt.
- Slorc holds the first ever Asean Optimist Championship yachting event.

NOVEMBER, 1996

- Newly appointed Burmese am-

bassador to Thailand, Hla Maung, rejects democratization as a condition for Asean membership.

- Thai army commander-in-chief reports that Burma has a democracy.
- Ajit Singh reports Burma is making strides to meet Asean's technical requirements and is ready for membership.
- Indonesian ambassador to Burma reports that Burma is more prepared to join Asean than Cambodia or Vietnam.
- Mahathir asks Asean to think carefully about Burma and accept Burma's membership in 1997.
- Asean foreign ministers agree to base their decision on a report by their senior economic officials and the Asean Secretariate.
- Suharto invites Than Shwe to the Asean summit in Jakarta.

DECEMBER, 1996

- Asean heads of government agree to admit Cambodia, Laos and Burma at the same time.
- Ohn Gyaw expresses confidence Burma will join Asean in 1997 by making sufficient progress between now

and July, 1997.

JANUARY, 1997

- Thai foreign minister said Thailand should look after itself rather than intervene in other countries internal affairs.
- Abdullah Badawi confirmed Malaysia would like Burma to be a member this year. It could happen at the meeting in July or the informal summit in December.
- Malaysia asks Burma to speed up the constitution drafting process.
- Ohn Gyaw visits Hanoi for economic cooperation talks. Vietnam praises Burma's position saying Burma is better prepared for Asean membership than Vietnam was.
- Suharto plans to visit Burma in the third week of February. It will mark the first Indonesian head of state visit in four decades.
- Thai Prime Minister Chavalit plans to visit Burma in late February or early March.



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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED