

BURMA ALERT

No.4, Volume 3, April 1992

Published by: The Associates to Develop Democratic Burma

ISSN: 1182-0454

Burma News:

UNITED NATIONS ACTS ON BURMESE REFUGEE PROBLEM

Responding to the growing refugee crisis on the Burma-Bangladesh border, the new UN Secretary-General Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali on Mar.6, called on Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to *"take all necessary action to ratify the causes of this tragic situation which, if not addressed urgently, would threaten the stability of the region and increase human suffering."* As the number of Rohingya Burmese Muslim refugees fleeing persecution by SLORC rose to over 200,000, Bangladesh appealed for international assistance. Initially, Bangladesh had approached China which has close ties with both Burma and Bangladesh to mediate the problem. China, however, is SLORC's major arms supplier (worth over US\$1 billion) and has a thriving border trade with Burma. Peking, therefore, advised Dhaka to settle the matter bilaterally and declined to intercede on Bangladesh's behalf. During the Mar.17-21 visit to the USA of Bangladesh Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, Burma was at the top of her agenda when she met with US President George Bush. She also met with the UN Secretary-General who told a press conference afterwards that he would send a special envoy, Under Secretary-General Jan Eliason of Sweden who is also the UN's Humanitarian and Relief Co-ordinator, to Burma and Bangladesh to help resolve the problem [A920327.0403 & UN920306].

NORWAY URGES ARMS EMBARGO BY SECURITY COUNCIL

On Mar.25, Norway requested the UN Security Council to impose an arms embargo against SLORC to prevent a further threat to peace and security in the region. Norway's action was prompted by the Rohingya refugee crisis but Ambassador Martin Huslid said that Norway was *"also deeply concerned about the grave human rights situation in Burma and the persistent disregard by the Burmese authorities of the Resolution on the Situation in Myanmar (46/132) adopted by the General Assembly on 17 Dec.91"* which emphasized the obligation of all member states to promote and protect human rights and fundamental freedoms [NOR920325J].

MALAYSIA - ROHINGYA PROBLEM NO LONGER A DOMESTIC ONE

Concerned over SLORC's ill treatment of Muslims in Arakan, Malaysian Foreign Minister Abdullah Badawi said on Mar.9 that the Rohingya refugee crisis *"could no longer be regarded as Burma's domestic problem ... because the action by Burmese troops has burdened neighbouring countries and may disrupt regional stability."* Malaysia protested to Rangoon and demanded that the military offensive in Arakan be stopped and Rohingyas be allowed to return home without any threat of persecution. In the past, Malaysia and other members of ASEAN have refused to publicly criticize SLORC for human rights violations but at the ASEAN summit in Singapore in Jan.92, Malaysian Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohammad made a veiled reference to SLORC by saying that ASEAN should not *"support oppressive regimes which are not concerned with the well-being of their own nationals"* [F920310].

INDONESIA AND SINGAPORE EXPRESS CONCERN

Following Malaysia's protest to SLORC, Singapore publicly expressed its concern over the influx of Burmese refugees into Bangladesh. Indonesia's Foreign Minister Ali Alatas also expressed concern and appealed to SLORC to solve the problem. Thailand, SLORC's strongest ally in ASEAN, refused to make a statement but hinted at its concern by pointing to the fact that there are at least 100,000 Burmese refugees in Thailand. This year, Thailand also refused to allow Burmese troops to cross over onto Thai territory to attack Karen strongholds from the rear. The Philippines, which holds the chairmanship of ASEAN this year has kept silent on the Rohingya issue but in Feb.92, President Corazon Aquino sent a letter expressing her government's concern to SLORC [A920327 & F920326].

DR. SEIN WIN VISITS AUSTRALIA

Dr Sein Win, Prime Minister of the National Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), led a delegation to Australia, Mar.1-17, at the invitation of Sir William Keys. The delegation was warmly welcomed by the Burmese community, met with members of the Australian government and parliament, and participated in several conferences on Burma [GUB920401].

Burma News:**BURMA ARMY FAILS TO CAPTURE MANERPLAW**

Despite orders to take Manerplaw by Mar.27 and the biggest dry season offensive to date, the Burma Army once again failed to capture the headquarters of the Karen National Union (KNU), Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), National Democratic Front (NDF) and the NCGUB. SLORC had sent in 25,000 troops supported by Chinese F-6 jet and Swiss PC-9 Pilatus turbojet fighter-bombers [A920313].

REPORT OF KNU TALKS WITH KHUN SA IS FALSE

General Bo Mya, President of the KNU, on Mar.25 issued a statement firmly denying an Agence France Presse report that he had met with drug warlord Khun Sa in late 1991 to solicit Khun Sa's help in fighting SLORC. Bo Mya pointed out that during the alleged period he was supposed to have met Khun Sa, he was in fact chairing the 10th KNU Congress in Manerplaw (Sep.91-Jan.92). The DAB, and especially the KNU, has a long-standing strict anti-drug policy. (*A recent joint policy statement by Burma's democratic forces on narcotics is published on page 5 -Ed.*) Bo Mya is of the opinion that the AFP report was planted by SLORC to counter allegations made by leaders of the democracy movement at a press conference in Feb.92, that SLORC has a secret understanding with Khun Sa and that SLORC is actively involved in the drug trade which financed its arms deal with China [KNU920325].

SLORC TRYING TO DIVIDE OPPOSITION

SLORC is again trying to divide the opposition by approaching individuals and organizations with private deals. Brang Seng, Chairman of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), said in Feb.92 that he was approached by SLORC, through a Christian pastor. Bo Mya was also approached by two pastors saying that SLORC wanted peace talks only with the KNU. Nai Shwe Kyin, Chairman of the New Mon State Party, was given the same message, but this time by two Buddhist monks. A similar approach was also made to Karenni General Aung Than Lay. To date, all groups have rejected the overtures on the principle that as members of DAB and/or the NDF, they would not talk to SLORC except as a group. SLORC has also approached expatriate Burmese with lucrative business opportunities in exchange for their support. Informed sources confirm that two Buddhist monks and an ex-army officer approached Aung San Oo in the US, to persuade him to return to Burma to help form a new 'democratic' government. Aung San Oo is General Aung San's son and older brother of opposition leader and Nobel Laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who is under house arrest in Rangoon [B920229, 0314].

"BUTCHER" SEIN LWIN DEAD

Colonel Sein Lwin, known as the "*Butcher*" died on Nov.26, 1991. Fearing that the news might spark celebrations and lead to anti-SLORC demonstrations, his death was kept secret by SLORC. Colonel Sein Lwin was a long-time protege of General Ne Win. He was responsible for the death of Karen leader Saw Ba U Gyi in 1950, the massacre of Rangoon University students in July 1962, the killing of student demonstrators in 1974 and the 'democracy' massacres in Rangoon in 1988. Colonel Sein Lwin held several cabinet posts under Ne Win. He was joint secretary-general of the Burmese Socialist Programme Party and became the President of Burma for 18 days from Jul.26-Aug.12, 1988 [F920409].

SLORC SEEKS RE-ENTRY TO NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

SLORC has approached North Korea to help it re-join the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Burma left NAM in Sep.79 over the Cambodia issue to appease China which was at that time supporting the underground Burma Communist Party. NAM is traditionally opposed to any outside interference in the 'internal affairs' of its member states. SLORC thinks NAM membership might help it thwart any attempts by the UN to act against Burma regarding the Rohingya refugee crisis [F920409].

SWISSAID TO SUPPORT DEMOCRACY MOVEMENT IN BURMA

Swissaid, a Berne-based development NGO, has decided to support Burma's ethnic minorities and democratic forces with an initial SFr550,000 (US\$365,000) program. SFr300,000 (US\$200,000), which is 80% funded by the Swiss Government, will provide relief for refugees on the Thai border not recognized by the UNHCR. The remaining SFr 250,000 (US\$165,000) will support educational, health and agricultural projects in ethnic minority areas. Swissaid said what is happening in Burma is genocide and it is concerned that the crisis will intensify [SWISS920324].

Foreign Trade:**CHINA:**

In the first week of Jan.92, 40 Chinese army trucks delivered small arms to SLORC. The steady flow of arms across the border at Panghsai- Kyukok started in Dec.91. Small arms are reported to account for US\$250 million of the US\$1.4 billion SLORC arms deal with China [F920130].

HUAXIA HAINAN DEVELOPMENT CONSTRUCTION & BUSINESS CO agreed to sell rail tracks, coaches, engines and other supplies worth US\$20 million to Myanmar Railways [F920109].

YUNNAN MACHINE IMPORT & EXPORT CORP sold US\$ 3.6 worth of railway tracks to Myanmar Railways on Nov.II, 1991 [F920109].

A YUNNAN company built a US\$3.5 million, 4-storey hotel in Muse, Shan State [BUR910831].

FRANCE:

Myanmar Foreign Trade Bank signed an agreement with the Singapore branch of the BANQUE FRANCAISE DU COMMERCE EXTERIEUR to accept its VISA credit cards to help boost Burma's hotel and tourist industries [F920109].

GERMANY:

SIEMENS formed a joint venture with Myanmar Economic Holdings Co. The Myanmar Electronic Systems will be a trading agency and service centre for electronic goods. Siemens will contribute 60% of Kyat 15 million capital (US\$ 2.4 million). Myanmar Economic Holding is the largest 'private' company in Burma wholly owned by retired and serving military personnel and military organizations [F911219]. Siemens, Wittelbacherplatz 2, D-8000, Munich 2.

HOLLAND:

HEINEKEN's joint venture in Singapore, ASIA-PACIFIC BREWERIES, was studying the feasibility of setting up a brewery in Burma. In Dec.91, it invested US\$25.5 million to upgrade a brewery in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam [F911219]. *(Also listed below under Singapore)*

MALAYSIA:

SERGE PUN ASSOCIATES is building a hotel in Rangoon [BUR910430].

SINGAPORE:

ASIA-PACIFIC BREWERIES, a joint venture between Heineken and FRASER & NEAVE was studying the feasibility of setting up a brewery in Burma. In Dec.91, it invested US\$25.5 million to upgrade a brewery in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam [F911219]. *(Also listed above under Holland).*

T. T. IMPORT EXPORT owns SINGAPORE PARAMEE which has a Sales Centre - MYANMAR PARAMEE at 404 Maha Bandoola St., Rangoon, selling electrical and personal goods, foodstuff and roofing material [Alert No.9, 1990 & Mgr/BUR910731].

BAN HIN CO formed a joint venture with Myanmar Economic Holdings Co to assemble cars, motorcycles & scooters in Burma and to carry on general trade. Ban Hin will hold 50% of the Kyat 10 million [US\$1.6 million] capital [F911219].

THAILAND:

DELTA EXPRESS received permission to re-export used cars & motorcycles to Burma [BUR890131].

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News sources this issue: A = Asiaweek, B = Bangkok Post, BUR = Burma Rights Movement for Action, F = Far Eastern Economic Review, GUB = National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, KNTJ = Karen National Union, Mgr = Manager, NOR = Government of Norway, SWISS = Swissaid and UN = United Nations.

The "Burma Alert" is published by the ADDB. It monitors foreign investments and trade with Burma to provide data for the Burmese democracy movement. Readers wishing to support the work are invited to become 'Associates' by contributing US\$100.00 annually. The ADDB is partially funded by subscriptions to the "Burma Alert", by associates and by a grant from the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montreal, Canada. Subscription to the "Burma Alert" is US\$25.00 per annum payable to ADDB, c/o Harn Yawngnaw, RR.4, Shawville, Quebec JOX 2Y0, Canada. Fax: 1 (819) 64T-3088

International Activities:**BANGLADESH:**

The Third Congress of the ALL BURMA STUDENTS DEMOCRATIC FRONT (ARAKAN) met in Feb-March and elected a new Regional Committee: Khine Hsann Aung (President), Meat Kyaw (Secretary), San Tha Aung (Economics), Kyaw Kyaw (Organization & Information), Prey Thein (Finance & Supply), Ran Aung (Health & Education), Khine Shwe Aye (Military), Cho Zan, and Khine Min Ni.

CANADA:

HAL FERRIS and BRIAN MANROVICH in Whitehorse, Yukon, organized a relief effort for Burmese refugees in Bangladesh and Thailand in March. They were helped by local federal member of parliament AUDREY McLAUGHLIN and received strong community support. Pharmacies, clinics and doctor's offices also donated medical supplies. A container load will be shipped to the Burmese Relief Center in Thailand. For more information: Tel. 1 (403) 667-2199 or 667-2266.

HONG KONG:

The ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION launched a Burma Campaign to make Asians aware of human rights violations in Burma and to encourage Asians to inform their governments and businesses about the consequences of their investments in Burma. The campaign also seeks the release of all political prisoners in Burma. To participate in the campaign or for information, fax: (852) 369-9895.

JAPAN:

On Mar.13, Japanese and foreign activists organized by the BURMESE RELIEF CENTER - JAPAN, rallied in front of the Thai Consulate in Osaka to deliver a 1 metre x 80 cm envelope addressed to the Thai Prime Minister. It contained a letter with a simple message - 'Mercy' - written in 5 languages, appealing to Thailand to show mercy to Burmese refugees and to prevent their forced repatriation.

THAILAND:

The BURMA RIGHTS MOVEMENT FOR ACTION (B.U.R.M.A.) has launched an international campaign calling for a boycott of PEPSI-COLA and PEPSI products. B.U.R.M.A. quoted Barry J. Shea, Pepsico International Vice President for South East Asia as saying, *"The market is there ... people will buy our product ... There's lots of money floating around and there is not much to spend it on in a country like Burma."* According to B.U.R.M.A., a bottle of Pepsi-Cola in Rangoon sells for Kyat 8-15. In contrast, the average salary of a worker is Kyats 16 per day, inflation is at 100% and malnutrition has been reported in Rangoon. Pepsi is said to be planning a second bottling factory in Mandalay. Address: Wayne Calloway, CEO, Pepsico Inc., Anderson Hill Rd, Purchase, NY.10577, USA.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

The DEMOCRATIC COUNCIL BURMA was established in New York in March, to help free Burma from SLORC and restore democracy, human rights and social justice in Burma. It plans to support all groups fighting for democracy in Burma and will cooperate with those working to stop human rights abuses, provide humanitarian assistance to refugees, and increase pressure for economic sanctions against SLORC. Central Executive Committee members: Dr Tyn Myint-U, U Min Kyaw Ya, Dr Ronald Findlay, U Sein Lin, Dr Saw Shwe Dah, U John Htet-Khin, Daw Majolaine Tin-Nyo, U Min Naing and U Maung Maung. Daw Aye Aye Thant is the Council's Special Advisor on Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs. Fax: 1 (212) 319-6297.

The INTERNATIONAL BURMA CAMPAIGN, the FREE SUU KYI, FREE BURMA CAMPAIGN, and the BURMESE RELIEF CENTER - JAPAN, have launched letter-writing campaigns to seek the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi (page 6). IBC Board members include: Rand Engel (President), Dr Vum Son (Vice President), Paula Green (Secretary), Tin Maung Thaw (Treasurer), Michael Bohana (Institute for Asian Democracy), Louisa Benson-Craig (American Karen Association), Bob Helvey (American Friends of Democracy in Burma), Ken Kraft (International Network of Engaged Buddhists), Win Win Kyi (Overseas Burma Foundation), Dr Pe Than Mating (Burmese National Movement Committee), Murray Thomson (Canadian Friends of Burma), and Tun Thwin (Burma Democratic Council). Fax: 1 (703) 823-1938.

Narcotics:**DEMOCRATIC FORCES OF THE UNION OF BURMA**

Policy Statement - 22 February 1992

1. The leaders of the democratic forces of the Union of Burma held a joint meeting on 21 February 1992, at General Headquarters at Manerplaw and are releasing this statement on the eradication of narcotic drugs in Burma. The leaders attending the meeting included:

- leaders of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB),
- leaders of the National Democratic Front (NDF),
- leaders of the National League for Democracy - Liberated Areas (NLD-LA), and
- leaders of the Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS).

2. The people and country of Burma have become extremely poor as a result of the Burmese Way to Socialism and the system of state monopoly which was implemented after the Burma Army, led by Ne Win, seized power in 1962. To hold on to power, the regime implemented a divide-and-rule policy and further intensified the civil war. As a result of the civil war and the increased suppression of the population, more and more people fled to the mountains and jungles for safety. Therefore, more people are now growing opium (mostly in the Shan State), simply for survival. On the other hand, there are more people trafficking and smuggling narcotics because the people in the towns and cities are becoming poorer day by day.

3. In 1988, the present Saw Maung military regime, known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC), seized power and began to negotiate with organizations and individuals involved in the narcotics trade by encouraging them to increase the production of opium and heroin. It is now well known that Burma is producing an estimated 2,500 tons of raw opium annually making it the largest opium producer in the world. In addition, some of the personnel of the ruling military regime at every level are not only taking bribes but are sharing the profits from the opium and heroin trade.

4. When we consider that SLORC is directly responsible for the increasing production and trade of opium and heroin in Burma, we see clearly that the SLORC is not only the enemy of the peoples of Burma but that SLORC is also the public enemy of the whole world.

- a) We are concerned that the production of opium and heroin in Burma continues to increase every year and that the opium and heroin trade is increasing not only within the country but is increasingly being trafficked as well.
- b) We are concerned for the health of the nation with the increasing number of drug addiction and I.V. drug related cases of AIDS which appear to be associated with the annually increasing production of opium and heroin in Burma.
- c) We are concerned that SLORC is directly benefitting politically and economically from the drug trade so that it can increase its military strength and prolong the civil war by further fragmenting the peoples of Burma so it can hold on to power by the 'divide-and-rule' strategy.

5. Therefore, we, the leaders of the Democratic Forces of Burma convened this conference and unanimously decided to form the Narcotics Eradication Commission of Burma (NECB) which will join hands with all international organizations and agencies interested in eradicating the narcotics problem in Burma.

signed: *Sein Win* (Dr. Sein Win), Chairman, NLD-LA

signed: *Bo Mya* (Gen. Saw Bo Mya), Chairman, DAB & President, KNU

signed: *Brang Seng* (Mr. Brang Seng), 1st Vice Chairman, DAB & Chairman, KIO

signed: *Shwe Kyin* (Mr. Nai Shwe Kyin), Chairman, NDF & Chairman, NMSP

signed: *Myint Zaw* (U Myint Zaw), Chairman, DPNS

(Note: KNU = Karen National Union and NMSP = New Mon State Party)

A LETTER CAMPAIGN FOR AUNG SAN SUU KYI AND BURMA

To generate consciousness and international action about Aung San Suu Kyi, the other prisoners of conscience in Burma, and the dreadful situation in that country, please:

1) Write your own version of the following letter (or use the same wording):

Dear.

I call on you to do everything in your power to obtain the unconditional release of Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi and the other prisoners of conscience in Burma, a speedy transfer of power to the representatives of the Burmese people elected in 1990, and a just political solution to the civil war.

Yours sincerely,

then address and send it to:

- * Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary General of the United Nations, UN Secretariat, NY, NY 10017, USA.
- * Your Head of State.
- * The candidates, if your country is holding elections this year, or any other appropriate political figure.

2) Please send a copy also to:

- * Nobel Peace Laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, 56, University Avenue, Yangon, Myanmar.
- * Burmese Relief Center, 266-27 Ozuku-cho, Kashihara, Nara 634, Japan.

(Suu Kyi is not able to receive letters at present, but the arrival of a lot of mail for her will make a strong impact, and the letters received by the Burmese Relief Center will be forwarded periodically to the Burmese Embassy in Japan to show growing international concern for Aung San Suu Kyi and the other prisoners of conscience in Burma.)

3) Make ten copies (or more, or less, according to circumstances) of this page (with a message saying who the sender is) and send them to ten people or organisations likely to act on them. In order to reach the widest possible range of people, use as many of your networks as you can — work, family, political, religious, academic, sport, friends, international contacts and so on. If you represent an organisation, please send the document out to your networks, encourage your members to participate, and use it in your mail-outs and publications. If you represent a Burma support group, feel free to add your address. Please translate where appropriate and possible.

(This campaign was adapted by **Free Suu Kyi, Free Burma** from an initiative of the **Burmese Relief Center, Japan.**)

