

BURMA ALERT

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Burma News:

REIGN OF TERROR IN ARAKAN

On 12 Jim, military intelligence agents of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) arrested 2 Rohingya leaders in Maungdaw and subjected them to torture at the Buthidaung Military Intelligence Center. Mohamed Ilyas, 72, a retired civil servant well-known for his community work and Chairman of the Maungdaw Township unit of the National League for Democracy (NLD) died under torture. SLORC said he was being questioned about plans to plant a mine under the bridge near the Buthidaung Golf Course and died 'because of his advanced age and his illness (acute gastro-intestinal disease)'. He was in good health when arrested. Fazal Ahmed, 53, the Member of Parliament for Maungdaw elected in 1990, is still under custody. It was earlier reported that Ahmed and four other MPs had been ordered but refused to cross the border into Bangladesh to persuade the 300,000 Rohingya refugees there to return to Burma, in another incident on the same night, SLORC intelligence agents broke into the house of Abdul Rahman, 32, in Maungdaw and summarily executed him [ARIF920705, A920717.0807.0904].

MASS RE-LOCATION OF VILLAGES IN KARENNI STATE

Up to 70,000 Karenni villagers have been evicted by SLORC troops from their ancestral homes and resettled on desolate fields. The Burma Army claims the villages are infiltrated by anti-Rangoon forces and that it was the Army's duty to move loyal villagers to safe areas. Karenni spokesmen dispute the claim pointing out that the villages of Gawh Tha Doh, Chiloh, Ler Ka Loh, Ler Lawh Htee and Htoe Doh Lay which were served with eviction notices in Mar.92, are located well behind the inner perimeter of the Burma Army's defence lines. In fact, the people from these villages make up the labour pool for the Mawchi Mines. The Karennis claim they are being moved out so that the Army can bring in landless lowland Burmans to work the mines. The Army has in the past settled its veterans from the Burmese lowlands in kibbutz-style settlements in fertile but 'unfriendly' areas. Further north from Mawchi in Pru-so township, over 60 villages were relocated by force to a camp in Pru-so town and their former homes declared a no-man's land. The villagers were warned that anyone remaining in the villages after 31 Mar would be considered an anti-SLORC element and eliminated. Since many of the displaced Karennis are Catholics, some analysts wonder if SLORC is embarking on a systematic program to eliminate ethnic and religious minorities. In the Diocese of Loikaw alone, 12,000 Catholics from 70 villages were relocated on 20 Mar. Priests and nuns from the parishes of Hoya, Ghekaw, Dolaco and Dorawkhu were moved by force to camps that do not have water, food, clothing or shelter. 25 people including children and old people are said to have died in the camps [BRC9208, HRBI9207, KPG920402, NST920904].

DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI AWARDED UNESCO PRIZE

On 30 Jun, the Paris-based United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) announced that its US\$25,000 Simon Bolivar Prize is being jointly awarded in 1992 to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and former Tanzanian President Julius Nyerere. The prize was first awarded in 1983 to reward activity which has contributed to "freedom, independence and dignity of peoples". In awarding the prize, the jury said, "Aung San Suu Kyi has held fast to the principle of a non-violent struggle for the respect of human rights. The prize aims at reinforcing international efforts towards the defence of the values of civil society, that are so dear to the people of Myanmar" [A920717, UNESCO].

NCGUB BEGINS RADIO BROADCAST FROM NORWAY

On 19 Jul, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) began broadcasting into Burma on short-wave radio at a frequency of 17840 kHz at 21.00 hrs Burma Standard Time for half-an-hour daily. Known as the "Democratic Voice of Burma" (DVB), the program is being transmitted via Radio Norway International in Oslo, Norway [A920717]. The objective is to provide the people of Burma with an alternate news source and to provide educational programs for children. SLORC has closed down schools and universities in order to control the population. DVB will not propagate violence and will reflect the ethnic diversity of Burma. To date, the programs featured have included statements from the NCGUB, Karen National Union (KNU), Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), National League for Democracy - Liberated Area (NLD-LA), a speech from Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, music, poetry, and various news items [GUB920726].

Burma News:**SLORC NAVY SINKS THAI FISHING TRAWLER**

In Jul.92, a SLORC naval patrol sank a Thai fishing trawler and arrested its 23 man crew which included 18 Burmese. The vessel was allegedly fishing illegally in Burmese waters. On 4 Jun, another Thai trawler, the P Choke-eg Samutchai No.9 was seized in Burmese territorial waters by SLORC troops and set on fire. A crew member died in the fire and the remaining crew of 14 including Captain Prapas lam-chookun, are still missing [B920609, A920807].

BURMA RE-ADMITTED TO NON-ALIGNED MOVEMENT

On 31 Jul, the Foreign Ministers of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) meeting in Jakarta, Indonesia, agreed to recommend to their heads of state that Burma be re-admitted to the 107-member Movement. Although Burma was a founding member when NAM was launched in Belgrade in 1961, it left in 1979 at NAM's sixth summit in Havana, Cuba, after voicing criticism about the Movement. India expressed reservations on the re-admission of Burma but agreed to go along with the consensus after being pressured by ASEAN members of NAM [B920802].

INDIA TALKS WITH SLORC, STUDENTS ARRESTED IN AIZAWL

On 12 Aug, SLORC's Foreign Office Director General U Aye, a senior official of the Defence Ministry, and Ambassador U Wynn Lwin met with Indian Defence Secretary N N Vohra. Both sides maintained silence on the subject of the discussion but it is understood that SLORC is worried about the increasing number of Burmese who are crossing over and becoming active in India against SLORC. In a possibly related move, police in the northeastern Indian state of Mizoram arrested nine Burmese students in Aizawl on 16 July. The student refugees possessed ration cards and had permission to stay in Mizoram. They had been living in Aizawl since Sep.89 as they felt the refugee camp at Champai, 25 km from the border, was unsafe. In May 92, SLORC troops intruded into Mizoram in pursuit of Chin National Front activists from Burma. The All Burma Students Union based in New Delhi protested both the arrests and the meeting [ABSU920812. TOINS920814].

O

Foreign Trade & Investments:**BRITAIN:**

CLYDE PETROLEUM together with Texaco [see USA below] is a partner with CROFT EXPLORATION in exploring for oil in Burma. Croft is based in Glasgow, Scotland [OGJ920518].

FRANCE:

TOTAL, the French oil company, signed a contract with SLORC to develop natural gas fields in the Gulf of Martaban. TOTAL won two off-shore concessions - Block M5 and M6 - totalling 26,140 square kilometres. Other bidders for the contract were Royal Dutch Shell and Unocal of the U.S. The gas reserve in the Gulf is estimated at 2-4 trillion cu.ft. TOTAL said it intends to negotiate a partnership with PTT Exploration & Production (PTTEP), the production arm of the Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT). Thailand plans to establish Burma as its long-term source of natural gas and PTTEP would (like to have a 30% stake in the project. PTT has already started planning a US\$2 billion, 350 km gas pipeline from Burma. It hopes that gas from the Gulf of Martaban will start flowing into Thailand in 1998 at a rate of 250 million cu.ft. per day [B920731, F920730].

HOLLAND:

SHELL EXPLORATION which discovered gas 80 km north of Rangoon in Jan.92 is expected to begin production soon at a rate of 20 million cu.ft. per day. The Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise does not want to wait for Shell to delineate the gas reservoir but wants Shell to put the discovery well on stream immediately because Rangoon is facing a power shortage. 40% of Burma's 70 million cu.ft. gas production is used for power generation [OGJ920518].

JAPAN:

NIPPON OIL together with Texaco [see USA below] is a partner with PREMIER PETROLIUM in exploring for oil in Burma's Gulf of Martaban [OGJ920518].

Foreign Trade & Investments:

UNITED NATIONS:

The FAO's Bangkok-based ANIMAL PRODUCTION AND HEALTH COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (APHCA) held its 44th Executive Committee meeting in Rangoon in Apr.92 [P920410].

The INTERNATIONAL CROP RESEARCH INSTITUTE ON SEMI-ARID TROPICS (ICRISAT) conducted the "Myanmar Asian Grain Legumes Network Workshop on Management of Groundnut, Chickpea, and Pigeonpea in Rice-based Cropping Systems" in Rangoon, in Jan.92. Present were ICRISAT Coordinator-in-Charge Dr D G Faris, and experts from Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Vietnam and UN agencies [P920117].

The Bangkok-based United Nations ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COMMISSION FOR ASIA AND THE PACIFIC (ESCAP) and the Geneva-based UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT (UNCTAD) co-sponsored a 5-day workshop on "Trade Facilitation" in Rangoon in Jan.92 [P920114]. UNCTAD encourages trade between developing and developed nations, works to improve shipping and helps developing nations find markets for their goods.

ESCAP sponsored its first 2-day "Human Resources Workshop" under its Jakarta Plan of Action adopted in 1988, in Rangoon, in Mar.92. Speakers included UNDP Asst Rep Ms Flavia Pansieri and UNITED NATIONS FUND FOR POPULATION ACTIVITIES Country Director Ms Sabiha Syed [P920324].

The UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP) and ESCAP co-sponsored a 2-day seminar on "Sectorial Energy Demand Studies" in Rangoon, in Feb.92. Speakers included UNDP Assistant Resident Representative Ms. Monina Magallanes and ESCAP Consultant Dr T Levere [P920214].

UNDP and the WORLD BANK sponsored a 3-day symposium on "Myanmar Energy Sector Investment and Policy Review Study" in Rangoon in Jan.92. Speakers included interim UNDP Resident Representative Rohinton Setna and World Bank team leader Anil K. Mahotra [P920121].

UNDP sponsored 5 SLORC customs officials to study "Customs and Excise Tax Administration" at the Institute for Tax Administration in Los Angeles, in Jan.92 [P920116].

UNDP sponsored a 5-day seminar on "Privatization" in Rangoon, in Jan.92. Speakers included UNDP Acting Resident Representative Rohinton Sethna and Prof V V Ramanadham of the INTER-REGIONAL NETWORK ON PRIVATIZATION [P920208].

UNDP International Trade Centre sponsored a 4-day seminar on "Effective Business Negotiating Techniques" in Rangoon, in Mar.92. Speakers included UNDP ITC official Claude Bruno Cellich [P920324].

UNDP officials together with Dr Allen Jones and P Stinbre called on U Than Aung, Deputy Minister for Co-operatives, in Mar.92, to draw up plans for the development of cottage industries [P920321].

UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION (UNESCO) Education Consultant David J Laird and Chief Technical Advisor Dr Rupert Maclean called on Col. Pe Thein, in Jan.92, to give advice at the "Workshop on Distance Education in Teacher Education" [P920123J].

Baudouin Duvicourt from UNESCO Headquarters in Paris and Chief Technical Advisor Dr Antoine Schwartz, called on Colonel Kyi Maung, Deputy Minister for Education in Feb.92 [P920222].

UNESCO Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific Director Hedayat Ahmed called on Maj-Gen Khin Nyunt, SLORC Secretary 1, Col Pe Thein, Minister for Health and Education, and members of the UNESCO National Committee, in May 92 [P920529].

WORLD BANK Executive Director Aris Othman called on Brig-Gen David Abel, Minister for Planning & Finance, and for Trade, Lt-Gen Chit Swe, Minister for Forestry, and Maj-Gen Myint Aung, Minister for Agriculture, in May 92, to discuss projects funded by World Bank loans [P920515-17].

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) South-East Asia Regional Planning and Finance Director D Sanvincenti, called on Col Pe thein and Col Than Zin in Feb.92 [P920225].

Foreign Trade & Investments:**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:**

APACHE OIL MYANMAR INC signed an oil production-sharing contract with the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise to revive old oil fields in two concession areas in Pyalo-Paukkaung (RSF-9) and Prome (EP-3), covering a total area of 1 million acres on the east bank of the Irrawaddy River near Pagan . The RSF-9 contract is for a 6-month study of existing data and an optional 30 month exploration period. The EP-3 contract is a 2 year geological and seismic study. President of APACHE OIL MYANMAR INC is B M Romani [OGJ920629, F920709 RR920616]. Write and protest to: Raymond Plank, CEO, Apache Corp, 2000 Post Oak Rd, Houston TX 77056. Tel: 1 (713) 296-6000.

Subject to SLORC approval, SANTA FE ENERGY RESOURCES INC of Houston will purchase a 50% share in APACHE's RSF-9 concession [OGJ920629],

TREND INTERNATIONAL (BERMUDA) signed an oil production-sharing contract with the Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise to resume operations which had been suspended for some years, in Tuywintaung and Letpando. J C Venji is President of TREND [F920709, RR920616].

TEXACO bought a 42% share of CROFT EXPLORATION'S oil concession in Burma in 1990 [M920608]. Croft, based in Glasgow, Scotland, invested US\$8 million for Block 'I' which is west of Henzada. Croft's other partner is Clyde Petroleum of U.K.

TEXACO together with Japan's Nippon Oil also purchased shares in PREMIER PETROLIUM's offshore concessions in Burma [OGJ920518]. Premier is a U.K. firm that paid US\$13 million for Blocks 'M13' and 'M14' in the Gulf of Martaban. Write and protest to: James W Kinnear, CEO, Texaco Inc, 2000 Westchester Ave, White Plains, NY.10604. Tel: 1 (914) 253-4000.

O**International Activities:****AUSTRALIA:**

On 7 Aug, the COMMITTEE FOR THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN BURMA (AUSTRALIA) organized a demonstration in front of the SLORC Embassy in Canberra in remembrance of the 8.8.88 massacre. Following a minute's silence, the laying of a wreath, and speeches by prominent Australians and Burmese representatives, the gathering proceeded to the embassies of ASEAN countries.

A memorial event to remember those who were killed in Burma on 8.8.88 was sponsored by the COMMITTEE FOR THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN BURMA (W.A.), HUMAN RIGHTS FOR BURMA INC, OVERSEAS BURMESE LIBERATION FRONT and the TRIBAL REFUGEE WELFARE IN SOUTH EAST ASIA. Following the service, a food fete was held at St Joachim's Hall in Perth. A candlelight 'Peace Vigil' was also held that evening at the Wesley Church at William and Hay St, Perth.

BANGLADESH:

The ALL BURMA YOUNG MONKS UNION (ARAKAN) is seeking contact with and assistance from the international community. Write: U Thi Ha, President ABYMU(A), c/o Moun Kyaw Hla, Tribal Cultural Institute, Tekpara Rd, Cox's Bazaar, Bangladesh.

GERMANY:

The Burmese community in Germany commemorated 8.8.88 with a 3-day fast in front of the SLORC Embassy in Bonn. They called on the German government and people to support the Burmese democracy movement and help organize a peace conference for Burma under international auspices.

HONG KONG:

The ASIAN HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION has designated 8 Aug-18 Sept, 1992 as "Burma Month" to mobilize an Asia-wide protest against foreign investments in Burma which is an investment 'in the death of the people'. It has also initiated a chain letter campaign to businesses that are investing in Burma. The objective of the Commission's Burma Campaigns is a) to obtain the unconditional release of all political prisoners; b) to make Asians aware of human rights abuses in Burma; and c) to urge Asians to show their governments and businessmen the relationship between their aid and investment to human rights violations in Burma. Over 1,000 Burma kits have been distributed by the Commission. Contact: Wong Kai Shing, AHRC, 4F, 57 Peking Rd, Kowloon, Hong Kong. Fax: (852) 369-9895.

International Activities: INDIA:

On 23 June, the BURMA STUDENTS LEAGUE in New Delhi organized a rally to protest SLORC's plan to hold a national convention. The students were stopped by police barricades and only five representatives were allowed to approach the SLORC embassy [N920624].

On 20 July, the BURMA STUDENTS LEAGUE demonstrated outside the SLORC embassy to mark the third anniversary of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest and to call for international support.

From 6 Aug-8 Aug. the BURMA STUDENTS LEAGUE (INDIA) sponsored an Art Exhibition entitled "Battle for Peace" by 'renown artist and pro-democracy revolutionary' Sitt Nyein Aye at the All India Fine Arts & Crafts Society in New Delhi. The exhibition was to commemorate the fallen martyrs of the 8.8.88 uprising and depicts the problems faced by young democracy activists outside Burma. The Honourable Shri George Fernandes, M.P. inaugurated the exhibition.

The SOCIAL WELFARE COMMITTEE FOR BURMESE POLITICAL REFUGEES is now known as the office of BURMESE POLITICAL REFUGEES WELFARE. A cassette tape of Burmese songs titled "Battle for Peace", is available for 100 rupees (US\$ 5) from the BPRW at its new address: Myo Myint Aung, c/o Tapan Bose, C-6/9, 1st Floor, Safdarjung Development Area, New Delhi 110 016.

NORWAY:

The NORWEGIAN BURMA COUNCIL which manages the US\$350,000 in aid from the Norwegian Government to the NCGUB reports that 25% is being used by the NCGUB in its international lobbying efforts; 25% is for staff training - three workshops on 'Human Rights and Project Administration', 'Negotiating Techniques' and 'Preparing Health Education Material', were held this year for staff members from various groups including the NCGUB, NLD-LA, All Burma Students Democratic Front (ABSDF), and Muslim, Kachin, Karen, Mon and Arakanese groups; and the remaining 50% is for health and educational activities. Of this last amount, 20% is for establishing a National Health Committee and a National Education Committee to co-ordinate and develop health and education projects; 34% is for health projects in areas controlled by the KNU, KIO, New Mon State Party, ABSDF, All Burma Muslim Union, Chin National Front, National United Front of Arakan (NUFA), Wa National Organization, Democratic Party for a New Society, NLD-LA, Lahu National Organization, Muslim Liberation Organization, Peoples Liberation Front and the Peoples Patriotic Party; 34% is for education projects in areas controlled by the KNU, NMSP, KIO, ABSDF and NUFA; 12% is a reserve for contingencies. For more details: Norwegian Burma Council, c/o H K Kuloy, IMTEC, Josefingt 9, N-0351 Oslo 3, Norway.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

On 1 Aug. the COMMITTEE FOR THE RESTORATION OF DEMOCRACY IN BURMA and the FOUNDATION FOR DEMOCRACY IN BURMA hosted a Burma Seminar Luncheon at the George Mason University School of Law in Arlington, Virginia. Speakers included Congressman Neil Abercrombie of Hawaii, Professor Josef Silverstein of Rutgers University and Louis J Walinsky, former Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of Burma. They discussed developments in Burma including current SLORC initiatives, the military/narcotics link, ethnic resistance and the refugee problem.

The LAWYERS COMMITTEE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS released a 320-page report in Jul.92 titled "Critique of 1991 U.S. State Department Report on Human Rights Practices" and includes 3 pages on Burma. It states, *"The Report on Burma is a very good summary of the serious and widespread violations of human rights taking place in that country. While generally forceful and insightful, the report unfortunately makes several statements that tend to downplay the extent of certain types of human rights violations."* Copies of the 1991 Critique are available for US\$15 from the Lawyers Committee, 330 Seventh Ave, New York, NY.10001.

News sources this issue: A = Asiaweek, Hong Kong, ABSU = All Burma Students Union, India, ARIF = Arakan Rohingya Islamic Front, B = Bangkok Post, BRC = Burmese Relief Centre, Chiang Mai, F = Far Eastern Economic Review, Hong Kong, GUB = National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, HRBI = Human Rights in Burma In-, Perth, KPG = Karenni Provisional Government, M = Project Maje, USA, NST = New Straits Times, Kuala Lumpur, OGJ = Oil & Gas Journal, UK, P = Working Peoples Daily, Rangoon, TOINS = Times of India News, New Delhi, and UNESCO = United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, Paris.

Human Rights:

Letter from Ta-chi-lek

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) and the United Nations International Drug Control Programme are funding a US\$4.5 million project in the border areas of the Shan State - Kengtung, Kokang and Wa states - in order to persuade people 'to stop growing opium poppies'. These projects include promoting small scale enterprises, building health and educational facilities and physical infrastructure which includes roads. Burmese democracy spokesmen have long opposed these projects as they suspect that SLORC will use UN initiatives to lend legitimacy to its regime and use available funds and roads to strengthen its military position in the border areas where the ethnic people who have long opposed Rangoon live. A reliable report from Ta-chi-lek on the Thai border where the UNDP has recently opened an office seems to indicate that SLORC is doing exactly what the opposition feared. The United Nations agencies are not only perpetuating an illegal regime. They are aiding and abetting SLORC and directly contributing to the suffering of the Burmese people. Excerpts from the English translation of a letter:

I want to tell you about what is happening at a time when the Burma Army is supposed to be at peace with its enemies in the Shan State. The Army is observing a cease-fire with various rebel groups and it is very quiet. However, something is taking place which is worse than when there was fighting.

The Burma Army is expanding its manpower to 3 times the size they were when there was fighting. Up to 3 regiments are now stationed in some townships where there was no Army units before. In some cases, the military exceeds the civilian population of the township. We have learnt that 5 regiments will be stationed in Ta-chi-lek itself. Kengtung which used to have 1-3 regiments will now have 10 regiments. Some townships where the new troops are stationed have very little cleared or cultivated land. These relatively level grounds have been expropriated by the Burma Army to construct their new garrisons. In some cases, people have also been forcibly relocated. No financial compensation is given to the people. Food from villagers, land for the garrisons, land for road building, are all expropriated without recompense. The people are required to supply, free of charge, labour, timber, roofing material, knives and implements for cutting and other building supplies for the Army's construction projects. Pigs, chicken, and cattle also have to be supplied to supplement the Army's rations. If the villagers refuse to comply, the quantity demanded is increased. Some village headmen have been beaten.

There is no one the people can complain to. They are told it is a command from above and no help is given. People are terrified of the government. The ones who have not yet had their land seized are waiting in dread for their turn. They are unable to sell their land since all fear the Army.

Tachilek, Shan State, 5 July 1992.

Documents from the Shan Human Rights Foundation confirm the allegations above. For example, the Burma Army's 221st, 227th, 316th Light Infantry Battalions (LIB), and the 3rd Chin Rifles were newly assigned to Mong Hpyat, Mong Hkat, Tar Lay, and Mong Yong townships in Jan.92. In all four cases, people from the surrounding villages were commandeered to construct barracks for the troops. Some men were reportedly tortured and killed for refusing to obey. Similarly in Jan. 92, the newly arrived 244th and 245th LIBs relocated the villagers of Nong Noom and Wan Pwamt and confiscated all their land around Kengtung for their garrisons. The 360th LIB also commandeered the people of Mong Pyin town in Jan.92 to construct their barracks. Nearby forests were stripped to earn income for the commanders. In Mar.92, the 246th LIB confiscated over 2 000 acres of land in the Kunhing area on the Taunggyi-Kengtung highway for their new base. Another 9,000 acres of farm land near Kengtung were confiscated by the 224th, 225th, and 226th Light Infantry Regiment in Nov.91.

According to Asiaweek [920529] there are over 1.5 million people who have been displaced by SLORC policies. This does not include the over half-a- million Burmese refugees in neighbouring countries. While Dr Boutros Boutros- Ghali, the UN Secretary General talks about 'preventive diplomacy' and the need for intervention in situations like Burma, what are UN agencies doing supporting SLORC?