

# Burma Alert

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## SLORC ATTACKS KAREN H.Q.

On 11 Feb, State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) troops launched a massive offensive against the headquarters of the Karen National Union (KNU) on the Thai border. The attack came after SLORC issued an ultimatum to the Karens on 31 Jan to lay down their arms and 'return to the legal fold.' The KNU had been negotiating a cease-fire with SLORC since Dec'95. The KNU wanted a political dialogue while SLORC insisted that the Karens would have to first lay down their arms and participate in its National Convention to discuss political issues. Analysts, including the United Nations, have observed, however, that SLORC's National Convention is undemocratic. Thousands of civilians in the Kawkaik, Moulmein, Mudon, Thaton and Papun areas were rounded up by SLORC prior to the current offensive to act as porters to carry military supplies to the front line. According to the Burma Border Consortium that coordinates humanitarian relief on the Thai-Burmese border, about 10,000 new refugees have crossed the border to seek sanctuary inside Thailand. Relief workers estimate that as many as 20,000 refugees could join the 100,000 Burmese refugees already in Thailand. The exiled National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma has condemned SLORC's use of arms to settle political differences and called on the international community to provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees [KNU970212, NCG970213, BBCon970213].

## D.K.B.A. ATTACKS REFUGEE CAMPS

During the night of 28/29 January, SLORC and Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) troops attacked 3 refugee camps inside Thailand leaving over 7,000 refugees homeless. Wangka camp was 70% destroyed, Don Pa Kiang camp was 90% destroyed while only 15 houses were destroyed in Maela before the attackers were driven back. For the last six months, the DKBA had been issuing warnings to refugees that if they did not return to Burma, their camps would be destroyed. The Karen Refugee Committee, the UN High Commission for Refugees and others have called for better security and the Thai Army has suggested that

the camps be moved further into Thailand [BBCon970213].

## DAW SUU MURDER THREAT

On 3 Feb, speaking to reporters at a press conference, Nobel Peace laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi said that a SLORC cabinet minister had encouraged supporters to murder her. Citing reports from several sources, she said that Rail Transport Minister Colonel Win Sein had urged members of the Union Solidarity Development Association (USDA) at an upcountry rally to kill her. The minister was not available for comment but SLORC spokesmen discounted the allegation saying that "she has been watching too much of the Alfred Hitchcock type of suspense movies." On 9 Nov, Daw Suu's motorcade was attacked by a mob controlled by men with walkie-talkies. While it was clear that USDA and SLORC personnel were involved, SLORC also discounted that attack implying that it was staged by Daw Suu's supporters [N/AFP970204].

## TAMU N.L.D. HEAD TORTURED

Kyin Swan Khan (alias Par Khan), president of the National League for Democracy (NLD) Tamu branch, Sagaing Division, was tortured by military intelligence and lost his eyesight after both eyes were injured. Kyin Swan Khan and five NLD members were arrested on 18 Dec. They were accused of holding a party meeting without the knowledge of the Township Law and Order Restoration Council (LORC) and possessing anti-government literature. Kyin Swan, Khan is being detained at the Tamu police station [ABSDF970116].

## FEINSTEIN OPPOSES SANCTIONS

Senator Diane Feinstein, co-author of the Cohen-Feinstein Amendment that called for a ban of new US investments should the political situation in Burma deteriorate, said on 4 Feb that now was not the time to impose sanctions. She said the escalating violence in Burma and the death threat against Daw Suu are not enough to trigger the ban. Daw Suu has since last fall urged the US to impose the ban. She repeated her appeal on 3 Feb stating that 'large-scale repression' was taking place [LAT970206].

**Burma News:****MORE CHINESE ARMS ARRIVE**

Between 27 January and 4 February, heavy weapons, tanks and armoured cars were off loaded from a Chinese ship in Rangoon harbour during the night [FTUB/NCG970211, IS970210]. It may be significant that SLORC started its offensive against the Karens shortly after the new arms shipment arrived - Ed.

**TROOPS ISSUED LIVE BULLETS**

According to the Far Eastern Economic Review, since the early-December student unrest, troops stationed in Rangoon have been issued with live ammunition. This indicates that the authorities anticipate more unrest and that they are prepared to use force to quell any challenge to its authority [F970116].

**TEXTILEWORKERSARRESTED**

Thirty-four of the textile workers protesting the military's take-over on 13 Dec of the state-owned Thamaing Textile Factory were arrested. Located in Insein Township, the textile factory is one of the largest in Burma. The factory was renamed the 'Tatmadaw Textile Factory' [ABSDF961220].

**STUDENTS STILL AT R.G.H.**

More than 100 students are receiving medical treatment in a special ward at Rangoon General Hospital (RGH). The students are being treated for wounds sustained during the military crackdown against their protests earlier in December. SLORC maintains that the demonstrations were dispersed peacefully and that there were no casualties. Hospital visitors, who were previously free to come and go, are now being strictly checked following the arrival of the students. No medical interns are allowed to enter the special ward - only senior doctors are permitted entry [ABSDF961220].

**SLORC REJECTS H-R REPORT**

SLORC dismissed the US Department of State's Annual Human Rights Report on Burma as "either extremely ignorant of the true situation" or part of "a conspiracy" to discredit the regime. The Report said that "out of sight of most visitors, citizens continue to live subject at any time and without appeal to the arbitrary and sometimes brutal dictates of the military dictatorship" [Reu/US970201].

**MUSLIM VILLAGES RELOCATED**

Muslim villagers from Lawadaung, Pranchay, Kachapa, Kanbyin, Mraungna, Alichauung, and Baggona in Buthidaung District were ordered by SLORC to relocate on 30 Oct. They were given until 10 Nov to comply. No reasons, compensation or relocation assistance were offered [RSO9611].

**U.N. - END CHILD CONSCRIPTION**

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child meeting in Geneva on 17 Jan called on SLORC to make 'urgent efforts' to end child military conscription and the forced use of children as army porters. A separate report released 15 Jan by Human Rights Watch/Asia said that children in Burma were forced to join the army, used as porters, sexually abused, arrested, beaten and sold to Thailand for prostitution. SLORC, however, dismissed reports of abuses as fabrications [Reu/UN970117].

**U.S. CONGRESSMEN PROTEST JAPANESE W.T.O. COMPLAINT**

On 3 Feb, the entire Massachusetts delegation to the US Congress sent a letter to Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto urging Japan to end its opposition to the Massachusetts law denying state contracts to companies doing business in Burma. Japan was preparing to challenge the state law in the World Trade Organization. The Congressmen, led by Barney Frank, said that "if the Japanese government chooses to place dollars ahead of human rights, it has that sovereign right but Japan should not attempt to intimidate Massachusetts into changing the standards it has established for doing business with the state government." [US970206]

**PEPSI QUILTS BURMA**

PepsiCo, the US\$30 billion soft drink giant, announced on 24 Jan that it is pulling all of its brands and business out of Burma due to mounting protests from customers against human rights abuses by SLORC. Pepsi said it severed all ties with its Burmese bottler on 15 Jan and that it expects all production and distribution of company products to cease by 31 May. Pepsi has been the target of a growing consumer boycott led by university and high school students. Pepsi is the latest in a series of recent business withdrawals from Burma [AP970127, FT970128, WP970128].

## MAE THA RAW HTA AGREEMENT

### Ethnic Nationalities Seminar

*One hundred and eleven delegates from 14 ethnic groups met from 7-14 January at Mae Tha Raw Hta to work out a common 10-point program to end military rule and restore democracy in Burma. This is the first time the various ethnic groups, including those that have signed cease-fire agreements with SLORC and those who have not, have been able to agree on a broad-ranging program that clearly spells out the ethnic peoples' political position. In a statement issued at the end of the Seminar, participants gave full support to the democracy movement led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; resolved to strengthen the National Democratic front and improve cooperation between ethnic and pro-democracy forces; vowed to dismantle the SLORC military dictatorship; rejected SLORC's National Convention; opposed SLORC's sham drug eradication programs; called on SLORC to cease military operations and resort instead to a tripartite political dialogue to resolve political problems; called on the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) to postpone accepting SLORC as a member; and resolved to establish a genuine democratic federal union based on equality and self-determination for all nationalities. The following are excerpts from the Agreement concluded on 14 January:*

We, the leaders of Arakanese, Chin, Kachin, Karen, Karenni, Kayan, Mon, Pa-O, Palaung, Lahu, Shan and Wa [peoples]... agree to:

#### **1. Political Aims:**

- (a) The dismantling of the [SLORC] military dictatorship and the establishment of peace;
- (b) The establishment of a democratic political system;
- (c) Equality and self-determination for each and every nationality; and
- (d) The establishment of a federal union.

#### **2. SLORC's National Convention:**

The rejection of SLORC's National Convention (The Convention convened by SLORC ... is for the perpetuation of a military dictatorship... Absolutely no rights will be gained for the ethnic nationalities).

#### **3. Tri-partite Dialogue:**

A tri-partite dialogue as agreed to by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and called for by the resolutions of the UN and other international organizations. The tri-partite dialogue must include three forces, namely: i) the National Democratic Front, the United Nationalities League for Democracy, the Peace and Democracy Front and other ethnic nationalities; ii) pro-democracy force led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; and iii) the SLORC clique.

#### **4. Federal Union:**

The establishment of a genuine federal union composed of national states [with] rights of national equality and self-determination.

#### **5. Economic Policy:**

The establishment of [an open] market economy and participation by foreign investors. However, [since] foreign investments at present are [only] benefiting SLORC... and increasing its oppressive power, we strongly object to [foreign investments made with SLORC].

#### **6. Narcotic Drugs:**

The cooperation with international narcotic drug eradication organizations for the eradication of the entire business of narcotic drugs, including cultivation, production and trafficking.

#### **7. Pro-democracy Forces:**

The dismantling of the SLORC military dictatorship... We agree to join hands with the pro-democracy forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi... Moreover, we acknowledge the National League for Democracy (NLD), led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as the winner of the 1990 general election ... [and] we fully support all acts of NLD opposition to SLORC.

#### **8. A.S.E.A.N:**

The postponement, indefinitely, of acceptance of Burma under SLORC, as a member of ASEAN.

#### **9. The N.D.R**

The development of the National Democratic Front (NDF), the nation-wide alliance of ethnic nationalities, to [become] a ... more solid entity.

#### **10. Regular Meetings:**

The maintenance and implementation of the results of the Ethnic Nationalities Seminar and the holding of a meeting at least once a year.

Signatories:

- 1. General Aung Than Lay, KNPP
- 2. Colonel Khun Okker, PPLO
- 3. Colonel Maha San, WNO
- 4. Colonel Sai Pao Sing, UWSP

5. Mar Aik Phone, PSLF
6. Colonel Zau Seng, KIO
7. Khaing Myat Kyaw, AASYC
8. B Kya Oo, Lahu Democratic Front
9. Nai Han Tha, New Mon State Party
10. Khaing Soe Naing Aung, ALP
11. Khun Na Ruh, Kayan New Land Party
12. Sao Got Kesi, SURA
13. Salai Shwe Kha, Chin National Front
14. Khun Horn, Shan Democratic Union
15. General Saw Bo Mya, KNU
16. Chao Tzang Yawngnhe (Shan)
17. Naw Louisa Benson (Karen)
18. Khun Marko Ban (Kayan - NCGUB)

Abbreviations used: AASYC = All Arakan Students and Youths Council, ALP = Arakan Liberation Party, KIO = Kachin Independence Organization, KNPP = Karenni National Progressive Party, KNU = Karen National Union, PPLO = Pa-O People's Liberation Organization, PSLF = Palaung State Liberation Front, SURA = Shan United Revolutionary Army, UWSP = United Wa State Party, and WNO = Wa National Organization.

**National Democratic Front:** Arakan Liberation Party, Chin National Front, Karenni National Progressive Party, Karen National Union, New Mon State Party, Pa-O People's Liberation Organization, Palaung State Liberation Front, and Wa National Organization.

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## STUDENT DISSIDENTS ESCAPE

Than Nyunt Oo and Thet Hmu, both 26, whom SLORC has accused of fomenting the student unrest in December, escaped in February to KNU headquarters. Thirty-four others were given seven-year prison terms after secret trials. Both men were jailed in 1988 after the democracy uprising. After his release in 1994, Than Nyunt Oo enrolled in medical school. But on 10 Dec, security forces surrounded his home to arrest him for his role in the unrest. He fled and escaped a dragnet. "I will continue the struggle because... SLORC will try to annihilate the opposition," he said. Thet Hmu, also a medical student had been freed only in April 96. "I was personally involved in the demonstrations... The December movement was part of a larger concern for democracy. It came from a lack of democracy," he said. Both men said that returning to prison would be a nightmare. Prisoners are kept 5-6 to a tiny cell

and are often chained to iron posts for breaking prison rules. Beatings, and months in solitary confinement are common [WT970208].

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## Fourth Congress

### NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC FRONT

*Following the Ethnic Nationalities Seminar, the National Democratic Front held its Fourth Congress from 7-15 February to consolidate its organization and follow-up on the previous month's Ethnic Seminar. Fifty-three representatives from various organizations including those from the Shan United Revolutionary Army and the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma attended. The NDF members agreed:*

- \* To abide by the Mae Tha Raw Hta Agreement and strive to implement it.
- \* To continue to strive for a Federal Government.
- \* To resist SLORC's ethnic cleansing policy and recognize each other's cultural uniqueness and ethnic identity.
- \* To reject [individual] cease-fire agreements made with SLORC as divide and conquer tactics... They only provide SLORC with greater freedom to operate in ethnic areas.
- \* To establish a program for the total eradication of narcotics and to establish a viable crop substitution program.
- \* To oppose the National Convention which will entrench the SLORC military dictatorship.
- \* To strongly oppose foreign investments made with SLORC.

The Fourth Congress of the NDF also:

- \* Strongly protested SLORC's military offensive against the Karen National Union while the KNU was still striving to end hostilities through negotiations.
- \* Strongly urged the international community to increase pressure on SLORC to agree to a tripartite dialogue.
- \* Welcomed Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's speech on the 50th Anniversary of Union Day in which she invited all nationalities to join hands in the establishment of a genuine union. The NDF agreed to join hands with the democratic forces led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to bring an end to the SLORC military dictatorship.

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**Burma News:****UNION DAY CELEBRATIONS**

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and about 1,000 NLD supporters celebrated the 50th anniversary of Union Day at her residence on 12 Feb. The fact that SLORC allowed the celebration to take place was viewed by some as a relaxation of restrictions. Anti-sanction forces in the international community capitalized on the celebration, saying that sanctions should not be imposed now. What was not publicized was the heavy security arrangement which served to intimidate the population. Access to Daw Suu residence was restricted. Barricades were set up miles from her house. Hundreds of supporters some of whom came from the provinces were turned back at the barricades. Others who were allowed through the barricades had to walk past heavily armed combat ready troops who lined the streets. The troops were reportedly from the ethnic states and spoke little or no Burmese. This raised fears amongst the population of a repeat of 1988 when battle hardened ethnic troops were brought in and told that 'communists' were trying to take over the country. The troops shot unarmed civilians without hesitation [NCG970213, BA].

**ARRESTS & EXTORTIONS**

In Sep'96, Colonel Thein Lwin, Chairman of Chin State LORC, and Major Saw Hlaing, Chairman of Than Tlang Township LORC and No. 266 LIB Than Tlang Camp Commander, summoned the headmen of villages in Than Tlang Township to come to Haka, capital of Chin State. When they arrived, they were arrested and detained at the Haka police station and accused for having contact with the Chin National Front. Those who could pay a Kyat 20,000 fine (US\$ 165 at the black market rate) were released immediately. Eleven headmen who could not pay were detained and a Kyat 50,000 (US\$400) ransom each has been set for their release [CHRO961002].

**MASS FORCED RELOCATION**

More than 25,000 people have been forcibly removed from their villages in the Tenasserim Division in the south. Over 5,200 families from 99 villages in Bokepyin and Kyun Su townships have been affected. According to SLORC's new Coastal Region Military Command, the villagers had failed to obey previous orders requiring them to report on the activities of

ethnic armed forces and students from the All Burma Students Democratic Front. The villagers were ordered to move and leave behind all their belongings. Any one found in the village after the deadline was killed without further questions. In May, seven family members including an infant were shot and killed by Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 358 in Kyein-me Taung, Bokepyin Township. Another military column led by Major Htun Hla from LIB 17 killed six civilians in Pawa Chaungwa, Tenasserim Township. Thirty six villagers were also killed by SLORC troops in Eastern Mergui Township on Don Island. In June, 87 people were killed by the military in Kyun Su Township on Don Island [Oway961223].

**SHWEBO FARMERS PROTEST**

In Jan, farmers from Inpin village, Dipeyin Township, Shwebo District, Sagaing Division, protested SLORC's requirement that they sell paddy to the regime at prices less than half the prevailing market prices (Kyat 14,000 per 100 baskets versus Kyat 35,000). More than 3,000 farmers from Ondabin, Pauktaw, Katha, and Methae villages, and university students joined the protest and marched to Dipeyin. The farmers demanded an end to the unjust repression of peasants, a reduction in taxes for farmers, an end to the forced sale of paddy at inappropriate prices, and the right to form an independent peasants' union. In Dipeyin, the farmers were invited to discuss their complaints with Sagaing Divisional LORC chairman and Commander of the North West Command, Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe, Township LORC chairman U Tin Htoo and police commander U Than Oo. The peasants and demonstrators were all filmed by SLORC agents. Maj-Gen Hla Myint Swe assured the farmers that their demands and complaints will be forwarded to higher SLORC authorities. He told them that problems can and should be resolved systematically but that further demonstration will not be tolerated. Following the meeting, the farmers were sent back to their respective villages in buses arranged by the authorities. But that very night military forces entered the villages and arrested those who had actively participated in the rally. Among those arrested was Ma Moe Moe, a Mandalay university student. It is not known where they are being detained [ABSDF970122].

**International:****E.C. TO REMOVE PRIVILEGES**

On 17 Dec, after spending a year investigating SLORC's use of forced labour, the European Commission recommended that trade benefits under the General System of Preferences for Burma be suspended. Burmese industrial exports to the European Union totalled just US\$30 million in 1995, and special low tariffs saved it only about US\$365,000. "It is symbolic," said one Commission official, "but the symbolism is vitally important to SLORC." The Commission's recommendation is expected to be approved by EU Finance Ministers in March 1997. According to the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), which launched the complaint, about 800,000 Burmese are forced to work without pay or against their will, and contribute about a tenth of the country's economic output [Reu961218].

**KOREAN DEMOCRAT DEPORTED**

On 6 Feb, Dr Kim Sang Woo, a Member of Parliament from Korea, was deported from Rangoon. Kim is a prominent member of the Forum of Democratic Leaders in the Asia Pacific. SLORC said, "During his first visit (in June 1996) Dr Kim... blatantly interfered in the internal affairs of Myanmar and also collaborated against the country with anti-government elements residing abroad." SLORC further charged that "In Nov'96, Dr Kim ... submitted a proposal at the FDLAP Region Conference in Manila to dissuade ASEAN countries from having constructive engagement with Myanmar." Kim told a news conference in Bangkok that he was manhandled and forced back on a plane just an hour after landing in Rangoon. "I was absolutely appalled at the treatment I received. They say I am a troublemaker, but why issue a visa to a troublemaker? To act like this was very stupid... I wonder if they're that insecure to not [even] allow me to stay one day." Kim said immigration officials pulled him away when he went to get his passport stamped. They then asked him to leave the country and when he protested and asked to see representatives of his embassy they forcibly put him back on the plane. Kim is a member of Korea's Parliamentary Foreign Affairs Committee and travels with a diplomatic passport. He said he would call on his government to officially investigate the incident. Commenting

on SLORC charges, Kim said that he had visited Daw Suu twice before, not once as charged. He denied submitting a proposal to the FDLAP Conference but said that the Conference adopted a declaration urging an arms and economic embargo on Burma. It also urged the international business community to freeze investments until a new government is installed in Rangoon. Kim said he went to Burma to try and understand the current political situation following the unrest in December and the increased pressure on the democracy movement and on Daw Suu [Reu/SLORC970207].

**CANADA REQUESTS ASEAN HELP**

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien in an address during a banquet hosted by Thai Prime Minister Chavalit Yonchaiyudh on 17 Jan, urged ASEAN to pressure SLORC into holding talks with the Burmese democracy movement in order to bring about national reconciliation and political reform. Last year, Canada proposed the establishment of a United Nations Contact Group to advise the Secretary-General on how to implement relevant UN resolutions on Burma. The idea was rejected by ASEAN but Canada continues to pursue the proposal at the United Nations. "We want to bring Burma into the community of nations as an open and democratic country," Chretien said [N970118].

**CZECHS HONOUR DAW SUU**

On 10 Jan, Prague's Charles' University bestowed an honorary doctorate of Law on Daw Suu. The award was part of activities marking the 20th Anniversary of the founding of the Czechoslovakian dissident group, Charter 77. Czech president Vaclav Havel, an original signatory of Charter 77, was the person who nominated Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for the Nobel Peace Prize in 1991. Dr Michael Aris, accepted the degree on behalf of his wife. NCGUB Prime Minister Dr Sein Win spoke at the Charter 77 celebrations on the creation of an Open Society in Burma [NCG970124].

**U.S. LAW DEGREE FOR DAW SUU**

On 26 Jan, American University bestowed an honorary law degree on Daw Suu. Dr Michael Aris accepted the degree on her behalf. In a message to the University, Daw Suu called for a 'principled stand against companies' dealing with SLORC and urged the American people to "use your liberty to promote ours" [WP970127].

**Investments:****SLORC INVESTMENTS INCREASING?**

*According to SLORC's Directorate, of Investment and Company Administration, foreign investments in Burma are increasing. As of Nov 30, there were reportedly 226 foreign projects worth US\$5.27 billion (The totals below only add up to US\$3-4 billion - Ed):*

- Oil & Gas (31) projects	US\$1.49 billion
- Manufacturing projects	1.07 billion
- Hotel/Tourism (38) projects	731.2 million
- Mining (41) projects	496.9 million

*The three major SLORC investors are:*

- Singapore	US\$1.17 billion
- UK	1.01 billion
- Thailand	960 million

**CANADA:**

**INDOCHINA GOLDFIELDS** is developing a major copper deposit near Monywa. Construction of a mine is expected to begin in the second quarter of 1997 and the first copper will be produced in mid-1998. The mine could eventually produce 125,000 tonnes of copper per year. The copper project is owned 50% each by Goldfields and SLORC's Mining Enterprise No 1. Goldfields is 30% owned by **IVANHOE CAPITAL CORPORATION** which is in turn owned by mining investor **Robert Friedland**. Vancouver-based **TECK MINING** and Japan's **SUMITOMO METALS** are Friedland's major partners in Goldfields. Commenting on SLORC's human rights abuses, the company's statement said, "Indochina Goldfields management and employees feel that their presence in the country is highly beneficial to all concerned. Nobody has ever accused the mining company which is Indochina Goldfields partner of any human rights violations, and Indochina Goldfields has a strong policy in support of human rights." As evidence, Goldfields cited its commitment to financing educational and medical charities with profits from the Monywa project. It has reportedly already made contribution towards repairing earthquake-damaged Buddhist monuments in Pagan. In June 96, Goldfields raised US\$200 million from institutional investors on the Toronto Stock Exchange even though analysts said the stock was overvalued. This seems to indicate that investors feel that the benefits outweigh the cost of human rights concerns and an uncertain political environment. Friedland's move into Burma was facilitated by Vancouver businessman **Reggie Tun Maung**, senior vice president of **Ivanhoe Myanmar Holdings**, a

wholly owned subsidiary of Goldfields. Tun Maung's son is married to the daughter of SLORC Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Myanmar Investment Commission Vice Admiral Maung Maung Khin. Friedland, a dual US and Canadian citizen says that to do business in Asia "you not only have to have know-how, you have to have know-who." In China, Friedland's **Shanghai Land Corporation** has a deal to produce low-cost, prefabricated housing with the China Fund for the Handicapped, which is directed by Deng Phufang, the son of paramount leader Deng Xiaoping. In Indonesia, a partner in Friedland's **First Dynasty Mines Ltd** is Bambang Trihatmodjo, the son of President Suharto. Friedland is no stranger to controversy. In 1990, he quit abruptly as chief executive officer of Galactic Resources after the US Environmental Protection Agency announced an investigation into Galactic's mining operations in Summitville, Colorado. To date, the cost of cleaning up nearby streams polluted with cyanide-laced waste has totalled more than US\$150 million. US officials sought, but failed, to recoup the Summitville cleanup cost by asking Canadian courts to freeze US\$152 million of the nearly US\$450 million Friedland was paid for his 13% share in Diamond Fields. The company, which found the world's largest nickel deposit in 30 years at Voisey's Bay, was bought by Canadian nickel giant INCO for US\$3.18 billion in July 96. In 1994, Friedland relocated his primary place of business from Vancouver to Singapore, while he, his wife, and their three children moved to Sydney, Australia [IPS/N961213].

NEWS SOURCES: ABSDF = All Burma students Democratic Front. AFP = Agence France Presse, AP = Associated Press, BA = Burma Alert, BBCon = Burma Border Consortium, CHRO = Chin Human Rights Organization, F = Far Eastern Economic Review, FBC = Free Burma Coalition, FT = Financial Times, FTUB = Federation of Trade Unions, Burma, IPS — International Press Service, IS = Inside Source, KNU = Karen National Union, LAT = Los Angeles Times, N = The Nation, Bangkok, NCG = National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, NLM = New Light of Myanmar, Oway = Oway News Service (ABSDF), RSO = Rohingya Solidarity Organization, Reu = Reuters, SLORC = State Law and Order Restoration Council, US = US Government /Congress document, UN = UN document, WP = Washington Post, WT = Washington Times, and X — Xinhua News Agency.

**AUSTRALIA:**

**TENNANT ORIENTAL LIMITED** Chairman Clive Carroll and party called on Minister at the Office of the Deputy Prime Ministers and Secretary of the Myanmar Investment Commission Brig-Gen Maung Maung. Economic affairs including commodity financing and investments were discussed [NLM970122].

**CHINA:**

**YUNNAN MACHINERY AND EQUIPMENT IMPORT AND EXPORT CORPORATION** and SLORC's Myanma Timber Enterprise signed a build, operate and transfer contract for a US\$15 million wood-processing factory. Using local wood materials, the factory will produce various wood-based products 90% of which will be exported. Minister for Forestry Lieut-Gen Chit Swe and Chinese Ambassador Chen Baoliu attended the signing ceremony at the Rangoon International Business Center [X961210].

**GERMANY:**

**DETECON CO** President Mr Treytl called on SLORC Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Myanmar Investment Commission Vice-Admiral Maung Maung Khin to discuss cooperation in the installation of telephone lines and investment opportunities [NLM970122].

**OSTASIATISCHER VEREIN (OAV)**, the **German Asia-Pacific Business Association**, opened the German Business Center in Rangoon on 11 Feb. The OAV representative is Frank Schmidy (see BA Vol.8, No.1, Jan.97) [FBC970212].

**INDONESIA:**

A delegation from **R.C.T.I. TV** led by Mr Juwarno called on SLORC Minister for Information Maj-Gen Aye Kyaw to discuss media services between the two countries and cooperation in news and information work. Also present were Director-General of Myanma Television and Radio Department U Kyi Lwin, Managing Director of Printing and Publishing

Enterprise U Than Maung, Managing Director of News and Periodicals Enterprise U Tin Kha, Managing director of Motion Picture Enterprise U Tin Pe, Chief Editor of The New Light of Myanmar U Kyaw Min and officials of the Ministry of Information and the Embassy of Indonesia [NLM970122].

**ISRAEL:**

**KOORTRADELTD** Vice-President Carmel Dahan and party called on SLORC Deputy Prime Minister Lieut-Gen Tin Tun. They discussed cooperation in the fields of agriculture and satellite communications [NLM970122].

**JAPAN:**

**MARUBENI CORP** said it was planning to invest US\$1.5 million in a joint venture with SLORC in 1997 to produce rice for export to neighbouring Asian countries. A Marubeni spokesman said, "The final decision has not been made yet." [Reu961225].

**RUSSIA:**

**The RUSSIAN FEDERATION** signed an agreement with SLORC to cooperate in the eradication of narcotic drug trafficking. Secretary of the Central Committee for Drug Abuse Control, Director-General of Myanmar Police Force, Col Soe Win and Deputy Head of Federal Security Service of Russia, Colonel General Valentin A Sobolev signed the agreement [NLM970122].

**THAILAND:**

On 12 Feb, Thailand's National Energy Board approved the **PETROLEUM AUTHORITY OF THAILAND'S** plans to invest in and buy natural gas from Burma's **Yetagun** gas field in the Andaman Sea. PTT will hold a 14.17% stake. Partners are **TEXACO (USA)**, **PREMIER OIL (UK)**, and **NIPPON OIL**. Yetagun has reserves of 1.1 trillion cubic feet and will come on stream in 1999 with an initial capacity of 200 mcfpd [Reu970212].

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