

Viewing cable 09BEIJING2493, BURMA/PRC BORDER SITUATION UPDATE

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OO RUEHCN RUEHGH RUEHVC
DE RUEHBJ #2493/01 2441148
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 011148Z SEP 09
FM AMEMBASSY BEIJING
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5855
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON IMMEDIATE 4776

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BEIJING 002493

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EAP/CM AND EAP/MLS - LAURA SCHEIBE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 09/01/2029

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [BM](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: BURMA/PRC BORDER SITUATION UPDATE

REF: A. BEIJING 2481

[B](#). RANGOON 573

[C](#). RANGOON 567

Classified By: Political Minister Counselor Aubrey Carlson. Reasons 1.4
(b,d)

[1](#). (C) Summary: As cross-border refugees from Burma's Kokang region continue to return to Burma, local residents and remaining refugees in China's Nansan border region told ConGenOff September 1 that refugee flows had moved to border crossings in Yunnan province adjacent to ethnic Wa-controlled territory. Many refugees expressed discontent with the PRC government's perceived weak response to the outbreak of violence in Kokang that resulted in the destruction of PRC citizens' property. China's official reaction praised Yunnan province's response to the refugee flows and called on Burma to maintain stability. PRC netizens' response to violence in the Kokang region appeared to have been tightly controlled, with very few dissenting postings remaining online. End summary.

RUMORS OF SPREAD OF CONFLICT TO OTHER PARTS OF BURMA

[2](#). (SBU) Consulate Chengdu PolOff (ConGenOff) observed Kokang refugees returning across the PRC border to Burma September 1, but heard from a number of local residents and refugees at the Nansan border crossing that the flow of refugees into China had shifted from Nansan to areas in China adjacent to ethnic Wa - controlled Burmese territory, including Gengma

County, Mengding Qingshuihe border crossing, and Cangyuan County, Mangka border crossing, both in Yunnan province. One refugee suggested to ConGenOff that Burmese Army soldiers, tanks and armored personnel carriers currently in the Kokang region would turn their attention to other nearby ethnic autonomous regions.

PRC REFUGEES' DISCONTENT WITH PRC RESPONSE

13. (SBU) Whereas Kokang refugees with limited resources had already returned to Kokang, PRC businesspeople had been reluctant to go back, according to ConGenOff's first-hand observation. Chinese police at the Nansan border crossing reportedly advised Chinese businesspeople not to return to Kokang due to ongoing instability in the region. ConGenOff observed wide-spread frustration among ethnic Chinese who had fled Kokang, both due to loss of their property and due to their perception that the PRC government had not responded strongly enough to protect their interests. A group of Chinese September 1 suggested to ConGenOff that the PRC government should demand compensation from the Burmese government on their behalf, and one PRC businessman speculated that PRC interest in an oil pipeline through Burma had muted the PRC response to the recent violence. Another refugee stated that the Chinese government had pressured Kokang leader Peng Jiasheng to close casinos in the region that had served as a popular destination for corrupt PRC officials and had offered military assistance as compensation, though Peng rejected the offer.

PRC PUBLIC COMMENTS CONSISTENT, UNREMARKABLE

14. (SBU) Chinese official statements and media reports praised Yunnan provincial authorities for effectively handling the inflow of refugees from Burma's Kokang region and called on Burma to handle properly its domestic issue and guarantee the safety of Chinese citizens and their property in Burma. MFA Spokeswoman Jiang Yu stated on September 1 at a regularly-scheduled press briefing that China and Burma had remained in close contact since the outbreak of violence in Kokang and that China hoped the Burmese government would create peaceful conditions under which refugees could return home.

TIGHT CONTROL OF ONLINE COMMENTARY

15. (SBU) Online commentary on China's response to the conflict in Burma's Kokang region appears to have been tightly controlled. On the nationalistic Tiexue forum, many Burma-related posts had been deleted and those posts that remained online (almost exclusively reproductions of Xinhua reports) were closed to comments. Popular web-portal Souhu's comment section contained few Burma-related comments. A Xinhua article reposted on a number of online news sites, including the popular Netease portal, reported that the Chinese government had donated to Burma five sets of

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meter-gauge diesel locomotives, 20 passenger cars and 200 truck cars at a handover ceremony August 31 in Rangoon to improve Burma's railway passenger and freight transport capacity. Netizen comments on the Netease article appeared to have been censored, as the number of total registered comments decreased from 65 to 25 as PolOff navigated to the comments page from the article.

¶6. (U) This message was drafted in coordination with ConGen Chengdu.
HUNTSMAN

<http://www.wikileaks.ch/cable/2009/09/09BEIJING2493.html>