

BURMA ALERT

Associates to Develop Democratic Burma

JANUARY 1996
Volume 7, No.1
ISSN: 1182-0454

RR.4, Shawville, Quebec, JOX 2Y0, Canada

DAW SUU BARRED FROM PARTY

On 21 Dec.95, State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) officials stopped Daw Aung San Suu Kyi from attending a Karen New Year's celebration in Insein, a suburb of Rangoon. She was instead taken to the military headquarters at Con Myint Thaya where the deputy Regional Commander, Thura Myint Maung, brought in four men to read out the regulations under which the Karens had been permitted to hold their celebrations. One of the terms of the agreement was that no political parties would be invited. Daw Suu was then allowed to return home [AP/N951224, HRW/a951226].

FOUR N.L.D. MEMBERS ARRESTED

Four members of the committee who were organizing the Karen New Year celebrations from which Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was barred, were arrested on 20 Dec for 12 days after they had visited Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to invite her to attend their celebration. The four were Mahn Htay Shein, chairman of the organizing committee; Saw Tin Win, member of the NLD Central Committee from Pa-an, Karen State; Tin Tun Oo and Ko Myint Htun, NLD youth members [AP/N951224, HRW/a951226].

THREE ARRESTED OVER VIDEO

Three people were arrested in Mandalay, the second largest city in Burma, in connection with the distribution of videotapes of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's "People's Forum." The People's Forum is the informal public gathering which has taken place outside Daw Suu's home every weekend since her release in Jul.95 from 6 years of house arrest. According to SLORC, it is illegal to distribute videotapes without clearance from its censorship board. Zaw Zaw Myaing, 30, owner of a video rental shop in Mandalay's Myat Pha ward and Aun^Soe, were arrested in Dec.95 and NLD spokesman Win Htein confirmed that Sein Hla Aung, 45, an NLD member in Mandalay was arrested on 16 Dec. They will be tried on 11 Jan. HumanRights Watch/Asia is concerned that they may not receive a fair trial, and is urging foreign embassies in Rangoon to request details about the charges against them, and request permission to send diplomatic observers to attend the trial [AP/N951224, HRW/a951226, 960111].

KHUN SA & SLORC CUT A DEAL

Khun Sa, one of the world's most infamous drug trafficker, struck a deal with SLORC on 29 Dec.95 to convert his Merng Tai Army (MTA) into a regional militia under SLORC command. Following the agreement, 3 SLORC battalions entered Ho Mong, the headquarters of the MTA. In addition, 7 more battalions have been deployed on the strategic Naung Ok-Doi Lang mountain range. Khun Sa was indicted in the United States on drug-trafficking charges in 1989. Until recently, SLORC branded Khun Sa a drug-running 'terrorist' and had said that it would never negotiate with him and would put him on trial if he was caught. Khun Sa has long claimed to be a nationalist fighting for the independence of Burma's Shan people. He said he only taxed opium traders moving through his zone of control to finance his political battles. The MTA was the most powerful armed group fighting Rangoon until several thousand MTA troops led by young Shan nationalists, broke away in Jun.95. Subsequently, Khun Sa officially stepped down as MTA commander in Nov.95 [B/MTA960103, B960104, Reu951231, DVB960102].

KHUN SA DOUBLE-CROSSED SHANS

Khun Sa's deal with SLORC is seen as a double-cross by Shan nationalists who believe that Khun Sa made a secret deal with SLORC to hand over his troops and territory in exchange for an amnesty so that he can live peacefully and enjoy the proceeds of his drug trade for the rest of his life. "Khun Sa's decision was a betrayal of the Shan revolutionary cause. It's a sell-out of Shan land to the Burmese. It's a well planned conspiracy," said Major Kyaw Htun, a Shan MTA officer, who fled MTA headquarters at Ho Mong with 300 others before SLORC troops marched in to take control of the area. According to Kyaw Htun, Khun Sa used MTA members of Chinese origin to secretly talk with SLORC without the knowledge of Shan MTA members. The Shans are reportedly prepared to continue their struggle for independence without Khun Sa [B960103,04, N960108].

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Burma News:**NEW RESTRICTIONS ON N.L.D.**

Since the NLD withdrew from SLORC's National Convention on 29 Nov.95, new restrictions have been placed on NLD party members. All NLD members must seek permission from local Law and Order Restoration Councils before embarking on any travel within the country or attending party meetings. Additional restrictions on the publication and distribution of NLD literature and video films were also announced [AP/N951224, HRW/a951226, 960111],

THIRTEEN ARTISTS ARRESTED

Thirteen Burmese performance artists were arrested by SLORC between 7-10 Jan in Mandalay. They are members of a song and dance troupe (A-Nyein) and 2 comedians who had participated in a private Independence Day celebration at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's home in Rangoon on 4 Jan. Arrested were 2 female dancers, Daw Win Ma and Hnin Pa Pa, and another unidentified woman who is an assistant to the dancers and 6 male members of the band: Tin Myint Hlaing, Win Htay, Sein Hla, Win Htway, Thaung Tun, and an unidentified man. The 2 comedians are Pa Pa Lay and Lu Zaw. Pa Pa Lay, was only released last year after 18 months in prison for making fun of SLORC members. He is an NLD member. It is not known if they have been charged. According to Human Rights Watch/Asia, the arrests appear to be part of a pattern of harassment and intimidation directed against members and supporters of the NLD. Observers believe that, since it would be a public relations disaster to put Daw Suu back under house arrest, SLORC is going after her supporters instead to cut off her support base [HRW/a960111].

N.L.D. SPOKESMAN DETAINED

In an interview with the British Broadcasting Service on 10 Jan, Win Htein, the NLD's internal affairs liaison officer and spokesman said that he was detained for 24 hours for questioning by SLORC. The officials did not identify themselves and had no arrest warrants. Starting at 9 pm, they questioned him through the night about the Karen New Year celebrations and kept reminding him of the laws concerning public gatherings (According to a 1988 SLORC decree, all gatherings of more than 5 people are illegal). He was released without charge on 3 Jan. In response to Win Htein's unlawful detention, the NLD has established a legal

aid committee, headed by NLD Chairman U Tin Oo to intervene with SLORC in such cases. The NLD has also established a Social Aid Committee to provide assistance to political prisoners [HRW/a960111, ABSDF(DGN)951227].

KARENNI CEASE-FIRE VOID

On 20 Dec.95, the Central Committee of the Karenni National Progressive Party (KNPP) declared that its cease-fire agreement, signed with SLORC on 21 Mar.95, is null and void. However, the KNPP re-affirmed its belief that peace can be achieved through dialogue and expressed its willingness to continue holding cease-fire talks with SLORC. A grand ceremony was held in Mar.95 to mark the cease-fire but SLORC violated the agreement soon after and launched a major military offensive, sending thousands of its troops into KNPP controlled areas. The KNPP tried to salvage the agreement with local commanders in Loikaw in Jun.95 without results. A further KNPP delegation to Rangoon in Nov.95 was explicitly told that the Mar.95 agreement was not an official agreement and that as far as SLORC was concerned, the KNPP had surrendered and, therefore, was not in any position to negotiate concessions. On 1 Jan.96, SLORC troops captured the KNPP's stronghold at Doi Thi Sakheu but heavy fighting continues [ABSDF(DGN)/AFP/B951225, B960103],

KARENS TALK CEASE-FIRE

A seven-man Karen National Union (KNU) delegation led by Padoh Klee Say, held cease-fire talks with a SLORC delegation headed by Colonel Kyaw Win in Moulmein on 8 Dec without reaching any agreement. Meanwhile, on 21 Dec.95, SLORC troops opened fire on a Karen New Year ceremony at Wall Baw village. The troops then looted and destroyed the village. SLORC-controlled Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA) troops have also been active making a number of attacks on Sho Klo refugee camp in Thailand. Rangoon is reportedly preparing to launch a dry season offensive against the KNU. The attacks are intended to pressure KNU leader General Bo Mya to agree to SLORC's terms. SLORC is worried that the natural gas pipeline from Burma to Thailand could be attacked by KNU troops. The KNU has reportedly refused a profit-sharing deal with SLORC for the project [B/KNU951228, B951213].

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Burma News:**GENERAL KHIN NYUNT ATTACKS
DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI**

In the latest attack on democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, intelligence chief Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt urged people to be aware of "subversive elements" trying to alter the course laid down by the military for the future of Burma. "Adopted sons and daughters of colonialists, under external influence, are attempting to cause the disintegration of the Union and the loss of independence," he said in a speech published in state-run newspapers on 25 Dec. Although he did not use Daw Suu's name, Khin Nyunt was clearly referring to her and her party. "Without seeing to national well-being they are moving to cause disruption to the National Convention only for their party's interest," he said. Earlier, when the NLD officially withdrew from SLORC's National Convention, a commentary in the rigidly-controlled state media suggested that Daw Suu and her colleagues were traitors and that traitors should be "annihilated" [Reu/B951226],

**STUDENTS GET 2 YEARS PRISON
FOR TOUCHING BARBED WIRE**

On 24 Nov, three students who were providing security for Daw Aung San Suu Kyi were arrested for touching the barbed wire barricades set up by SLORC to control the crowds who gathered to attend Daw Suu's People's Forum. The students had asked the SLORC officials at the gate to Daw Suu's residence to move the barbed wire to provide more room for the crowds. When they were ignored, they attempted to move the barricades themselves and were arrested. Since the weekly gatherings began in Jul.95, the crowds have grown from a little over 100 people to over 6,000 and include intellectuals, monks, nuns and foreigners [ABSDF(DGN)951227].

**SLORC TORTURES POLITICAL
PRISONERS TO FIND U.N. LEAK**

Quoting a Burmese source, Associated Press reported that beginning in mid-November, some political prisoners in Insein jail were subjected to very brutal interrogations for 45 days. The prisoners were transferred to small 'military dog cells' and forced to sleep on the concrete floor without mats or blankets. Water and food were withheld and contact with relatives denied. The political prisoners treated in this

manner included Win Tin (member of NLD Secretariat), Myo Myint Nyein, Dr. Myint Naing (NLD elected representative), Monywa Tin Shwe (NLD elected representative) and Saw Nai Nai (NLD elected representative from Pazundaung, Rangoon Division). SLORC was apparently trying to find out who wrote the letters describing prison conditions to the United Nations Human Rights Special Rapporteur Professor Yozo Yokota. The letters were smuggled out of prison and clandestinely sent to Yokota last October when he visited Burma. Yokota was allowed into Insein jail, but he was not permitted to meet with political prisoners held there [ABSDF(MTZ)/AP/N951227],

**A GLIMPSE BEHIND THE SCENE:
KHUN SA'S SURRENDER**

According to an MTA source, Khun Sa sent a five-member delegation to Rangoon on 9 Nov to negotiate his surrender. It was led by Khun Saeng, Khun Sa's uncle and MTA Minister of Economic Affairs, and Sao Khwan Muang, MTA Minister of Political Affairs. On 18 Dec, the delegation met SLORC chairman General Than Shwe, and its Secretary 1 Lieut-Gen Khin Nyunt. The source also claimed that the cease-fire negotiations were mediated by the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD) and Khun Sa's secretary, Sao Lao Tai. On 20 Dec the SNLD apparently sent a representative to meet Khun Sa at the MTA's Ho Mong stronghold to confirm the MTA's surrender to SLORC. The source claimed that Khun Sa has always had close ties with SLORC. In an interview with the Nation on 11 Jan, Khun Saeng claimed that Khun Sa had no alternative but to negotiate with Rangoon following the defection of Major Gang Yod in Jun.95 with about 2,000 men. SLORC also pressured Khun Sa by cooperating with his Wa rivals to encircle and attack the MTA. The decision by the Thai Army and government to close the border into MTA areas opposite Mae Hong Son, Chiang Mai and Chiang Rai, also made it difficult for Khun Sa to replenish food and medical supplies, he added. Khun Saeng, who was responsible for MTA finances, also said that after the Thai border closure, the MTA had to pay Bt2,500-3,000 (US\$100-120) for each pick-up load of goods and Bt500 (US\$20) for each traveller crossing the Thai border. SLORC also demanded a Bt200,000 (US\$8,000) per month protection which was shared with some Thais, he said [BA, N960J].

Burma News:**'NO' TO KHUN SA'S EXTRADITION**

SLORC will not turn opium warlord Khun Sa over to the United States to face narcotics charges, a senior SLORC official said on 6 Jan. The official, who declined to be identified, said that Khun Sa will be tried in Rangoon. He said, "Now they (the US) want to take this guy ... and if Khun Sa talks then, a lot of soiled linen will come out of the cupboard." Most ethnic guerrilla forces fighting Rangoon have long suspected Khun Sa to have had links with the successive military regimes in Rangoon because of his immunity from Burma Army attacks. It was not until late 1993 that SLORC forces launched their first sustained offensive against him and managed to capture some areas under his control. Khun Sa was indicted on drugs charges in a New York court in Dec.89 after a seizure of 1.05 tonnes of heroin hidden in bales of rubber at the Bangkok port. The US on 4 Jan announced a US\$2 million reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of Khun Sa and said that it was SLORC's duty to hand him over to US authorities and see that he is brought to justice [N960106].

KHUN SA SURRENDER - A SETBACK FOR DRUG ERADICATION?

According to experts, the surrender of Khun Sa to SLORC will not make much of a difference in the war on drugs. Referring to similar agreements made by SLORC with Wa and Kokang forces in 1989 whereby they were allowed to continue trafficking drugs in exchange for not joining the democracy movement, Mark Taylor, a US Drug Enforcement Agency officer in Rangoon said that, "A cease-fire agreement could be a counter-narcotics setback." Burma is the world's largest producer of opium, estimated at 2,030 tonnes in 1994. Opium is the raw material for heroin. More than 60% of the heroin sold in the US originates in the Golden Triangle of Burma. Khun Sa's share of Burma's opium business declined from about 80% in 1989 to less than 50% in 1994, the US State Department said. "At this point, eliminating Khun Sa won't make much difference in the overall picture as far as the drug trade is concerned," said Martin Smith, a Burma expert based in London. Disturbingly, the rivals who have been taking business away from Khun Sa are the ones who signed ceasefire agreements with Rangoon and are trafficking in

opium with SLORC's tacit approval, said Bertil Lintner a Bangkok-based Burma expert. The United Wa State Army led by Pao Yu Chang is one. Other Khun Sa rivals allied to SLORC are Yang Mu Liang, who heads the Myanmar New Democratic Alliance, and Lin Ming Xian, leader of the Eastern Shan State Army. Lintner calls Lin, "the rising star of the opium trade in Burma". Colonel Kyaw Thein (military intelligence), who negotiated the cease-fires and is talking with Khun Sa, defended SLORC's position. "This is a complicated matter," he said. "The Wa and the Kokang have been cooperating with the government. We have told their leaders to stop the refining of opium in their areas. I'm sure it's still going on, although they don't operate labs as openly and freely as they used to." However, the latest aerial survey of opium cultivation in Burma shows that the opium crop has increased in the Wa and Kokang areas. Most analysts agree that only true political settlements between the ethnic people in the Shan State and a legitimate Burmese government can lead to the eradication of the narcotics trade [AP/N960107].

WA'S SEEK M.T.A. TERRITORY

Ethnic Wa forces fighting the MTA are hoping to gain control of the Mong Tai Army's territory in southern Shan State. In an interview on 6 Jan with the Nation, a senior member of the United Wa State Army that said its leaders were "very surprised" by the "unexpected secret deal" between Khun Sa and SLORC. The UWSA had been making steady progress in capturing MTA strongholds in Doi Lang and Mong Yawn and had planned a final push to conquer all MTA territory the senior Wa leader said. The UWSA had informed SLORC Secretary 1 Lieut-Gen Khin Nyunt in June of their planned offensive and SLORC had agreed to allow the Wa to use SLORC-controlled roads to transport artillery and other weapons from its Pangshang headquarters on the Sino-Burmese border down to the northern Thai frontier. Previously the Wa had to use manpower, mules or horses to transport the arms. SLORC also supplied the Wa with mortar shells when it attacked Khun Sa's positions last June. SLORC's agreement with Khun Sa to take over the disputed territory is 'cheating', he said. The deal forced UWSA commanders to call off the planned attack on the MTA but the UWSA still intends to fully occupy the southern Shan State [N960107],

Burma News:**THAIS REINFORCE BURMA BORDER**

Thai forces along the border with Burma have been reinforced after SLORC troops entered Ho Mong and took over MTA positions on the ill-defined frontier. Problems arose when SLORC troops tried to take Doi Lang, claimed by both countries. The MTA's presence in the past had prevented both sides from seriously contesting the strategic hill. Thai Supreme Commander General Viroj Saengsnit told reporters that Rangoon has been requested to instruct its border troops to avoid military action against Thai troops in any border conflict. Thai Army Deputy Commander Chetha Thanajaro was assigned by Army Chief Pramon Palasin to liaise with the SLORC leadership over possible border problems. The Naresuan Force's 7th Infantry Division and Mae Sariang-based 36th Rangers Battalion, including artillery, were moved up to the Mae Hong Son border recently. Thai reconnaissance aircraft are also keeping a watch along the border. Lieut-Gen Khin Nyunt has reportedly reassured the Thais that the Burma Army will not attack Thai troops. Thai 3rd Army Region Commander Lieut-Gen Thanom Watcharapruk has been instructed to avoid any military action, and SLORC has also given similar instructions to its Eastern Commander, Major-Gen Tin Tut [N960104, B960104].

FORMER POLITICAL LEADERS CALL FOR SLORC-ASSK DIALOGUE

23 veteran politicians who took part in Burma's struggle for independence jointly issued a statement requesting SLORC and the NLD led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi to enter into a dialogue for the sake of the Burmese people and the country. They stated their belief that the people, monks, political parties and the Tatmadaw must work together to safeguard Burma's independence and to build a peaceful, democratic and developed country. They called for national reconciliation in order to establish national solidarity. The signatories were: 1.

Bohmu Aung, one of Burma's 'Thirty Comrades' and former Speaker of the House of Commons, 2. Thakin Chit, 3. Thakin Thcin Pc, 4. Bo Aung Naing, 5. Bo Tha Tun, 6. Bo Tin Hla Oo, 7. U Aung Myint, 8. U Nyunt Thein, 9. Nai Ngwe Thein, 10. U Min Lwin, 11. U Tin Tun, 12. Thakin Chit Maung (Wi Du Ra), 13. Thakin Khin Aung, 14. Thakin Lwin, 15. U Than Sein, 16. Bo San Tha Kyaw, 17. Bo Sein Aung Lin, 18. U Ba Tun, 19. Dr. Maung Maung Kyaw, a former student leader and famous lawyer, 20. U Ye Myint, 21. U Tha Ban, 22. U Myint Aye, and 23. Bo Nyo [ABSDF(88)951229].

THAN SHWE VISITS BEIJING

SLORC Chairman Senior General Than Shwe arrived in Beijing 7 Jan for a six-day visit. He was accompanied by Secretary 1 Lieut-General Khin Nyunt, Foreign Minister Ohn Gyaw and five other top generals. Than Shwe met with President Jiang Zemin and discussed political ties, and 'international and regional issues.' They then witnessed the signing of two agreements on Chinese loans and on economic and technological cooperation. A third agreement on cultural exchanges was also signed [AP-DJ960108].

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NEWS SOURCES THIS ISSUE: ABSDF(88) = All Burma Students Democratic Front (88 Group), ABSDF(DGN) = All Burma Students Democratic Front (Dawn Gwin), ABSDF(MTZ) = All Burma Students Democratic Front (Moe Thee Zun), AFP = Agence France Press, AP = Associated Press, DJ = Dow Jones, B = Bangkok Post, BA = Burma Alert sources, BT = Business Times, DN = Dagens Nringstliv, Oslo, DVB = Democratic Voice of Burma Radio, Oslo, F = Far Eastern Economic Review, HRW/a = Human Rights Watch/Asia, JT = Japan Times, Kyodo = Kyodo News Agency, MB/IN = Intelligence News, MTA = • Merng Tai Army, N = The Nation, Bangkok, Reu = Reuters, WPD = New Light of Myanmar, Rangoon, and X = Xinhua News Agency, Beijing.

The "Burma Alert" is published monthly by ADDB Inc to provide data for the Burmese democracy movement. In 1995, grants were received from the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, Canada; the Evangelisches Missionswerk, Germany; and the National Endowment for Democracy, U.S.A. "BURMA ALERT" SUBSCRIPTIONS; Institutions - US\$100.00 (or C\$100.00) per annum and Individuals US\$25.00 (or C\$25.00) per annum. Readers are also invited to become Associates' and participate in helping to promote democracy in Burma by contributing US\$100.00 (or C\$100.00) per annum. All cheques and money orders payable to ADDB Inc, *do* Harn Yawngnwe, RR.4, Shawville, Quebec J0X 2W, Canada. Fax: 1 (819) 647-5403, Tel. 647-5405. E-mail: yawngluveCqHiookup.net

Investments:**CHINA:**

CHINA delivered 5 powered vessels on 30 Dec to SLORC's Inland Water Transport. To date, 42 vessels financed by a US\$30 million loan from China's Yunnan Machinery Corporation have been delivered. Another 6 vessels, the first batch of 30 vessels financed through another loan of US\$40 million signed in Nov.94, will be delivered in Jan.96 [X951230].

CHINA and SLORC signed an agreement for China to supply agricultural machinery, equipment and spare parts to an agricultural machinery factory in Burma. Chinese ambassador Chen Baoliu and SLORC Minister for National Planning and Economic Development Brig-Gen David Abel were the signatories [X960102].

FRANCE:

TOTAL has hired 10 French mercenaries (in Nov.95) to work with SLORC to protect the 63 km-long overland portion of its natural gas pipeline from the Andaman Sea to Thailand [MB/IN951222].

TOTAL MYANMAR, UNOCAL of the US and **P.T.T.** of Thailand, contributed Kyat 12 million (US\$2 million) to the Myanmar Livestock Breeding and Fisheries Cooperative Syndicate. The local enterprise was formed to 'develop' villages in the Kanbauk area of Yebu township through which the Yadana natural gas pipeline will pass. The Syndicate will engage in prawn breeding, pig breeding, dairy products and animal feed processing [X951227].

NORWAY:

NORSK HYDRO and **STATOIL** have started talks with SLORC. Norsk Hydro wants to invest in a fertilizer production plant. Statoll is involved with the **CHAROEN POKPHAND GROUP** of Thailand in the **PETRO-ASIA** consortium. Statoil is 100% owned by the Norwegian government and Norsk Hydro is 50% owned. The move by Statoil and Norsk Hydro was strongly criticised by the Nobel Peace Award Committee and Burmese pro-democracy groups based in Norway. On 6 Jan.96, the Norwegian Foreign Ministry warned Norsk Hydro and Statoil, not to engage in business in Burma. "There is good reasons to keep away from the Burmese, military junta," the Norwegian State-Secretary said. Statoil and Norsk Hydro said that the position of the government will have an impact on their business decision [DN960104],

NORDIC AVIATION RESOURCES which is likely to win a contract from SLORC to expand the Rangoon airport will probably turn down their 390 million Norwegian kroner project (US\$56 million) [DN960104].

Not the Right Time for Business in Burma

Norwegian TV2 conducted a telephone interview with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 9 Jan.96 regarding Statoil and Norsk Hydro's interest in Burma:

"We have always look upon Norway as one of the strongest allies of our democratic movement. (I trust) the Norwegian people, the Norwegian Government and even business interests in Norzway will stand by our democratic movement. I do not think: that this is the right time for any Norwegian-owned companies or industries to establish itself in Burma."

JAPAN:

CHIYODA CORP has drawn up a development plan for the city of Mandalay. Under the plan, Chiyoda is advocating about 60 projects including the construction of oil pipelines from the Bay of Bengal to Mandalay and improvement in the network of roads between Mandalay and China's Yunnan Province. The plan calls for the development of Mandalay into a city with a population of 3.5 million by 2020, three times its current size [Kyodo951226].

MARUBENI CORP received a 2.6 billion yen (US\$26 million) order from SLORC for 200 construction machinery including bulldozers and pressure shovels. The order is the largest construction machinery deal signed by SLORC to date. Marubeni will provide financing assistance through a 3-year deferred payment arrangement. Marubeni and SLORC reached a comprehensive infrastructure development agreement in Feb.95 [AP-DJ960107].

MALAYSIA:

MALAYSIAN PALM OIL PROMOTION COUNCIL (MPOPC) is planning to implement an intensive awareness programme in new emerging markets to further increase the export of palm oil. It will be looking at potential markets in Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Laos, Cambodia and Burma [X960101],

Note: Most 'Burma Alert' subscriptions end in December. Please renew your subscription or update your address. Thank you - Editor.

Investments:**SINGAPORE:**

ACCOR ASIA PACIFIC will establish **INDOTEL PTE LTD** in Singapore to acquire and develop hotels in Vietnam and the rest of Indochina (Cambodia, Laos and Burma). **AAPC** operates 98 hotels in the Asia Pacific region, including 3 in Vietnam, 2 in Cambodia and 1 each in Laos and Burma [X960102].

ALLIED CONTAINER SERVICES PTE LTD and the Port Authority of Burma will jointly expand and operate Burma's largest container port in Rangoon. The port will eventually be able to handle 3,500 containers at any one time. Work is expected to be completed within six months. **ASC** holds 49% of the shares in the project [B951219],

DEVELOPMENT BANK OF SINGAPORE and the **UNITED OVERSEAS BANK** will form joint venture banks with Burmese partners. The joint ventures will initially lend in foreign currency (US dollars) to finance investments in cash-hungry Burma. Although **DBS** and other foreign banks already lend to foreign projects in Burma through their headquarters or branches in Bangkok, a joint venture is seen as a stepping stone to a full banking licence. Among the projects **DBS** has financed are renovations of 2 major hotels, the **Strand** and **Inya Lake** [BT951215].

MACCON is an advertising company operating in Burma [B951229],

MYANMAR MEDIA INTERNATIONAL is an advertising company operating in Burma which **LEO BURNETT** is planning to form an affiliation with [B951229].

PREMIER is an advertising company operating in Burma [B951229],

THAILAND:

CHAROEN POKPHAND is sending a survey team to Pegu, Magwe and Mandalay divisions, and Arakan and Shan states to find the best location to grow DK888, its best maize hybrid. In 1993, maize plantation experiments were carried out in Mandalay. In Nov.95, CP donated 10 tons of DK888 worth Baht 800,000 (US\$32,000) to Senior-General Than Shwe, chairman of **SLORC C.P. AGRO-INDUSTRIES (Thailand)** Vice-president Adirek Sripatak said that the Group plans to spend Baht 100 million (US\$4 million) to build an animal feed manufacturing

plant, a slaughter house and a chicken farm in Burma. The project will be 100% CP owned. Construction in Rangoon will start in Jul.96. **C.P. TRADING GROUP** Vice-president for Crop Integration Montri Congtrakultie said that CP plans to start soybean farms, raise prawns and to also provide 2 weeks' to 1 month's training in Bangkok for **SLORC** officials from the Ministries of Trade, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Livestock, to get acquainted with CP's technology. In 1994, a CP import-export trading company was established in Rangoon. Former Thai Premier General Suchinda Kraprayoon, honorary chairman of **TELECOM HOLDING**, a CP Group subsidiary, visited Rangoon in Aug.95 to pave the way for the company's business, CP might also establish a bank and a fund for local communities to extend loans to Burmese along the lines of its ventures in north-eastern Thailand [B960102],

DIELTHELM TRAVEL opened branch offices in Mandalay and Pagan to cope with an increase in tourism to Burma. Dielthelm expects to handle at least 2,500 visitors to Burma in the six months ending March, 27% more than in the same period last year [B950102],

ITAL-THAI DEVELOPMENT PLC and **SLORC's** Transport Ministry signed a provisional agreement to design and build an international airport in Mandalay. No details available [B951219].

PRAKIT/F.C.B., an advertising agency, has a joint venture in Burma [B951229].

TOTAL QUALITY P.R., a public-relations joint-venture will be stepping into the advertising market in Burma via **TQPR Thailand** and **SPA TODAY** which is a 60-40 joint venture between **FUTURE COMMUNICATIONS** and **TODAY ADVERTISING**. Today Advertising began in Jun.95 as a member company of the **TODAY MEDIA GROUP**, which started in 1993 as a magazine publisher in Burma [B951229].

THAILAND and **SRI LANKA** have agreed to request the **ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK** to make a feasibility study of a possible economic pentagon linking the two countries with Burma, India and Bangladesh [N960107].

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BURMA ALERT ON THE WEB

<http://sunsite.unc.edu//freeburma/ba/ba.html>E-mail: yawnghwe@hoolcup.net

Tourism:**VISIT MYANMAR YEAR - 1996?**

The Opinion of
DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

The following statements (edited for style) are compiled from an interview with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Rangoon on 17 Nov.95, which was published in the "BURMA DEBATE", Vol.11, No.5, November/December 1995:

On "Visit Myanmar Year - 1996" strengthening SLORC and at the same time benefitting the people through a "trickle down" effect:

Another aspect of "Visit Myanmar Year - 1996" is the forced labour that has been imposed on the people in order to make Burma more 'respectable' for tourists. People are made to build roads and bridges. If people cannot donate their labour, they have to donate money. 650 kyats (US\$100) each is not uncommon (per capita income is US\$200 - Ed). That's a lot for people who barely have enough to live on. In many towns, people are also made to replace their wooden or bamboo fences with brick walls to impress tourists. In some places, people are even made to replace the wooden fronts of their houses with brick facades if they cannot afford to rebuild the whole house in brick. This causes a lot of hardship for the people. Most people do not get anything back from the tourist industry

On the NLD's position on tourism:

It is too early for either tourists or investments or aid to come pouring into Burma. These things should be conditional on genuine progress towards democratization.

On the kinds of conditions SLORC should fulfil before an international boycott is lifted:

SLORC should show respect for the United Nations General Assembly resolutions. The 1994 General Assembly resolution spelled out what is necessary before it can be said that Burma is really on the road to democratization. The resolution should be implemented.

On what tourists usually see:

Tourists usually go to the Shwedagon Pagoda, and the pagoda at Pegu. If they go to Pegu by car, they might see that the roads are very bad. But the tourists who stay in hotels and go around in air conditioned taxis will not see anything of what is going on in the country. They will know nothing of the situation of people in the rural areas, who are the backbone

of the country. 80% of Burmese people live in the countryside. Whether or not they are better off will prove whether the country is developing or not. The NLD's position is that real development must be measured by the standards of health and education. Independent data such as compiled by the United Nations shows that SLORC's spending on health and education has decreased. The 1993 UN Human Development Report shows that SLORC spent 150 times on defense what it spent on health and education. And in the 1994 report, the ratio is 222 times. UNICEF data also shows that the dropout rate at the primary school level is rising. UNICEF's conclusion is that children are dropping out of school because families are getting poorer and this applies to the great majority of the Burmese people.

On the usefulness of tourists:

Tourists can open up the world to the people of Burma just as the people of Burma can open up the eyes of tourists to the situation in Burma if the tourists are interested in looking. But if the people of Burma simply come to see tourists as a source of ready money, then there is not much the tourist will be able to do to help the Burmese people, apart from scattering a few dollars around. Tourists have to assess how their visit will help the people. The 'trickle down' effect is sometimes really only a mere trickle which dissipates before it gets to where it's needed.

On the cultural effects of tourism:

The political and economic situation will affect and influence the social attitudes of the people. To preserve one's culture, one has to be proud of one's self. If people do not have confidence in themselves, they will lose their culture because they will think other people are better. If they get poorer and if they have to depend on foreigners for a little trickle of the money flowing in, then they will lose confidence in themselves. If they lose confidence in themselves, they will no longer value their own culture. The reason why a lot of young people are taking to wearing foreign clothes is because they lack confidence in themselves, in their country and in their own culture. The people have to feel that their culture is valuable and worth preserving. If they do not feel it is worth preserving, no amount of laws will make them preserve it.