

Burma Alert No.10
(October 1990)

UNITED NATIONS UPDATE:

The DALLAS MORNING NEWS in an editorial on 14 September, joined the growing number of organizations calling for United Nations sanctions against the military junta in Burma:

"The US supplies nearly \$40 million per year in aid, much of it military. It should be cut off immediately, and not restored until the junta has made good on its promise to install the election winners. Moreover, the US should call for an international boycott and United Nations sanctions".

Please continue to write to the United Nations (see also page 1) as follows:

Mr. Javier Perez de Cuellar, Secretary-General
The United Nations, The U.N. Plaza
New York, NY.10017

Ref: The Illegal 'Myanmar' Regime in Burma

Dear Sir,

On 27 May 1990, the National League for Democracy (NLD) won 396 seats out of 485 seats in the Burmese *Pyithu Hludaw* (National Assembly). This landslide victory was achieved although Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the Secretary-General was under house arrest and was barred by the Army from contesting the elections. It is a revealing testimony of the people's desire for democracy and an end to military rule.

However, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) has since declared that it will not hand over power to the NLD. It is claiming that the elected *Pyithu Hludaw* is not a government and that it is only a constituent assembly. In addition, SLORC has said that it will appoint a 'National Convention' to guide the *Pyithu Hludaw* in drafting a constitution. The new constitution will have to be approved by SLORC before it can be adopted by a national referendum. Only then will SLORC hand over power to a new *Pyithu Hludaw* elected under the new constitution.

To further consolidate its position, SLORC has now arrested the remaining leaders of the NLD who won the elections. The leaderless NLD is now being pressured to form a coalition with the military-backed National Unity Party (NUP) which won only 10 seats in the elections. All these manoeuvres show that the military regime in Burma is determined to nullify the results of the elections and stay in power indefinitely.

On behalf of the Burmese people, we call on you not to recognize the 'Myanmar' delegation to the current session of the General Assembly. We also call on you to impose sanctions on the illegal 'Myanmar' regime and call on the United Nations, its agencies and programs such as ESCAP, FAO, ILO, WHO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, etc. to suspend operations in Burma until SLORC fulfils its promise to the United Nations made on 7 November 1988 to hand over power to the election winners.

Yours respectfully,

THE LAST TEAK FOREST

"United Nations officials and conservation groups rank the destruction of Burma's once magnificent tropical forests among the globe's major environmental tragedies."
Associated Press, June 29, 1990

The last major tropical forest on mainland Southeast Asia is in Burma. It contains 80% of the world's remaining teak trees. In the 1950's Burma had a 57% forest cover (96 million acres). According to the UN, Burma's forest cover is now only 40% (67 million acres), half of which is tropical forest (34 million acres) [RAN900000].

The deforestation rate has accelerated at an alarming rate since 1989 when logging concessions were granted to timber companies in Thailand. Even before the Thai companies moved in, the tropical forest in Burma was already over-logged with an annual deforestation rate of 259,000 acres. The UN and satellite photographs confirm that Burma is now losing 1.7 million acres of forest per year [FR900900].

This means that in less than 20 years, the remaining tropical forest in Burma could be wiped out. Meanwhile, according to observers, the teak forest along the Burmese-Thai border will be depleted in 3-5 years at current logging rates.

Burma, once the 'rice bowl' of Asia could become a desert if the destruction of the tropical forest is not stopped. At the end of the Second World War, Ethiopia had a 40% forest cover, half of which was tropical forest, like in Burma.

The loss of the tropical forest in Burma will affect neighbouring countries as the rainfall decreases and the desert encroaches. People who depend on the forests will be forced to migrate to the cities or become refugees as famine strikes. Wildlife such as elephants, rhinoceros, tapir, hornbill and others will also die.

HELP BURMA'S ENDANGERED ENVIRONMENT:

1. Urge your government to ban the import of Burmese products. Americans should support the US Congress' proposal for economic sanctions. It is reported that the White House is reluctant to impose the sanctions. Please write in October:
 - President George Bush, The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington DC. 20500Also call 'OPINION MONITOR' (202) 456-7639 to register your support. Weekdays 9-5.
2. Demand an end to the cross-border logging concessions with Thailand. Write:
 - General Saw Maung, SLORC, Ministry of Defence, Rangoon, Burma (Myanmar).
 - Prime Minister Maj.Gen. Chatichai Choonhavan, Government House, Nakhorn Pathom Road, Bangkok 10200, Thailand.
3. Protest the UN's support for a highway bridge across the Moei River between Burma and Thailand which will facilitate cross-border logging operations. Write:
 - S. Kibria, Executive Secretary, ESCAP, Rajdamnoen Ave., Bangkok, Thailand
 - J. P. de Cuellar, Secretary-General, The United Nations, New York City, NY. 10017
4. Contact and support the following groups trying to save Burma's environment:
 - All Burma Students Democratic Front, P.O.Box 1352, GPO, Bangkok 10501, Thailand
 - Friends of the Rainforest, P.O.Box 4612, Stn.E, Ottawa, Ont., K1S 5H8, Canada
 - Greenpeace USA, 1436 U. Street NW, Washington DC. 20009
 - Project Maje, 14 Dartmouth Rd., Cranford, NJ. 07016
 - Rainforest Action Network, 301 Broadway, San Francisco, CA. 94133
5. Boycott the products of companies doing business in Burma.

BURMA NEWS:

Ex-general TIN U, 64, chairman of the NLD, whose possible death was reported in "Burma Alert No.9" is still alive in Insein Jail but in very poor health.

On 30 August the NLD and the UNITED NATIONALITIES LEAGUE FOR DEMOCRACY (UNLD), a coalition of 19 ethnic-based regional parties, announced an alliance giving them a total of 435 seats out of 485 seats in the Pyithu Hludaw [St/Re900901 & F900913].

MIN KO NAING, 26-year-old head of the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABFSU), who played an important role in the 1988 democracy movement was sentenced to 20 years hard labour by a military tribunal in Rangoon on April 28 [F900920].

Comedian ZARGANA, 27, who was arrested May 19 for making fun of General Saw Maung was sentenced to 7 years hard labour [F900920]. Zargana was also arrested in 1988 for his role in the democracy movement. He said he was whipped with bamboo sticks and tortured with electric shocks in prison. He was released in April 1989 [A900615].

U SAN LIN, 42, patron of the DEMOCRATIC PARTY FOR A NEW SOCIETY was arrested by the military for recruiting high school students to form a union [A900907].

Ex-colonels KYI MAUNG, acting chairman of the NLD, and CHIT KHAING, NLD party secretary, were arrested for passing on to 'somebody not concerned' some 'evidence that ought to have been withheld in the interest of the state'. Both were elected to the Pyithu Hludaw on 27 May. Their arrest is assumed to be connected to the demonstrations in Mandalay on 8 August in which the Army killed 4 people [F900920].

U OHN KYAING, U THEIN DAN, U YE MYINT AUNG and U SEIN HLA AUNG, NLD leaders in Mandalay were arrested for 'inciting disturbances by disseminating false news about the (8 August) clash' [F900920 & St/Re/AP900908].

Troops fired tear gas to disperse SCHOOL CHILDREN who demonstrated for nearly 3 hours in Mandalay on 18 September, the second anniversary of SLORC rule [Re900919].

The INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR DEMOCRACY IN BURMA (INDB) is holding a Burma Seminar in Washington, D.C. in cooperation with the United States Committee for Refugees (USCR) and the International Center for Development Policy on 19-20 October.

CHINA:

A shipment of CHINESE arms arrived in Rangoon in August. It is believed that 12, F6 or F7 aircraft and at least 4, 'Shanghai' or 'Hainan' class patrol boats will also be delivered before the end of 1990. Burma Army officers from armour and artillery units have trained in China over the past year (see "Alert No.1 &3") [F900913].

ISRAEL:

The ISRAEL GOVERNMENT sponsored a short course on PLANT PRODUCTION in Rangoon from July 17 - Aug.3 for 26 trainees. Zvi Herzog was the instructor [P900718].

MALAYSIA:

Dato K.S. Nijhar, Ministry of Trade & Industry visited Rangoon July 22-26 for Bilateral Trade Talks. He called on Vice-Adm. Maung Maung Khin, Min. for Energy, and for Mines; Brig.Gen. David Abel, Min. for Planning & Finance, and for Trade; Lt.Gen. Tin Tun, Min. for Transport & Communications, and for Social Welfare, and for Labour; Lt.Gen. Chit Swe, Min. for Livestock Breeding & Fisheries, and for Agriculture & Forests; and Lt.Gen. Sein Aung, Min. for Industry 1 and for Industry 2 [P900723-27].

UNITED NATIONS & INTERNATIONAL AGENCIES:

The FOOD & AGRICULTURAL ORGANIZATION (FAO) and the Swiss Government co-sponsored a training course from July 23 - Aug.24, on MONITORING & EVALUATION OF AGRICULTURAL AND RURAL INVESTMENT PROJECTS for 25 officials [P900724].

The INTERNATIONAL LABOUR ORGANIZATION (ILO) sponsored U Aung Ba Kyi, Director of the Labour Department to attend a seminar from July 16-20 in Shanghai on PRIVATE BUSINESSES given by the ILO and the Chinese Ministry of Labour [P900716].

INTERNATIONAL MONETARY FUND (IMF) representatives B. Allen and E. Perez met Brig.Gen. David Abel to discuss the Budget Department's POLICY & MANAGEMENT PROJECT [P900817].

INTERNATIONAL RICE RESEARCH INSTITUTE (IRRI) Asian Rice Farming Systems Network Co-ordinator Dr. V.R. Carangal arrived to study paddy cultivation Jul.9-14 [P900714].

The WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO) sponsored a 5-day seminar in July on HUMAN RESOURCES FOR HEALTH IN SUPPORT OF POLICY ANALYSIS AND PLANNING in Rangoon [P900724].

WHO South-East Asia Region Project Director Dr. Zakir Husein called on Col. Pe Thein to discuss health plans [P900823].

UNDP officials accompanied Chief Technical Advisor U Sein Win of the Asia and Pacific Regional Watershed Project on a visit to the Pugyi area [P900713].

UNEP sponsored Daw Tin Aye, Associate Professor. of Geography and a member of the National Commission for Environmental Affairs, to Geneva from July 9-13, to attend a meeting on BIOLOGICAL DIVERSITY [P900720].

UNESCO Director of the Principal Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific, Hedayat Ahmed visited Rangoon July 8-11, to discuss educational cooperation [P90079-12].

UNICEF East Asia and Pakistan Regional Director Daniel J. Brooks, Deputy Director of the UNICEF Planning Division Hanf Narula and UNICEF Resident Representative Rolf C. Carriere met with and discussed implementation of rural water supply projects from 1990-1995 with Lt.Gen. Chit Swe on July 25. They also called on Col. Pe Thein, Minister for Health, and for Education; and on Brig.Gen. David Abel [P900726-28].

The UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE LEAST DEVELOPED COUNTRIES (UNCLDC) Executive Secretary Dr. Pushkar N. Pant called on Brig.Gen. David Abel on July 27, to discuss the Conference which was to be held in Paris from Sept.3-14 [P900728].

The UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND (UNFPA) co-sponsored a 2-day POPULATION & DEVELOPMENT seminar with the Institute of Economics in August [P900822].

UNITED STATES:

*AMOCO (see "Alert No.1") Chairman Richard Martin Morrow, Amoco Production Company President Patrick Joseph Early and Europe, Latin America & Far East Region President Robert S. Blanton called on Sr.Gen. Saw Maung and Vice-Adm. Maung Maung Khin. Amoco is carrying out seismic surveys and expects to start drilling in 1991 [P900818-19].

SOURCES: [A900907] Asiaweek [FR900900] Friends of the Rainforest
[F900920] F.E.E.Review [P900908] Working Peoples Daily
[RAN900000] Rainforest Action Network
[St/Re/AP900908] Strait Times/Reuters/Associated Press
