

Burma Alert No.12
(December 1990)

BURMA NEWS:

DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI of the National League for Democracy (NLD) was awarded the prestigious 1990 Thorolf Rafto human rights award in NORWAY on Nov.4 [R901031].

U MAUNG KO, 52, a senior organizer of the NLD and close associate of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, died while in military custody on Nov.9. Those who attended the funeral said his body was heavily bruised, and that there was blood around the mouth and ankles. They believe he died under torture. The Working People's Daily only reported that U Maung Ko 'died suddenly'. Sr.Gen. Saw Maung has denied that U Maung Ko was tortured. He said that according to Intelligence Chief, Maj.Gen. Khin Nyunt, U Maung Ko "after confessing, made use of a blanket there and hanged himself". U Maung Ko was detained at a military intelligence center near Rangoon airport. People who knew U Maung Ko found the suicide story hard to believe - "He was not the sort of person who would give up". Others said that "it is almost impossible to commit suicide ... They don't let you have anything to do it with" [A901130, AP901114, R901031 & MG901122].

On Nov.9, two students, YE MARN and YE HTIN KYAW, armed with a fake bomb hijacked a Thai International Airbus A300 enroute from Bangkok to Rangoon, to Calcutta. All 220 passengers and crew were released unharmed. The students wanted the Burmese military to abide by the results of the May 27 elections and transfer power to the NLD. They also demanded the release of all political prisoners including 2 students in a Thai jail who hijacked a Burmese plane in 1989, the abolition of all military tribunals and the cancellation of sentences imposed by the tribunals [Ny901111 & A901123].

NITA YIN YIN MAY, Information Officer at the British Embassy in Rangoon, was arrested Nov.16 and sentenced to 3 years in prison by a military tribunal for violating the 'official secrets act'. She had been arrested twice before and questioned about the British ambassador's views about the NLD (see *Alert No.11*) [La901122 & A901207].

U KYI MAUNG, 72, acting NLD Chairman and U CHIT KHAING, 69, NLD party secretary, were sentenced on Nov.19 by a military tribunal to 10 years in prison for violating the 'official secrets act' (see also *Alert No.10*) [La901122 & A901130].

The Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), which is fighting for a democratic federal Burma, has invited the NLD, victors of the 27 May elections, to participate in the formation of a provisional government-in-exile [A901123]. DAB members are:

All Burma Muslim Union
All Burma Students Democratic Front
All Burma Young Monks Union
Arakan Liberation Party
Chin National Front
Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma
German-Burmese Association
Kachin Independence Organization
Karen National Union
Lahu National Organization
Muslim Liberation Organization

National United Front of Arakan
New Mon State Party
Overseas Burmese Liberation Front
Overseas Karen Organization
Palaung State Liberation Party
Pa-O National Organization
People's Liberation Front
People's Patriotic Party
Shan State Progressive Party
Wa National Organization

In October, representatives of all political parties were forced to sign a statement accepting Declaration No.1/90 (July 27/90) which outlined SLORC's timetable for a transfer of power and in effect forbids the NLD from introducing its own constitution "to obtain power and form a government". A Burmese source said *"The handcuffs were right there on the table and they were given the choice between a ballpoint pen or the handcuffs"* [B901027]. DAW MYINT MYINT KHIN, 58, a notary and a senior NLD member was reported to have signed the statement. Of the 14-member NLD Central Committee, only 4 including Daw Myint Myint Khin, still remain free. She herself served 10 months in jail and was released only in May 1990 [B901030 & A901123].

CHAMNARN POTJANA, Deputy Permanent Secretary of THAILAND's Interior Ministry, warned international agencies to stop helping Burmese students. If not, he said *"no matter if they are officials of the UNHCR (UN High Commission for Refugees) or other UN agencies, we will ask the Foreign Ministry to expel them"*. Mr. Chamnarn said that a holding camp for Burmese dissidents on the border will be established. The Thais began reconsidering the status of Burmese asylum seekers after the Thai International airliner was hijacked. They also suspect Burmese students to have been involved in the recent bombings of the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok [Ny901118]. However, given that an intelligence agent planted the bomb found at the Embassy in Tokyo (Alert No.11), these incidents may have been instigated by Burmese Intelligence.

UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATION:

Professor SADAOKO OGATA, the UN Human Rights Commission's investigator and MR. JAKOB MOLLER, a senior official from the UN Centre for Human Rights in Geneva, visited Burma Nov.3-11. Mrs. Ogata will report to the Commission in Geneva in Feb.91.

Diplomats say Mrs. Ogata, a professor of Tokyo's Sophia University, was prevented from meeting Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other political prisoners. In preparation for Mrs. Ogata's visit, Insein Jail was whitewashed, new blankets and more food was distributed to inmates. More than 2,000 of the prison's 3,000 inmates were also transferred to Mandalay, Mergui, Tharrawaddy, Thayetmyo, and other prisons up-country. Those transferred included torture victims and political prisoners.

On Nov.5, the Working People's Daily published an 'Open Letter' from a Bo Thanmani to Mrs. Ogata describing alleged British and Japanese human rights violations in Burma between 1942-45 and asked for compensation for the victims as well as for the damage done in Burma during the Second World War. On Nov.6, an editorial in the same paper which is controlled by the regime, endorsed the letter [A901116, F901115 & P901106].

UNITED NATIONS GENERAL ASSEMBLY

On Nov.19, SWEDEN tabled a resolution demanding the immediate release of all political prisoners in Burma, and expressing concern at the military's refusal to hand over power to the NLD. The resolution would have also required the UN Secretary General to report to next year's General Assembly on Burma's compliance with its demands. This is the first time a specific country has been criticized by name at this year's UN debate on human right abuses around the world [Ny901124 & F901206].

The SWEDISH resolution was supported by AUSTRALIA, AUSTRIA, BELGIUM, CANADA, DENMARK, FRANCE, GERMANY, GREECE, HUNGARY, ICELAND, IRELAND, ITALY, LUXEMBOURG, NETHERLANDS, NORWAY, POLAND, PORTUGAL, SPAIN and the UNITED KINGDOM. The resolution ran into strong opposition from Asian countries including CHINA and was postponed till next year. Another resolution sponsored by AFGHANISTAN, CUBA, UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, ZAMBIA and ZIMBABWE called on the UN to urge all States to respect the principle of non-interference in a State's internal affair [GA901121 & Ny901124].

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (UNDP):

On Oct. 12, ARTHUR N. HOLCOMBE, Deputy Regional Director, UNDP Asia Pacific Regional Bureau and MICHAEL GAUTIER, Deputy UNDP Resident Representative in Burma outlined a number of projects worth US\$53 million, to help develop the Burmese economy over a 5-year period [B901013]. The UNDP has also contacted Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) in Thailand to participate in the projects. The UNDP and UNICEF are the only bilateral funding agencies currently operating in Burma. The Japanese Government's forestry training program, the Asian Development Bank's road project, and the World Bank's program which were still active in 1990, have now been completed.

According to Mr. Gautier, the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) would like NGOs to participate in Burma's development and has asked the UNDP to contact them on its behalf. The NGOs involved would not report to SLORC or any of its ministries or administrative units but to a 'board' linked with the UNDP. He said that very few limits will be placed on NGOs but that American-based NGOs and those involved in assistance to Burmese minorities in Thailand would not be welcome.

RE-FORESTATION PROJECT IN THE DRY ZONE

NGOs will be responsible for the integrated rural development and re-forestation of the area between the Irrawady river and the Shan border which stretches from Rangoon to Mandalay. The project can start any time in 1990. No restrictions will be placed on the movement of foreigners in this area. Initially, 20-30 volunteers will be recruited to form core members of the team. Eventually 300 Burmese volunteers will be recruited for this project which will affect 1.5 million people. It has a budget of US\$ 2-2.5 million. The UNDP is prepared to fund an NGO 100%, for three years.

BORDER AREA DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The UNDP has earmarked US\$ 17 million from the UN Capital Development Fund for this project which will include road construction; water, sanitation, and agricultural (crop substitution) development; and the construction of mini-hydro outlets. The Burma Army has already built 20 schools, 2 or 3 hospitals and 14 dispensaries in the Wa area and dry weather roads in southern Shan State. An Army Development Committee has also been formed to 'cut red tape and consult the people about their wishes'. This project will be the Army's 'show piece'. Mr. Gautier suggested NGOs could be involved in the management of stock and supplies for dispensaries which can only be 'done by helicopter' but said that NGO involvement could begin only after April 1991.

OTHER UNDP PROJECTS:

ECONOMIC - 7 or 8 projects involving foreign expertise on an open economy including budget, debt management, customs, foreign trade banks, commercial banks, management development programs, and modern planning techniques.

EDUCATION - a team of 12 experts is examining the entire education system and will report in Feb. 91. However, Mr. Gautier does not think secondary schools and universities will be re-opened in 1991. UNICEF and UNESCO might fund some of the projects in this field. UNICEF has a current budget of US\$ 30 million for Burma in the field of child/mother protection, primary education, health and sanitation.

HEALTH - several projects including nursing schools and AIDS awareness. The Ministry of Health has also requested Medecins sans frontieres, Holland to examine areas in Kachin State. OXFAM may also be involved in a 'programmation exercise' with UNICEF. The UN Family Planning Agency (UNFPA) also has a US\$ 3 million budget for Burma. The UN Fund for Drug Abuse Control (UNFDAC) also has a budget of US\$ 10 million for Burma but Mr. Gautier thinks only US\$ 1 million will be used this year [DP900911].

Addresses:

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1 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY.10017, U.S.A. Fax: 1 (212) 826-2057

UNITED NATIONS CHILDREN'S FUND (UNICEF), James P. Grant, Under-Secretary-General,
3 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY.10017, U.S.A. Fax: 1 (212) 888-7465

CANADA

The Pilatus PC6, PC7 and PC9 aircraft (*Alert No.8 & 11, Switzerland*) used by the Burma Air Force are all powered by PRATT & WHITNEY turboprop engines [JA870000].

CHINA:

In addition to the arms deal with CHINA reported earlier (*Alert No.10 & 11*), one hundred light and medium tanks will also be purchased. These will include T69IIs and the Chinese version of the Soviet PT76 light amphibious tank, as well as APCs (Armoured Personnel Carriers). The 20-30 anti-aircraft guns purchased have been identified as 37mm twin-barrel and 57 mm single-barrel guns. 180 officers, mostly lieutenants and captains have also completed their training in China [F901206].

In early October, 8 Chinese Army trucks were observed crossing the China-Burma border at Wan Ting-Pang Hsai. The convoy travelled along the Burma Road to Lashio where a cargo of arms and ammunition was unloaded [F901108].

HONG KONG:

Strand Hotels International (*Alert No.8,9 & 11*) is being financed by JARDINE FLEMING through JF Asia Select Venture Capital Fund, SUN HUNG KAI, and PIONEER INTERNATIONAL. Strand Hotels International needs US\$ 12 million to finalize a 30-year contract for the STRAND, the INYA LAKE and the PRESIDENT hotels. These 3 hotels represent 400 of the 460 tourist standard rooms currently available in Rangoon. *Adriaan Zecha and *Bernard Pe Win are the main proponents of the project [Am901100].

Adriaan Zecha, 57, is the Indonesian-born financier who founded the REGENT HOTEL GROUP. He sold out his interests in 1986 and now heads HALE CORP. (Hotel And Leisure Enterprises). Hale Corp. is controlled by the Pritzker family of Chicago which also controls the Hyatt chain. In 1988, Zecha bought a two-third interest in Southern Pacific Hotels (Parkroyal Hotels and Travelodges), the No.1 hotel chain in Australia. He is expanding the Australian-New Zealand chain to Southeast Asia starting with Silom Travelodge in Bangkok and a Parkroyal Hotel in Kuala Lumpur. He also owns the Amarapuri, a small luxury resort overlooking Surin Beach in Phuket, Thailand. Zecha was also involved in re-locating the Saigon Floating Hotel from Australia [A900216].

Bernard Pe Win is originally from Taunggyi where his grandfather U Tan Pey-ya owned the city's electricity plant and cinema before Ne Win expropriated them. Bernard is an accountant who qualified in the UK. He worked for American Express in the Philippines and Hong Kong and for Sally Aw (Haw Par family) prior to this.

Pioneer International is managed by Robert Kim Bway Oung (Aung Myint) who also owns the Rangoon Restaurant at 265 Gloucester Road in Causeway Bay. The restaurant is a favourite dining spot for Hong Kong-based 'Myanmar' officials and expatriates.

UNION BANK OF SWITZERLAND (UBS) in Hong Kong has established an interbank credit line for Swiss Franc 10 million (US\$ 8 million), with the Myanma Foreign Trade Bank. Sam Wong is the assistant treasurer for UBS Hong Kong [Am901100].

POLAND

Ten armed 'Hoplite' Mi2s and ten PZL Swidnik transport helicopters have been purchased from POLAND. Pilots will be sent to Poland for training [R901206].

SINGAPORE:

HAW PAR TRADING PTE. LTD., 180 Clemenceau Ave., #04-01 Haw Par Glass Tower, Singapore 0923, Tel: 339-1655, Fax: 339-1851, is active in Burma [G900000].

*Myanmar Leading Logistics ("Alert No. 11") has a capital of Kyat 50 million (US\$ 7.7 million), 49% held by *SKS MARKETING (Alert No.1) and 51% by *Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings ("Alert No.5") [P900902].

NATSTEEL TRADE INTERNATIONAL PTE. LTD. formed Myanmar Natsteel Hardware Centre Ltd., a joint-venture with the Construction and Electrical Stores Trading Corp. of the Ministry of Trade, to sell construction material such as iron rods, iron bands, zinc pipes, zinc sheets and wire mesh [P900921].

UNITED STATES:

EVERWOOD INC., a garden furniture company is advertising that they use only Burma teak because they "strongly believe in conserving the world's natural resources". They wrongly believe that the Burma Selection System is still being followed and that Burma's forests are being carefully managed. Please phone: Mr. Wayne Rogers at (803) 459-8380 or write: Route 5, Box 173A, Abbeville, S. Carolina 29620, U.S.A.

YUGOSLAVIA:

In addition to the YUGOSLAV aircraft deal (Alert No.11), 3 light patrol boats of the Koncar-class were reportedly delivered in Oct. Like the aircraft, the patrol boats are powered by ROLLS-ROYCE engines. Under the terms of a 1972 agreement with BRITAIN, the aircraft and boats cannot be sold to a country like Burma. Moreover, the patrol boats are of SWEDISH design and are also equipped with SWEDISH-made 40 mm or 57 mm BOFORS cannons. Prior approval from Stockholm is required for such exports. Burmese pilots and naval officers will be sent to Yugoslavia for training [F901206].

SOURCES:	[A901130] Asiaweek	[AP901114] Associated Press
	[F901115] F.E.E.Review	[P901106] Working Peoples Daily
	[R901131] Burma Review	[B901030] The Bangkok Post
	[Ny901111] N.Y.Times	[GA901121] UN General Assembly
	[DP900911] UNDP Briefing	[Am901100] Asian Money
	[MG901122] Montreal Gazette	[JA870000] Jane's Aircraft
	[La901122] Los Angeles Times	

ASSOCIATES TO DEVELOP DEMOCRATIC BURMA (ADDB)

The "Burma Alert" published monthly by the ADDB monitors foreign investment and trade in Burma to provide pro-democracy groups with data for their campaigns. The ADDB are not against foreign trade and investments. The present economic stagnation in Burma is the result of the inward-looking 'Burmese Way to Socialism'. However, we believe that the situation in Burma cannot be alleviated by foreign investments. Political change must come first. Foreign investments now will only help an unpopular and repressive military regime hold on to power and prolong the suffering of the people of Burma. Subscription to the "Burma Alert" in 1991 is US\$25.00, payable to HARN YAWNGHWE (ADDB), Acct.No.2142 8026-204, RR#4, Shawville, Quebec J0X 2Y0, Canada.

OPINION

FEDERAL REPUBLIC, NOW!

The following is an excerpt from the editorial of the September/October 1990 issue of the BURMA BULLETIN published by U KYAW WIN, P.O.Box 2292, Costa Mesa, CA.92628-2292

The time has come for Burma's expatriates to come to the aid of their homeland by joining hands with the DAB and forming a provisional federal government ... this government would seek international de-recognition of the regime in Rangoon and ... turn over the reins (of power) to the national assembly that was elected in May ... This may well be an unconventional way. But Burma's unique situation calls for bold action ... (the suggestion below) merits consideration as well. But a government of the model described therein would do well to practise democracy and elect its own leaders from among the capable who are sincerely motivated, regardless of pedigree.

A MESSAGE TO BURMESE EXPATRIATES:

The following is an edited version of a talk by Louis J. Walinsky, chief of Burma's economic advisory team (1953-58), and the author of "Economic Development in Burma".

Many Third World countries are ruled by military cliques whose control is enforced by the secret police and the gun. Among these, Burma is unique. It is the only one that has proved its own illegitimacy by refusing to honour the results of a general election. This has opened a tremendous gap in the armour of the regime. It is through this gap that Burmese expatriates who wish to restore democracy in Burma can most effectively strike. The greatest contribution they can make is to persuade the UN and countries friendly to the cause of democracy, to declare SLORC illegitimate, withdraw their diplomatic recognition, and impose sanctions designed to compel it to surrender power to the rightful elected NLD government headed by Aung San Suu Kyi.

A number of consequences would follow from such actions. Financial and technical assistance by the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and individual governments would be cut off. Investors would no longer be able to accept the risk involved in timber, fisheries and mineral extraction concessions which the next government might not honor. The split within the Burmese military would widen. Many officers, already troubled by the dishonorable conduct of their top commanders, would not be able to any longer tolerate their nation's shame in the eyes of the world. The Burmese people too would take to the streets again, as they did by the millions in 1988, convinced they can achieve victory this time without a heavy cost in blood.

The way to precipitate the desired actions is to create a government-in-exile pro tem to represent the legitimate NLD government until the illegitimate military junta steps down or is overthrown. The creation of a government-in-exile pro tem would provide a constructive alternative to the SLORC regime and spur the international community to welcome, assist and recognize this democratic alternative.

Of whom should a government-in-exile be composed? This question is made less difficult if we consider the single most important qualification necessary. The core must be composed of individuals whose names and affiliations suggest a close and important identity with democratic Burma. These are individuals who held important leadership positions in the last democratic government and their close family members who have acquired a professional education and technical skills in the West. It is time for the Burmese expatriate community to make such a move.

The opinions expressed here by U Kyaw Win and Mr. Walinsky are not necessarily those of the ADDB. We will be publishing articles of interest in the "Alert" to facilitate dialogue. Readers are encouraged to submit articles of less than a thousand words.