

BURMA ALERT No.7 (Vol.2, July 1991)

Burma News:

SLORC REJECTS U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS INVESTIGATOR

The State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) rejected the appointment of Yozo Yokota, a Japanese legal expert, as the new United Nations' Special Rapporteur for Burma. Yokota was to replace Mrs. Sadako Ogata who visited Rangoon in November 1990 to investigate human right conditions. She was given a very cool reception by SLORC and her subsequent report to the Commission in February 1991 embarrassed the military junta in Rangoon. SLORC has proposed that Purificacion Quisumbing, a Filipino lawyer, be appointed instead. She chaired the 46th session on Human Rights in Geneva in 1990 and later visited Burma at the invitation of SLORC [F910704].

INTER-PARLIAMETARY UNION QUESTIONS SLORC

At the 85th Inter-Parliamentary Conference held 29 April-4 May in Pyongyang, DPR of Korea, the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) passed a resolution expressing its concern over the fact that SLORC has not as yet convened the Pyithu Hludaw 12 months after holding parliamentary elections. The resolution also expressed grave concern over the subsequent arrest of 62 elected parliamentarians and questioned SLORC about the specifics of each case. The IPO is the international organization of the representatives of the Parliaments of each nation. IPU members submit the resolutions adopted by the IPU to their respective Assemblies and Governments and promote their implementation. As of 1 January 1991, 113 of the 148 Legislative Assemblies world-wide were represented. China, Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the USSR are also members. (Address: Inter-Parliamentary Union, B.P. 438,1211 Geneva 19, Switzerland. Tel: 41 (22) 734-4150, Fax: 41 (22) 733-3141)

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY LINKS HUMAN RIGHTS TO AID

On June 29, the European Council adopted a declaration on human rights which affirmed that the protection of human rights is one of the foundation stones of European cooperation and of relations between the European Community and third countries [EUR910710]. This was again emphasized at the meeting of the Economic Ministers of the EEC/ASEAN (Association of South east Asian Nations) which was held on June 1 in Luxembourg. Indonesian Foreign Minister Ali Alatas replied that if the EEC takes into consideration a nation's, historic, social and economic context in evaluating human rights issues, ASEAN had no objections to discussing them. Both sides agreed on the importance of *"democratic practices, respect for human rights, increased political and economic participation of all people which enhances the productive process and contributes to more equitable sharing of economic benefits"*. However, there was disagreement when the EC requested ASEAN to help in applying pressure on SLORC to transfer power to a civilian government. British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd called for an end to arms sales to Rangoon saying that it is *"grotesque that such a poor country should devote such a high proportion of its budget to weaponry when it is not the subject of any external threat"*. Thailand's Foreign Minister Arsa Sarasin, however, warned that further pressure and sanctions will only make SLORC turn further inward and close off all chances of reform. Instead, he said, the international community should provide 'inducements' which would give SLORC a stake in maintaining cooperative relations with other countries. He said ASEAN has a sincere desire to see Burma adopt democracy but that it cannot ignore the existence of the present regime because of geographic realities [AE910604].

SLORC TO HIRE U.S. PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRM

SLORC has instructed its United Nations mission in New York to hire a public relations firm to improve its international image. SLORC hopes to neutralize the negative effect of the February U.N. Human Rights Report by emphasizing its concern for the environment and its fight against AIDS [F910606].

(Khun Sa of the Mong Tai Army, indicted in absentia in March 1990 on 10 drug trafficking charges by a U.S. federal grand jury, is also reported to have hired a U.S. law firm in New York to improve his image by emphasizing his concern for human rights in the Shan State - Ed.)



Burma News:

MAUNG THAWKA, DISSIDENT WRITER, DIES

The Working People's Daily stated that imprisoned dissident novelist and poet U Ba Thaw, 64, better known as *"Maung Thawka"* died June 12 in a Rangoon hospital. No cause of death was given nor was it clear where and when he had been hospitalized. U Ba Thaw, a former navy Lieutenant Commander, was president of the Writers Union and a senior member of the National League for Democracy (NLD). He was arrested on 20 July 1989 and on 5 October 1989, Military Tribunal No.2 sentenced him to 20 years' imprisonment with hard labour for *"inciting members of the armed forces to join the democracy movement"* [AP/BR910631 & AI900916].

BURMA JOINS U.N. DRUG CONVENTION

On 11 June, SLORC signed the U.N. 1988 Vienna Convention Against Illicit Traffic in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances. A SLORC Foreign Ministry spokesman said that SLORCs commitment to narcotics suppression should now be internationally recognized and that allegations about its involvement in the illicit narcotics trade are now no longer sustainable [F910627].

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THE JULY "BURMA ALERT" WAS DELAYED DUE TO AN A.D.D.B. FACT FINDING MISSION TO EUROPE IN JULY-AUGUST. APOLOGIES FOR ANY INCONVENIENCES CAUSED - Editor.

International News:

BANGLADESH:

The ALL BURMA STUDENTS DEMOCRATIC FRONT (ARAKAN) hat, as of 15 June 1991, opened a Jungle High School and a Jungle Federal Library at the Eagle Camp on the Bangladesh-Burma border. Text books and general books on history, political science, medicine, literature (Burmese and English) and military training are required. Mailing address for the books can be obtained from the "Burma Alert". Other aid for the students in Bangladesh can be channelled through the BURMESE RELIEF CENTRE, P.O.BON 48, Chiangmai University, Chiang Mai 50002, Thailand. Fax: 66 (53) 212-219.

BURMA:

The NCGUB MINISTRY OF HEALTH held a National Health Conference 5-7 June in Manerplaw. Kawthoolei State, to discuss the serious health problems in Burma that have long been neglected by the military. A NATIONAL HEALTH COMMITTEE, the BURMA MEDICAL ASSOCIATION and the BURMA RED CROSS SOCIETY were formed to implement the primary health care programs that were agreed upon. The plan of action emphasizes a primary health care system based on health awareness education, the need for basic health centres and sub-centres in remote regions, the need for the training of health workers with priority given to maternal and child care, and the need for extensive immunization programs, safe water supply programs, nutrition programs, family planning services and an essential drugs policy. Assistance will be requested from the WHO, UNICEF and interested NGOs. Further information can be obtained from: Dr. Sann Aung, Minister of Health, P.O.Box 34, Huamark Post Office, Bangkok 10243, Thailand. Tel:/Fax: 66 (2) 318-8507.

(In an independent study on the current health situation in Burma, World Vision International reported that, *"Infant and maternal mortality are high mainly caused by malnutrition and diseases such as pneumonia, diarrhea, tetanus, vaccine preventable diseases and malaria. Repeated episodes of infections and infestations, combined with parental ignorance about proper feeding, all add to the problem"*. The report added that a serious deficiency of Vitamin A exists and that almost half of the loss of hearing and speech in children in Burma is caused by iodine deficiency. A chronic lack of essential drugs was also noted.)

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

The BUDDHIST PEACE FELLOWSHIP and KARUNA CENTER has launched a campaign to petition the United Nations on behalf of the Burmese people to recognize only the elected representatives of the people, the NLD. Additional information can be obtained from the KARUNA CENTER, telephone 1 (413) 367-9520 or 49 Richardson Rd., Leverett, MA.01054, U.S.A.

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Human Rights:

BURMESE REFUGEES IN THAILAND

In "Burma Alert" No.4, Vol.2, an account of Thai Immigration Police brutality towards Burmese student refugees was published. The students who are recognized by the UNHCR as 'persons of concern' were beaten up for demanding to be released after having served their sentence of 40 days in detention for 'illegal entry'. Following a public outcry. The United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) in Bangkok investigated the charges. Subsequently, the UNHCR claimed that the reports were exaggerated but did not specifically refute the allegations. Nothing, however, was done to get the students released. The following account describes what happened to them:

On April 25, the 41 remaining 'persons of concern' were told that if a fine of Baht 5,000 (US\$200) was paid, they would be taken from the Immigration Detention Centre in Bangkok along with other Burmese 'illegal immigrants' to Ranong, a Thai border town, and released. The money was paid and the 41 students were taken on a bus that night with about 100 other prisoners to Ranong, 470 kms away.

Recognizing that the lives of some Burmese 'illegal immigrants' may be in danger if they are deported to Burma, Thai officials normally release their prisoners at an official pier in Ranong. Theoretically, they have been deported from Thailand and can take a boat across the narrow estuary of the Pakchan river to Victoria Point (Kawthaung) in Burma. In this instance, the bus did not go to the official pier when it arrived in Ranong in the morning (26 April). Instead, it went to an isolated private pier at the Tara Resort. There it was surrounded by Thai Immigration Police and Navy personnel and the Burmese were loaded onto a ship. The students 'of concern' who had been handcuffed on the bus had their handcuffs taken off on the ship after they protested. The ship then left immediately for Kawthaung and was escorted by a Thai naval vessel. This was the first time a naval escort had been used and the students became suspicious that they were really going to be repatriated to Burma. When the ship docked on the Burmese side, a student, Aung Mtun (UN N1# 909 - arrested 19 Dec.90), stabbed himself in an attempt to commit suicide. In the confusion that followed, most of the prisoners (students 'of concern' and 'illegal immigrants') jumped into the water and escaped.

Aung Htun and Than Than Myint (UN NI#1238 - arrested 20 Nov.90) managed to convince local Burmese traders to smuggle them back to Ranong where Aung Htun received medical attention and Than Than Myint went into hiding. By 8 p.m. 31 of the 41 'persons of concern' had either been rescued from nearby islands or had made their way back to Ranong. Two 'illegal immigrants' who remained on the ship, Khaing Gyi and Tayoke Ma (a.k.a. Tayoke Gyi), were arrested by Burmese authorities.

On 27 April, the Thai army and police rearrested 21 of the 31 'persons of concern' who had escaped from Burma and were hiding in Ranong. They were held at Phanpalar Police station in Ranong.

On 28 April, 8 more 'persons of concern' escaped back to Ranong from Burma (total 39) and went into hiding. A legal officer from the UNHCR arrived in Ranong and met with the 21 'persons of concern' held at the police station. He said he would report the incident to Bangkok and Geneva and try to get them released and returned to Bangkok.

On 29 April, the 21 'persons of concern' whom the UNHCR legal officer tried to get released were officially charged with 'illegal entry' by a Thai court and sentenced to 14 days detention. The 18 other 'persons of concern' remained in hiding.

Students and other Burmese refugees continue to be arrested by Thai authorities and repatriated to Burma although there is substantial evidence that the returnees are arrested, beaten and tortured by the military. Some have disappeared. The latest reports claim that Thailand has agreed to swap Burmese student refugees for illegal Thai fishermen captured by SLORC

On 2 July, 3\$ male and female student refugees who are recognized by the UNHCR as 'persons of concern' presented themselves to Thai authorities in Bangkok to be arrested. They wanted to draw attention to the UNHCR's inability to protect diem and also to appeal to the Thai Government to stop repatriating Burmese dissident students back to Rangoon. Their fate is not known.

On July 29, Min Thein, a student leader, also recognized by the UNHCR as a 'person of concern' was arrested by Thai Immigration Police and shot dead in the back 'while trying to escape'.



Human Rights:

A refugee is not a dangerous criminal. Why are Burmese refugees being detained beyond their sentences without any legal recourse? Why are student refugees handcuffed? Why did the Thai Police shoot and kill Min Thein? Why is the UNHCR unable or unwilling to do anything to protect the refugees?

The UNHCR claims it cannot do more for Burmese refugees because it is in Thailand only at the invitation of the Thai government to look after Indochinese refugees. As far as the Thais are concerned, there are no Burmese refugees, only 'illegal immigrants' who must be deported. Since there are officially no Burmese refugees, the UNHCR can only designate genuine refugees as 'persons of concern'.

Readers are invited to express their concern to:

Mrs. Sadako Ogata, High Commissioner, UNHCR, Palais des Nations, Geneva 10, Switzerland.

UNHCR Thailand, UN Building, Rajdamnoen Road, Bangkok, Thailand.

Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, Government House, Pitsanulok Rd., Bangkok 10300, Thailand

General Issarapong Noonpakdi, Interior Minister, Asdang Rd., Phrakonong, Bangkok, Thailand

Foreign Investments:

CHINA:

The INTERNATIONAL COMPUTER CORP. supplied US\$536,000 worth of equipment to the Myanmar Port Authority Which opened its computer room in Rangoon on April 26 [P910427].

S. KOREA:

The Second Myanmar-Korea Symposium was held at the Institute of East and West Studies, *YONSEI UNIVERSITY in Seoul, 27-31 May. The First Symposium was held in Rangoon, 15-16 November 1990 (see also "Alert" No.2, Vol.2 it No.9, Vol.1). The KOREAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY was the co-organizer and the financial sponsors were: *DAEWOO LTD., *SUNKYONG LTD. and *YUKONG LTD. The main purpose of the second symposium was to inform Korean businesses about investment opportunities in Burma. Korean organizers and speakers included *Dr. Tae-Kyu Park, Dr. Chang Young Jung, *Dr. Sung-Yeal Koo, Dr. Myungsoon Shin and Dr. Ja Son* of Yonsei University, *Dr. Dalchoong Kim, Director of the Institute of East and West Studies, and Dr. Duk Choong Kim of Sogang University. Burmese participants included U Tin Winn, SLORC Ambassador to Korea, Dr. Than Nyun, Pro-Rector, Institute of Economics, Rangoon, U Khin Maung Oo, Deputy Director-General, Directorate of Trade, U San Din, Deputy Director-General Development of Labour and U Shwe La Min, Deputy Director, Planning Development, Ministry of Planning and Finance [YU910531]. Institute of East and West Studies, Yonsei University, Seoul 120-749. Fax: 82 (2) 393-9027.

THAILAND:

WORLD VISION INTERNATIONAL will expand its community development program in Burma. Its representative, Mr. Roger Walker, and Dr. Amaya Maw Naing, an expatriate Burmese health consultant visited Burma in April. Mr. Wattanapong Santatiwatt, East Asia Regional Director, also led a delegation to Burma 24-27 June and called on Colonel Thein Pe, Minister for Health and for Education and Chief Commanding Officer of the Universities Training Corps. Initially, World Vision will work in four areas: Dago, a satellite town outside Rangoon, Hlaingtaya, Dawpone and Mandalay. World Vision will focus primarily on maternal and child health, family planning, the promotion of improved family nutrition, health education for adolescent and school-age children, immunization, and training for health workers in various fields relevant to the health of mothers and children [WV910630& P910630]. WVI East Asia, P.O.Box 1717, Bangkok 10501, Thailand. Tel: 66 (2) 391-6155, Fax: 66 (2) 381-1976.

*** ATTENTION: NEW "ALERT" FAX NO. 1 (819) 647-3088 ***

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN BURMA
(Qtr.2, 1989/90 - Qtr.3, 1990/91)

ENERGY SECTOR	Data(WPD)	Foreign Investor	Foreign Investment "Alert"
Concession:			US\$ million
Block C	03 Oct.89	Yukong, ROK	38.7000 No.1/90
Block G	27 Oct.89	Shall, Natherlands	80.0000 No.1/90
Block D	30 Oct.89	Idemitsu, Japan	40.0000 No.1/90
Block E	06 Nov.89	Patro-Can, Canada	22.0000 No.1/90
Block B	10 Nov.89	Amoco, USA	51.0000 No.1/90
Block F	13 Nov.89	Unocal, USA	29.0000 No.1/90
Block I	17 Nov.89	Croft, UK	8.1450 No.1/90
Block H	24 Nov.89	BHP, Australia	25.2000 No.1/90
Block J	Q3/89-90	Kirkland, UK	4.0000 No.3/90
Block M13	03 May 90	Premier, UK	11.7750 No.8/90
Block M14	03 May 90	Premier, UK	7.2750 No.8/90
Sub-Total 1			317.0950
MINING SECTOR	Data(WPD)	Foreign Investor	Foreign Investment "Alert"
Concession:			US\$ million
Block IV	Q4/89-90	Sea E L M, Thailand	54.1000 No.3, 5/90
Block VII	20 Apr.90	Seeng Thai, Thailand	13.1200 No.8/90
Block X	01 Jun.90	Sea E L M, Thailand	38.6500 No.9/90
Mon Kyawt	30 Nov .90	Saha Pongsiri, Thailand	0.1000 No.2/2
Sub-Total 2			105.9700
TOURISM SECTOR	Date(WPD)	Foreign Investor	Foreign Investment "Alert"
Joint-Venture:			US\$ million
Golden Triangle	Q4/89-90	Vitavas, Thailand	10.0000 No.2, 5/90
Thahtay Kyun	03 Nov .90	Union Farm, Thailand	10.0000 No.2/91
Myanmar Hotels	27 Jun.90	Strand Intl., UK	12.5000 No.8, 9/90
Myanmar MCG	Q2/90 91	MCG Corp., Japan	60.0000 No.5, 8/90
Netour Ltd.	Q3/90-91	Asia Voyages, HK	8.5000 No.8/90
Pagan-Inle	Q3/90-91	Asia Voyages, HK	0.4000 No.8/90
Sub-Total 3			101.4000
FISHERIES SECTOR	Data(WPD)	Foreign Investor	Foreign Investment "Alert"
Joint-Venture:			US\$ million
Myanmar Bangladesh	24 Aug.90	Cox'a Bazaar Seafoods	0.1000 No.11/90
Myanma American	10 Jul.90	M Marshall Assoc., USA	74.1900 No.9, 11/90
Myanmar Sea Fishers	19 Dac.90	Sea Fishers, Bangladesh	2.8600 No.2/91
Sub-Total 4			77.1500
FOOD SECTOR	Data(WPD)	Foreign Investor	Foreign Investment "Alert"
Joint-Venture:			US\$ million
Myanmar Songserm 1	09 Aug.90	Songserm, Thailand	20.0000 No.11/90
Myanmar Songserm 2	09 Aug.90	Songserm, Thailand	15.0000 No.11/90
Myanmar Singapore	09 Oct.90	United Tobacco, Singapore	1.5000 No.2/91
Sub-Total 5			36.5000

FOREIGN INVESTMENTS IN BURMA
(Qtr.2, 1989/90 - Qtr.3, 1990/91)

INDUSTRIAL	Date(WPD)	Foreign Investor	Foreign Investment "Alert"
Joint-Venture:			US\$ million
Gold Star	Q2/89-90	Transicom, Singapore	0.2500
Myanmar NC	23 Sep.89	NC Woodwork, Singapore	0.7(60 No. 1/90
Myanmar Motor*	16 Jan.90	Century Motors, Sing.	0.4250 No.6/90
Yangon Garment	01 Feb.90	Value Ind., HK	1.0000 No.6/90
Myanmar Ace Metal	14 Feb.90	Ace Pressure Weld, Sing.	0.1060 No.6/90
Myanmar Daewoo	30 Mar.90	Daewoo Corp., ROK	3.2875 No.5, 8 /90
Myanmar Segye	02 Jun.90	Segye Corp., ROK	4.7500 No.5, 9/90
Daewoo Electronics	03 Jun.90	Daewoo Corp., ROK	6.6000 No.5, 8/90
Sub-Total 6			17.1845

Total	Data(WPD)	Sector	Foreign Investment
			US\$ million
INVESTMENTS	1989 91	All Sectors	655.2995

Note: Data supplied by the Union of Myanmar Foreign Investment Committee (UMFIC), Rangoon. Dates given are when contracts were signed or when Ministry of Trade Notifications were published in the Working Peoples Daily, (WPD) Rangoon. Q1 or Q2. etc. dates are from UMFIC. The above data is only for direct foreign Investments handled by the UMFIC. It is not comprehensive. There are also some discrepancies between the amounts published in the WPD and those reported by the UMFIC. One possible explanation is that the amounts in the WPD are target figures while the UMFIC figures are actual direct investments. Other major sources of foreign currency for SLORC to date include:

Sale of	Date	Foreign Buyer	Foreign Earnings "Alert"
CONCESSION:			US\$ million
Tokyo Embassy	Dec.89	MCG Corp., Japan	236.0000 No.1, 5/90
Trade	Jan. 1990	BHP, Singapore	130.0000 No.5/90
Timber	Dec.1988-90	22 Thai firms	100.0000 No.1/90
Timber	Dec.1990-92	Thai firms	80.0000 Estimate
Copper mine	1988-92	Daewoo Corp., ROK	20.0000 No.1/90
Fishing	Dec. 1988-89	Various	17.0000 No.6/90
Fishing	Dec.1989/90	Various	12.0000 Estimate
Total			595.0000

SOURCES this issue: [AE910604] Agence Europe, [AI900916] Amnesty International, [AP/BR910531] Associated Press/Burma Review, [EUR910710] NCGUB Europe, [F910704] Far Eastern Economic Review, [P910427] Working Peoples Daily. [WV910630] World Vision and [YU910531] Yonsei University.

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