

BURMA ALERT No.9 (Vol.2, September 1991)

Burma News:

ASEAN SENDING PHILIPPINE FOREIGN SECRETARY TO RANGOON

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) - Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand, decided in July to send Philippine Foreign Secretary Raul Manglapus, to Rangoon. He will draw the attention of the Burmese State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to international concern over its treatment of political prisoners and its refusal to transfer power to a popularly elected government. This is in response to pressure from the United States for ASEAN to join the international community in urging SLORC to respect the will of the people. Australia, Canada and the European Community supported the US initiative. Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said SLORC is fomenting instability in the region by not respecting the wishes of the Burmese people. Thai Foreign Minister Arsa Sarasin, however, said that Thailand would solve the problem in Burma in Thailand's own way and urged other countries not to interfere [A910802, B910723, N910723].

GEN. SAW MAUNG VISITS CHINA, UNWELCOME IN THAILAND

SLORC Chairman Senior General Saw Maung made his first overseas state visit 20-25 Aug., to China and received a warm welcome. Chinese Prime Minister Li Peng said, *"The way to settle the problems facing a nation is the business of the people of that nation, and no other country should interfere"*. Burma and China signed a pact for economic and technological co-operation [A910906]. Thailand, however, has repeatedly postponed Saw Maung's trip to Bangkok which was originally scheduled for June. Supreme Commander Gen. Sunthorn Kongsompong made the invitation in Feb'91 but the Thai Foreign Ministry said that the trip *"was not appropriate for the time being"* [A910830].

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY IMPOSES ARMS EMBARGO ON BURMA

On 29 July, the European Community announced an embargo on the sale of all military material to Burma. It also called on the rest of the international community to show similar restraint and desist from such sales to Burma. The EC foreign ministers denounced SLORC's abuse of human rights and its continued refusal to hand over power to the National League for Democracy (NLD) which won a landslide victory in the 27 May 1990 elections. The EC statement said it is *"appalled that the Burmese authorities continue to spend large amounts of their country's meagre resources on arms"*. [N910731]

DR. SEIN WIN VISITS EUROPE AND AMERICA

Prime Minister Dr. Sein Win of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), left Bangkok in early September for Europe. Subsequently, the delegation which included U Win Ko, Minister of Finance, and the earlier delegation led by Foreign Minister U Peter Limbin ("Alert" No.8, Vol.2), left for the United States.

SLORC TIGHTENS GRIP ON OPPOSITION

SLORC Law No.11/91, 9 Aug.91, amended the Law Safeguarding the State from the Danger of Subversive Elements to allow "subversive elements" to be held without trial or to have their freedom of movement curtailed for up to 5 years instead of 3 under the earlier law. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, General Secretary of the NLD, has been detained under this law since July'89. SLORC has also appointed a nine-member committee headed by the attorney-general to review all existing laws [F910822]. On 10 July, SLORC Law No.10/91 amended the Pyithu Hludaw Election Law of 31 May 1989. The amendment bars anyone convicted of security or moral offences from running for the Pyithu Hludaw (Parliament) and the amendment is retroactive to 31 May 1989. Members of Parliament who are already elected but have since been convicted of such offences must be expelled from the Pyithu Hludaw. SLORC is trying to legalize its campaign to weaken the NLD which won 392 out of the 485 seats in the elections. According to the Inter-Parliamentary Union, 62 MPs have been arrested by SLORC and 23 have already been sentenced to 10-25 year terms by military tribunals for 'treason' and for 'attempting to form a government'. According to the new amendment, these MPs will be expelled from parliament and banned for life from politics [UPI/B910712].

Burma News:**BRIG. AUNG GYI IN THE SOUP**

Former Brigadier Aung Gyi, 72, leader of the United Nationals Democracy Party (UND Party), was alleged to have condoned the payment of Kyat 1 million (US\$ 160,000) as protection money to the Karen National Union (KNU). Party Chairman U Kyaw Myint Lay, Party Secretary U Kyi Han and Central Executive Committee member U Khin Nyo, were also implicated. U Lu Win, a local UND Party leader, made the accusation after he and 50 others were arrested on charges of having links with the KNU, possessing illegal firearms, illegally selling birds' nests for soup and for corruption. They were arrested after a naval patrol off the southern coast of Burma discovered M-16 automatic rifle ammunition and an M-79 grenade on a boat belonging to the birds' nest firm run by U Lu Win, who claims he has a government tender to collect the birds' nests. Seventeen government employees have been charged with using illegal procedures in providing the tender for the contract and 6 other government employees have been charged with bribery and corruption for complicity in the million dollar deal [AFP/B910717 & N910718]. Brig. Aung Gyi was Gen. Ne Win's second-in-command when he seized power in 1962. He resigned from the Revolutionary Council in 1963 following disagreement over the role of private enterprises in a socialist economy. He was imprisoned by Ne Win from 1965-68 and again from 1973-4. He is credited with having influenced the 1988 pro-democracy uprisings by writing and widely distributing a series of open letters to Ne Win. The letters criticized the economic policies of the Burmese Way to Socialism and the human rights abuses by riot police. He was arrested 29 Jul.88 but released on 25 Aug.88 and participated in the pro-democracy movement. He help founded the NLD and was its first president but resigned 2 months later after disagreeing with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi over the NLD's strategy of opposing SLORC.

International News:**CANADA:**

On the 3rd anniversary of SLORC's coup on 18 Sept., the FRIENDS OF THE RAINFOREST demonstrated in front of the Thai Embassy in Ottawa to protest Thai complicity in the indiscriminate destruction of Burma's rainforest.

NETHERLANDS:

In Aug., the INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP FOR RECONCILIATION issued an urgent request for appeals to Thai authorities to stop the repatriation of Burmese refugees. Write: General Suchinda Kraprayoon, National Peacekeeping Council, Suan Ruenrudee, Bangkok 10300; Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, Government House, Pitsanulok Rd., Bangkok 10300. More information: Shelley Anderson, IFOR, Spoorstraat 38, 1815 BK Alkmaar, Netherlands. Tel: 31 (72) 12-30-14, Fax: 31 (71) 15-11-02.

SWEDEN:

The ALL BURMA STUDENTS DEMOCRATIC FRONT (ABSDF) has opened an Information Office in Sweden. News items, information bulletins, advice, contact addresses, donations for expenses, etc. are all welcome. Aye Chan Naing, ABSDF, c/o P.O.Box 4034, S-18104 Lidingo, Sweden.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

The STUDENT ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COALITION (SEAC) is hosting COMMON GROUND, the 3rd annual national student environmental conference, 4-6 Oct. at the University of Colorado at Boulder. 'Common Ground' will assist in organizing, training, educating and networking U.S. student environmentalists. Last year, 2 Burmese students participated at the 2nd annual conference held in Champaign-Urbana and were able to have a Burma information booth sponsored by SYNAPSES. This year, SYNAPSES would like to get more Burmese students to attend. If all 15 student refugees currently studying in the US are to attend, US\$3,000 has to be raised. Donations to Synapses are tax-deductible. To sponsor a Burmese student to 'Common Ground', contact: Don Erickson, Synapses, 1821 W. Cullerton, Chicago, IL 60609. Tel: (312) 421-5513. For information about 'Common Ground', write: 862, 17th Street, Boulder, Colorado 80302. Tel: (303) 440-5290, Fax: (303) 440-0712.

* URGENT ACTION *

SULAK SIVARAKSA, well-known Thai writer and outspoken social critic, is being investigated by Thai police about allegations that he defamed Thai Army Commander General Suchinda Kraprayoon and committed *lèse majesté* during a political debate at Thammasat University. The legal complaint filed by the Army alleges that Sulak's comments on legal amendments being proposed by the National Peace-keeping Council (NPC) were tantamount to insults to the monarchy and charged that he accused General Suchinda and Supreme Commander General Sunthorn Kongsompong of having visited Burma to "*seek logging concessions and learn lessons about coups*" from SLORC's Gen. Saw Maung. Sulak claims that he had said that New Aspiration Party leader, Gen. Chaovalit Yongchaiyuth, had sought the logging concessions and General Sunthorn visited Burma prior to the 23 Feb.91 coup to learn "*lessons about coups*". He also claims that the *lèse majesté* law is being abused to harass him. Army Secretary, Maj.Gen. Anusorn Krissanaserani, said "*We have to protect the dignity of the army commander and the army institution*" [N910906 & F910919]. Sulak is a friend of the Burmese democracy movement and longtime critic of Thailand's policy of supporting SLORC. Sulak is a patron of the Birmingham-based Burma Peace Foundation and a founding member of the International Network of Engaged Buddhists which has been actively supporting the Burmese democracy movement. The NPC, indeed, seems to be learning from SLORC. Please express your concern for Sulak and the infringement of his freedom of expression to: General Suchinda Kraprayoon, National Peacekeeping Council, Fax: 66 (2) 280-6277 and Prime Minister Anand Panyarachun, Fax: 66 (2) 280-1443.

* URGENT ACTION *

Foreign Investments & Trade:

CHINA:

U Ohn Gyaw, Director-General, Political Affairs of the Foreign Ministry (now Deputy Minister), led a delegation to Beijing, 9-24 May. They attended a seminar on Drug Control and U Ohn Gyaw signed a contract with Deputy Foreign Minister Qi Huai Yuan for the construction of two bridges on the China-Burma border. He also signed a contract with Deputy Security Minister Gu Lin Fang and UNIDCP Acting Chairman G. Giacomelli [P910510-26].

Lieutenant General Chit Swe, Minister for Livestock Breeding & Fisheries, and for Agriculture & Forests, led a delegation to Yunnan, China and the Philippines, 15-27 May. Delegates included U Hla Pe, Director, Myanma Timber Enterprise, U Tin Hlaing, Managing Director, Myanma Agriculture Service, U Tin Htut Oo, Assistant Director, Agriculture Planning and Statistics Department, U Tin Maung, Director General, Livestock Planning and Statistics Department, Colonel Nyunt Tin, Commander, 11th Light Infantry Division and Captain Thaik Toe [P910516-28].

The first Myanmar-China Trade Fair opened in Muse, Shan State, on 28 May. Goods from 6 Ministries, 11 syndicates of Township Co-operatives and 10 private companies, as well as gems from the Myanma Gems Enterprise were put on sale. 63 Chinese companies also took part [P910604].

*CHINA NATIONAL AERO-TECHNOLOGY IMPORT EXPORT CORP. (CATIC) Vice-Chairman Zhao Guangshen called on Lt.Gen. Tin Tun, Minister for Transport & Communications, Social Welfare, and for Labour, to discuss "*mutually beneficial aviation work, extending Myanma Airways flight and the sale of aircraft*" [P910620]. CATIC demonstrated the 17-seat, short-haul, multi-role Y-12 aircraft in Jun'90 ("Alert" No.9, Vol.1). Li Shanghui, CATIC Managing Director, and Xu Wen, Project Manager, accompanied by Zhang Yong Zhi, Economic Counselor from the Embassy in Rangoon, also called on Lt.Gen. Tin Tun on 14 May to discuss "*bilateral aviation matters*" [P910515].

FRANCE:

Eleven representatives from French firms visited Rangoon and called on U Ko Lay, Mayor of Rangoon to discuss "*distribution of water, roads, bridges, buildings and sanitation work of Yangon*" [P910528].

Dr. Alain Deloche led a delegation from MEDECINS DU MONDE to call on Col. Pe Thein, Minister for Health, and for Education, and Chief Commanding Officer of the Universities Training Corp. [P910627].

Foreign Investment & Trade:**GERMANY:**

*MYANMA FRITZ WERNER INDUSTRIES CO. LTD. ("Alert" No.8, Vol.1) is now selling lathe machines, shaping machines, drilling machines and electric power tools in Rangoon [P910511].

HONG KONG:

Beginning May 31, Myanma Airways introduced non-stop direct flights between Rangoon (Departure 0630 hrs) and Hong Kong (Departure 1230 hrs) on Mondays and Fridays [P910518].

ISRAEL:

Michael Atzmon, Director of the International Agricultural Development Co-operation Central Committee, Ministry of Agriculture, and Moshe Kiron, of the Agricultural Expansion Services Department, Ministry of Agriculture, called on Lt.Gen. Chit Swe on 17 June [P910620].

JAPAN:

On 14 May, T. Oyake, Vice-President of O.E.C.F. of Japan, called on Brig.Gen. David Abel, Minister for Planning & Finance, and for Trade, to discuss *"economic co-operation"* [P910515].

On 16 June, the Star Corporation opened its HONDA Showroom and Service Centre at 61 Tekkatho Yeiktha Rd., Rangoon. Michhio Akutsau of HONDA TRADING COMPANY attended with Star Chairman U Myint Htay and Executive Director U Aung Gyi [P910617].

S. KOREA:

Gil Yong Um, Vice-President, *DAEWOO CORP. called on Lt.Gen. Tin Tun to discuss *"the sale of railway coaches, passenger buses and telephones"* and a ship-building joint venture [P910516].

A delegation led by Jung Gil Hwang of the KOREAN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION FUND called on Lt.Gen. Tin Tun to discuss *"aviation and economic development"* [P910601].

PHILIPPINES:

Lt. Gen. Chit Swe led a delegation to China and the Philippines, 15-27 May. They were joined by Dr. Myint Thein, Director General of the Agriculture Planning and Statistics Department [P910516].

SINGAPORE:

On May 23, *MYANMAR NATSTEEL HARDWARE CENTRE LTD. ("Alert" No.12, Vol.1) opened its office at 262 Seikkantha St., Rangoon. General Manager is Chang See Poh. The Centre will import corrugated iron sheets, metal gratings, iron rods and zinc pipes and sell them for local or foreign currency. It will also hire out construction machinery [P910524].

THAILAND:

General Vijit Sookmark, Deputy Chief of Staff, Royal Thai Armed Forces, led a delegation to Rangoon, 17-22 June. He was met by Maj.Gen. Khin Nyunt, Director of Defence Services Intelligence and Maj.Gen. Myo Nyunt, Rangoon Commander. The delegation called on Gen. Than Shwe, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Services and Commander-in-Chief of the Burma Army [P910618-23].

Wichian Watanakun, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, led a delegation to Rangoon, 17-22 June at the invitation of U Ohn Gyaw, Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs. He called on Sr.Gen. Saw Maung, SLORC Chairman, and signed a 'Memorandum of Understanding Relating to Fixed Boundary on the Mae Sai - Nam Ruak Rivers Sector' at the Foreign Ministry [P910618-23].

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

On June 21, Dr. Ian MacMichael led a delegation from ORBIS FLYING EYE HOSPITAL, Houston, Texas, to Rangoon and called on Colonel Pe Thein [P910622].

PEPSI-COLA and 7-UP are now available in Rangoon from *PEPSI-COLA PRODUCTS MYANMAR LTD. ("Alert" No.5, Vol.1) at 336 Prome Road. Tel: 31991/33946 [P910511].

Foreign Aid:

JAPANESE AID TO BURMA

War Reparations, Grants & Loans
(US\$ millions)

Year	War Rep.	Grants	Loans	Total	ODA Aid	Percent
1955-62	149.8			149.8		
1963	27.0			27.0	45.3	60%
1964	16.6			16.6	24.3	68%
1965	11.6			11.6	14.9	78%
1966	10.2			10.2	16.2	63%
1967	6.4			6.4	11.6	55%
1968	10.2			10.2	15.7	65%
1969			30.0	30.0	28.7	105%
1970		11.9		11.9	22.9	52%
1971		16.7	7.1	*26.7	40.9	58%
1972		18.1	11.6	29.6	44.3	67%
1973		14.8	41.9	56.3	70.8	80%
1974		12.1	34.2	46.4	67.4	69%
1975		17.1	7.1	*21.6	58.1	42%
1976		17.7	21.5	*27.3	70.7	55%
1977		8.0	12.2	*20.6	101.7	20%
1978		10.6	96.7	107.3	273.8	39%
1979		30.0	153.3	*178.1	363.7	50%
1980		37.2	122.3	*152.5	308.7	51%
1981		33.2	100.1	*125.4	283.5	47%
1982		21.3	76.5	97.8	318.9	31%
1983		48.4	65.1	113.4	302.0	38%
1984		47.1	47.1	*95.4	275.8	34%
1985		49.4	104.9	154.1	n/a	n/a
1986		68.9	175.2	244.1	(a)307.8	79%
1987		67.3	104.7	172.0	(a)240.7	71%
1988		(*)91.3	(*)168.3	259.6	(a)9.7	?
1989		0.1	(a)72.0	72.1	(a)101.1	71%
1990		(a)23.5	n/a	23.5	(a)28.0	84%
1991		(a)42.0	n/a	42.0	(a)124.0	34%
Total:	231.8	686.7	1,451.8	2,370.3	3,571.2	66%

Note: Figures above are compiled from various sources and may not be strictly comparable. However, they do give an indication of the magnitude of Japan's aid program. Unless indicated, all figures are from Prof. David Steinberg's 'Japanese Economic Assistance to Burma', Conference on Managing Japan's Aid, East-West Center, U of Hawaii, 4-6 June, 1990. '*' = total does not add up, (*) = figures different from UNDP, (a) = figures from "Alert" No.8, Vol.2. ODA figures here are only for Bilateral Official Development Assistance grants and loans. War Reparations were from Apr.1955-65 and Semi-Reparations from Apr.1963-72, although disbursements continued until 1975.

There are currently 19 Japanese loan projects in Burma that total almost US\$900 million, of which only 20% has been disbursed. This means Japan can continue to give up to US\$ 700 million in loans to SLORC without 'resuming' aid to Burma. Japan also has 5 grant projects worth US\$ 66 million underway, of which 65% has already been disbursed. Another US\$23 million remains to be disbursed without 'resuming' aid [F910711].

In 1990, Burma's GDP growth was 5%, budget deficit: 14% of GDP (3% in 1987), estimated defence expenditure: 50% of budget (official figure: 32% of budget of Kyat 12 billion), inflation: 60% (20% in 1987), money supply: Kyat 40 billion (7 billion in 1987), official exchange rate: US\$1=Kyat 6.5, blackmarket exchange rate: US\$1=Kyat 80, trade deficit: US\$570 million, foreign exchange reserves: US\$310 million (Jan.91), foreign debt: US\$5.3 billion [F910808].

Clarification:**UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES IN BURMA**

In "Alert" No.8, Vol.2, we mentioned allegations of corruption against U.N. officials who have let their personal ties with members of SLORC influence their professionalism. We also showed the UNDP and UNICEF, increasing their aid programs in Burma. It has been brought to our attention that this juxtaposition may have the unfortunate effect of casting doubts on the integrity of UNICEF and UNDP Representatives Rolf Carriere and Gerd Dietrich Merrem. That was not our intention. We do not question Mr. Carriere's motives, only his judgement in recommending the US\$40 million, 5-yr UNICEF program at this point in time. Mr. Merrem is new but UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Michael Gautier's enthusiastic support of SLORC reforestation and border development programs has, however, raised eyebrows. The allegations we quoted were made against the FAO Resident Representative who has been in Burma for the last 15 years, which is unusual (normal term 3-5 yrs), the FAO Regional Director for South East Asia who is a Burmese and depends on SLORC to lobby for his election to the post, and the WHO Officer-in-Charge in Burma, another Burmese - Ed.

SOURCES this issue: [A910802] Asiaweek, [B910723] Bangkok Post, [F910808] Far Eastern Economic Review, [N910723] The Nation, Bangkok and [P910515] Working People's Daily, Rangoon.

The "Burma Alert" is published monthly by the ADDB. It monitors foreign investments and trade with Burma to provide the Burmese democracy movement with data for their campaigns against the military dictatorship in Rangoon. Readers wishing to support the work are invited to become 'Associates' by contributing US\$100.00 annually. The ADDB is partially funded by subscriptions to the "Burma Alert", by associates and by a grant from the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montreal, Canada. Subscription to the "Burma Alert" is US\$ 25.00 per annum payable to ADDB, c /o Harn Yawngnwe, RR.4, Shawville, Quebec J0X 2Y0, Canada. Fax: 1 (819) 647-3088

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