

Burma News:**DEMOCRATIC VOICE OF BURMA GETS SWEDISH/US FUNDS**

The Democratic Voice of Burma (DVB) radio, which is broadcasting to Burma everyday, has received SEK 900,000 (US\$120,000) from a Swedish source via the Olof Palmes International Centre and US\$75,000 from the US National Endowment for Democracy, for its operations. The DVB was set up in Norway by the democratic opposition and started broadcasting on 19 July 1992 [DVB930513].

HUMAN RIGHTS IN ASIA PLACED BEHIND ECONOMIC GROWTH

The first regional Asian Human Rights Conference in Bangkok, 29 Mar-2 Apr, ended with a declaration which placed economic growth and community development above individual freedoms. The 30-point Bangkok Declaration said that human rights must be considered in the context of a country's background. Great emphasis was also placed on adherence to the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of states. The declaration will be considered by the United Nations in Vienna in June, when statements on human rights from governments in Africa and Latin America will also be submitted as the UN re-examine the way human rights should be viewed. It was not surprising that a more internationally acceptable Asian declaration on human rights was not presented. Pressure from Middle Eastern countries had excluded Australia and New Zealand from the conference and the chief Iranian delegate headed the committee drafting the declaration. China, Burma and Iran are the worse human rights offenders in the region. SLORC representative U Win Mra said, "Asian countries with their own norms and standards of human rights should not be dictated to by a group of other countries who are far distant geographically, politically, economically and socially." The more than 100 non-government Asian human rights groups attending the conference strongly disagreed with their governments' appeal to 'cultural relativism'. They saw that as an effort to justify deviating from international standards of human rights. Although Japan was attacked for being too Western in its approach by China and its neighbours, it voiced serious reservations about the Bangkok Declaration and refused to allow the declaration to include a clause critical of efforts to link development assistance to a country's human rights performance. Seichiro Otsuka, head of the Japanese delegation, also reiterated Japan's position that expressions of concern about human rights violations do not constitute interference in a nation's internal affairs [F930415].

THE WA - SLORC ALLIES, SUPPORT LAHU CALL FOR DEMOCRACY

According to the Far Eastern Economic Review, SLORC is facing further problems in getting a new constitution which will preserve the military's role in national politics. The Wa people, an ethnic group in north eastern Shan State, led by Pao Yochang, is reported to be supporting constitutional demands made by Yo E La of the Lahu National Development Party. The Lahu are another ethnic group in eastern Shan State. The Lahus want a return to democracy with far-reaching provisions for local autonomy for all ethnic groups - a Union of Burma on the basis of the diversity of cultures, diversity of economic conditions, and differing traditions. The Lahu statement said, "sovereign power must not be in the hands of an aristocracy. In a democracy, sovereign power must be with the people. The constitution must grant freedom of speech, freedom to assemble, freedom of the press and freedom to oppose the government by peaceful means." What intrigues analysts is the fact that the Wa are SLORC allies. In the 1970's and 80's, they made up a large portion of the anti-Rangoon Communist Party of Burma troops. In 1989, they mutinied against the CPB and agreed not to join the democratic opposition against SLORC in exchange for a measure of autonomy and unrestricted 'trading' rights [F930520].

KHUN SA'S ARMY KILLS 61 VILLAGERS IN MONG HSAT

The official Working People's Daily and Shan sources said that 61 villagers were killed near Mong Hsat by Khun Sa's Merng Tai Army. Khern Sai, an MTA spokesman, said that the villagers were caught in a cross-fire when the Burma Army ambushed an MTA column that was responding to a call for help from the villagers. The villagers had complained that they were being harassed by bandits. The Rangoon paper said that an MTA column of 80 men commanded by Hsam Hkam tied up 120 people, including children, and shot them, killing 61 and seriously wounding 37. The Shan and Lahu villagers who were digging for gems and panning for gold were said to have been robbed by the MTA. SLORC also claims that in Feb.93, 300 MTA troops attacked the Pa-O village of Pantawi in Langkho and shot and bayoneted to death 61 people including old people and babies, and destroyed 150 houses. Khern Sai claims that he does not know anything about the earlier incident [Reu930325].

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Burma News:

CLINTON CALLS FOR RELEASE OF DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI

On 19 May, US President Bill Clinton urged the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) to release 1991 Nobel Peace laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, to respect the results of the May 1990 elections, and to commit itself to genuine democratic reforms. He made the statement after he and Vice-President Al Gore met with Nobel Peace laureates Archbishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa (1984), Betty Williams from Northern Ireland (1976) and Kara Newell representing the American Friends Service Committee (1947). Clinton said, "I was moved by the stories of individual suffering I heard this afternoon and am deeply concerned by the tragic human rights situation in Burma. The Burmese people should know that America stands with them and with others in the international community in the struggle for freedom in Burma." Also present at the meeting were National Security Advisor Anthony Lake, Deputy Advisor Samuel Berger, NSC Senior Director for Asian Affairs Kent Wiedermann and Director for Humanitarian Affairs and Human Rights, Eric Schwartz. The laureates met with Clinton as part of their unprecedented mission to free Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, which began in Feb.93 with a trip to the Thailand-Burma border and the United Nations Commission for Human Rights in Geneva. The laureates also met with the US Congressional Black Caucus, the Human Rights Caucus and Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Paul Simon. The Canadian International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development in Montreal, which is headed by Ed Broadbent, is serving as the secretariat for the Peace Laureates Mission [ICHRDD930519, NHK930520].

LIEUT-GENERAL KHIN NYUNT SEEKS INVITATION TO ASEAN

Lieutenant-General Khin Nyunt, SLORC's intelligence chief and Secretary 1, arrived in Singapore on 25 May with a 22-man delegation to solicit an invitation to the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) ministerial meeting to be held in July. Thai Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai speaking to the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand on 10 May had said that Thailand was consulting with other ASEAN governments about the possibility of inviting SLORC to attend the ASEAN meeting in Singapore as an observer. SLORC had in April approached the ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta about the possibility of joining ASEAN. This was followed up on 18 May when SLORC Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw met with Philippine Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo in Manila. A senior ASEAN official in Singapore made the overtures public on 19 May and said that SLORC's poor human rights record made it unlikely that it would be admitted to ASEAN in the next few years unless dramatic progress in human rights was made. US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asia and Pacific Affairs Winston Lord had raised the question of human rights in Burma at the ASEAN-US talks held over the 15-16 May weekend in Brunei. He said that the US wants SLORC to hand over power to the winners of the May 1990 elections. Lord also met with Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong and Senior Minister Lee Kwan Yew on 19 May. While ASEAN does not want to antagonize SLORC, an ASEAN official said that if SLORC was admitted to ASEAN, it would risk having the US and the European Community break off their annual dialogue with ASEAN. Indonesia and Malaysia are also unhappy with SLORC's treatment of the Muslim Rohingyas in Arakan. Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw, however, said that the high-powered visit was to further enhance bilateral ties and was not an attempt to join ASEAN. Khin Nyunt's delegation also included National Planning and Economic Development Minister Brig-Gen David Abel, Minister of Information Brig-Gen Myo Thant, Tourism Minister Maj-Gen Kyaw Ba and Minister of Transport Maj-Gen (Air) Thein Win. They met with Goh Chok Tong, Lee Kwan Yew and Deputy Prime Minister Brigadier-General Lee Hsien Loong who had invited Khin Nyunt. *Observers think it is significant that the SLORC 'trade' delegation did not include Trade Minister Lieut-Gen Tun Kyi who, with Lieut-Gen Khin Nyunt, was a serious contender for the post of Army Commander-in-Chief, which was filled recently by Lieut-Gen Maung Aye. Reports that Sanda Win, General Ne Win's daughter who is close to Khin Nyunt, is also in Singapore, is adding to the speculation about the real purpose of the visit. Sanda Win resigned from the Burma Army recently (Alert No.4, Vol.4 - Apr.93). Rumours say she is fleeing Burma. Others wonder whether Khin Nyunt's visit is not a desperate attempt to negotiate an economic 'rescue package'. SLORC's foreign exchange reserve is said to be nearly depleted [B930527,0526,0520, N930511,0525].*

Burma News:

'UN SHOULD SEND TROOPS TO BURMA' - THINK TANK

The highly regarded London-based independent think tank, the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), said on 19 May that there is a better case for the United Nations to intervene in Burma than in Bosnia-Herzegovia. The IISS said that UN intervention in Burma "would have a clear aim (removing SLORC), a finite end, and the support of the majority of the (Burmese) people." The remarks were made in the IISS's analysis of the world in 1992, which included an evaluation of the UN's intervention in Bosnia and Somalia. It said that the UN did not have the resources to call to account all the inhumane regimes around the world but that UN choices should not be based on media coverage, which helped bring about the intervention in Bosnia [B930520].

SLORC REJECTS MONITORING OF REFUGEES BY UNHCR

On 25 May, SLORC rejected a request by Bangladesh Home Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury that the UN High Commissioner for Refugees be allowed to monitor the repatriation and resettlement of Muslim Rohingya refugees in Burma. Lieut-Gen Mya Thinn, SLORC's Minister for Home Affairs, who was in Bangladesh to discuss the repatriation, replied that the problem could be solved mutually and bilaterally. The refusal of SLORC to allow a UNHCR presence in Burma has slowed down the repatriation. The refugees do not believe their safety can be guaranteed without UNHCR involvement. To date, 24,047 of the 300,000 Muslim refugees who fled in 1991-92, have been repatriated [Reu930526, RR930518].

VISITORS FOR DAW SUU KYI AND POLITICAL PRISONERS

Dr Michael Aris, husband of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and their youngest son Kim, 14, visited the detained opposition leader, 8-24 April. Aris said that his concerns about her health have been 'considerably allayed' and that her spirits and her convictions remain as steadfast as ever. Diplomats in Rangoon said that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi had recently received representatives of the SLORC, and that the conditions of her house arrest had improved. *Social visits by SLORC members do not mean much unless they are a first step towards allowing Daw Suu to participate in Burmese politics. As of 27 May, SLORC Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw was still saying that SLORC would release her if she left the country - Ed.* Three staff members of the US Foreign Affairs Committee, Robert Hathaway, James McCormick and Paul Berkowitz, were on 5 Apr allowed to visit detained National League for Democracy leaders U Tin Oo, U Kyi Maung and U Win Tin in Insein Jail. Their request to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was, however, denied (*Alert No.4, Vol.4 - Apr.93*) [MD930410, Ny930430, N930428, B930428].

AUNG GYI SENTENCED TO 6 MONTHS FOR CORRUPTION

Ex-Brigadier Aung Gyi was given a 6-month sentence in May for corruption in connection with his cake shops and bird's nest business (*Alert No.9, Vol.2, Sep.91*). Aung Gyi was General Ne Win's deputy when he first seized power in 1962. He later became a businessman. In 1988 he wrote a number of letters to Ne Win criticizing the military's failures. Some credit his letters, which were widely circulated, with prompting the country-wide democracy uprisings in 1988. Together with ex-General Tin Oo and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, Aung Gyi formed the National League for Democracy. He later resigned after disagreeing with Daw Suu. Last year, he wrote more letters criticizing SLORC for its brutal policy of recruiting military porters and the forced conscription of villagers for military service. His arrest is seen as a warning but his light sentence illustrates how the military looks after its own [BBC930514].

KACHIN INDEPENDENCE ORGANIZATION AGREES TO CEASE-FIRE

On 8 Apr, the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) and SLORC reached an understanding to confine their troops to certain designated areas in Kachin State and not to attack each other (*Alert No.3, Vol.4 - Mar.93*). The KIO insists that the truce is not a 'business deal' like those agreed between SLORC and other ethnic and former communist forces in 1989-90. The SLORC-Kachin truce is supposed to be the first step towards more comprehensive peace talks between Rangoon and other resistance forces. Meanwhile, Karen leader General Saw Bo Mya, as Chairman of the Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), wrote to General Than Shwe on 23 April outlining 3 steps that SLORC should take if it is sincere about wanting national unity and peace: 1) a publicly announced unconditional nation-wide ceasefire, 2) the unconditional release of all political prisoners, and 3) the holding of a round table discussion based on freedom and equality of representation and discussion [F930422, DAB930423].

Foreign Trade & Investments 1:

BRUNEI:

The ROYAL BRUNEI AIRLINES is leasing a Boeing 757 aircraft, complete with a mainly British cockpit crew and cabin staff from Brunei, to Myanmar Airways [F930520].

BAIDURI HOLDINGS, controlled by Brunei's royal family, and Singapore-listed food processing group QAF, which is linked to Prince Mohamed Bolkiah, brother of the Sultan, have together with Singapore's Oei Hong Leong, invested in a joint venture between HIGHSONICS ENTERPRISE of Singapore and SLORC to manage the international side of Myanmar Airways [A930407, Kyodo930220].

CHINA:

A delegation headed by Minister for Civil Affairs Cui Naifu visited Pagan, Mandalay, Taunggyi and Rangoon, 26 Feb - 2 Mar. The delegation called on Brigadier-General Thaung Myint, Minister for Social Welfare, Relief and Resettlement, and Major-General Kyaw Min, Minister for Mines [X930302].

Singapore tycoon Oei Hong Leong, who recently established strong ties in China, said that he will arrange for 100-200 Chinese companies to invest in Burma over the next two years [Kyodo930220].

Mandalay city authorities are worried about a massive influx of Chinese businessmen from Yunnan. About 23,000 settled in Mandalay in 1992 and 27,000 more are expected this year. Houses, hotels, restaurants are being taken over and local inhabitants are being forced to move to the suburbs [F930506].

Guangdong Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Group Corporation Deputy General Manager Fan Shaoya said on 1 Apr that SLORC will purchase 5,000 units of walking tractors from the corporation. The agreement will be signed when Lieut-Gen Myint Aung, Minister for Agriculture, visits Guangzhou later in April. To date, SLORC has already purchased 1,500 walking tractors from Guangzhou [X930401].

HONG KONG:

UNIMIX and MYANMAR ECONOMIC HOLDINGS LTD inaugurated a joint venture garment factory in Rangoon on 1 Mar. Myanmar Economic Holdings Ltd is the investment arm of the military. The joint venture, MYANMAR UNIMIX INTERNATIONAL, has an authorized capital of Kyat 15.6 million (US\$2.6 million). It will manufacture and market garments [X930302].

INDONESIA:

A delegation headed by Coordinating Minister for the Economy, Finance, and Trade Dr Radius Prawiro arrived in Rangoon on 18 Feb to strengthen economic co-operation between Indonesia and Burma. Vice Admiral Maung Maung Khin, Deputy Prime Minister hosted a dinner in honour of the Indonesians and the delegation met with the Ministers of Industry, Trade, Mines, Energy and Agriculture [X930218].

SINGAPORE:

On 25 May, the ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD briefed Lieut-Gen Khin Nyunt's delegation on Singapore-Burma trade (page 1). Chairman Alan Yeo welcomed Burmese companies to set up in Singapore and said that there was still room to develop bilateral trade which grew from US\$18 million in 1960 to US\$372 million in 1992. He also said that the Singapore Manufacturer's Association and Trade Development Board are planning a Burma business opportunities conference [B930526].

Oei Hong Leong, Indonesian-born former boss of property giant UNITED INDUSTRIAL CORP, BAIDURI HOLDINGS of Brunei, and Ernest Lai and F F Wong of the public-listed food processing group QAF, have invested in MYANMAR INTERNATIONAL AIRWAYS, a joint venture between HIGHSONICS ENTERPRISE and SLORC. Highsonics will invest US\$10 million and take over 37 rarely used foreign landing rights including Mecca, Guangzhou, Shanghai and Kunming. QAF and other Singapore interests are also opening a duty-free shop in Rangoon airport. Oei is also planning to attract American and German partners to develop Burma's infrastructure and industries [A930407, Kyodo930220].

Foreign Trade & Investments 2:

THAILAND:

Mae Hong Son-based SUK-UAH-ANANT CO, owned by Mae Hong Son Provincial Council Chairman Anan Uahtrakul won a SLORC contract to build and operate a 164 kilometre road linking Chiang Rai in Thailand and Kengtung in Shan State. The road will cost Baht 326 million (US\$13 million) and will take 18 months to complete. The Thai contractor will operate the road for 20 years and share the toll revenue with SLORC. A second proposal for the 91 kilometre Kengtung-Yunnan section of the road has yet to be submitted (*Alert No.4, Vol.4 - Apr.93*). The Chiang Rai-based ASIA INTERNATIONAL TRANSPORT AND ENTERPRISE CO LTD owned by Aswin Suwannarit had earlier submitted a bid to build the road linking Tachilek on the Thai border to Kengtung and Ta Luo in Sipsongpanna, China for Baht 300 million (US\$12 million). Aswin has been granted a licence by SLORC to operate tour packages by sea from Ranong to Rangoon. SLORC's tourism plans for Kengtung, however, recently ran into a literal road block. Former Burma Communist Party troops of the United Wa State Army, who are SLORC allies, set up a road block between Kengtung and Mong La enroute to China to collect 'fees' from travellers. Chen Si Xiong, Secretary General of the Sipsongpanna Communist Party confirmed that while China supported the road project, the main impediments are the ethnic groups who control the area and want autonomy from Rangoon. Other observers note that while the new highway might help Sipsongpanna develop and give SLORC much needed foreign exchange from tourism, the local Shan and Khun people will not benefit. In 1991, the traditional-style royal palace of the hereditary ruler of Kengtung was torn down by SLORC to make room for a hotel [BWR930507, B930426, N930518, NEJ930501].

The SIAM CEMENT GROUP is evaluating trade and investment opportunities in Burma. Group Senior Executive Vice President Thawee Butrsunthorn recently visited Burma and said that sales representatives will be appointed as a first step towards trading and investing in Burma. Siam Cement recently purchased a 37% share of MARIWASA MANUFACTURING, the Philippines' largest manufacturer of ceramic tiles, for US\$9 million as part of its regional expansion plan [F930520, X930329].

Myanmar Fisheries signed an agreement on 17 Feb with T.B.E. COMPANY to set up the GENERAL FISHERIES CO LTD, a joint venture to fish, raise prawns and market marine products. The company has an authorized capital of Kyat 30 million (US\$5 million). Myanmar Fisheries holds 51% equity [X930218].

THAI FACTORY DEVELOPMENT CO (TFD) President and Director Anandvichai Dhanansunthorn said that the company is studying the feasibility of building factories in Burma. TFD specializes in developing factories in Thailand for foreign firms and its major shareholder is the INDUSTRIAL FINANCE CORPORATION OF THAILAND, a government institution [B930513].

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

ORBIS INTERNATIONAL Executive Director Oliver Foot met with Major-Gen Khin Nyunt, SLORC Secretary 1 and three ministers on 16 Feb. He had further discussions with Rear Admiral Than Nyunt, Minister for Health, about the teaching and treatment of eye diseases [X930216].

LEVI STRAUSS, citing human-rights violations by the Peking regime, said that it will not invest directly in China. It will also phase out its use of Chinese subcontractors although it may continue to buy Chinese fabric for the time being. Levi ended its Burmese garment purchasing contracts with Dae Woo and Segye Ltd of Korea and Kalomex of Hong Kong in Jun.92. It said, "Under current conditions, it is not possible to do business in Myanmar without directly supporting the military government and its pervasive violations of human rights" [F930513].

NEWS SOURCES THIS ISSUE: A = Asiaweek, B = Bangkok Post, BBC = British Broadcasting Corporation, BWR = Bangkok Post Weekly Review, DAB = Democratic Alliance of Burma, DVB = Democratic Voice of Burma Radio, Oslo, F = Far Eastern Economic Review, ICHRDD = International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, Montreal, Kyodo = Kyodo News Agency, Japan, MD = Mainichi Daily, Japan, N = The Nation, Bangkok, NEJ = New Era Journal, Bangkok, NHK = NHK Radio, Tokyo, Ny = New York Times, P = Working People's Daily, Rangoon, RR = Radio Rangoon, Reu = Reuter, and X = Xinhua News Agency, China.

International Activities:**BRITAIN:**

BURMA ACTION GROUP is launching a campaign for the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on May 27. Irish Nobel Peace laureate Mairead Maguire will attend the launch. Targetted are AMOCO, TEXACO and TOTAL. Participants are urged to fax the oil companies asking them to disinvest in Burma: AMOCO (UK) Exploration, Managing Director R J Criswell, Fax: 011 44 (81) 849-7329. TEXACO Ltd, Fax: 011 44 (71) 719-5183. TOTAL Oil Holdings, Fax: 011 44 (71) 416-4499. Also write: The Rt Hon Douglas Hurd, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, London, SW1A 2AH, urging economic sanctions against SLORC through the United Nations.

CANADA:

On 25 Mar, the **ONTARIO PUBLIC INTEREST RESEARCH GROUP** and the **CANADIAN FRIENDS OF BURMA** hosted a talk entitled "Repression 101" at the University of Ottawa. Htun Aung Gyaw, former chairman of the All Burma Students Democratic Front, discussed the plight of Burmese student refugees in Thailand and how SLORC targets, controls and brutalizes students.

JAPAN:

On 5 May, Vesak Day, the **BUDDHIST RELIEF MISSION** launched an international campaign for **BUDDHIST MONKS IN BURMA 1993** with meditation and prayer at the Todaiji Temple in Nara. According to the Buddhist Relief Mission, more than 1,000 monks are in prison in Burma. The case of U Zaw Tika, abbot of Shwe Pone Pwint Monastery in southern Rangoon, was cited as an example of how SLORC persecutes monks. U Zaw Tika was arrested with other senior Buddhist monks in 1990 when they refused to minister Buddhist religious rites to soldiers as a form of protest. The arrested leaders were forced to sign a statement denouncing the boycott but U Zaw Tika was among those who refused. When U Zaw Tika, who was in his seventies, was hospitalized for cancer of the intestine last year, he was kept shackled to his hospital bed. He was then transferred back to Insein Prison where he died at the end of Nov.92. Readers are urged to write SLORC and world leaders on behalf of the Buddhists in Burma. Information: Ken Kawasaki, 266-27 Ozuku-cho, Kashihara-shi, Nara 634 or Fax: 011 81 (7442) 4-6254.

On 22 May, the **BURMESE RELIEF CENTER - JAPAN** and the **INTERNATIONAL NETWORK FOR BURMA RELIEF** held a special Benefit Dinner at Saint Mary's Cathedral in Osaka to mark the Third Anniversary of the 27 May 1990 elections in Burma. Over 400,000 yen (US\$4,000) was raised for students and refugees on the Thai border. Last year, the Relief Center sent over 3 million yen (US\$30,000) to the refugees. The Center's 'International Letter Campaign' in support of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has to date, resulted in 450 letters to the Secretary-General of the United Nations. Copies were sent to the SLORC Embassy in Tokyo. To express their support for democracy in Burma, 1,408 origami paper cranes were folded by hundreds of Osaka residents to represent each day Daw Suu has been held under house arrest. The cranes will be delivered to the Embassy.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

On 15 Apr, 30 US Congressmen wrote to Warren Christopher, Secretary of State, expressing their concern about the political and human rights situation in Burma and called for the US government to convey to SLORC the following expectations: the unconditional release of Daw Suu, the hand over of power to a freely elected civilian government, the release of political prisoners, the cessation of harassment of persons and political parties exercising their basic freedoms of expression, association and assembly, and SLORC's conformation to internationally-recognized standards of conduct with respect to the human rights of the citizens of Burma.

On 27 Mar, Burmese from New York, Maryland and Virginia rallied to protest the SLORC Embassy's Armed Forces Day celebration at the China Garden Restaurant in Arlington, Virginia.

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