

BURMA ALERT

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Burma News:

11 FLEEING BURMESE SEAMEN ABDUCTED IN SINGAPORE

Australian International Transport Federation (ITF) officials claim that 11 Burmese seamen in transit from Australia to Bangkok were abducted in Singapore and taken back to Burma in June. Roger Chapman said the eleven were crewmen on board the Greek registered ore carrier 'Angelica Faith' owned by London-based Diamantis Limos Ltd. The ship was loading a cargo of coal for Taiwan at Dalrymple Bay near the Queensland port of Mackay when a wage dispute broke out. The ship's officers, owners and representatives from the Burmese State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) pressured the seamen to drop their claim. The ship's books were examined by Australian officials and it was discovered that the Burmese had been underpaid by \$98,856 based on Greek seafarers' rates. Local Australian unions refused to allow the ship to leave until the owners paid up. The funds were held by ITF and were to be handed over to the seamen in Thailand where they hoped to live in exile. The seamen refused to go to Taiwan fearing that they would be kidnapped and taken back to Burma. Burmese seamen are usually paid much lower than crew from other nationalities but, even then, much of their pay is held back by the ship owners who then remit the funds directly to SLORC. In this case, the 11 seamen insisted that they be paid what was owed them. According to the ITF, the men arrived at Singapore's Changi airport at 7:50 pm by Qantas en route to Bangkok. They were last seen in the transit lounge. It is believed that they were met by SLORC agents and 'persuaded' to return to Burma. Some time later, a man purporting to be the brother-in-law of one of the seamen turned up at the ITF office in Bangkok with a letter allegedly signed by the 11 men to accept the money on their behalf. But he was refused. The ITF believes that SLORC has the support of governments within the region because this sort of incident has happened before. Chapman said, "We want to send a message to the shipping industry internationally that the exploitation of Burmese or any third world seafarers will not be tolerated by the ITF". Singapore authorities and airport police dismissed the idea that the seamen could have been abducted in the transit lounge in Changi against their will. Senior airline officials said it was almost impossible for anyone to enter the transit lounge. Even diplomats are not given that privilege [B930716, 0717]. The SLORC agents could also have been in transit in Changi from Bangkok to Rangoon - Ed.

DEMOCRATIC ALLIANCE CONGRESS RE-ELECTS BO MYA

The Democratic Alliance of Burma (DAB), the umbrella organization of pro-democracy forces fighting SLORC, held its second congress in Manerplaw beginning on 13 July. 17 of the 21 member organizations made it to the congress in spite of having to travel on foot for many days through difficult and dangerous terrain. The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) remained a member although rumours had circulated that it was pursuing a separate peace with SLORC. The KIO promised to continue fighting SLORC and not deviate from DAB principles but reserved the right to talk with SLORC if there was a chance to negotiate peacefully. General Bo Mya of the Karen National Union (KNU) was re-elected Chairman of the DAB Central Committee. Brang Seng, KIO chairman, Nai Shwe Kyin, chairman of the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and Ye Kyaw Thu of the Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma (CRDB), were named first, second and third vice-chairmen. Nai Han Tha replaced the KIO's Dr Tuja as General Secretary and U Myint Zaw of the Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS) took over as joint secretary from the People's Liberation Front's U Aye Saung. The KNU's Major-Gen Maung Maung was unanimously elected to head the DAB's Military Commission. The Foreign Commission is headed by the KNU's Dr Em Marta and U Kyaw Hla of the Muslim Liberation Organization. U Aye Saung and U Aung Sein Tha of the National United Front of Arakan are in charge of Information & Organization. Dr Tuja and U Tin Maung Thet of the All Burma Muslim Organization are in charge of Finance [B930723, N930716].

Burma News:**DIALOGUE PARTNERS DISAGREE WITH ASEAN ON BURMA**

The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) meeting in Singapore on 26 July with its dialogue partners, the European Economic Community, the United States, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, South Korea and Canada, continued to disagree on the issue of Burma. ASEAN maintains that changes are more likely to take place in Burma if trade ties are promoted and if they keep talking to the SLORC generals. The dialogue partners disagreed and pointed out that ASEAN's policy is not leading to political change or improved human rights. A senior Canadian official stated bluntly that "constructive engagement does not work." Speaking at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference, Canadian Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs Perrin Beatty said that "regional and cultural variations simply cannot be used as a blind behind which a regime can justify torture, summary executions and the systematic disrespect of the rule of law." US Secretary of State Warren Christopher said, "The yearnings for more freedom are not a Western export, they are a human instinct," and Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said that democratic processes are the "clearly expressed desire of the Burmese people" [B930727].

SLORC TO CUT THAI FISHING RIGHTS

Two weeks after SLORCC revoked 47 Thai timber concessions along the border, it cancelled fishery concessions granted to Thai firms. Prior to the cancellation, SLORC reduced the fishing time period from 41 days to 25 days per trip for each licence which made it very difficult for Thai companies to operate in Burmese waters [BWR930709].

DEAD PORTERS FLOAT DOWN THE SALWEEN RIVER

Reports persist of the Burma Army rounding up civilians to act as porters and human mine sweepers. The ill-treatment of both men and women porters has been documented. Yet SLORC continues to deny the practice. On 9 Apr, SLORC stated that all labour provided by villagers for the Army is voluntary and that "porters recruited are never required to accompany the troops to the actual scene of battles; neither are they exposed to danger." However, since the beginning of the year, decapitated bodies of porters bayoneted or beaten have been seen floating down the Salween river from SLORC-controlled areas. A villager who lives ten kilometres downstream from Saw Hta estimates that 200 bodies have floated past his house in the last 5 months. "They were all porters. I would say many of them were Shan villagers because they were wearing the traditional Shan pants. About a quarter of them were women. They are usually without clothes. I think the women are raped before being killed" [N930623].

AUSTRALIA TO ACCEPT 50 BURMESE STUDENT REFUGEES

An Australian Embassy official said on 3 June that Australia will accept 50 Burmese student refugees from Thailand for resettlement. Under the special program, the students will have to be sponsored by a family or an institution. No further details were available. The Australian International Development Assistance Bureau scholarship program for 10 Burmese students reported in Alert No.1, Vol.4, Jan.93, is underway. The first student, Zaw Tun, 23, arrived at the University of Canberra at the beginning of Jul.93 [Focus9306, AAP930706].

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APOLOGIES

In June 1993, the USA mailing list was inadvertently deleted. Unfortunately, we had no up-to-date back-ups for the files. We have since reconstructed the mailing list. However, if your address is incorrect or if you know of someone who has not received the "Burma Alert" since Jun.93, please let us know. Thank you for your understanding and cooperation. The problem with the mailing list also delayed the publication of the July and August issues. Our sincere apologies - Ed.

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Foreign Trade & Investments:**FRANCE:**

TOTAL OIL CO representatives arrived in Rangoon 31 May to discuss the sale of offshore natural gas to Thailand, from 1-3 June. SLORC Energy Minister Lieutenant-Colonel Khin Maung Thein visited France 7-19 June to discuss energy matters [RR930602,07,19].

SWITZERLAND:

ARW, an NGO for the Control of Arms Export from Switzerland, reports that the Stans-based PILATUS FLUGZEUGWERKE AG aircraft manufacturer, has from the very beginning been involved in designing and installing weapons systems on its aircraft. Pilatus which produces the PC-6, PC-7 and PC-9 aircraft, has always maintained that its aircraft are only for training pilots, and that it is not involved in installing weapons systems on its planes. PC-6 'Porters' have been used by the Burma Army for many years. Eight PC-7s were purchased by Burma in 1976 and another eight in 1979. Four PC-9s were purchased in 1984 and another two later. The PC-7s and the PC-9s armed with cannons, rockets and bombs, have been used extensively by SLORC in ground attack roles. According to ARW, Pilatus in 1975 produced a paper outlining the armament systems which could be used on the PC-7. These included machine gun pods, multiple-rocket pods, general purpose bombs, fragmentation bombs, flares and grenades. In 1976, Pilatus worked with MATRA, a French weapons manufacturer, to design an ideal configuration for an underwing weapons system. From 1978 to 1979, Pilatus worked closely with MATRA and GIAT, another French armament company, and with FABRIQUE NATIONALE (FN) and FORGES DE ZEEBRUGGES (FZ), Belgian weapons companies. In 1976, when Burma purchased its first PC-7s, Pilatus technicians and pilots were directly involved in the installation and trials of the weapons systems supplied by MATRA and FZ. Again in 1987, when Burma purchased PC-9s, the Burma Air Force requested the BRENNAN COMPANY of Singapore to arrange for FN and FZ to participate in their weapons trials. The trials took place at the Thabyewa and Taungnyo/Myenyo Ranges and were attended by representatives from Pilatus, Giat, FN and FZ. They included cannon and rocket firing, and bombing runs. In Feb.93, Pilatus denied that its technical personnel were involved in shooting exercises but admitted that its technicians were in Burma as part of a regular service operation [BURMA9303, SR1930227].

THAILAND:

The PETROLEUM AUTHORITY (PTT) Chairman Liem Krisnakri led a delegation to Rangoon to discuss the sale of offshore natural gas to Thailand, from 1-3 June [RR930602]. The PTT spent US\$3.8 million in 1992 exploring unsuccessfully for oil in Burma. The PTT had a 10% share in Unocal's Block F concession [BWR930402]. The PTT wants a 30% share in TOTAL's Block M5 and M6 offshore concessions, a long-term contract to purchase natural gas from SLORC, and to develop a multi-billion 350 km pipeline to Thailand [Alert No.8, Vol.3, Aug.92].

On 7 Apr.93, two Burmese refugee villages about 1 km from the border near the Thai town of Nat-en-taung were ordered by the Thai Army to evacuate in 15 minutes or be shot on sight. Democracy Village and Aung Tha Bye Village were then burnt. 500 people were displaced and fled back across the border into Burma. Other camps, Pyi Thein, No.9 Mine Camp, Ale Store Camp and Kanaung Se Camp were also reportedly burnt by Thai soldiers. The camps had been in existence for at least 2 years and it was not clear why they were being moved now. Some Thai officers at the site said they had been ordered by higher authorities to drive back all refugees in the area. Some analysts suspect that the planned PTT natural gas pipeline from the Gulf of Martaban may cross the border into Thailand at Nat-en-taung which is only 75 km from the Burmese coast [Focus9305-10, BURMA9304,B930418].

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

UNOCAL representatives arrived in Rangoon 31 May to discuss the sale of offshore natural gas to Thailand, from 1-3 June [RR930602].

Foreign Trade & Investments:**UPDATE: FOREIGN FIRMS IN BURMA - 1**

Source: Burma Alert

BERMUDA:

TREND INTN'L (BERMUDA), RSF-1 & RSF-2, Jun.92

Production - Oil & Gas

BRITAIN:

BINNIE & PARTNERS, Mar.92

Rangoon Water Supply, US\$6 million - Infrastructure

CABLE & WIRELESS via ASIA SATELLITE, Apr.90

Leased transponders - Communications

CHERRY VALLEY 1990

10 yr contract to breed 600,000 ducks/yr - Trade

NEW FRONTIER CRUISE, Jan.92

Cruise ship MV Aurora stopped in Rangoon - Tourism

PREMIER, Block M-12 (Martaban) Sep.92

Exploration - Oil & Gas

PREMIER, Block M-13 & M-14 (Tenasserim) May 90

Exploration \$19 million - Oil & Gas

ROLLS-ROYCE Oct.90

Engines in Yugoslavian G-4 aircraft - Arms

SEISMOGRAPH SERVICES (Raytheon, USA)

Oil Industry Service - Oil & Gas

SPECIALISTS SERVICES INT'L Oct.90

Opened office, inspection of goods - Infrastructure

CANADA:

COLLINS & LITTON CANADA, Nov.92

Avionics in Shaanxi Y8-D aircrafts - Arms

FALCONBRIDGE, 90

Feasibility study (Nickel) - Mining

INTERNATIONAL PETROLEUM, Jun.92

Exploration - Oil & Gas

IVANHOE CAPITAL CORP, Nov.92

Interested in Gold - Mining

PRATT & WHITNEY, 90

Engines in Swiss Pilatus aircraft - Arms

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

AMERICAN EXPRESS since Oct.74

Amex card agreement - Tourism

AMOCO, Jul.93

New concession, exploration - Oil & Gas

APACHE OIL, Block RSF-9 and EP-3, Jun.92

Production - Oil & Gas

CARSON INDUSTRIAL

Oil Industry Service - Oil & Gas

COCA-COLA '92

Sold in Rangoon - Trade

DEAN HARDWOODS INC

Teak - Forestry

GENERAL ELECTRIC THAILAND, Dec.92

Planning new markets - Trade

GRANT NORPAC

Oil Industry Service - Oil & Gas

HALLIBURTON

Oil Industry Service - Oil & Gas

ITT SHERATON via Sheraton Royal Orchid, Bangkok, Nov.90

Studying hotel - Tourism

MIRIAM MARSHALL ASSOCIATES, Jul.90

US\$74 million - Fisheries

P.A.E. via S'pore & Thai subsidiaries

Oil Service Industry - Oil & Gas

PARKER DRILLING

Drilling for AMOCO, BHP, IDEMITSU & YUKONG - Oil & Gas

PEPSICO Apr.90

35% share in bottling plant, \$1 million - Trade

RAYTHEON via Seismograph Services UK

Oil Industry Service - Oil & Gas

SANTA FE

50% of APACHE's RSF-9 & EP-3 concessions - Oil & Gas

SCHLUMBERGER thru GECO-PRAKLER, Aug.92

Oil Industry Service - Oil & Gas

TEXACO Sep.92

Shares in PREMIER (UK) M-12 concession, pipeline - Oil & Gas

TEXACO May 90

50% of PREMIER (UK) M-13 & M-14 Blocks, pipeline - Oil & Gas

TEXTRON via BELL HELICOPTER S'PORE, Oct.91

Proposed repair facilities - Arms

TEXTRON via BELL HELICOPTER S'PORE, Jul.92

Proposed Bell 206L-3 helicopters - Arms

UNOCAL, Apr.93

47.5% share in TOTAL'S M-5 & M-6 concession, pipeline - Oil & Gas

International Action:**PROTEST IN AUSTRIA TO MARK DAW SUU'S BIRTHDAY**

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL organized a demonstration in Vienna on 17 June at the UN World Conference on Human Rights. As SLORC Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw rose to address the Conference, about 100 people wearing a face mask of 1991 Nobel Peace laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi stood up in silent protest. Amnesty called for her release and organized similar protests on 19 June in London, Vienna, Tel Aviv and Canberra to mark her 48th birthday. At a reception in her honour at Vienna's Hofburg Palace, Austrian Foreign Minister Alois Mock who is president of the UN conference said that Vienna tried to invite Daw Suu "but the rulers of her country prevented it." He also praised her "courageous fight for the values of humanity" [Reu930619].

RELIEF FROM BRITAIN FOR BURMESE STUDENTS

The ALL BURMA STUDENTS RELIEF FUND raised 13,603 Pounds Sterling in 1992 for the relief and medical care of students fighting SLORC along the Thai-Burmese border. The funds also enabled the students to purchase two boats to facilitate their transportation needs on the river. ABSRF, 105 Harrowes Mead, Edgware, Middx HA8 8RS. Tel/Fax: 44 (81) 958-2111.

BURMA HUMAN RIGHTS SEMINARS IN PARIS

The AUNG SAN SUU KYI - LIBERTE, a Burmese association for the defence of human rights, held a joint seminar on "Human Rights in Asia" on 4 Jun.93, together with Maison chinoise de la démocratie, Alliance pour une Chine démocratique, Communauté tibétaine en France, and the Centre vietnamien pour les Droits de l'Homme. In Mar.93, the ASSK-L together with France-Birmanie, Amitié France Karen, held a conference, "The Politics of Exclusion in Burma". Participants included Dr Sein Win and U Peter Limbin from the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB), representatives from the National Democratic Front, the All Burma Students democratic Front, the National League for Democracy - Liberated Area, the Burmese community in Europe and the Burma Canadian Society.

JAPANESE NETWORK CELEBRATES DAW SUU'S BIRTHDAY

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL and the NATIONAL NETWORK FOR BURMESE CONCERNS organized a celebration in Tokyo's Hibiya Park to honour Daw Suu on 19 Jun. Foreign Minister Kabun Muto and NCGUB Prime Minister Dr Sein Win, a cousin of Daw Suu, sent congratulatory messages to the gathering of 300 people [Kyodo 930620]. Network members: the Burmese Association in Japan, Burmese Concerns Group, Burmese Concerns Group in Kansai, International Women's Network for the Freedom of Aung San Suu Kyi, International Network of Engaged Buddhists in Japan, and the Buddhists Network for Peace and Human Rights.

ASSISTANCE TO THAI-CHINESE-BANGLADESHI BORDERS

In 1992, the Chiang Mai-based BURMESE RELIEF CENTRE in addition to assisting refugees on the Thai border, supported the Burma Medical Association's primary health care training program for 50 students from 10 ethnic backgrounds; donated medical supplies for Dr La Ja's mobile health team on the Chinese border; financed an extension to Dr Cynthia's clinic in Mae Sot; helped Daw Mya Raza Lin, an Arakanese leader, to run a primary boarding school in the remote Chittagong Hill Tracts on the Bangladeshi border; and even supplied 190 sacks of rice to displaced villagers in Burma near Toungoo and Nyaunglebin. Donations are needed. BRC, P.O.Box 48, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50002.

NEW THAI HUMAN RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION CENTRE

The SOUTHEAST ASIA INFORMATION NETWORK (SAIN) published its first Tri-annual Report in Apr.93. SAIN is an NGO dedicated to documenting and disseminating up-to-date information concerning human rights and environmental abuses in the region. Training in technical and journalistic skills is available for individuals and organizations. SAIN also maintains a library of photographs and video footage. PO Box 217, Chiang Mai University, Chiang Mai 50002. Tel: 66 53 278-660, Fax: 66 53 277-419.

International Action:**US SENATE RESOLUTION FOR RELEASE OF DAW SUU**

On the 3rd anniversary of the 27 May 1990 elections in Burma, the US Senate passed a resolution calling for the US President to seek the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, the transfer of power in Burma to the winners of the 1990 election and the adoption by the UN Security Council of an arms embargo against SLORC. The resolution was co-sponsored by Senators Moynihan, Pell, Helms, McConnell, Biden, Jeffords, D'Amato, Kerrey and Hatfield.

DAW SUU GETS ENCYCLOPEDIA IN TIME FOR BIRTHDAY

On 28 May, it was announced that a 32-volume ENCYCLOPEDIA BRITANNICA had been delivered to 1991 Nobel Peace laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi at her home in Rangoon as a gift from its Chicago-based publishers. When her husband Dr Michael Aris visited her in 1992, she expressed a desire for an encyclopedia. Her desire was relayed to the publishers via British academic and Burma scholar Hugh Tinker who is a Britannica author. The books were shipped to Rangoon where they were picked up and delivered by Dr Aris in Apr.93. In a note to the publishers, she said, "I cannot tell you what a help and joy it is for me to have such a wonderful mine of information ... it sits at my elbow, a constant friend and companion." Daw Suu has been under house arrest since 20 July 1989 and has begun her fifth year in detention.

BURMESE EXPATRIATES CALL FOR STRONG US POLICY

Burmese expatriates based in Canada and the US met in Washington DC from June 5-7, 1993 to discuss a common strategy in the campaign to restore democracy in Burma. The meeting was hosted by FREEDOM HOUSE. Mrs Bette Bao Lord, well-known author and the new chairwoman of Freedom House is the wife of Winston Lord, the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs. Bo Mya addressed the meeting and other speakers were: John Finney, Country Director for Thailand and Burma from the US State Department who welcomed policy input from the participants, James McCormick, Republican staff on the US House of Representatives Foreign Affairs Committee, and Andrew Samet, a senior member of Senator Daniel P Moynihan's staff. The meeting ended with a set of recommendations to the US Government. An NGO Burma Working group was formed to help advocate some of the policy recommendations (Information: Mary Pack, Tel: 202 462-0400, Fax: 202 328-9212).

US CONGRESSMEN LEAD RALLY TO FREE DAW SUU

The US Congressional Human Rights Caucus led by co-chair Congressman Benjamin Gilman called for the release of Daw Suu and "a return to democratic rule in Burma" at a protest on 17 June in Washington DC, to mark her birthday. Prior to a press conference on Capitol Hill, Burmese patriots made merit on Daw Suu's behalf at the Mingala Rama Monastery in Silver Springs. The participants then marched from the Capitol to the SLORC Embassy to remind the world about the situation in Burma. A letter from the Congressional Human Rights Caucus to Daw Suu supporting her stand was delivered to the Embassy.

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NEWS SOURCES THIS ISSUE: AFP = Agence France Presse, B = Bangkok Post, BURMA = Burma Rights Movement for Action, Bangkok, BWR = Bangkok Post Weekly Review, Focus = Burma Focus, ABSDF Norway, Kyodo = Kyodo News Agency, Japan, N = The Nation, Bangkok, P = Working People's Daily, now the New Light of Myanmar, Rangoon, and RR = Radio Rangoon, Reu = Reuters, and SRI = Swiss Radio International, Bern.

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