

BURMA ALERT

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Burma News:

SINGAPORE ACCUSES SLORC OF ILLEGAL ACT

Singapore Home Affairs Minister Shunmugam Jayakumar confirmed on 31 Aug that the 11 Burmese seamen who disappeared while in transit in Singapore were kidnapped by an agent of the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) [Alert No.7, Vol.4, Jul.93]. He denied involvement by Singapore intelligence, police, immigration, civil aviation and other government departments. Jayakumar said that while Singapore has good relations and investments in Burma, it would not carry out "illegal or improper acts" as a favour to SLORC. He said that what happened was a blatant abuse of diplomatic privileges and that SLORC's action was most irregular and, "if against the will of the 11 seamen, illegal." The Home Affairs Minister answering a question in Parliament said that an investigation showed that the 11 men arrived in Changi on 3 June on a Qantas flight. U Myint Soe, first secretary at the SLORC embassy, used his privileged access as a diplomat to enter the transit lounge. Claiming he had authority, U Myint Soe requested Qantas and Singapore Airport Terminal Services (SATS), a private firm, to seize the seamen's passports and detain them in a holding area at Qantas' expense. The 11 men were held for four days at Changi airport and put on board a Singaporean airliner for Rangoon. Jayakumar said that the onus was on airlines to alert immigration and police if individuals who are not "prohibited immigrants" are prevented from entering Singapore. In this case, neither Qantas nor SATS informed authorities. Jayakumar said that Singapore has formally protested to SLORC and that the government was considering whether anyone should be criminally charged. Airport repatriation procedures are also being reviewed. In spite of the Home Affairs Minister's report, many found it inconceivable that the Singapore government, which is normally highly efficient and well-informed, could have been totally ignorant of the mass kidnapping and detention in such a high security area as the airport [WP930904, N930905, B930905].

WA NATIONALISTS ARE READY TO FIGHT SLORC

SLORC's honeymoon with the Wa nationalists may be coming to an end. The Wa are reported unsatisfied with SLORC's National Convention. They complain that little of the development aid they were promised in 1989 has been delivered, and that none of their political demands, including the creation of a separate state, has even been discussed. The Was want a federal form of government while SLORC is advocating a centralized power structure. In Feb.93, Shwe Ohn, 70, a leading Shan lawyer and politician, was sentenced to a year's imprisonment for writing and distributing guidelines for a federal constitution. The Wa nationalists were also offended by Major-General Myo Nyunt's suggestion on 7 June that the existing names of ethnic states be replaced by more 'traditional' names such as Kanbawza, Kantarawaddy, Dhannyawady, Ramanya, Oktha, Dagon, and Yadanabon. The suggestion is typical of SLORC's Burman ethnocentricity and insensitivity. The names suggested are Burman names for their non-Burman neighbours. A Wa representative said, "If they (SLORC) go ahead with these name changes, we'll fight". The Wa nationalists in northern Shan State were the main fighting force of the once formidable Communist Party of Burma. In 1989, the Was rebelled against their ethnic Burman communist leadership and formed their own organization. SLORC Intelligence Chief rushed to negotiate with the Was and offer them unrestricted 'trading rights' and development assistance in exchange for a promise not to attack SLORC troops. The well-armed Wa troops are said to number between 10-30,000, making them one of the largest ethnic armies. SLORC has reportedly sent large numbers of its troops to reinforce bases opposite areas controlled by the Wa [F930819, 0715].

SLORC RECALLS AMBASSADOR TO THAILAND

U Phone Myint, SLORC Ambassador to Thailand was recalled in August 1993. He had only been in Bangkok since February 1993. The reason for the abrupt termination of his tour of duty is unknown [F930819].

Burma News:**MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT ARRESTED FOR CRITICIZING SLORC**

SLORC announced on 4 Aug that Dr Aung Khin Sint, an NLD Member of Parliament elected in May 1990, and a delegate to the National Convention, had been arrested. According to SLORC, Dr Aung Khin Sint was arrested "for writing leaflets criticizing the government." U Than Myint, an NLD member, was also arrested with Dr Aung Khin Sint for "distributing illegal documents (Dr Khin Sint's leaflets)." The leaflets are reported to be the anonymous letters delegates received in May 93, threatening them for participating in the National Convention. The announcement of the arrests is seen as a warning to delegates to the National Convention not to oppose the military's new proposed constitution [B930806, N930806].

THAI FOREIGN MINISTER TO RANGOON IN SEPTEMBER

Thai Foreign Minister Prasong Soonsiri will visit Rangoon 16-18 Sep to hold the first meeting of the Thai-Burmese Joint Commission, which was set up in Jan.93 to strengthen co-operation between the two countries (Alert No.2, Vol.4, Feb.93). Bilateral issues including economic, social and security cooperation will be discussed. Foreign Ministry Permanent Secretary Pracha Gunakaseem will lead an advance team of 30 officials to Rangoon on 13 Sep to prepare for the ministerial meeting [B930819]. The Foreign Minister's visit follows a long line of high-level visitors to SLORC this year. General Vijit Sookmark, Defence Minister, made a 4-day goodwill visit to Burma, 12-15 Aug.93, which included a side trip to Mandalay and Kengtung. He assured General Than Shwe that Thailand will not interfere in Burma's internal affairs and that Thailand has a clear policy to cut off arms supplies to 'minority' groups fighting SLORC. General Vijit was preceded by Army Commander-in-Chief General Vimol Wongwanich who also made a goodwill visit to Rangoon, 8-10 Aug. Thai Interior Minister Chaovalit Yongchaiyudh led a 70-member delegation to Burma in May 93 [B/AP930820, B930816, N930816].

ASIAN DEVELOPMENT BANK AID FOR 4-NATION HIGHWAY?

Tourism Authority of Thailand (TAT) Governor Dharmnoon Prachuabmoh told a press conference on 10 Aug that Thailand, China, Laos and Burma will seek priority cooperation from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to conduct a feasibility study and design a highway to link the four countries (Alert No.6, Vol.4, Jun.93). The highway is part of an ambitious plan to make the 4 countries a sub-regional tourist destination. An ADB sub-regional economic cooperation meeting is scheduled in Manila for 30-31 Aug. The TAT Governor spoke at the end of a two-day "Quadripartite Meeting on Sub-regional Tourism Cooperation" held in Chiang Rai [BWR930820].

SLORC TROOPS TURN BACK THAI DEPUTY MINISTER

Thai Deputy Transport and Communications Minister Charas Puachuay and his team surveying the proposed highway link between Thailand and China were forced at gunpoint to abandon their mission. The team left Chiang Rai on 19 Aug to survey the route and determine where the road needed repair. In Payak, Minister Charas met with Lieut-Colonel Maung Maung Ze (?) and explained their mission. He also informed the military commander that Thailand had approved a Baht 300 million (US\$ 12 million) budget to upgrade the road between Tachilek and Kengtung. Lt-Col Maung Maung Ze reportedly thanked the Minister but said that Burma was expecting UN or Asian Development Bank funding for the project. He further added that should the expected funding not materialize, Burma might consider the Thai offer and possibly allow private investment in the project. Continuing their journey, Minister Charas and his team were stopped in Kengtung by a military unit led by Lt-Col Ne Win Oo who refused to allow them to proceed, claiming that Rangoon had not cleared their passage. Minister Charas managed to convince Lt-Col Ne Win Oo that they had the necessary authorization and they were finally allowed to proceed. However, shortly after leaving Kengtung, another military unit of 30 armed soldiers used a GMC truck to block their route and turned the survey team back [B930822].

Burma News:**SHANS REJECT MILITARY ROLE & PRESIDENTIAL SYSTEM**

Khun Tun Oo, chairman of the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD), surprised observers by bluntly rejecting SLORC's constitutional proposals on 9 Aug when the National Convention reconvened after a recess. Khun Tun Oo rejected any future role for the military in government and strongly advocated a 'representative' type of democracy with sovereign power vested in an elected legislature instead of the executive presidential system preferred by SLORC. The SNLD won the largest number of seats (23) in the 1990 elections after Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) [N930811, B930811].

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Foreign Trade & Investments:**BRITAIN:**

CLYDE PETROLEUM which held shares in CROFT EXPLORATION's Block I oil exploration concession withdrew from Burma in Nov.92 [BA].

CROFT EXPLORATION and partner, TEXACO, gave up their Block I concession in the northern Irrawaddy delta region in Nov.92 after spending US\$8 million unsuccessfully searching for oil [BA].

KIRKLAND RESOURCES which paid US\$4 million for its Block J oil exploration concession in the Moulmein area withdrew from Burma in early 1992 [BA].

CHINA:

CHINA RADIO AND TELEVISION CORP FOR INTERNATIONAL TECHNO-ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION (CRTV), in collaboration with the CHINA NATIONAL COMPLETE PLANT IMPORT AND EXPORT CORP, will build 2 ground satellite stations in Burma [X921025].

HONG KONG:

EMERALD LTD formed joint venture EMERALD ROSE GARDEN with May Li Aung International to build a 500-room hotel. A 240-room hotel will first be constructed at the site of the Horticultural Garden in central Rangoon. Start-up capital is US\$15 million [F930819].

GARMING MARINE PRODUCTS formed a joint venture with Myanmar Fisheries to farm and market marine products. Capital is US\$8.3 million. Garming holds a 49% share [F930722].

JAPAN:

IDEMITSU OIL DEVELOPMENT COMPANY, which paid US\$40 million for its Block D oil exploration concession in the Shewbo/Monywa area, withdrew from Burma in early 1992 [BA].

SUMITOMO signed a contract with SLORC on 16 Dec.92 to install 24,000 telephone exchange lines in the Rangoon area. The new telephones will be provided to those who can pay a lump sum in foreign currency [RR921217].

SINGAPORE:

A 59-member ECONOMIC DELEGATION headed by Finance and Communications Minister Teo Chee Hean arrived in Rangoon 16 Aug. In addition to discussing foreign investments and economic cooperation, the delegation was briefed on the Syriam development project. Syriam on the Pegu River opposite Rangoon is the site of Burma's main oil refinery, a tin smelting plant, a garment factory, a technical school and rice mills. A new Chinese rail and road bridge links Syriam to Rangoon and SLORC has earmarked it for development as an industrial zone [UPI/B930823].

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

UNOCAL, PETRO-CANADA, MURPHY OIL and the Thai PTTEP terminated their operations in Nov.92 in the Salin/Central Burma area (Block F) after unsuccessfully spending US\$40 million. UNOCAL, however, purchased a 47.7% share in TOTAL's (France) Block M-5 and M-6 offshore natural gas concession in 1992 and is involved in the proposed gas pipeline to Thailand [BA].

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Foreign Trade & Investments:

UPDATE: FOREIGN FIRMS IN BURMA - 3

Source: Burma Alert

JAPAN:

CHINA JEWELRY Feb.91	Top buyer of pearls - Trade
DAIMARU 1989	- Fisheries
GOTO OPTICAL via Japan Govt Grants	Planetariums etc - Equipment
HINO Member, Japan Burma Association lobby group.	Buses & trucks - Transport
HONDA via STAR CORP Jun.90	Opened Rangoon Showroom - Transport
HOUSHO TRADING Feb.90	Fish and fishmeal - Trading
IDEMITSU, Block D, Oct.89	Exploration, US\$40 million - Oil & Gas
ISUZU 1991	Sold green trucks - Transport
JAPAN Dec.89	Moei River bridge feasibility study, US\$0.1 million - Infrastructure
JAPAN Feb.90	Rangoon Airport Expansion US\$600 million - Infrastructure
JAPAN Aug.90	Debt Relief Grant US\$23.5 million - Aid
JAPAN Jun.91	Debt Relief Grant US\$42 million - Aid
JAPAN Nov.91	Debt Relief Grant US\$15.9 million - Aid
JAPAN Feb.91	Irrigation Training Centre, US\$10 million - Aid
JAPAN	Cultural Training Center, Rangoon - Aid
JAPAN	Institute of Marine Technology - Aid
KAIKO SUISAN Feb.90	Fish and shrimp - Aid
KAJIMA KENSETSU	Member, JBA lobby group - Construction
KAJIMA KENSETSU 1987	Biluchaung No.1 Power Plant - Construction
KANEMATSU KOHSHO	Member, JBA lobby group - Trading
KINSHO MATAICHI	Member, JBA lobby group - Trading
KONICA via GOLDEN GLORY Oct.90	Opened Konica Centre - Trade
KUBOTA	Member, JBA lobby group - Equipment
MATSUDA	Member, JBA lobby group - Equipment?
MATSUSHITA	Member, JBA lobby group - Equipment?
MIMATSU CONSTRUCTION GROUP, Aug.90	Building hotel, US\$60 million - Tourism
MITSUBISHI JUKON	Member, JBA lobby group - Industry
MITSUBISHI JUKON 1987	Biluchaung No.1 Power Plant - Infrastructure
MITSUBISHI SEKIYU	Member, JBA lobby group - Oil & Gas
MITSUBISHI SHOJI	Member, JBA lobby group - Trading
MITSUI BUSSAN	Member, JBA lobby group - Trading
MITSUI Apr.89	Opened Branch Office - Trading
NEWJEC ENGINEERING, 1987	Biluchaung No.1 Power Plant - Infrastructure
NIHON KOHKAN (NKK) 1988	Member, JBA lobby group - Trade
NISSAN 1991	Sold green trucks - Transport
NISSHO IWAI	Member, JBA lobby group - Trading
NIPPON OIL Sep.90	Owens shares in PREMIER (UK) M-12 concessions - Oil & Gas
NIPPON OIL May 90	Owens 20% of PREMIER (UK) M-13 & 14 concessions - Oil & Gas
NIPPON SUISAN 1989	- Fisheries
SAKAI CO, Aug.92	1987 Biluchaung No.1 Power Plant - Infrastructure
SANWA TRADING Feb.90	Led delegation to Rangoon - Trading
SUMITOMO SHOJI Dec.92	Will install 24,000 telephone exchange lines - Communications
SUZUKI Aug.90	Sold by Myanmar /CENTURY MOTORS - Transport
TAIYO COMPANY Feb.89	Fisheries
TOHMEN,	Member, JBA lobby group - Trading
TOKYO MARUICHI SHOJI May 90	Supermarket, US\$1.5 million - Trade
TOSHIBA via GLODEN GLORY Feb.90	Products sold in Rangoon - Trade

International Action:**AUSTRALIAN SENATORS PROPOSE INTN'L BURMA GROUP**

The AUSTRALIAN PARLIAMENTARY FRIENDS OF BURMA (APFB) has proposed that delegates to the Inter-Parliamentary Union meeting in Canberra in Sep.93 form an International Parliamentary Committee for Burma. The Committee would coordinate efforts by parliamentarians world-wide to bring about change in Burma. The APFB was formed in May 93. Chairman: Senator Stephen Loosley. Secretary: Senator Vicki Bourne, GPO Box 36, Sydney, NSW.2000. Tel: 61 (2) 247-3377, Fax: 247-9681.

BERLIN BURMA CONFERENCE CALLS FOR PEACE TALKS

The International Burma Conference, held 16-18 Apr.93 in Berlin, invited SLORC to open dialogue without any pre-conditions with the democratic forces and liberation movements in Burma as a way to resolve the problems in Burma. The Conference was organized by the BURMA PROJECT, BERLIN and the INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, BERLIN.

PAKISTANI STUDENTS BOYCOTT PEPSI

JEAY SINDH TARAQI PASAND STUDENTS FEDERATION in the Sindh Province of Pakistan launched a PEPSI-BOYCOTT campaign on 28 Jul.93. During the protest, a number of student activists including JSTSF Central President Altaf Rind, Gen-Sec Manzoor Memon, and Central Executive Committee members Jamil and A Bari, were arrested by authorities. The student leaders were allegedly tortured and detained for 9 days. The JSTSF, however, vows to continue with the PEPSI boycott. Address: A-29 Mohammadi Town, Qasimabad, Hyderabad 71000, Pakistan. Tel: 654-347, Fax: 221 29-978, Attn: JSTSF.

KAREN HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP FORMED IN THAILAND

The KAREN HUMAN RIGHTS GROUP was formed in January 1993. Their aims are to i) systematically report human rights abuses in Karen regions, ii) train and equip Karen volunteers to gather and process human rights information, and iii) help Karen people and youth to be more aware and involved in documenting their situation. For information: Kevin Heppner, PO Box 22, Mae Sot, Tak 63110, Thailand. Tel: 66 (2) 332-7554 or Fax: 66 (2) 332-1924.

NGO NAMES SLORC AS NO.1 HEROIN SUPPLIER FOR US

On 17 June, JUBILEE CAMPAIGN, a human rights NGO, issued a press statement naming SLORC as the leading supplier of heroin to the USA. Quoting the Drug Abuse Warning Network, the statement warned that the use of heroin in the US is at the highest level ever reported. There was a 45% increase in heroin-related hospital episodes from the 3rd quarter of 1991 to the 3rd quarter of 1992, costing the US billions of dollars annually. Address: 3686 King St, Suite 171, Alexandria, VA.22302. Tel: 1 (703) 750-0318, Fax: 658-0077.

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NEWS SOURCES THIS ISSUE: AP = Associated Press, B = Bangkok Post, BA = Burma Alert, BWR = Bangkok Post Weekly Review, F = Far Eastern Economic Review, N = The Nation, Bangkok, RR = Radio Rangoon, UPI = United Press International, WP = Washington Post, and X = Xinhua News Agency, Beijing.

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International Action:**RELEASE AUNG SAN SUU KYI NOW!**

On 20 July 1993, SLORC posted a notice at Daw Suu Kyi's residence extending her detention for another year. Under current SLORC law, she can be kept in detention without a trial for a maximum of 5 years. To mark the 4th anniversary of her detention, Burmese student activists, the INTERNATIONAL CENTER in Washington, DC and the Office of Congressman Abercrombie, organized a press conference, a demonstration at the White House and a protest rally at the SLORC embassy. Following are excerpts from statements made on that day:

"Despite her isolation, Aung San Suu Kyi is not forgotten ... I remain confident that the aspirations of all Burmese people for basic human rights and representative government will ultimately be fulfilled" - Bill Clinton, President, USA

"Yesterday, the 19th ... marked Burma's Martyrs' Day ... that crime was the act of weak men, corrupted by envy and the fear of losing power. By imprisoning her (Suu Kyi), their successors (SLORC) show the same weakness, corruption and fear" - Max Baucus, Senator, USA.

"To the people of Burma, and to Aung San Suu Kyi, we say: Take heart! You are not forgotten. You shall be free" - Neil Abercrombie, Congressman, USA.

"The reign of terror in Burma must end. It is the moral obligation of the US and the international community to hold SLORC accountable for the atrocities committed ... and force the immediate transfer of power to the winners of the 1990 elections" - Eric Fingerhut, Congressman, USA.

"We are here to say that we are not giving up ... just like Aung San Suu Kyi is not giving up" - Amnesty International, USA.

"We believe that American moral and political leadership is needed to focus international attention on the human rights disaster in Burma" - Asia Watch, Washington, DC, USA.

"All this regime (SLORC) needs to maintain power are arms and currency. Their rule by force and fear must be overcome" - Institute of Asian Democracy, USA.

"We believe that truth and justice transcend man-made rules and boundaries, and no one who upholds truth and justice should ignore the injustices being committed against an entire nation by a handful of ruthless leaders" - Burmese Student Activists, Washington, DC, USA.

"We pledge to continue our struggle until victory belongs to the people" - Tin Maung Thaw, Committee for the Restoration of Democracy in Burma.

"For the 42 million people in Burma ... she (Suu Kyi) is the only one ... who can unify the country and bring about peace, freedom, democracy and human rights" - U Ba Thaung, United Front for Democracy & Human Rights in Burma.

AUSTRALIAN Minister for Foreign Affairs Senator Gareth Evans called on SLORC to initiate a dialogue with all leading Burmese political figures, including Daw Suu Kyi, in order to encourage democratization and reconciliation in Burma.

The EUROPEAN COMMUNITY called on SLORC to lift all restrictions imposed on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi immediately and thus enable her to participate in the political process.

In JAPAN, Amnesty International, Burmese Association in Japan, Group Concerning Burmese Issues, Group Concerning Burmese Issues in Kansai, International Women's Network for the Freedom of Aung San Suu Kyi, International Network of Engaged Buddhists (Japan) and the Buddhist Network for Peace and Human Rights, wrote to Dr Boutros Boutros-Ghali, Secretary General of the United Nations urging him to seek the release of Daw Suu and to get SLORC to stop its violations of the human rights of the Burmese people.