

U.S. GETS TOUGH WITH SLORC

A high level US inter-agency meeting in March affirmed that the Clinton administration should give top priority to human rights and democracy in its new Burma policy. The US will not be resuming drug eradication aid which the US Drug Enforcement Administration is seeking. The unconditional release of democratic leader and 1991 Nobel Peace laureate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and a dialogue between her and the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) are two key issues the US will stand firm on. The policy review was ordered by Clinton at the request of South African Archbishop Desmond Tutu and his fellow Nobel Peace laureates in May 1993. If Rangoon continues to drag its feet, the US will bring more pressure to bear but if it responds positively, the US is willing to embark on a more cordial relationship, perhaps even sending an ambassador. A high-ranking US official will be travelling to Rangoon to elaborate the US position. This new policy stance is being greeted with concern in ASEAN, especially Thailand. Bangkok is planning to invite SLORC to the coming ASEAN foreign Minister's meeting in July and Singapore could come under pressure to stop being a trans-shipment point for the junta's arms purchases. Although China is SLORC's largest arms supplier, the US is targetting the junta's other arms suppliers such as Singapore, Portugal, Poland and Czechoslovakia [F940331, BA, USG].

THE TALK THAT NEVER WAS

In an interview with Phillip Shennon of the New York Times on 6 March, SLORC Secretary 1 Lieut-Gen Khin Nyunt claimed that he had sent senior officers to talk to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi but that they found her 'negative and counter-productive' (BA, No.3, Vol.5, March 1994). Informed Rangoon sources report that no military delegation visited Daw Suu nor had SLORC tried to open dialogue with her through any other channel [IND940415]. This is typical SLORC behaviour. It seems that General Than Shwe and others have blocked Khin Nyunt from talking to Daw Suu and thus gaining the upper hand. Khin Nyunt, therefore, had to fabricate a reason why the promised dialogue is not taking place. The SLORC generals were not

pleased with US Congressman Bill Richardson's statement that Khin Nyunt and Suu Kyi are the two people who will solve Burma's future - Ed.

GOH CHOK TONG VISITS RANGOON

On 28 March, Singaporean Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong made an official visit to Rangoon, ending SLORC's five and a half years of diplomatic isolation. He is the second head of government to visit SLORC after the Laotian Prime Minister, who visited in 1992. Goh was accompanied by S Jayakumar (Foreign Affairs), Yeo Cheow Tong (Trade & Industry), Dr Lee Boon Yang (Labour & Second Minister for Defence), and 25 businessmen led by Trade Development Board Chairman Alan Yeo. According to Goh, Singapore has to date invested over US\$86 million in Burma and in 1993 Myanmar-Singapore trade was US\$459 million. Singapore is interested in developing tourism and agriculture in Burma. Goh said he was visiting to assess business opportunities in Burma for Singapore and that he was encouraged by what he saw. However, he warned that economics and politics cannot be separated. He said that there must be competent government to create the right conditions for economic growth and that the government must be able to mobilize the people to work with a common vision. He also warned that if 'Myanmar' wants to join the regional community, it will have to show that it is more open and that there is more progress. On the question of 'Myanmar' joining ASEAN, Goh said that it was premature. Goh said that he did not discuss human rights with SLORC Prime Minister Senior General Than Shwe and Secretary 1 Lieut-Gen Khin Nyunt, but that he had had extensive private discussions with both on the political situation in Burma including the status of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi [N940327, WPD940331, SLORC].

ZARGANA RELEASED

On 25 March, Zargana, 33, the well-known comedian, was released by SLORC from Insein prison after 4 years. He was first arrested in 1988 for his satirical jokes against the military regime. He was arrested a second time in 1990 while helping his mother campaign for the May 27 general elections that year [N940327].

Burma News:**AUSTRALIA-SLORC TIES RENEWED**

Contrary to earlier reports that Australia will close its Trade office in Rangoon, Australia has resumed military ties with SLORC after a 3-year absence. Australia justified the move on the grounds that it wants better access to key figures in Rangoon's military junta [A940330]. In addition, Australia is providing A\$200,000 for HIV/AIDS programs and A\$200,000 for Maternal and Child Health Care programs in Burma through NGOs. Its scholarship program for exiled Burmese students was also increased to twenty from ten [AUS940329].

MON-SLORC TALKS

On 31 March, the New Mon State Party said that its cease-fire talks with SLORC were progressing slowly. The announcement came amid strong speculation that the talks had broken down. The first round of negotiations took place in January 1994 and focussed on the need for a ceasefire before political talks. The NMSP team to the second round of negotiations included General Nai Toe Mon, commander-in-chief of the Mon Liberation Army, Nai Tin Aung, Secretary-General for Foreign Affairs, NMSP, Nai Soe Myint, Governor of Thaton District, Nai Lwin Mon, Chief of Education Affairs, NMSP, and Nai Kaw Rot, chief of staff, MLA. They were flown from Bangkok to Moulmein in mid-March and returned on 28 March. The second round concentrated on the military demarcation line separating the Mon and SLORC troops. Nai Tin Aung said that there were still differences in opinion but that they could be overcome. A third round of talks will be held after the team reports back to the NMSP Central Committee. Nai Tin Aung said that the solution to the problem in Burma requires a military ceasefire and a political settlement with the participation of all parties concerned [B940330, N940401].

ANOTHER M.P. DISAPPEARS

The National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (NCGUB) reported that on 25 March, U Myint Maung, National League for Democracy (NLD) elected representative for Ein-me and Minister for Agriculture & Forests, disappeared en route from Chiang Mai to Bangkok. He was on a leave of absence from the NCGUB because of his poor health and was believed to be travelling alone to obtain medical treatment. However, on 11 April, SLORC held a press conference in Rangoon

where U Myint Maung told reporters that he had defected because of disappointment and disagreement with the leadership of the NCGUB. With him was Khaing Saw Htun, senior Democratic Alliance of Burma official, who had also defected. Burmese dissidents were surprised by Khaing Saw Htun's defection [NCGUB, N940411].

KNU-SLORC TALKS

According to SLORC Secretary 1 Lieut-Gen Khin Nyunt, efforts to hold peace talks with the Karen National Union (KNU) are not making much progress. He made the statement on Rangoon TV while visiting the Karen village of Myabadaing on 5 April. Thai military sources had earlier reported that Khin Nyunt was in Myabadaing to talk with KNU representatives. This was denied by KNU sources who said they were still waiting to hear from SLORC. The KNU insists on holding the talks in territory not controlled by SLORC and where the media will be allowed to observe. "The meeting should be held openly", said the source. The KNU is appointing a 5-man team to meet SLORC representatives to prepare an agenda for a meeting of higher-level officials. General Bo Mya, the KNU president, has said that he will not personally participate in cease-fire talks with SLORC [B940405,07,09, N940405.07, KNU].

ROMULO WANTS TRADE

Philippines Foreign Secretary Roberto Romulo visited Rangoon 7-8 April to discuss cooperation in sugar farming, information technology, aircraft maintenance, and pulp and paper technology. He met with Deputy Prime Minister General Tin Tun, SLORC Secretary 1 General Khin Nyunt and SLORC Foreign Minister U Ohn Gyaw. Romulo said that, "Burma has achieved momentum towards constitutionalization, political pluralism and political development" [N940410].

DRUG CONFERENCE HELD

The 2nd Ministerial Conference on Cooperation of Drug Abuse Control among Laos, Thailand and SLORC was held in Rangoon 9-11 Feb.94. Lieut-Gen Mya Thin, Minister for Home Affairs, chaired the meeting. The Thai delegation was led by Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the Narcotics Control Board Amnuay Virawan. The Lao delegation was led by Phao Bounnaphol, Minister to the Prime Minister's Office [SLORC9403].

FORUM OF 8888 FORCES

From 18-21 March, the first forum of 8888 forces (Burmese pro-democracy groups) met on the Thai-Burmese border to consider the current political situation and map out a common broad-based strategy. Participants included the NCGUB, National League for Democracy - Liberated Area, All Burma Students Democratic Front, All Burma Young Monks Union and the Democratic Society for a New Society. The Forum reached the following conclusions:

1. SLORC is only changing to consolidate power. Political reforms are not being introduced.
2. SLORC's 'market-oriented' economy is monopolized by the military and its minions. No real economic development is taking place.
3. SLORC's cease-fire talks with ethnic groups and its promise to develop border areas is an attempt to ease internal political, military and economic pressures and to boost its image.
4. Burma's problems can only be resolved if a solution can be found for 2 fundamental issues - democratic rights and the right of self-determination of the ethnic people. Only in a dialogue including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, SLORC and the ethnic people can such a solution be found.
5. A genuine dialogue between Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the SLORC can pave the way for a peaceful political settlement.
6. The Forum made the following suggestion to the international community:
 - a) Burma's neighbours should review their policy of pressuring the ethnic groups to hold cease-fire talks with SLORC. This will prove to be a misguided policy in the longer-term.
 - b) ASEAN should review its 'Constructive Engagement' policy, which is hindering the democratic process in Burma and could in the long-term become a threat to regional security.
 - c) Foreign investors should realize that their investments will not yield the desired profits and that they are only increasing the level of human rights abuses in Burma.

7. Democracy and human rights transcend national borders. The Forum requests the assistance of like-minded nations to help bring about equality, justice, and democracy in Burma.

8. The anti-military forces in Burma are still alive and strong. Members of the Forum will, therefore, redouble their efforts to work in closer cooperation with the people inside Burma.

In conclusion, the Forum will strive for closer unity and cooperation among the 8888 Forces.

NEWS SOURCES THIS ISSUE: A = Asiaweek, AUS = Australian Government, B = Bangkok Post, BA = Burma Alert, BIG = Burma Information Group, CAN = Canadian Government, F = Far Eastern Economic Review, I = The Independent, London, UK, N = The Nation, Bangkok, NCGUB = National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma, SLORC = State Law and Order Restoration Council/Embassy, USG = US Government, and WPD = Working People's Daily, now New Light of Myanmar.

Passage:

SAW MAW REH, 74, president of the Karenni Provisional Government, passed away on 11 April of heart failure at Ban Huay Surin, Khun Yuam District, on the Thai-Burmese border. Saw Maw Reh helped founded the Karenni National Progressive Party in 1957, the Federal National Democratic Front in 1975, and the National Democratic Front (NDF) in 1976. He served in the British Army and under the Sawbwa of Kyebogyi, Sao Shwe, before joining the Karenni resistance movement in 1948. He became president of the NDF in 1987 for one term. Saw Maw Reh supported the idea of a federal union but always insisted that the independence of Karenni and their right of self-determination be recognized first before deciding on a political system. He was given a Christian burial in Na On village in Karenni State on 13 April [B940415/BIG/BA].

The "Burma Alert", published monthly by the Associates to Develop Democratic Burma, monitors foreign investments and trade with Burma in order to provide data for the Burmese democracy movement. Individual subscription to the "BURMA ALERT" is US\$25.00 (or C\$25.00) per annum payable to the Associates to Develop Democratic Burma, c/o Harn Yawngnhe, RR.4, Shawville, Quebec J0X 2Y0, Canada. Fax: 1 (819) 647-5403, Tel. 647-5405. Institutional subscription is US\$100.00 (or C\$100.00) per annum. Readers are also invited to become 'Associates' by contributing US\$100.00 (or C\$100.00) per annum. In 1993, the ADDB received grants from the International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development, Canada; the Evangelisches Missionswerk, Germany; and the National Endowment for Democracy, U.S.A.

International Action:**BURMA PARLIAMENTARIAN GROUP**

The Australia-based International Parliamentary Friends of Burma issued an invitation in March to parliamentarians worldwide to join it in raising international awareness of the human rights situation in Burma, and to help promote and defend the rights of the people of Burma. Contact: Senator Vicki Bourne, GPO Box 36, Sydney, NSW2000, Australia. Tel: 61 (2) 247-3377, Fax: 247-9681.

THE WORDS CRY OUT

A compilation of 13 essays, poems and lyrics by Burmese exiles expressing their yearning for freedom, democracy and above all a yearning to go home to a free Burma. Edited by Zaw Gyi and Alan Nichols and published by the Australian Burma Support Group, 46 James St, Prahran 3181, Australia, with a grant from the World Association for Christian Communications, UK. Available from: Australian Burma Council, Tel: 61 (6) 281-6553, Jesuit Refugee Service, 61 (2) 356-3888, and Alan Nichols, 61 (3) 510-7943.

REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP

A very useful kit for Refugee Sponsorship in Canada is available from the Canadian Baptist Refugee Service, 7185 Millcreek Drive, Mississauga, ON, L5N 5R4. Tel: 1 (905) 826-0191, Fax: 826-3441. The kit deals with 'Who is a refugee?', the Canadian Resettlement program including criteria for becoming a sponsor, the cost and responsibilities of a sponsor, and provides a list of useful resources. According to the World Refugee Survey 1993, 500,000 to 1,000,000 Burmese are listed as internally displaced. In 1992, Canada welcomed 252,842 immigrants of whom 52,875 were refugees.

SHOOT THE DICTATORSHIP!

The Burmese Relief Center - Japan, is sponsoring a photo contest to expose the real Burma behind SLORC's whitewash. "We are inviting all travellers to Burma to open their eyes and shutters to the realities of life under the dictatorship. An informed visitor who can expose what's behind the whitewash is a friend of Burma's people". Topics suggested include Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's house arrest, slave labour, SLORC satellite town slums, and SLORC

involvement in drug trafficking. Deadline is December 1, 1994. For details contact BRC-J, 266-27 Ozuku-cho, Kashiwara-shi, Nara-ken 634, Japan. Tel: 81 (7442) 2-8236. Fax: 4-6254.

JAPANESE DRIVE-BY PROTEST

The Burmese Relief Center - Japan, has launched a Drive-by Protest against Nippon Oil. Supporters are urged to drive by their local Nisseki (Nippon Oil) gas station and hand in a protest coupon calling for a withdrawal from Burma. Activists are also urged to write to: Hidejiro Osawa, President, Nippon Oil, 1-3-12 Nishi Shimbashi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 105, Japan. Tel: 82 3 3502-1111, Fax 3502-93.

BURMESE BUDDHIST TEXTS

The Japan-based Buddhist Relief Mission (Ken Kawasaki) launched an appeal for donations to help purchase priceless Burmese Buddhist manuscripts that are being smuggled out of Burma to be sold to tourists as souvenirs by temple robbers. Peter Skilling from Canada, a Pali scholar and former Buddhist monk, is leading an effort to purchase the manuscripts. The ultimate aim of the project is to return the collection to Burma in the future. Send donations by bank transfer to: Peter Conrad Skillings, Acct.No.101-019807-3, Bangkok Bank, Head Office, Silom Road, Bangkok, Thailand and a separate letter to; Peter Skillings, c/o The Siam Society, 131 Asoke Rd, Bangkok 10110.

"BALLADS FOR AUNG SAN"

A booklet of songs and poems describing the struggle for freedom, democracy, human rights, and justice in Burma (in English and Burmese) entitled "Ballads for Aung San" is available from Burma Freedom Writer, P.O.Box 5479, Chicago, IL.60680, USA. Tel: 1 (312) 829-9137.

OIL FIRMS LEGALLY LIABLE

The Center for Constitutional Rights, a non-profit public interest law office has written to Unocal and Texaco informing them that under US law, they could be held legally liable for SLORC's human rights abuses which arise out of the oil company's operations in Burma. Details from Beth Stevens, Center for Constitutional Rights, 666 Broadway, New York, NY.10012-2317, USA. Tel: 1 (212) 614-6464, Fax: 614-6499, Email: ccr@igc.apc.org

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION

UN HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES

The Burma Alert, No.3, Vol.5, March 1994, summarized foreign investments in Burma. Apart from investments, another major source of foreign funds for SLORC has been aid:

UN Agencies - Health/Educ/Dev	US\$181 million
CHINA - Infrastructure	US\$108 million
FRANCE - Debt Relief	US\$82 million
JAPAN - Debt Relief	US\$81 million
MALAYSIA - Credit Facility	US\$25 million

On 5 November 1993, the UN High Commission for Refugees signed a Memorandum of Understanding in Rangoon with SLORC to repatriate the 250,000 Muslim Rohingya refugees in Bangladesh. To implement the programme, the UNHCR and the World Food Program is launching a US\$38.1 million project to supplement the US\$16.2 million required to care for the refugees in Bangladesh before they are repatriated. Details are as follows:

* The repatriation will be voluntary. To build confidence, a UNHCR and WFP presence will be established in Arakan State. To make the prospect of returning attractive, UN Agencies will provide improved economic and social benefits to the returnees.

* SLORC will guarantee international UNHCR staff access to Arakan State including Buthidaung and Maungdaw. Returnees will be issued 'appropriate' identification papers and given 'the same freedom of movement as all other nationals'. SLORC will improve basic infrastructure and services in the area through projects funded by the UNHCR.

* A technical mission of UNDP, UNHCR, WFP and SLORC travelled to Arakan State in September 1993 and designed the repatriation project. UNDP is using a similar design in other areas of Burma and is coordinating closely with UNHCR, WFP and UNICEF.

* The repatriation will involve 4 phases: Preparation, Movement from Bangladesh to Burma, Relief assistance, and Re-integration.

* The overall responsibility for the project's implementation in Burma is with the Office of the Director General of Immigration and Manpower, Ministry of Home Affairs, Rangoon. UNHCR will fund additional SLORC staff.

* **PREPARATION** - UNHCR staff will be based in Rangoon and travel to Arakan State as required. WFP will have 2 expatriates and 5 local staff. UNHCR will assist SLORC to upgrade reception centres in Maungdaw township at Taungbro, Ngakura, Pyinpyu, Kanyinchaung and Magyichaung, and build a new reception centre at Buthidaung. Boats, trucks and fuel will be bought to transport the refugees. A separate radio communication system will be established between Rangoon, Sittwe and Maungdaw.

* **MOVEMENT** - Returnees will be registered by Immigration officials and later issued 'appropriate' identification papers. After two nights in the reception centres, they will be returned to their villages of origin. This phase is expected to last until 1995.

* **RELIEF** - Returnees will be given enough food for the first 60 days in their villages. WFP food commodities will be purchased locally. Bamboo, thatch and other materials will also be purchased for the returnees.

* **RE-INTEGRATION** - UNHCR Community projects will focus on i) Water and Sanitation, ii) Health, iii) Agriculture and Fisheries, iv) Income Generating Activities, and v) Education. SLORC funded by UNHCR will employ community development workers.

Water installations will be constructed by SLORC with UNHCR assistance. Boats and motorcycles will be purchased for SLORC health workers. Rice mill and boat building projects, construction of irrigation dams and canals will be funded. Carpentry, food processing, mat making and handicrafts will also be supported. Teacher training and renovation of schools will be undertaken. All these projects will be implemented through SLORC.

(See proposed UNHCR Budget on Page 6)

The Rohingyas, however, continue to report SLORC abuses in Arakan State and worry how good the guarantees given by SLORC are going to be. Burma's 1982 Citizenship Law excludes the Rohingyas. What 'appropriate' identification papers will SLORC issue the returnees? It is also ironic that of the US\$38 million designated for the refugees, SLORC will get US\$17.8 million to take them back, the UNHCR US\$7.5 million and Bangladesh US\$2.5 million to arrange their return, and the refugees themselves US\$10.1 million or US\$50 each - Ed.

Foreign Investments:**CANADA:**

A subsidiary of PLACER-DOME INC is targetting Burma in a new drive for resources in Asia [CFOB]. Write to P.O.Box 49330, Bentall P.O., Vancouver, BC, V7X 1P1.

Also write IVANHOE CORP whose chairman called on SLORC in Feb.94, 900-2 Place Alexis Nihon, Westmount, Quebec, H3Z 2W4.

FRANCE:

Ambassador Alain Briottet met with SLORC Information Minister Brig-Gen Myo Thant in Jan.94 and offered to exchange television programmes and news information, and train Burmese media personnel [AFP].

SINGAPORE:

ASIA-PACIFIC BREWERIES on 8 April signed a memorandum of understanding with the Union of Myanmar Economic Holdings (UMEH) to set up a US\$30 million brewery in Rangoon to produce Tiger Beer. According to the APB, the UMEH is a diversified private holding company. The UMEH was set up by SLORC in Feb.90 to run businesses for the military. 40% of its shares are held by the Directorate of Procurement of the Ministry of Defence. Its other shareholders are Defence Service personnel, regimental institutes and war veterans (retired servicemen) [N940410, BA, No.5, Vol.1, May.90].

THAILAND:

O.N.K. MINING AND CONSTRUCTION CO Chairman Krin Pongpatchote said that he has signed a memorandum of understanding with SLORC to implement 4 projects worth US\$700 million. They include 2 dams on the Salween River (US\$400 million), a 350-km road from Mong Yai to Kengtung in the Shan State (US\$180 million), and a commercial port at Thiwala, 65 km from Rangoon (US\$85 million). The two dams are part of the 7-8 dams on the border being advocated by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (BA, No.11, Vol.2, Nov.91 and BA, No.9, Vol.3, Sep.92). The Nam Ruak/Nam Mae Sai dam and the Nam Kok dam will generate 25 and 100 megawatts respectively. The smaller dam will flood an area of 900 sq kms in the Shan State to provide irrigation for 16,000 hectares (160 sq km) of farmland in Thailand. The larger dam will flood 2,920 sq kms to irrigate 64,000 hectares (640 sq km). SLORC will purchase 10% of the

electricity generated by both dams and EGAT will take the rest. O.N.K. is constructing a US\$24 million plywood factory in Burma and has 5-6 subsidiaries in the logging business in Burma. It is not well known in Thailand and has a registered capital of US\$20 million. To finance the projects, O.N.K. has invited KANEMATSU (Thailand) CO, WORKS CONSULTANT & SERVICE CORP, FIRST FEDERAL BANKING CORP and AMERICAN PRODUCT DIVISION (Wisconsin) CO, to become partners [N940124].

ROHINGYA REPATRIATION**UN HIGH COMMISSION FOR REFUGEES****BUDGET****UNHCR - REFUGEES IN BANGLADESH:**

Bangladesh - Camps & Services	US\$8.3 million
Refugees - Food etc	US\$3.5 million
UNHCR - Operational Costs	US\$1.8 million
UNHCR - Delivery Costs	US\$2.6 million
Total for 200,000 refugees	US\$16.2 million

UNHCR - REPATRIATION (Preparation):

Bangladesh - Jetty, Roads, etc	US\$1.2 million
SLORC - Reception Centres	US\$0.1 million

UNHCR - REPATRIATION (Movement):

Bangladesh - Transp & Op Costs	US\$1.0 million
SLORC - Trans, ID & Op Costs	US\$0.7 million
Refugees - Food	US\$0.4 million

UNHCR - REPATRIATION (Relief):

Bangladesh - Op Costs	US\$0.3 million
SLORC - Housing & Op Costs	US\$1.0 million
Refugees - Repat.Kit & Allow	US\$7.0 million

UNHCR - REPATRIATION (Re-integration):

SLORC - Projs & Op Costs	US\$15.6 million
UNHCR - Delivery Costs	US\$6.7 million

Total UNHCR Repatriation US\$34.1 million

WFP - REPATRIATION (Relief & Re-int):

SLORC - Warehouses/vehicles	US\$0.4 million
Refugees - Food	US\$2.0 million
Refugees - Food for work	US\$0.8 million
WFP - Delivery Costs	US\$0.8 million

Total WFP Repatriation US\$4.0 million

Total UNHCR/WFP Repatriation US\$38.1 million

In Jan.94, Japan said that it will contribute US\$3.6 million to the UNHCR Rohingya Repatriation Programme. Canada also made a US\$3.75 million contribution in March. The USA is contributing US\$4.75 million.