

Report Card
Burma
1 Apr~30 Jun 2003

ARRESTED



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ALTSEAN
BURMA

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ISBN 974 – 91747 – 9 – 8

Printed in Bangkok
November 2003

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BLACK FRIDAY: A SLAP IN THE FACE OF ASEAN

NOTE: While report card covers the period April 1 – June 30, 2003, we have included analysis and updated information on ‘Black Friday’ as of September 18, 2003, for the benefit of readers.

On 30 May, a date which has come to be known as ‘Black Friday,’ Sr-Gen Than Shwe authorized a murderous attack on NLD leaders Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin Oo, and their entourage. This ambush and the ensuing crackdown was the most ruthless and bloodiest attack on the democracy movement in Burma since 1988.¹

This updated summary of the Black Friday attack and its aftermath indicate:

- The premeditated nature of the brutal attack and subsequent crackdown
- Active official involvement of the regime in planning, implementing and mopping-up operations
- Endorsement at the highest levels of the junta, as evidenced by rewards, including promotions, for those involved.
- Ongoing operations to aggressively expand military and militia capacities throughout the country, in order to inhibit pro-democratization efforts.

Despite its promises to Asean and the international community, the regime that calls itself the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) has no intention of allowing democratic reform. The attack, which happened days before the Asean Ministerial Meeting & Asean Regional Forum, was a slap in the face of Asean’s well-meaning but ineffectual efforts to encourage reforms in Burma. The insult has been further compounded by SPDC’s snubs at subsequent efforts to facilitate a process of national reconciliation in Burma.

It is time for Asean to realize that firm, consistent actions are needed to ensure irreversible reforms do take place in Burma, so that it can become an asset to the region, instead of the security threat and embarrassment that it currently poses.

This is a regime of wily bullies, not of bungling well-meaning fools who need love and understanding. Asean needs to be disciplined in dealing with the Burmese regime or risk having to deal with a continuous cycle of détente and detention.

Asean should adopt a range of firm initiatives to prove to the SPDC that it is serious about reform, including support for moves to raise Burma at the UN

¹ For a complete account of the Black Friday crackdown see Altsean’s Briefing: “Black Friday & the Crackdown on the NLD,” available online at <http://www.ibiblio.org/obl/docs/BlkFriupdatejun24.doc>

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Security Council. Otherwise the junta will continue to treat its neighbors as gullible accomplices.

Asean _ Paying The Price of Constructive Engagement

All of us in Asean wish Aung San Suu Kyi will be free, to be able to do what she would like to do. In our own way, we have explained to the Myanmar foreign minister that wish. But we don't do it in a confrontational manner. ~ Asean Secretary General Ong Keng Yong, at the Asean Ministerial Meeting²

The Black Friday crackdown was not only an attack on Burma's democratic opposition, but an attack on the credibility of Asean. Since being admitted into Asean in 1997, Burma has been a 'bad bet' for the organization; tarnishing the reputations of member countries by flouting international laws, contributing to regional instability, and repeatedly lying to the international community. Asean is now paying the price for 6 years of 'constructive engagement,' a policy UN Envoy Razali called "just an excuse for perpetuating the status quo."³

By rejecting 2 proposals by Asean and member countries to restart the process for reconciliation, the regime has shown it has no intention to work with the association towards this objective. However, the regime has responded to limited pressure from Asean leaders, indicating that a strong, coordinated response from the association would have an impact.

CHALLENGE TO CREDIBILITY

Asean's failure to respond effectively to the situation in Burma has resulted in a loss of credibility for the association-both regionally and internationally. Malaysian Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar has expressed concern that if the problem is not resolved by Asean, then "other countries and regional organisations may come in to decide on the matter and this would make things much more difficult."⁴

Kobsak Chutikul, vice-chairman of Thailand's House Committee on Foreign Affairs stated that 'Asean faced no threat more serious than the Burma conflict, which could be a turning point in revitalising the grouping if it could show the world that it defused the problem by itself.'⁵

² Irrawaddy (16 June 03) Suu Kyi's Disposition in Question

³ Malaysiakini (16 Jun 03) UN envoy lashes out at Asean inaction over Burma

⁴ New Straits Times (28 July 03) Ministers: We're not pressuring Yangon

⁵ Bangkok Post (9 August 03) Burma Conflict Seen as Worst Threat to Future of Grouping

As Asean pursues plans for greater regional economic integration, it must consider how to deal with a regime that has been internationally sanctioned and whose economic policies are driving Burma backwards in development.

RELATIONS WITH THE EU & US

Asean's failure to take a coordinated strong position on Burma has drawn criticism from both the US and EU. While signing a new sanctions bill on Burma, President Bush warned that: "Burma should not be permitted to tarnish Asean's record as a positive force for progress."⁶

Echoing statements made by Razali in June, on 14 August, a senior US official commented that "it is unthinkable that a military junta could assume chairmanship of Asean in 2006."⁷

US lawmakers have also leveled heavy criticism at Thailand for taking a soft stance on the regime (See Thailand).

Asean has also come into direct conflict with the EU over their decision to push for Burma's inclusion into the Asia-Europe forum, ASEM. At the 23 July ASEM meeting in Bali, EU representatives maintained that they would not allow Burma to enter ASEM unless Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was released and the SPDC allowed democracy.⁸ Asean rejected an EU proposal to hold a special session on Burma at the meeting, however agreed to hold an ad-hoc meeting on the sidelines.⁹ On 22 July, the EU released a statement saying it was "deeply concerned" about the situation in Burma, and warning that the issue could impede "relations with the region as a whole."¹⁰

INTERNAL DIVISION

The conflicting approaches of Asean members on dealing with Burma has led to regional discord, which threatens to increase as long as the problem remains unsolved. Specifically, Thailand has come into conflict with Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, who have taken a harder line against the junta. Thaksin dismissed Prime Minister Mahathir's statement about the possibility of expelling Burma from Asean as "Premier Mahathir's personal opinion."¹¹

⁶ Nation (30 July 03) US wants Asean to exert more influence

⁷ AFP (14 August 03) "Unthinkable" that Myanmar can lead ASEAN: top US official

⁸ AFP (24 July 03) Thailand seeks international forum to push Myanmar to free Suu Kyi

⁹ Nation (23 July 03) Asean calls meeting on Burma

¹⁰ AP (22 July 03) EU warns that Myanmar's detention of Suu Kyi hurts relations with Asia; Yangon says it releases 91 dissidents

¹¹ The Age (23 July 03) Burmese Political Crisis Threatens Rupture Among Neighbours

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While both Indonesia and the Philippines have stated that the regime should release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi within a specific timetable, Thaksin has continued to urge that the SPDC be given more time “to prove themselves.”¹²

ASEAN MINISTERIAL MEETING (AMM) & ASEAN REGIONAL FORUM (ARF)

At the Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and Asean Regional Forum (ARF) held 3 weeks after Black Friday, Asean members received strong pressure from the US and UN to break with their traditional ‘non-interference’ policy and take a strong stand on the situation in Burma.

At the forum, SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung first claimed that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s detention was prompted by rumors of ‘assassins’ coming to Burma, but later admitted having no evidence for these claims. He said that the regime had no intention to harm Daw Suu or to ‘prolong our security arrangements,” and promised that she would be released when the situation returned to ‘normal.’¹³

During the meeting, only the Philippines and Singapore openly demanded the release of Suu Kyi, but nearly all members reportedly ‘mentioned it’ in private communication.¹⁴ Some members, including Thailand, blocked any form of ultimatum to force Rangoon to abide by the request or face ramifications¹⁵ Reportedly, some members were “begging the Philippines to soften its stance in favour of Burma.”¹⁶

The final Joint Communique from the AMM regarding Burma was weaker than many had hoped stating: “...we urged Myanmar to resume its efforts of national reconciliation and dialogue...We welcomed the assurances given by Myanmar that the measures taken following the incident were temporary and looked forward to the early lifting of restrictions placed on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD members.”

ASEAN PROPOSALS

Asean Troika _ REJECTED

At the Asean Ministerial Meeting (AMM) and Asean Regional Forum (ARF), SPDC foreign ministry director of political affairs Thaung Tun pleaded, “Give us

¹² Ibid

¹³ DPA (19 Jun 03) Myanmar renewed country's commitment to civilian government

¹⁴ Nation (18 Jun 03) Burma's front man in spotlight at Asean

¹⁵ Nation (18 Jun 03) Spotlight on Burma at Asean meeting

¹⁶ Nation (17 Jun 03) Philippines demurs as Asean backs Burma

breathing space. The political situation in our country is very complex. We need Asean to talk to us and help us create democracy and stability.”¹⁷

In response to this, Asean ministers accepted an Indonesian proposal to send a delegation to help the junta hasten democratic reforms “using the experience of the other Asean countries which have gone through a similar struggle.”¹⁸ The proposed delegation would be led by Ali Alatas, Indonesia's former foreign minister.

However, the SPDC gave the proposal the cold shoulder, with SPDC foreign Minister Win Aung saying: "In internal matters which are very complicated the homegrown process is best...I think it's better not to complicate matters.”¹⁹

Indonesian Envoy _ Last Chance

Despite the initial rebuff, it was announced Sept 17 that Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri had appointed Former Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister, Ali Alatas, as a special envoy and submitted a request to the SPDC to allow him to visit the country. Alatas said that he intended to convey the position of Indonesia and Asean to the SPDC during the visit and support moves towards reconciliation and democratization. “So in this case, Aung San Suu Kyi's case could be solved and the pressure over the case could be eliminated,” he said.²⁰

The Philippines has urged the regime to accept the Indonesian envoy or face further pressure from Asean. Foreign Secretary Blas Ople said: “If Alatas is denied entry to Myanmar, that would signal this Asean summit to take a harsher view of the political situation in Myanmar. The possibility of a censure will not be foreclosed. Any act to bar Ali Alatas as special envoy from Yangon will be taken as a provocation.”²¹

The SPDC has yet to confirm the visit, which Indonesia is hoping will occur before the October Asean summit in Bali.²²

Thai ‘road map’ _ much ado about nothing _ REJECTED

In July, after criticizing US Sanctions on Burma, Prime Minister Thaksin stunned the world with a groundbreaking new plan for reconciliation in Burma - (yet another) ‘road map.’ The road map, which included no ultimatums, was vaguely

¹⁷ Nation (18 Jun 03) Spotlight on Burma at Asean meeting

¹⁸ AP (17 Jun 03) ASEAN formally urges Myanmar to free Suu Kyi & AFP (20 Jun 03) ASEAN to step up pressure on Myanmar; mission being prepared to Yangon

¹⁹ AFP (3 July 03) Indonesia to decide if ASEAN will send mission to Myanmar: Ong

²⁰ Xinhua (17 Sept 03) Indonesia's envoy optimistic about visiting Myanmar soon

²¹ AP (18 Sept 03) Philippines warns Myanmar against refusing envoy for talks on democracy leader's release

²² Xinhua (17 Sept 03) Indonesia's envoy optimistic about visiting Myanmar soon

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described by Thaksin and members of his administration as a “concept,” a “modality,” or actually just “an idea for a road map.”²³ Thaksin lobbied hard for his wishy-washy plan and managed to get Razali to express support for the ‘road map’ along with Japan, Australia, Austria, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the UK.²⁴

The SPDC was not among the roadmap’s supporters. By the end of July, enthusiasm had waned as Win Aung eventually informed Thaksin that the SPDC ‘would rather solve it’s own problems from within.’²⁵

Meanwhile the Thai ‘road map’ was successful in deflecting media attention from the real issue - the SPDC’s continuing detention and arrests of opposition members and supporters.

Plans For The Future

REGIME ROADMAP _ ANOTHER ‘ROAD TO NOWHERE’

The perfect stalling tactic

On 30 August, newly appointed Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt unveiled a 7-point ‘road map’ to democracy. According to Khin Nyunt, the SPDC ‘road map’ will reconvene the stalled 1993 National Convention to draft a state Constitution, which will be voted on in a national referendum and ultimately result in ‘free and fair’ elections.²⁶ The road map is the perfect stalling tactic for the regime; a plan to reduce international pressure while guaranteeing a pro-military outcome. The SPDC roadmap is a clear plan to maintain military control of Burma and a direct rejection of the UN resolution for a tripartite dialogue. “This is exactly the line the regime was pushing 10 years ago. Nothing has changed,” says Aung Zaw, editor of Irrawaddy magazine.²⁷

National Convention background

The SPDC first instituted the National Convention in 1990 as a ‘consolation prize’ to elected representatives who the regime banned from taking office. The convention, which was tasked with drawing up a new constitution, wasn’t convened until January 1993. In order to ensure a voting majority, the SPDC

²³ Nation (18 July 03) Rangoon weighs Thai ‘road map’ & Xinhua News Agency (30 July 03) Thailand’s “road map plan” just advice to help Myanmar: spokesman & Radio Thailand (21 July 03) Thai Premier says Burma’s Suu Kyi “is in no danger whatsoever”

²⁴ Nation (1 August 03) Japan backs push for road map on Burma

²⁵ AFP (27 July 03) Malaysia warns Myanmar over Suu Kyi

²⁶ AFP (9 September 03) Myanmar says “too early” to come up with democracy roadmap timetable

²⁷ Sydney Morning Herald (31 August 03) No freedom for Suu Kyi in Burma junta’s reform plan

appointed 505 out of the 702 delegates. Among the delegates appointed by the regime were leaders of ceasefire groups who were known drug traffickers.²⁸ The NLD, which won over 80% of the seats in the 1990 election, constituted only 12% of the national convention.²⁹

As a result of misrepresentation and after being continually denied permission to address the convention, NLD leaders finally walked out in 1996. The National Convention was suspended soon after.

What's missing from the 'road map'

- Any clear timeframe
- A role for NLD and/or other democratic opposition groups
- A role for ethnic nationality groups
- Commitment to release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, people detained during the Black Friday crackdown, and other political prisoners.
- Commitment to a nation-wide ceasefire and cessation of hostilities against ethnic nationality groups.

What the convention does offer

- Guarantee of a "leading role of Burma's armed forces in the future affairs of the State."³⁰
- Guarantee of the military's right to declare a "state of emergency" whenever deemed necessary.³¹
- Guarantee that presidential candidates be "well-versed in military affairs" effectively limiting qualification to serving or retired members of the armed forces.³²
- Requirement that the military appoint 25% of the seats in both the upper and lower houses.³³
- Requirement that at least one of the 3 people holding offices of president and vice presidents be from the military.³⁴

²⁸ Sai Lin, a leader of the National Democratic Alliance Army (NDAA) was appointed a special advisor to the National Constitutional Convention.

²⁹ Irrawaddy (3 September 03) Revisiting the National Convention

³⁰ The Irrawaddy (6 September 03) Ethnic Agendas: The PM's Road Map To Nowhere

³¹ The Irrawaddy (6 September 03) Ethnic Agendas: The PM's Road Map To Nowhere

³² The Irrawaddy (6 September 03) Ethnic Agendas: The PM's Road Map To Nowhere

³³ The Irrawaddy (2 September 03) New Approach to Combat the Rhetoric

³⁴ The Irrawaddy (2 September 03) New Approach to Combat the Rhetoric

NLD & ethnic nationality participation not required

By ensuring that the mandate of the convention will be unacceptable to the NLD and most other opposition groups, the SPDC is hoping to forestall their participation. In announcing the road map, Khin Nyunt made only one reference to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi - to blame her and the NLD for the failure of the 1996 convention.³⁵ On 9 September, government spokesman Tin Win noted that convention regulations stated that any group which left the convention could be deemed to have forfeited their right to participate. "It is still too early to come up with any definite answers on whether the NLD can join the national convention," he said.³⁶

No mention was made of participation by ethnic nationality groups in the national convention or subsequent stages of the 'road map.' A statement issued by the Karen National Union (KNU) referred to Khin Nyunt's address as "the lost road to nowhere."³⁷

Meanwhile the regime has named 4 senior military officials and a judge to oversee the drafting of a new constitution.³⁸ Lieutenant General Thein Sein has been appointed as the new chairman, and Chief Justice Aung Toe and Minister of Electric Power Major General Tin Htut have been named as joint vice-chairmen.³⁹

SPDC RESHUFFLE _ RISE OF THE HARDLINERS

On 25 August, Sr. Gen Than Shwe carried out a reshuffle of senior leadership positions, promoting hardliners to top positions. Not surprisingly, Than Shwe retained for himself his role as Chairman of the SPDC and Commander-in-Chief of the military.⁴⁰ Tellingly, the biggest change was Than Shwe's decision to replace Khin Nyunt, who had been the SPDC's strongest proponent of the dialogue, with Soe Win, who engineered the attack that effectively ended it.

The reshuffle indicates a consolidation of power, not a prospect for real change. The regime has reshuffled its cabinet 14 times since Nov 15, 1997.⁴¹ Ludu U Sein

³⁵ Sydney Morning Herald (31 August 03) No freedom for Suu Kyi in Burma junta's reform plan

³⁶ Agence France Presse (9 September 03) Myanmar says "too early" to come up with democracy roadmap timetable

³⁷ The Irrawaddy (6 September 03) Ethnic Agendas: The PM's Road Map To Nowhere

³⁸ Financial Times (9 September 03) Burma begins to draft constitution

³⁹ AFP (7 September 03) Myanmar junta names new members of constitutional body

⁴⁰ AFP (25 August 03) Myanmar's ruler ousts influential number-three general Khin Nyunt

⁴¹ . Bangkok Post (29 Aug 03) Burmese reshuffle keeps world guessing

Win, a Burmese political observer notes: “In essence it is nothing—it is old wine in a new bottle.”⁴²

General Khin Nyunt _ transferred from Secretary 1 to the largely ceremonial role of Prime Minister. Analysts believe this may be a deliberate ploy by Than Shwe to make a ‘moderate’ figure the PR face of the SPDC. The move also sidelines Khin Nyunt from control over the military. The demotion will be reinforced if Khin Nyunt also loses his position as Military Intelligence Chief⁴³

Lt-Gen Soe Win _ takes over as Secretary 1, his second promotion in 7 months. The Secretary 1 position may be a reward for Soe Win, who is believed to have been the mastermind behind the Black Friday attack.⁴⁴ On 21 January, Soe Win declared: “The SPDC not only won’t talk to the NLD [National League for Democracy] but will also **never** hand over power to the NLD.”⁴⁵ Days later he was rewarded with a promotion to Secretary 2.⁴⁶

Lt-Gen Thein Sein _ appointed Secretary 2 of the SPDC. A former Commander of MOC-4 (Phugyi) and the Golden Triangle Military Region, he is believed to hold negative views on Thailand.⁴⁷ He was recently appointed the new chair of Khin Nyunt’s National Convention.

U Ko Lay _ appointed Minister of the Prime Minister’s Office. Former Mayor of Rangoon during the regime’s bloody crackdown of the 1988 uprising, notoriously corrupt.⁴⁸

Maj-Gen Thein Swe _ appointed Minister of the Prime Minister's Office. His background is unconfirmed, but he may have been Chairman of the Kayah (Karenni) State Peace and Development Council or the head of the Defense Ministry’s External Intelligence Division.⁴⁹

The Big Picture - Nationwide Crackdown & Military Buildup

May 30 was not an isolated incident, but the start of a crackdown intended to eliminate the democracy movement, including the NLD. Foreign Minister Win Aung said, “We were very much concerned that the days of anarchy of 1988 will

⁴² The Irrawaddy (26 August 03) New Emperor or New Scapegoat?

⁴³ The Irrawaddy (26 August 03) Who’s Who In the Junta’s Line-up & The Irrawaddy (26 August 03) New Emperor or New Scapegoat?

⁴⁴ The Irrawaddy (26 August 03) Who’s Who In the Junta’s Line-up

⁴⁵ DVB (28 Jan 03) No plan to talk to NLD and we are not afraid of USA-SPDC

⁴⁶ AP (3 Feb 03) Myanmar reshuffles cabinet

⁴⁷ The Irrawaddy (26 August 03) Who’s Who In the Junta’s Line-up

⁴⁸ The Irrawaddy (26 August 03) Who’s Who In the Junta’s Line-up

⁴⁹ The Irrawaddy (26 August 03) Who’s Who In the Junta’s Line-up

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be back...We have to clear up, clear up means that what is the real intention behind all these activities.”⁵⁰

CRACKDOWN

In addition to the people arrested during the Depayin attack, the SPDC arrested many other democracy advocates and NLD MPs in the following days and weeks. Villagers living in Depayin and nearby villages have also reportedly been arrested and interrogated.⁵¹ Military Intelligence agents have carried out many of the arrests and the Northern Command have also been involved, reportedly arresting most of the NLD officials in Myitkyina, Kachin State.⁵² “The NLD is undergoing another period of intimidation and harassment as the military continues with its mopping-up operation,” reported one senior NLD member.⁵³

□ Following the May 30 attack, the SPDC shut down most NLD offices throughout the country.⁵⁴ Brig-Gen Than Tun said the NLD headquarters would remain closed “until the present problem is solved.”⁵⁵

□ The SPDC has also dramatically increased their military presence in Rangoon.⁵⁶ Locals report that soldiers are stationed off the main roads in Rangoon in readiness for any protest that may occur.

□ There are reports that former political prisoners under age 40 are frequently being summoned and threatened by the military intelligence.⁵⁷

□ In order to quell possible demonstrations, the SPDC delayed reopening of schools and universities until just before the Asean Regional Forum.⁵⁸

MILITARY BUILDUP

Black Friday occurred in the context of the SPDC’s ongoing military buildup, which has intensified in months following the attack. The buildup includes

⁵⁰ Reuters (19 Jun 03) Myanmar silent on Suu Kyi release

⁵¹ DVB (15 July 03) Villagers arrested near Dipeyin

⁵² Irrawaddy (5 Jun 03) Crackdown Escalates

⁵³ AFP (17 July 03) Myanmar opposition paralysed after arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi

⁵⁴ LA Times (2 Jun 03) Myanmar Cracks Down on Opposition; Nation’s military rulers hold pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi for a third day. Party offices and universities are shut down.

⁵⁵ LA Times (2 Jun 03) Myanmar Cracks Down on Opposition; Nation’s military rulers hold pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi for a third day. Party offices and universities are shut down

⁵⁶ AFP (8 Jun 03) Outrage over Suu Kyi but Myanmar people too beaten down to protest

⁵⁷ DVB (21 Jun 03) Burmese opposition radio reports further arrests of NLD supporters

⁵⁸ Bangkok Post (3 Jun 03) Suu Kyi detention points to widening military split The ruling junta is said to be divided over how to deal with Aung San Suu Kyi, and so the hard-liners have decided to up the ante. – Larry Jagan

widespread forced recruitment of villagers for military training. Civilians are also being forced to join civilian militia groups as well as the SPDC army. On 21 July the SPDC ordered all states and divisions to conduct basic military trainings 'to defend the nation from foreign enemies.' Members of SPDC controlled militia and civil organizations were required to attend, along with civil servants and their family members as well as relatives of members of the military.⁵⁹

Shan State

April-local SPDC army commanders ordered people in Mongton, Kengtawng (Kengtung), Mongpan, and Mongnai to fashion weapons such as slingshots, swords, lances, bows and arrows.⁶⁰

June-the Shan Herald Agency for News (SHAN) noted a build up of troops in Kengtawng (Kengtung) Shan State, including LIBs 246, 332, 524 from Kunhing; IB 99 from Langkher; and IB 297 along with LIBs 520, 575, and 577 from Mongpan.⁶¹

May-SPDC authorities ordered village elders in Mongton and Monghsat Townships, to provide them with 450 new recruits.⁶²

1 August-It was reported that 200 civilians in Namkham and 100 in Mongwi are being given basic military training by IB 45.⁶³

Karen State

18 July-It was reported that the SPDC Soldier Collection group had ordered villagers in Mon and Karen State to vote for 5 people from each village to become soldiers. If people try to run away to escape forced conscription they are reportedly arrested and put in jail for 3 years.⁶⁴

16 August-It was reported that local battalions are giving month-long military trainings in many villages in Pa'an Township, Karen State. Reportedly, at least one person from each household was ordered to attend the trainings, which the local battalions said was so people could help protect the country against foreign enemies.⁶⁵

⁵⁹ Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union (July 03) Monthly Human Rights Situation Report, Tenasserim Division

⁶⁰ SHAN (4 April 03) Junta staves off axis of evil

⁶¹ SHAN (2 Jun 03) Plant awaits power producer from Japan

⁶² SHAN (13 May 03) Burmese Refugee on the rise: Unfortunately Thailand does not recognise Shans as refugees

⁶³ Mizzima, posted on SHAN-EU Group Weekly Digest, No. 55 (1 - 7 August 2003)

⁶⁴ NCGUB (20 Sept 03) Human Rights Documentation Unit

⁶⁵ Ibid

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Mandalay Division

14 August -It was reported that in Chan Aye Tha Zan, Aung Myae Tha Zan, Ma Ha Aung Myae, Pyi Kyi Tha Kon and Pa Thein Kyi Townships, in Mandalay Division, USDA members and battalions from the Central Military Headquarters organized military trainings. The trainings started on 3 July 2003 and there were about 30 people in attendance. The authorities also held some trainings in high schools which students were forced to attend.⁶⁶

Arakan State

June- the SPDC began stepping up conscription in Arakan State, forcing former deserters to re-enlist or face a 3-year prison sentence. SPDC Western Command defense force headquarters and battalions now have to conscript at least 2 recruits each month, and companies must recruit at least one person.⁶⁷

17 July-The SPDC has been reportedly conducting new rounds of forced conscription in various townships. LIB 538 has been forcibly recruiting people in and around Rathedaung Township.⁶⁸

Chin State

6 August-It was reported that State Authority Chairman Colonel Tin Hla ordered civil servants and civilians to attend 'anti-foreign aggression' defensive military trainings, given by IB-266. One Haka resident reports that the SPDC has ordered everyone between the ages of 18 and 50 to join the militia.⁶⁹

Tenasserim Division

June-No. 12 Military Divisional Training Center demanded that 6 villages in Pyicha village tract each send 20 people to attend a 15-day militia training.⁷⁰

After 21 July-The Coastal Region Military Command instructed all the districts and townships administration councils to recruit and send 20-30 'hard core persons' and 40-60 people as reserves from each village under their control.⁷¹

30 July-It was reported that militia trainings were conducted at Pulaw, Myate and Tavoy. Every village group was ordered to send 90 members including 30 people for 'permanent squad' and 60 for a 'volunteer squad'.⁷²

⁶⁶ NCGUB (20 Sept 03) Human Rights Documentation Unit

⁶⁷ Narinjara (18 Jun 03) Increased Conscripts in the Burmese Army

⁶⁸ Narinjara (17 July 03) Forced Conscription in Western Burma

⁶⁹ DVB News (6 August 2003)

⁷⁰ Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union (June 03) Monthly Human Rights Situation Report, Tenasserim Division

⁷¹ Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union (July 03) Monthly Human Rights Situation Report, Tenasserim Division

Mon State

22 June-It was reported there are increased flows of refugees into Halockhane refugee camp since the SPDC has begun forcing villagers in combat areas to join the militia. Members of the militia are reportedly given authority to collect villagers for forced labor and to arrest or execute any who oppose them.⁷³

4 July- It was reported that in Ye Township the SPDC is forcing every man between the ages of 18 and 40 to attend military training. The authorities recruited about 1,000 men from Yaung-daung village near Thanbyu Zayat city alone, and many other villages have been ordered to prepare for the training.⁷⁴

4 August-It was reported that 800 civil servants, both men and women, from Mudon Township are being forced to buy uniforms and attend a month-long State Defense Force training. Trainees are taught how to use small arms, how to defend against an American Invasion and to (identify) destructive elements.⁷⁵

21 August-It was reported that SPDC army strategic commands will supervise civil servants and villagers who recently completed forced military training. The trainees will be forced to volunteer on rotation to assist military operations, including launching military offensives.⁷⁶

Sagaing Division

30 July-It was reported that in Shwebo (Shwe-Bo) District up to 900 people were attending basic military training.⁷⁷

ATTACK WAS PREMEDITATED

Multiple evidence confirms the premeditated nature of the attack and crackdown. In the months prior to the attack, the SPDC and their cohort organization, the Union Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) steadily increased harassment of the NLD on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's tours throughout the country and threatened civilians not to go out and support them. Weeks prior to the attack, SPDC increased riot and weapons training.⁷⁸

⁷² Network Media Group (30 Jul 03) Youth in Burma given militia training

⁷³ Kao Wao (22 June-7 July 03) No. 47, Counter insurgency expands in Ye (Bop Htaaw, Thai-Burma Border, 22 June 03)

⁷⁴ Independent Mon News Agency and Kao-Wao (4 July 03) Life in Mon State

⁷⁵ Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union (July 03) Monthly Human Rights Situation Report, Tenasserim Division

⁷⁶ Independent Mon News Agency (21 Aug 03) Forced Volunteers for Burma Army

⁷⁷ Network Media Group (30 Jul 03) Youth in Burma given militia training

⁷⁸ DVB (14 May 03) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Phakant & Irrawaddy (6 Jun 03) Regime Organizes More NLD Attacks & DVB (4 Oct 02) Police, Firemen given riot control training as commodity prices soar

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Sr-Gen Than Shwe has promoted officials who have openly opposed dialogue, namely Lt-Gen Soe Win, Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and Brig-Gen Khin Ye, who are believed to have orchestrated the attack. Brig-Gen Than Tun, official NLD liaison, denied the Thai Foreign Minister's assertion on May 26 that dialogue would occur soon. Than Tun was promoted in October 2002 – the month when communication between SPDC and NLD stopped. Six days before the attack, the War Office in Rangoon issued a directive putting all armed organizations in the country on a state of emergency. Four days before the ambush, recruits were being collected to participate in the attacks.

On 29 May, Lt-Gen Soe Win led a closed door meeting with Saw Htun, the Director-in-Charge of the USDA; Khin Ye, the Chief Inspector of Burma's Police Force; Col Tin Hlaing, Minister for Home Affairs; and Brig-Gen Soe Naing, the commander of the Northwest Regional Command.⁷⁹ Maj-Gen Saw Tun is also reported to be a key organizer of the attack. Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, a secretariat member of USDA and SPDC's Minister of Information, was in Sagaing Division in the third week of May.

Before his first key promotion in Sept 2002, Lt-Gen Soe Win was the Commander of the Northwest Command in Sagaing Division (where the attack took place). He is an honorary member of USDA. In recent months Soe Win has toured Sagaing, Pegu, and Irrawaddy Divisions to organize harassment and rally USDA members against the NLD.⁸⁰

After the attack, U.S. Embassy officials in Rangoon visited the scene and said, "Clearly, orders were given for a violent attack" and that the weapons were "clearly prepared before the fact." They believe far more people may have died than the SPDC reported.⁸¹

CHRONOLOGY OF THE ATTACK

From November 2002: The SPDC and USDA steadily increase harassment of the NLD and supporters during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's travels.

Weeks before the attack, SPDC increases riot and weapons training of local militia and other groups and increases surveillance on NLD members.

May 6: Daw Suu, U Tin Oo, and 12 NLD male youth members leave Rangoon to tour Kachin State and areas of Sagaing Division. Crowds of up to 40,000 arrive to greet Daw Suu and NLD members in Shwebo, Lone Khing, Bhamaw (Bhamo),

⁷⁹ Kao Wao News (30 May – 10 Jun 03) Eyewitness accounts of the regime's ambush on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her entourage as recounted by some escapees

⁸⁰ DVB (28 Jan 03) No plan to talk to NLD and we are not afraid of USA - SPDC

⁸¹ AP (5 June 03) Clash between followers of Myanmar opposition leader, pro-government supporters appears premeditated: US official

Mogok, and Monywa, despite repeated efforts by local SPDC and USDA units to prevent people from going out to see her.⁸²

May 24: The War Office in Rangoon issues a directive putting all armed organizations in the country on a state of emergency.⁸³

May 25: In Kyidauk Pauk village, Kachin State, people waiting to see the NLD team are threatened by more than 100 USDA members wielding sticks, knives, and catapults. A brick is thrown at Daw Suu's car and an NLD member is injured.⁸⁴

Northwest Military Command takes inmates from Mandalay Prison and reportedly promises them money and their freedom if they assist in attacks on the NLD.⁸⁵

May 26: Local authorities gather at least 3,000, mostly criminal, recruits at the Army's Northwest Regional Command headquarters. The recruits are bribed with 500 kyat/day (US\$0.50) and meals to participate in protests against the NLD.⁸⁶

May 29: SPDC Gen Soe Win holds a meeting with Saw Htun, the Director-in-Charge of the USDA; Khin Ye, the Chief Inspector of Burma's Police Force; Colonel Tin Hlaing, Minister for Home Affairs; and Brigadier General Soe Naing, the commander of the Northwest Regional Command.⁸⁷ Maj-Gen Saw Tun is also reported to be a key organizer of the attack. Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan, a secretariat member of USDA and SPDC's Minister of Information was in Sagaing Division during the 3rd week of May.⁸⁸

⁸² AFP (8 May 03) Crowds flock to see Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi despite warnings; DVB (8 May 03) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Shwebo District Sagaing Division; DVB (14 May 03) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Phakant; DVB (10 May 03) Government spokesman admits preventing supporters from welcoming Suu Kyi; DVB (20 May 03) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and team at Bhamaw, Kachin State; DVB (22 May 03) "Whole town" welcomes touring Burmese democracy leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi; AP (26 May 03) Myanmar pro-democracy activists sentenced to prison, Suu Kyi's party reports harassment & Reuters (30 May 03) Myanmar junta says Suu Kyi causing "commotion"

⁸³ DVB (26 May 03) Burma War office places all armed organizations on state of emergency

⁸⁴ AP (26 May 03) Myanmar pro-democracy activists sentenced to prison, Suu Kyi's party reports harassment

⁸⁵ DVB (4 Jun 03) Criminals were used to attack the NLD

⁸⁶ Kao Wao News (30 May – 10 Jun 03) Eyewitness accounts of the regime's ambush on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her entourage as recounted by some escapees:

⁸⁷ Kao Wao News (30 May – 10 Jun 03) Eyewitness accounts of the regime's ambush on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her entourage as recounted by some escapees

⁸⁸ Irrawaddy (9 Jun 03) Military Leaders Behind Black Friday

THE ATTACK

May 30

6:30pm: USDA vehicles follow Daw Suu and the NLD team as they leave Butalin for Depayin (Dipeyin or Tabayin) Township.⁸⁹ Motorcyclist supporters trying to follow Aung San Suu Kyi's car are stopped and beaten by about 100 police.⁹⁰

8:30pm - 12am: Three miles past Depayin at Kyi (Kyi Ywa or Phaya Htwet Gan) village the NLD team is forced to use an alternate route through a forested area, because the road is blocked by huge logs.⁹¹ 3,000 – 5,000 villagers come out to welcome them.⁹² A monk insists that Daw Suu give a speech, even when told it is too late. When Htun Zaw Zaw, a close aide to Daw Suu, gets out of the car to talk to the monk, USDA members following the convoy began to attack villagers standing nearby.⁹³

Trucks loaded with 500-1,000 USDA members, police, men dressed as monks, armed soldiers, and prisoners from Mandalay Prison continue to arrive at the site. They attack hundreds of unarmed NLD supporters and the NLD team's 20 cars and 25 motorcycles with gun-fire, sharpened bamboo stakes between 2 -3 feet long, catapults, steel and iron pipes⁹⁴ NLD leaders call on their supporters not to react.⁹⁵

The windows of Daw Suu's car are broken and the thugs try to attack her before her driver is able to drive off towards Depayin.⁹⁶

NLD Vice Chairman U Tin Oo is reportedly beaten up.

Eyewitnesses reported that attackers shouted: "This person is not dead yet, keep on beating," and "We build roads and bridges. What has your Aung San Suu Kyi done for the country?" A female NLD youth member said she saw 2 people beaten to death, Thein Toe Aye, and another she did not know. She said one attacker shouted, "If you don't want to be

⁸⁹ Irrawaddy (6 Jun 03) Eyewitness Tells of Bloody Friday

⁹⁰ Radio Free Asia (3 Jun 03) Witness Account Contradicts Junta's Reports

⁹¹ NCGUB News Desk (1 Jun 03) Scores Killed in Junta Attack on NLD Motorcade

⁹² Eyewitness Ko Zaw Zaw Aung, the chief organizer of Mandalay NLD youth and former political prisoner reported that

⁹³ Irrawaddy (6 Jun 03) Eyewitness Tells of Bloody Friday & DVB (14 Jun 03) Eyewitness accounts of Black Friday – originally from NLD-LA Australia

⁹⁴ LA Times (2 Jun 03) Myanmar Cracks Down on Opposition; Nation's military rulers hold pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi for a third day. Party offices and universities are shut down. & NCGUB News Desk (1 Jun 03) Scores Killed in Junta Attack on NLD Motorcade

⁹⁵ Irrawaddy (6 Jun 03) Eyewitness Tells of Bloody Friday

⁹⁶ Ibid

beaten, just pretend to be dead. If you move we will just have to continue beating you.” ~ NCGUB (21 Jun 03)

Some people, including female NLD members are stripped and left naked.⁹⁷ USDA members shout insults like “Are you protecting the wife of *Kala*?” (A derogatory term for South Asians, Indians, Muslims, and Westerners.)⁹⁸

Some NLD members run towards Depayin, but more USDA members are waiting for them in town. Nails are planted on the road and tires are shot to prevent people from following the NLD members. The people of Depayin come out and chant, “Long Live Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.” USDA issues a curfew and military and local army units confront the villagers.⁹⁹

12:45am, May 31: Members of the police force, fire brigade, and local authorities put the wounded and dead bodies into vehicles. They push cars into ditches to clean up the scene of the attack.¹⁰⁰

31 May: About 60 NLD members who hid from the attackers returned to the site of the clash and regrouped after sunrise. Army, police and local officials arrive and take most of them away in a truck.¹⁰¹

Eyewitness account

Ko Wunna Maung who escaped to Thailand in July, described the attack in Depayin: “People were all bloody. We were all broken [wounded]. I was lucky to have escaped...People in the back were all down on the ground with their bloody bodies. They kept on hitting people around the place...I bumped into their people who were lying in wait for us. They were chasing us like animals...At about ten, we heard spurts of gunshots. We saw burning cars from the paddy-fields. I don’t know who was alive and who was dead. All of them were lying flat on the ground with flowing blood.”¹⁰²

AFTERMATH

ATTACK THE FOLLOWING DAY

On 31 May, citizens from Monywa went to the USDA office and were brutally beaten by the Army, USDA, police, and members of other services. Reverend U Panna Thiri, while trying to mediate, was killed along with a student. Another

⁹⁷ Irrawaddy (6 Jun 03) Eyewitness Tells of Bloody Friday

⁹⁸ Ibid

⁹⁹ Irrawaddy (6 Jun 03) Eyewitness Tells of Bloody Friday

¹⁰⁰ DVB (14 Jun 03) Eyewitness accounts of Black Friday – originally from NLD-LA Australia

¹⁰¹ Irrawaddy (6 Jun 03) Eyewitness Tells of Bloody Friday

¹⁰² DVB (4 July 03) Black Friday Eyewitnesses escape to Thailand

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student was seriously injured and later died. The SPDC and USDA officials took away the bodies of the students.¹⁰³

SPDC COVER-UP & DAMAGE CONTROL

After the attack, the SPDC reported that Daw Suu and at least 18 other NLD members were taken into temporary ‘protective custody’ to ‘ensure her safety and for the sake of national security.’¹⁰⁴ Sr-Gen Than Shwe put off the Jun 1 quarterly meeting of the SPDC and ordered the SPDC regional commands to remain on high alert.¹⁰⁵

While the SPDC publicly blamed the NLD for deaths and injuries during the attack,¹⁰⁶ Brig-Gen Than Tun stated the dialogue: “would not be affected by the latest incidents.”¹⁰⁷

In order to maintain a blackout on information about the attack, the SPDC cut communication and transportation links in the Monywa and Depayin area.¹⁰⁸ Military officials also reportedly began to relocate villagers from the area.¹⁰⁹

On 13 June, 6 policemen in Kathaung (Kawthaung) Tenasserim Division, were arrested and sentenced to one year in prison with hard labor for publicly discussing the Black Friday attack.¹¹⁰

REGIONAL PR CAMPAIGN

In July, Than Swe sent his 2 foreign ministers on a regional ‘goodwill tour’ to convince ASEAN and other Asian neighbors that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD were to blame for Black Friday. Carrying a personal letter from Than Swe and photos of a ‘healthy’ looking Daw Suu, the SPDC deputy foreign minister made a whirlwind tour of Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, while the foreign minister visited China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India.¹¹¹ Than

¹⁰³ NCGUB News Desk (1 Jun 03) Scores Killed in Junta Attack on NLD Motorcade

¹⁰⁴ Washington Post (10 Jun 03) Where Is She?

¹⁰⁵ Kao Wao News (30 May – 10 Jun 03) Eyewitness accounts of the regime’s ambush on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her entourage as recounted by some escapees

¹⁰⁶ LA Times (2 Jun 03) Myanmar Cracks Down on Opposition; Nation’s military rulers hold pro-democracy activist Aung San Suu Kyi for a third day. Party offices and universities are shut down.

¹⁰⁷ Bangkok Post (3 Jun 03) Suu Kyi detention points to widening military split The ruling junta is said to be divided over how to deal with Aung San Suu Kyi, and so the hard-liners have decided to up the ante. – Larry Jagan

¹⁰⁸ Radio Free Asia (3 Jun 03) Witness Account Contradicts Junta’s Reports, Irrawaddy (6 Jun 03) Eyewitness Tells of Bloody Friday & DVB (17 Jun 03) Interview with Thakhin Thein Pe

¹⁰⁹ Irrawaddy (3 July 03) Suu Kyi’s Whereabouts Still Unknown

¹¹⁰ DVB (13 August 03) Six Policemen Dismissed for Discussing 30 May Incident

¹¹¹ BBC (14 July 03) Burma defends Suu Kyi custody

Swe's letter claimed that that Daw Suu was "attempting to lure armed groups...to join in the planned uprising," and therefore he was compelled to take firm measures to prevent the country from sliding down the road to anarchy and disintegration".¹¹²

MEDIA ATTACK ON DAW SUU

In July the state-run New Light of Myanmar published a series of articles, allegedly written by a former NLD member, which personally attacked Daw Suu. "Auntie Suu is a willful and hard-headed person liable to rash judgments followed by blind action, in her relations with the present government," one article noted. The paper also published photos of Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD leaders having dinner with SPDC officials, with the caption, "A family dinner."¹¹³

PARTIAL LIST: DEAD, ARRESTED, DETAINED, RELEASES

22	MPs arrested, under house arrest, or missing ¹¹⁴
6	MPs released ¹¹⁵
140	Democracy Advocates arrested, imprisoned and/or injured after May 30 and during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trips in 2003. ¹¹⁶
16	Democracy Advocates Released ¹¹⁷
112	Total Disappeared ¹¹⁸ and/or hospitalized
10	Total Killed ¹¹⁹

CASUALTIES

An initial report by NCGUB estimated that up to 70 people were killed and 200 injured in the Black Friday attack, mostly students.¹²⁰ As the SPDC has worked

¹¹² Financial (11 July 03) Junta says Suu Kyi planned uprising

¹¹³ Irrawaddy (11 July 11 03) Photo Diplomacy Backfires

¹¹⁴ AAPPB (28 Aug 03) Partial List of NLD members and other people who were detained, died, and disappeared after May 30 and during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trips in 2003, Members of Parliament

¹¹⁵ AAPPB (28 July 03) Partial List of NLD members and other people who were detained, died, and disappeared after May 30 and during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trips in 2003, released

¹¹⁶ AAPPB (28 Aug 03) Partial List of NLD members and other people who were detained, died, and disappeared after May 30 and during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trips in 2003

¹¹⁷ AAPPB (25 July 03) Partial List of NLD members and other people who were detained, died, and disappeared after May 30 and during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trips in 2003, released

¹¹⁸ AAPPB (28 Aug 03) Partial List of NLD members and other people who were detained, died, and disappeared after May 30 and during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trips in 2003, Disappeared

¹¹⁹ AAPPB (28 Aug 03) Partial List of NLD members and other people who were detained, died, and disappeared after May 30 and during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's trips in 2003, Died

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hard to cover up the incident and prevent information from leaking out, it is impossible to get a full account of all the victims. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners Burma (AAPPB) has verified at least 10 deaths, and an estimated 101 NLD members and supporters are still missing.¹²¹ In June, Amnesty International released the names of 45 missing NLD members.¹²² It is believed that most were arrested and taken to the Northwest Military Command Headquarters in Monywa.¹²³

The Northwest Military Command to Prison Service said 32 prisoners died while ‘carrying out their duty,’¹²⁴ (attacking the NLD and their supporters). On 31 May, sources in the Northwest Military Command reported that 65 bodies were secretly cremated in the compound.¹²⁵

DAW AUNG SAN SUU KYI DETAINED

Since 30 May, the SPDC has held Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in ‘protective custody’ using section 10(a) of Burma’s draconian 1975 State Protection Act to legitimize the detention. Secretary of AAPPB, Ko Tate says: “The detention of her [Suu Kyi] under 10(a) means that she is a destructive element. That is totally in contrast with the junta’s words that they are protecting her from personal danger.”¹²⁶

Jailing Daw Suu is a move designed to increase anxiety and panic among opposition groups, and to deflect international attention from democratic reform in Burma, forcing them instead to focus on freeing Aung San Suu Kyi.¹²⁷

On 10 June, Razali met with Daw Suu where she was being detained in a 2-room hut in Insein Prison. Razali condemned the conditions where she was being held as “deplorable,” however, stated that: “She’s uncowed and feisty. She was outraged that this had happened to her.”¹²⁸

In response to increased international pressure following Razali’s visit, on 31 August the regime transferred her to another location.¹²⁹

¹²⁰ NCGUB News Desk (1 Jun 03) Scores Killed in Junta Attack on NLD Motorcade

¹²¹ AAPPB (28 Aug 03) Partial List of NLD members and other people who were detained, died, and disappeared after May 30 and during Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s trips in 2003, (Died, Disappeared)

¹²² Amnesty International (Jun 2003) Myanmar: End Crackdown Now

¹²³ NCGUB News Desk (1 Jun 03) Scores Killed in Junta Attack on NLD Motorcade

¹²⁴ DVB (4 Jun 03) Criminals were used to attack the NLD

¹²⁵ NCGUB News Desk (1 Jun 03) Scores Killed in Junta Attack on NLD Motorcade

¹²⁶ Irrawaddy (18 Jun 03) Suu Kyi Held Under State Protection Act

¹²⁷ BBC (20 Jun 03) Inside Burma’s Insein jail

¹²⁸ AFP (30 Jun 03) Concerns for health of Myanmar’s Suu Kyi after one month in detention

¹²⁹ DPA (1 July 03) Suu Kyi removed from Insein Jail, but still not free

On 28 July, the SPDC finally allowed an ICRC team to meet with Daw Suu. The team reported that she appeared to be healthy and uninjured.¹³⁰ The following day an SPDC spokesman announced that she was being held in a government guesthouse in Rangoon.

On 31 August, the US stepped up the pressure on the regime by announcing they had credible evidence that Daw Suu was on a hunger strike. SPDC Ambassador to London, Kyaw Win, retorted: "How could anybody know that she's on hunger strike when you don't even know where she is?"¹³¹ On 6 September, the ICRC obtained a second visit with Daw Suu and stated that she was not on a hunger strike.

On 6 September, 7 political prisoners in Bassein Prison began a hunger strike calling for the release of Daw Suu and all other political prisoners.¹³²

On 10 September, SPDC Brig. Gen. Khin Yi said that releasing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi would destabilize the country. "If we release her immediately, I think some problem will come up because of her...Now, there is no rally, there is no protest."¹³³

On 19 September, Daw Suu underwent an operation related to a gynecological condition. The operation was supervised by her personal physician and she is reportedly recovering well.¹³⁴

U TIN OO DETAINED

After his arrest, U Tin Oo was brought to Kale [Kalay] Prison in Sagaing division near the India border. Three weeks after the attack, ICRC representatives were allowed a brief meeting with U Tin Oo. Despite numerous reports that he had sustained serious injuries during the attack, the ICRC reported that currently he "is in good health."¹³⁵

17 NLD MEMBERS AT KHAMTI PRISON

At least 17 NLD members arrested on 30th May are being detained at Khamti (Hkamti) Prison, in a remote location in northern Burma.¹³⁶ Reportedly, military intelligence agents are torturing these people to force them to 'confess' that the

¹³⁰ AP (28 July 03) Red Cross: Visit in Myanmar finds Aung San Suu Kyi in good condition

¹³¹ The Irrawaddy (3 September 03) Hungry for Answers

¹³² DVB (10 September 03) Prisoners stage hunger strikes in Bassein Prison

¹³³ AP (10 September 10 03) Suu Kyi to Stay in Jail for Time Being

¹³⁴ AFP (19 September 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi undergoes successful major operation

¹³⁵ Associated Press (24 Jun 03) Tin Oo alive, not hurt

¹³⁶ Network for Democracy and Development (4 Jun 03) The NDD calls for immediate intervention to prevent another massacre in Burma & AAPPB (3 Jun 03) Urgent Release

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30 May incident was not an ambush, but a fight between NLD supporters and those opposed to the NLD.¹³⁷

NLD LEADERS UNDER HOUSE ARREST

In addition to those democracy activists being jailed, harassed or hunted down, all the senior-most leaders of the NLD and their families have been subjected to strict house arrest in Rangoon. This has even included the household of U Tin Oo, despite the fact that he is not at home but being held at Kale Prison. A military guard has been stationed at his home to prevent visitors from seeing his family.

VICTIMS OF DEPAYIN ATTACK REMAIN IN DETENTION

Many of the people who were attacked at Depayin reportedly remain in detention.¹³⁸

On 6 August, The Democratic Voice of Burma Radio Service (DVB) reported that 6 people arrested at Depayin remained at the Monywa military hospital where they were being treated for injuries sustained during the attack. These people were not being allowed visits by family members or the ICRC.¹³⁹

On 5 July, a recently-released detainee reported that on 30 May, 140 people had been taken to Shwebo prison. 40 of these individuals were critically wounded, all with head injuries. The detainee reported that all the prisoners were interrogated, with the NLD members receiving the heaviest interrogations. Afterwards, the man reported that some people were released in small batches, but some NLD youth were sent to Khanti and Kale Prison. According to the detainee, 50 people remained in Shwebo prison at the time of his release.¹⁴⁰

RELEASES

On 16 June, the SPDC said they released 46 people who were detained during the May 30 attack.¹⁴¹ The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was given only minimal information about the releases of the 46, who are thought to be students.¹⁴²

On 29 June, Soe Win, an elected MP arrested on 5 June was released after he attempted to commit suicide. Reportedly he suffered a stroke while in prison and

¹³⁷ National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (13 Jun 03) Press Release

¹³⁸ DVB (14 Jun 03) Eyewitness accounts of Black Friday

¹³⁹ DVB (6 August 03) Conditions of the political prisoners in Monywa military hospital

¹⁴⁰ DVB (5 July 03) Depayin victims latest

¹⁴¹ AFP (16 Jun 03) Myanmar says 46 detained in May 30 violence have been released

¹⁴² AP (16 Jun 03) International Red Cross expects access to detained Myanmar opposition leader soon

has become almost blind as a result of eye injuries caused by his torture during interrogation.¹⁴³

On 22 July, the regime faxed a message to foreign diplomats in Rangoon announcing that 91 people had been released from prison, at least 29 of whom were NLD members. However the regime failed to specify how many of these had been arrested in conjunction with the May 30th attack.¹⁴⁴

On 22 July, the SPDC released 4 NLD members from Yenangyaung Township who had been arrested earlier in the month.¹⁴⁵

ICRC

On 3 July, ICRC representatives announced that they had been able to register and meet with 30 political prisoners arrested in conjunction with Black Friday.¹⁴⁶

On 31 July, the ICRC met with 28 political prisoners arrested in conjunction with the Black Friday attack.¹⁴⁷

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

In the wake of the Black Friday crackdown, government responses were mixed (see below). However, on 19 June, people in 15 countries held demonstrations to commemorate Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday and show solidarity with the victims of the May 30th attack. Demonstrations occurred in Thailand, the US, India, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, the UK, Canada, Italy, South Korea, Bangladesh, Jamaica, France, Finland and Belgium.

SANCTIONS

USA On 11 June, the US Senate passed a sanctions bill to ban imports from Burma, freeze assets and widen the visa ban to include more high-level SPDC and USDA officials.¹⁴⁸ U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said "Our response must be equally clear if the thugs who now rule Burma are to understand that their failure to restore democracy will only bring more and more pressure against them and their supporters..."¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Irrawaddy (7 July 03) MP Released after Suicide Attempt & Irrawaddy (25 August 03)MP Blinded by Torture

¹⁴⁴ Washington Post (25 July 03) Burma Launches Effort to Defend Suu Kyi's Arrest

¹⁴⁵ DVB (22 July 03) SPDC releases NLD officials in Yenangyaung

¹⁴⁶ AP (3 July 03) Red Cross: Myanmar holds at least 30 from clash that led to jailing of Nobel winner

¹⁴⁷ DVB (6 August 03) Conditions of the political prisoners in Monywa military hospital

¹⁴⁸ Xinhua (23 Jun 03) US sanctions threaten Myanmar garment industry & Washington Post (13 Jun 03) U.S. Sanctions Bill Would Ban Burmese Imports

¹⁴⁹ Wall Street Journal (12 Jun 03) It's Time to Turn the Tables On Burma's Thugs

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The regime has responded, calling US sanctions “weapons of mass destruction” and an “abuse of human rights,” while claiming that they will lead to another round of military coups in Burma.¹⁵⁰

UK 184 UK lawmakers signed a motion calling for targeted investment sanctions against Burma unilaterally if the EU will not agree to a multilateral action.¹⁵¹ Tony Blair, UK Prime Minister, said British companies had been told that trade with Burma was “not appropriate” amid the suppression of human rights by the military regime.¹⁵²

EU New EU sanctions were enacted on June 16, which widened the visa ban to include extended families of ministers, as well as deputy ministers and ex-ministers of the regime and senior army staff officers. However the director of the Burma Campaign UK, John Jackson, said the sanctions aren’t tough enough and that countries like Germany are blocking the EU from taking stronger measures.¹⁵³

UN & RAZALI

Following intense international pressure, the SPDC finally allowed UN Special Envoy Razali Ismail to visit Rangoon June 6-10. The regime successfully hijacked the agenda so that instead of facilitating dialogue, Mr Razali’s efforts were focused on obtaining a brief meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.¹⁵⁴ Razali reportedly saw no sign of injuries, and based on these observations concluded that Daw Suu was unhurt. Sr-Gen Than Shwe chose to snub Razali and show his contempt for the UN process by going on a beach vacation during Razali’s trip.

After meeting with Daw Suu, Razali traveled to Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, and the US to meet with state leaders and discuss ways to promote Daw Suu’s release. Razali urged that: “The United Nations and ASEAN should coordinate their efforts to send similar signals that Aung San Suu Kyi should be released immediately and the reconciliation process should move forward.”¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰ DPA (14 July 03) Myanmar junta attacks U.S. “meddling” in internal affairs & AFP (16 July 03) Myanmar junta condemns US sanctions as “weapons of mass destruction” & Xinhua (31 July 03) Myanmar rejects sanctions by foreign countries

¹⁵¹ Bloomberg.com (18 Jun 03) European and Asian Lawmakers Demand Aung San Suu Kyi’s Release

¹⁵² Financial Times (25 Jun 03) UK and Japan increase pressure on Burma

¹⁵³ Irrawaddy (17 Jun 03) EU Renews Sanctions on Rangoon

¹⁵⁴ Irrawaddy (16 Jun 03) Suu Kyi’s Disposition in Question

¹⁵⁵ AP (28 July 03) Razali urges coordination between ASEAN and U.N. over Myanmar

On 16 July, Razali met with UN Secretary General Kofi Annan, who didn't rule out future UN sanctions on Burma, but said it was 'a bit premature for me to say that it is a possibility.'¹⁵⁶

On 8 September, Razali announced that the SPDC had scrapped plans for him to visit Burma that month, but commented that the regime's plan to reconvene the constitutional convention was a "good idea" and the "right thing to do."¹⁵⁷

BURMESE OPPOSITION GROUPS

After Black Friday, the United Nationalities League for Democracy – Liberated Areas stated that the attack shows that the SPDC is "not interested in political change but [interested in] power." They call on the Burmese people to resist the regime with "civil disobedience" and "urge the UN to send a mediator with powerful mandate from Security Council, who can bring the regime to a dialogue table, by force---if necessary. We also call the international community and United Nations not only to condemn, but also to take more effective action on military junta in Burma."¹⁵⁸

The Members of Parliament Union (MPU) said: "It [the attack] is the beginning of the deliberate and well-planned plot of the SPDC to crush the democracy movement." They said the SPDC's excuse of detaining them for "their own safety is absolutely non-sense and unacceptable."¹⁵⁹

The MPU further said that: "May 30 massacre and detention of Daw Suu should serve as a wake up call to the international community that there is an urgent need for a better coordinated effort, stronger political will and a bigger stick in dealing with the regime..."¹⁶⁰

ASEAN MEMBER RESPONSES

Thailand

Prime Minister Thaksin's '2-faced' policy on Burma is clearly driven simultaneously by business interests and desire for a regional leadership role. Thaksin continues to ignore national interests, international opinion, and the position of other Asean members in order to remain 'a good neighbor' to the regime. After criticizing Mahathir's proposal to expel Burma from Asean as a last

¹⁵⁶ AP (16 July 03) U.N. chief expresses concern at imprisonment of Myanmar opposition leader, doesn't rule out possibility of U.N. sanctions

¹⁵⁷ AFP (8 September 03) UN envoy's Myanmar trip delayed, says give junta plan a chance

¹⁵⁸ Chinland Guardian News (7 Jun 03) Current crisis in Burma

¹⁵⁹ Members of Parliament Union (1 Jun 03) Concerted Action Urgently Needed to Counter Junta's Crackdown

¹⁶⁰ MPU-Burma (21 Jun 03) International Community Urged to Step Up Pressure for the Release of Aung San Suu Kyi

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resort, Thaksin proposed a vague 'road map' allowing both himself and the SPDC to buy time and save face, while taking no action to secure the release of Daw Suu or other detainees. (See Thai Road map).

While complaining about drug flows from Burma and US sanctions which will allegedly increase the flow of refugees and migrant workers, Thaksin has worked hard to block any Asean attempts to address the root causes of these problems - the SPDC.

11 June -during a visit to the US, Prime Minister Thaksin joined with President Bush in calling for "an immediate substantive political dialogue" in Burma.¹⁶¹ Mr Thaksin's subsequent actions appeared to contradict this statement.

26 June -the Thai Government used the SPDC's claim that opposition groups were planning to kidnap the SPDC Ambassador in Bangkok to justify a crackdown on Burmese political dissidents, refugees and migrant workers.

4 July -NLD members & Black Friday witnesses Wunna Maung and Khin Zaw fled to Thailand and submitted an affidavit with their testimony to the Thai Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. The Thai government refused to allow them to speak and threatened to deport them. Finally they were granted permission to stay in Thailand if they didn't speak publicly about the Black Friday incident¹⁶²

23 July -while continually calling on the international community and Asean to give the junta 'more time,' Thaksin also said that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi "is in no danger whatsoever."¹⁶³

25 July -US Senators criticized Thailand's crackdown on refugees and political activists, and their failure to join with Malaysia and other Asean members to take a strong stance against the SPDC. Senator Mitch McConnell said he was "becoming increasingly convinced that Thailand is on the side of the repressive junta in Rangoon."¹⁶⁴

The senator referred to a new proposal to make US assistance to Thailand conditional on Thailand taking action to sanction the SPDC; not obstructing delivery of humanitarian aid to Burmese refugees; and not forcibly repatriating people to Burma.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ RFA (13 Jun 03) Bush Watching Burma Closely: Pentagon Official 'We are deeply concerned'

¹⁶² AFP (4 Jul 03) Two witnesses to Myanmar violence seek UN protection in Bangkok

¹⁶³ The Age (23 July 03) Burmese Political Crisis Threatens Rupture Among Neighbours

¹⁶⁴ Nation (25 July 03) BURMA: 'Thailand siding with hated regime'

¹⁶⁵ Ibid

6 August -Thaksin lashed out against US criticism saying: “We are doing our best. What do you want us to do? Give them big mansions to live in?...As we are an ally, not a subordinate, he (McCain) should advise, rather than order.”¹⁶⁶ Thaksin also said that Thailand didn’t need to ask the US for any monetary assistance. “I and President Bush understand each other...There might be some senators that the government cannot control so they have come out to criticize their government,” he said.¹⁶⁷

20 August - Thaksin threatened to send troops to destroy drug factories across the border in Burma unless the SPDC takes action.¹⁶⁸ Several days later he stated: "A neighbour which lets its domestic drugs production ruin the future of its neighbour is not a good friendly country."¹⁶⁹

22 August -the SPDC warned that Thaksin’s comments "were discordant and detrimental to the existing friendship between the two neighbouring countries."¹⁷⁰

30 August -Thaksin expressed “praise and welcome” for the junta’s roadmap, predicting that reconciliation and democratic progress "will happen quickly if everybody sits together and helps."¹⁷¹

5 September -Thaksin is quoted in Thai-language newspaper Matichon, saying ‘the [Myanmar] regime [has] clearly shown its sincerity and opening itself [and] should be given time and support’...” if Suu Kyi was still stubborn, it would be helpless for her”.¹⁷²

8 August - Thailand’s 3rd army commander, Lt-Gen Picharnmet Muangmanee tells the Bangkok Post he had a ‘good signal’ from the regime that Aung San Suu Kyi will be released by Aug 22-24. Later Picharnmet denied the report.¹⁷³

31 August – It was reported that Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, predicted that Daw Suu would be freed within four or five months and ‘offered an important role in a new government.’¹⁷⁴

SPDC Promises to Asean - This time we really mean it!

¹⁶⁶ AFP (6 August 03) Thai PM brushes off criticism from US senators

¹⁶⁷ Ibid

¹⁶⁸ The Nation (21 August 03) Thaksin threatens to raid Burma drug sites

¹⁶⁹ The Nation (23 August 03) Thaksin Slams Burma: 'Not a good neighbour'

¹⁷⁰ From the New Light of Myanmar, reported in AFP (22 August 22 03) Myanmar hits out at Thailand's salvo over drugs trade

¹⁷¹ The Nation (1 September 03) REFORMING BURMA: PM backs junta's road map

¹⁷² Asia Times Online (5 September 03) ASEAN inaction irks Myanmar exiles

¹⁷³ Bangkok Post (8 August 03) Suu Kyi's Release Tipped

¹⁷⁴ Sydney Morning Herald (31 August 03) No freedom for Suu Kyi in Burma junta's reform plan

19 May, (11 days before the Black Friday crackdown) following a meeting with Khin Nyunt, Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart said: “..I have been informed that within only the next few weeks, there will be another political dialogue between the leadership of the SPDC and Aung San Suu Kyi.”¹⁷⁵

NLD spokesman U Lwin noted: ‘Other ministers of Thailand said the same thing before... It didn’t happen as they said. It became a tradition.’¹⁷⁶

Malaysia

Surprisingly, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad has taken the hardest stance against the military regime, calling for a strong, coordinated Asean response. In July he suggested that as a last resort Asean may consider expelling the regime. “In the end, it may have to be that way. I don't say that it cannot be, but certainly not at this moment.”¹⁷⁷

While this proposal was later deemed too drastic by other Asean leaders, it sent a strong message to the regime which undertook further PR efforts to try and win back regional support. Mahathir has been careful to distinguish that his condemnation is not an attempt to interfere in internal affairs of a member state, but rather a response to actions that directly affect Asean’s credibility. The Malaysian Prime Minister, who was primarily responsible for Burma’s admission to Asean in 1997, recognizes that his credibility is also at stake, and according to Razali has pledged to do his “utmost to influence the leadership (of Burma) to release Suu Kyi.”¹⁷⁸

In September, however, Malaysia rejected calls from domestic political opposition that Asean ban Burma from the summit in Bali unless Daw Suu is released. Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar stated that ‘isolating’ the regime would not be productive.¹⁷⁹

Singapore

Singapore’s Foreign Minister, S. Jayakumar described Aung San Suu Kyi's detention as "a setback" for Asean.¹⁸⁰ However Singapore has refrained from making public statements criticizing the regime, and plans continue for Burma to hold a travel show in Singapore in September to boost tourism.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁵ Bangkok Post (21 May 03) Junta plans to resume talks with Suu Kyi

¹⁷⁶ DVB (21 May 03) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the generals to talk?

¹⁷⁷ AFP (14 August 03) "Unthinkable" that Myanmar can lead ASEAN: top US official

¹⁷⁸ Malaysiakini.com (3 July 03) Burmese deputy FM to meet Mahathir over Suu Kyi

¹⁷⁹ AFP (11 September 03) Myanmar should not be excluded from ASEAN summit, says

Malaysia

¹⁸⁰ AFP (30 Jun 03) Singapore reiterates concern over Aung San Suu Kyi's detention

¹⁸¹ Xinhua News Agency (3 July 03) Myanmar to hold travel show in Singapore

Philippines

During a 30 July meeting with SPDC deputy Foreign Minister U Khin Maung Win, Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople urged the regime to release Daw Suu before the Bali meeting in October.¹⁸² The Philippines also strongly supported the Indonesian proposal to send an Asean delegation (troika) to Burma, but Ople insisted that "we will have to meet with Aung San Suu Kyi no longer as a prisoner but as a free person."¹⁸³

Ople responded cautiously to the SPDC's August reshuffle, noting that the developments "remain unclear and deserve close watching." Ople added, "Regardless of any changes in leadership, Myanmar should immediately release Daw Suu Kyi and her followers and allow them to participate fully and safely in the political life of the people of Myanmar."¹⁸⁴

Indonesia

At the end of June, Indonesia's Minister of Foreign Affairs said "We want to get results...but of course in a spirit of partnership with the Myanmar government."¹⁸⁵

On 28 June, Razali met with Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda to discuss ways to promote the release of Aung San Suu Kyi.¹⁸⁶

By 21 July, Indonesia was echoing Malaysia's position, with Foreign Ministry spokesman Marty Natalegawa noting that "the longer this issue is allowed to remain unresolved, the more it would constitute a setback, not only to the reconciliation process in Myanmar [Burma] itself, but also a setback to Asean ...indirectly."¹⁸⁷

On 30 July, Indonesian foreign Minister Hasan Wirayuda announced that the SPDC had assured them that Aung San Suu Kyi would be released before the

¹⁸² AFX.com (31 July 03) Philippines wants Aung San Suu Kyi freed before ASEAN Bali summit in Oct

¹⁸³ AFX.com (31 July 03) Philippines wants Aung San Suu Kyi freed before ASEAN Bali summit in Oct

¹⁸⁴ AFP (28 August 03) Philippines withholds judgment on new Myanmar PM, urges Suu Kyi release

¹⁸⁵ Jakarta Post (30 Jun 03) ASEAN insists on release of Suu Kyi

¹⁸⁶ Jakarta Post (30 June 03) ASEAN insists on release of Suu Kyi

¹⁸⁷ Nation (22 July 03) ASEAN membership: Give Rangoon time: Surakiart

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October Asean summit¹⁸⁸ He stated: "We have an assurance from Myanmar that the Suu Kyi case will be finished before the [October] Asean summit."¹⁸⁹

However, after the SPDC rejected Indonesia's proposal to send an Asean delegation to Burma, (See Troika) these assurances were less convincing. On 9 September, Indonesia urged the SPDC to release Daw Suu before the October meeting. "For the government of Indonesia, the release of Aung San Suu Kyi cannot be postponed again," said Hasan Wirayuda.¹⁹⁰

On September 12, Indonesia announced another proposal to send "a special envoy who will keep a low profile for an effective result." However the SPDC has yet to respond to the plan.¹⁹¹ (See Asean Member Proposals)

OTHER RESPONSES

Australia

Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer called for the SPDC to "step back from its regrettable actions,"¹⁹² and suspended Australia's human rights trainings for SPDC officials.¹⁹³ However Downer continues to oppose sanctions which he claims "haven't changed anything in Burma," and has vowed to maintain a policy of limited engagement with the regime.¹⁹⁴

Bangladesh

Foreign Minister M Morshed Khan said Bangladesh doesn't want to interfere in other countries' internal affairs, but he hoped Burma would find a better way to resolve its problems.¹⁹⁵ Relations between the two countries appear to have become even warmer since Black Friday. On 5 July, SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung traveled to Dhaka for an official visit, and in August the 2 countries instituted a special 'accounts trading system' to overcome the trade obstacles

¹⁸⁸ AP (30 July 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi to be released by October, Indonesian minister says

¹⁸⁹ AP (30 July 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi to be released by October, Indonesian minister

¹⁹⁰ Financial Times (10 September 03) Jakarta seeks release of Suu Kyi before Asean summit

¹⁹¹ Xinhua (12 September 03) Indonesia to send envoy to Myanmar for release of Suu Kyi

¹⁹² Australia Foreign Affairs Media Release (5 Jun 03) Visit to Burma by UNSG Special Envoy

¹⁹³ The Age (7 Jun 03) Riot fallout plunges Burma deeper into crisis

¹⁹⁴ DPA (18 Jun 03) Australian foreign minister decries sanctions against Myanmar & The Australian (17 Jun 03) Downer to seek Suu Kyi's release & Myanmar Times (23 June 23 03) ARF welcomes assurance on NLD leader

¹⁹⁵ Narinjara News (5 Jun 03) Bangladesh does not want to interfere in the internal affairs of Burma

created by US sanctions.¹⁹⁶ On 19 September, a high-level SPDC delegation departed for a 6-day trip to Bangladesh where they're scheduled to hold talks with military chiefs and the Bangladeshi President.¹⁹⁷

China

After the Black Friday attack, Foreign Ministry spokesman Kong Quan said: "Basically, China is not in favour of exerting pressure to others. It will not be helpful to solve the question, rather it will complicate it."¹⁹⁸

On 17 August, Deputy Sr-Gen Maung Aye led 35 SPDC officials on a high-level mission to China to beg for financial assistance to offset the crunch of US sanctions.¹⁹⁹

China has also spoken out against US Sanctions and ignored calls from the ICFTU, Razali and US lawmakers to exert more pressure on the regime.²⁰⁰ At the same time, Chinese leaders are concerned about the effects of Burma's increasing political and economic instability, and in July, stationed PLA troops along the Burma border.²⁰¹ The Chinese government has also continued to support the reconciliation process, and at the July ASEM meeting, foreign minister Li Zhaoxing stated: "China supports Asean on the Myanmar issue."²⁰²

EU

Leaders from France, Sweden, Italy, Germany and other EU countries made strong statements condemning the May 30th attack and subsequent detention of Daw Suu and opposition members. EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, Javier Solana said these actions broke earlier promises by the SPDC to engage in dialogue and said that the EU would respond with stricter sanctions.²⁰³

¹⁹⁶ Narinjara News (1 August 03) Dhaka sends 44-product list to Rangoon & Deutsche Presse Agentur (7 July 03) Myanmar seeks Bangladesh's help in ending isolation of Suu Kyi

¹⁹⁷ AFP (19 September 03) Myanmar military team begins Bangladesh visit amid growing ties

¹⁹⁸ AFP (26 Jun 03) China says it will not pressure ally Myanmar

¹⁹⁹ The Irrawaddy (18 August 03) Junta Seeks China's Help

²⁰⁰ Network Media Group (22 August 03) ICFTU denounces China on Burma &

AFP (20 August 03) China denounces sanctions against Myanmar & Reuters (11 August 03) U.N. envoy wants China role in Myanmar crisis & AFP (16 July 03) Top US official condemns China's stance on Myanmar

²⁰¹ Irrawaddy (2 July 03) Chinese Troops on Burma's Border &

Inter Press Service (27 August 03) China Supports Burma, But Urges Change

²⁰² Inter Press Service (27 August 03) China Supports Burma, But Urges Change

²⁰³ EU High Representative for the Common Foreign and Security Policy, urges the release of Aung San Suu Kyi

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India

India and Burma have only grown cozier since the May 30th attack. No doubt the SPDC was heartened to hear from an Indian government spokesman that: "India believes that the solution to internal problems must come from within and that external pressure can be counter-productive."²⁰⁴

Since the attack the two countries have exchanged high-level visits, with Foreign Minister Win Aung arriving in India on July 8th, and the head of the Indian Navy visiting Burma to discuss increased naval cooperation on 3 September.²⁰⁵ On 14 July, the 2 countries also signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to boost bilateral trade.²⁰⁶

Japan

Japan initially failed to take a strong position on Black Friday, but by mid June, Japanese Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi was threatening to 'review' economic aid to Burma unless Daw Suu was released. On 25 June, Japan announced a freeze on all new bilateral aid after several unsuccessful meetings between Senior Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs, Tetsuro Yano, and SPDC leaders including Khin Nyunt. A foreign ministry official said, "We will try to make Myanmar take the international community's concerns seriously."²⁰⁷

Japan also expressed support for ASEAN involvement in the reform process, including the proposal to send an ASEAN troika to Burma and Thailand's 'road map.'²⁰⁸

Pakistan

As part of the SPDC's post-Black Friday regional tour, Win Aung visited Pakistan on 8 July.²⁰⁹ During the visit the SPDC Foreign Minister agreed to support Pakistan's bid to join the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).²¹⁰

US

The US has led the international condemnation of the SPDC. The U.S. State Department called the NLD members' detention in isolation "outrageous and

²⁰⁴ Washington Post Foreign Service (9 Jun 03) U.S. Presses for Suu Kyi's Release

²⁰⁵ The Hindu (11 July 03) Myanmarese Foreign Minister meets Vajpayee & Xinhua (5 September 03) Indian naval chief visits Myanmar

²⁰⁶ Xinhua News Agency (July 15 2003) Myanmar, India sign MOU on setting up joint trade committee

²⁰⁷ AFP (30 Jun 03) Japan slams Myamar's junta over detention of Aung San Suu Kyi

²⁰⁸ Kyodo News (17 July 03) Japanese Foreign Minister calls for dispatch of ASEAN mission to Burma & Nation (1 August 03) Japan backs push for road map on Burma

²⁰⁹ AFP (7 July 03) Myanmar foreign minister to visit Pakistan

²¹⁰ AFP (8 July 03) Myanmar offers support for Pakistan's bid to join ASEAN security forum

unacceptable” and called for the SPDC to “provide a full accounting of the dead, injured, and missing.”²¹¹

INVESTIGATION: Between Jun 2 – 5, US Embassy staff conducted an investigation at the scene of the attack, where they found evidence of ‘great violence,’ and concluded that the attack was premeditated.²¹²

U.S. envoys in at least 11 countries, most significantly China and Thailand, have sought to encourage these governments to pressure for the release of Daw Suu.²¹³

On 19 June, the US Council on Foreign Relations-sponsored Task Force on Burma released a report with recommendations for US policy on Burma in regards to humanitarian assistance, human rights, narcotics control, refugees, democracy and rule of law.²¹⁴

Rogues Gallery for Black Friday

SR-GEN THAN SHWE: ‘THE BUCK STOPS HERE’

The Black Friday attack could not have been carried out except under the direction of Sr-Gen Than Shwe, who has openly displayed his loathing of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and contempt for the UN-brokered dialogue. Prior to Black Friday, Than Shwe promoted officials who openly opposed dialogue, namely Lt-Gen Soe Win, Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan and Brig-Gen Khin Ye, who are among those believed to have orchestrated the attack. In the months after the 30 May attack, Than Shwe presided over a nation-wide military buildup, and a simultaneous crackdown on the democratic opposition.



The following 5 officials attended a closed-door meeting the day before the attack.²¹⁵

LT-GEN SOE WIN: ‘THE MASTERMIND’



Lt-Gen Soe Win is widely believed to have been the mastermind behind the Black Friday attack.

Prior to September 2002, Lt-Gen Soe Win was the head of the Northwest Command in Sagaing Division (where the attack took

²¹¹ U.S. Department of State (5 Jun 03) Statement by Philip T. Reeker, Deputy Spokesman

²¹² AP (5 Jun 03) Clash between followers of Myanmar opposition leader, pro-government supporters appears premeditated: U.S. official & Bangkok Post (8 Jun 03) Attack on Burmese Activist Seen as Work of Military

²¹³ Washington Post Foreign Service (9 Jun 03) U.S. Presses for Suu Kyi's Release

²¹⁴ Available on-line <http://www.cfr.org/publication.php?id=6054>

²¹⁵ Kao Wao News (30 May – 10 Jun 03) Eyewitness accounts of the regime's ambush on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her entourage as recounted by some escapees

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place). He is viewed as a hardliner, specifically in his attitude towards the opposition, and a loyal supporter of Sr-Gen Than Shwe, who is patron if the USDA.

On 21 January, Soe Win declared: "The SPDC not only won't talk to the NLD [National League for Democracy] but will also **never** hand over power to the NLD."²¹⁶ Days later he was rewarded with a promotion to Secretary 2.²¹⁷ Prior to the Black Friday attack he toured Sagaing, Pegu, and Irrawaddy Divisions to rally USDA members to harass the NLD.²¹⁸ On 25 August, Than Shwe appointed Soe Win Gen to the position of Secretary 1, replacing Gen Khin Nyunt, who was 'promoted' to Prime Minister.

BRIG-GEN KYAW HSAN: 'SPIN DOCTOR'

Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan is the SPDC's Minister of Information and a secretariat member of the USDA. Brig-Gen Kyaw Hsan was in Sagaing Division during the 3rd week of May. After his September 2002 appointment as SPDC Minister for Information, Kyaw Hsan said that the national media must be used to counter "accusations" by "destructive expatriate groups" and "terrorist insurgents" about the regime's alleged human rights abuses.²¹⁹ In February 2003, Kyaw Hsan also launched the first major media attack against the democratic opposition in over 2 years, calling them "destructive elements" who must be "annihilated."²²⁰

MAJ-GEN SAW TUN: 'MOB RULER'

Maj-Gen Saw Tun is the Director-in-Charge of the USDA and Minister of Construction. He is also reported to be a key organizer of the attack.

BRIG-GEN SOE NAING: 'HOME ADVANTAGE'

Brig-Gen Soe Naing is the commander of the Northwest Regional Command, Monywa.²²¹ He was the former Commander of MOC-15, Buthitaung, Arakan State

COLONEL TIN HLAING: 'JAILER'

Colonel Tin Hlaing, the Minister for Home Affairs (Interior Minister), is also chairman of both the Central Committee for



²¹⁶ DVB (28 Jan 03) No plan to talk to NLD and we are not afraid of USA-S

²¹⁷ AP (3 Feb 03) Myanmar reshuffles cabinet

²¹⁸ DVB (28 Jan 03) No plan to talk to NLD and we are not afraid of USA -

²¹⁹ New Light of Myanmar (24 Oct 02) Leader says media must confront "smear campaigns" from abroad

²²⁰ AP (14 Feb 03) Myanmar's ruling junta attacks opposition

²²¹ Kao Wao News (30 May – 10 Jun 03) Eyewitness accounts of the regime's ambush on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her entourage as recounted by some escapees

Drug Abuse Control (CCDAC) and the SPDC's human rights committee. Colonel Tin Hlaing has consistently taken a hard line against the democratic opposition. In July 2001, he warned officials not to allow the NLD to reopen offices except in certain areas.²²² On 19 May 2002, he claimed that there were "no more political prisoners in Burma, and the 200 NLD members in detention "... were actually involved in criminal activities such as bombings in public places and working with insurgency groups."²²³

KHIN YE: 'ARRESTER'

Khin Ye is the Chief Inspector of the SPDC Police Force.

²²² NCGUB News: The Talks (18 Sept 01) The Facts

²²³ AFP (23 June 03) Japanese deputy FM meets Myanmar No.3 [to] push for Suu Kyi's release & NCGUB (20 May 02) NCGUB Condemns 'Irresponsible Remarks' by SPDC Official

DEMOCRACY AND DIALOGUE

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

"To ignore the result of the 1990 elections is to have total disrespect for the people and is also an insult to the people...During my travels I have seen what the people have suffered because of the lack of democracy...We are prepared to speedily set in motion a meaningful political dialogue." ~ Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, address on 13th anniversary of 1990 elections- 3 days before Black Friday²²⁴

On 23 April, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi turned up the heat on the regime by publicly expressing doubts about possible dialogue for the first time. "We have been concerned with the lack of progress...We have been forced to question the integrity of the SPDC and their sincerity in achieving national reconciliation," she said.²²⁵ Most believe that the talks are purposely being stalled by Sr-Gen Than Shwe, who has made little effort to hide his loathing for Aung San Suu Kyi and contempt for a UN-brokered dialogue.

RAZALI LOCKED OUT

After 4 months of pleading for permission to visit Burma, and repeatedly being told the regime was 'too busy' receive him, UN Special Envoy Razali Ismail was finally cleared for a visit in early June. Daw Suu noted: "If we really respect the position of the United Nations we should let him come here. I think it is for Razali to decide when he should come and not have to wait for an invitation."²²⁶

NLD TRIP TO CHIN STATE - SPDC TURNS UP THE HEAT

While local authorities and USDA members worked hard to disrupt the NLD trip to Chin State by blaring loud music during Daw Suu's speeches and harassing supporters, the trip was nonetheless a huge success. Tens of thousands came out to show their support, and Daw Suu and the NLD team inaugurated 6 NLD branch offices.²²⁷

On 3 April, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi left for a 12-day trip to western Chin State and Sagaing Division. She was accompanied by NLD vice chairman U Tin Oo and up to 20 NLD youth members. Even before she left, anti-NLD pamphlets were reportedly being circulated in her first stop, Gangaw, Magwe Division.²²⁸

²²⁴ AFP (27 May 03) Myanmar's election result must be honoured, Suu Kyi says on poll

²²⁵ AFP (23 April 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi complains for first time of stalled talks

²²⁶ AFP (23 April 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi complains for first time of stalled talks

²²⁷ DVB (3 April 03) Surprise - Daw Aung San Suu Kyi harassed

²²⁸ Irrawaddy (3 April 03) Suu Kyi May Face Harassment, NLD Says

On 8 April, the NLD team held a mass rally in Kale, Sagaing Division which was attended by up to 40,000 people. During the rally, members of No.17 military intelligence unit videotaped people and demanded a list of the people providing security for Daw Suu.²²⁹

On 10 April, it was reported that authorities in Haka, Tunzan, Mindat, and Matupi (Chin State) and Salin (Magwe Division) were passing out documents and posters that personally attacked Daw Suu.²³⁰ Some of the pamphlets included photos of Daw Suu with the caption “the bad woman who had a white Indian husband,” and, “the woman, Aung San Suu Kyi who was born of pure Burmese parents but unable to be a Burmese mother.”²³¹

Upon the NLD team’s return to Rangoon, the SPDC dismissed complaints about persistent government-sponsored harassment on her trip as merely “noisy conditions and over-zealous cameramen.”²³² The regime then accused Daw Suu’s bodyguards of having “grabbed” a cameraman trying to film her. The NLD maintains that this incident never happened.²³³ [For information on the NLD trip to Kachin State see Black Friday section]

TISSUE OF LIES

In the weeks before the Black Friday attack, the SPDC coldly and deliberately lied to the international community while plotting a bloody crackdown. Following allegations of harassment during the NLD trip to Chin state, the regime released a statement saying: “The government has complete trust in Daw Aung San Suu Kyi’s commitment to ensuring the smooth and stable development of Myanmar.”²³⁴

The junta claimed that political opposition groups had “unparalleled freedom to conduct their activities;” and “(political) prisoners are being released at a steady pace.” Getting their money’s worth in PR out of Australia’s human rights training programs, the junta claimed it has been “reforming its own internal procedures and practices through human rights programs - run by outside humanitarian groups.”²³⁵

Even the usually optimistic Razali wasn’t taken in by the regime’s rhetoric. “We all grabbed at something indicative of much bigger than what it is,” he said of the

²²⁹ DVB (8 Apr 03) Aung San Suu Kyi gets rousing welcome from 35,000 people in Kale

²³⁰ DVB (10 Apr 03) Poor road conditions affecting Aung San Suu Kyi tour entourage

²³¹ DVB (15 April 03) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in Chauk

²³² AFP (15 April 03) Myanmar junta says it has 'complete trust' in Aung San Suu Kyi

²³³ AFP (14 April 03) Myanmar's opposition denies junta's allegations of law-breaking

²³⁴ AFP (15 April 03) Myanmar junta says it has 'complete trust' in Aung San Suu Kyi

²³⁵ AP (9 May 03) Myanmar junta says it is serious about improving human rights

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SPDC's statement of support for Daw Suu. "It's going to the point where it's negative. The international community must draw its own conclusions."²³⁶

Note: the most significant development concerning democracy and dialogue during this period, i.e. the Black Friday crackdown, is detailed in its own section of this report card.

MILITARY THREAT

Increasing

Stagnant

Decreasing

Military analysts believe the events of Black Friday highlight the growing divide between hardliners and moderates. Army leaders aligned with Sr-Gen Than Shwe have showed they have no intention of ever talking to the opposition, with one diplomat commenting: "There is no chance of anything resembling democracy being established in Myanmar during General Shwe's lifetime."²³⁷ An Indian diplomat who had worked in the Soviet Union compared Burma to a more repressive version of Stalinist Russia, and Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir told Than Shwe "the management of your country is worse than the management of the worst country in Africa."²³⁸

"Pragmatists" aligned with Military Intelligence Chief Gen Khin Nyunt, reportedly support a resurrection of the dialogue process in order to guarantee a future role for the military in Burma. These leaders and the SPDC Foreign Ministry continue to warn of a major crisis in the coming months if the talks aren't resumed. One senior SPDC minister said: "Time is running out for us, our only chance of preventing the country from collapsing into an economic and humanitarian crisis is progress in the dialogue process."²³⁹

However, both Khin Nyunt and Than Shwe continue to publicly blame the country's problems on everyone but themselves and their cronies. At a public speech on 4 April, Khin Nyunt blamed Burma's economic, social and political problems on internal and external "destructionists," and on 1 May, Than Shwe urged workers to "safeguard the nation against the danger of neo-colonialists."²⁴⁰

²³⁶ Reuters (21 Apr 03) UN Myanmar envoy frustrated by Yangon, seeks visit

²³⁷ South China Morning Post (11 May 03) Aung San Suu Kyi is Myanmar's only hope for democracy, but the generals refuse to budge

²³⁸ Ibid

²³⁹ Bangkok Post (3 Jun 03) Suu Kyi detention points to widening military split

²⁴⁰ Xinhua News (1 May 03) Myanmar top leader calls for building modern nation & Xinhua News (4 April 03) Myanmar leader complains of pressures from internal, external forces

BUILDING CAPACITY

In the midst of a deepening economic crisis, the SPDC continues to pump money into the military, partly to ensure that any potential unrest can be quickly crushed.

Shan State

In January 2003, the SPDC set up a basic military training school at Wiang-Kao, west of Tongoong, Shan State. The school, under the command of Col Tint Lwin, is producing 2,500 new soldiers every 4 months.²⁴¹

In April, local SPDC army commanders ordered people in Mongton, Kengtawng (Kengtung), Mongpan, and Mongnai to fashion weapons such as slingshots, swords, lances, bows and arrows. Mongton residents said that no explanation was given for these orders.²⁴²

In June, the Shan Herald Agency for News (SHAN) reported that since the last dry season (Nov-May) there has been a build up of troops in Kengtawng (Kengtung) Shan State, including LIBs 246, 332, 524 from Kunhing; IB 99 from Langkher; and IB 297 along with LIBs 520, 575, and 577 from Mongpan.²⁴³

Mon State's nuclear reactor

Progress continues on the construction of the SPDC's Russian-supported nuclear reactor. On 31 March, 5,000 tons of Russian equipment arrived via 2 freighters at the Zadetkyi Kyun Naval Base in Kathaung Township, Mon State. Between 25 March and 3 April, 32 Russian experts surveyed the proposed building site at Kalagok Kyun. The SPDC has reportedly already confiscated more than 300 acres of land from local people for its construction.²⁴⁴

GOOD FRIENDS & NEIGHBORS

The SPDC continues to rely heavily on military support and arms from China, Russia, and India. On 16 May, the Karen National Union (KNU) publicly urged Russia, China, India, Singapore and Poland to stop providing military equipment to the regime. KNU General Secretary, Padoh Mahn Sha said, "Instead of selling arms to the dictators, these countries should cooperate and help to bring democracy and a workable federal state which will be beneficial to the people of Burma."²⁴⁵

The KNU estimates that the junta has bought US\$ 1.5 billion in tanks and gunships from China, as well as 75mm mortar shells from India.

²⁴¹ SHAN (2 Jun 03) Plant awaits power producer from Japan

²⁴² SHAN (4 April 03) Junta staves off axis of evil

²⁴³ SHAN (2 Jun 03) Plant awaits power producer from Japan

²⁴⁴ DVB (5 Apr 03) "Nuclear reactor" equipment reportedly shipped to Burmese naval base

²⁴⁵ Irrawaddy (16 May 03) KNU Warns Arms Suppliers Not to Trade with Burma

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India: More Weapons

In May, India acknowledged selling weapons to the SPDC, with a representative from the Ministry of Defense commenting that: "As part of the government policy of export promotion and development, India is inclined to export arms to countries, including Burma."²⁴⁶

Earlier this year, India sold up to eighty 75 mm mountain guns to the regime, along with small arms and ammunition. "The arms exports reveal that Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's government has pulled out all stops to befriend the military dictatorship in order to counter Chinese influence in Myanmar and Southeast Asia," said retired Lt-Col J. K. Dutt, a strategic affairs and international relations expert at Calcutta's Jadavpur University.²⁴⁷

Russia & China: Military Assistance

In June, the SPDC will begin a 45-day military exercise in the Coastal Regional Command with the assistance of Russian and Chinese military experts. The exercises, which will involve more than 10 combat battalions, 2 groups of fighter planes, and warships, will take place at the No 12 Military Training School in Pyicha village, Palaw Township, Tenasserim Division.²⁴⁸

FORCED CONSCRIPTION ON RISE

The SPDC continues to use forced conscription, often of children, to swell the ranks of its armed forces. In April, Kyaw, a 16 year old defector, reported that almost half of the soldiers in his battalion, IB 343, were under 17. The youngest soldier was only 11 years old.²⁴⁹

In May, SHAN reported SPDC authorities had ordered village elders in Mongton and Monghsat Townships, Shan State to provide them with a total of 450 new recruits. One man in Mongpan Township was told that if he joined the local militia he would be exempted from forced labor and taxes.²⁵⁰

In June, the SPDC stepped up conscription in Arakan State, forcing former deserters to re-enlist or face a 3 year prison sentence. The western command, which used to demand that each village provide recruits, is now making army units fulfill the recruitment quotas. Defense force headquarters and battalions

²⁴⁶ Pak Tribune (12 May 03) India actively exporting arms to Burma

²⁴⁷ South China Morning Post (24 May 03) India woos Myanmar with weapons deal

²⁴⁸ DVB (6 May 03) Burmese forces to stage joint military exercises

²⁴⁹ AP Worldstream (4 May 03) Myanmar child soldiers face uncertain future after forced conscription

²⁵⁰ SHAN (13 May 03) Burmese Refugee on the rise: Unfortunately Thailand does not recognise Shans as refugees

now have to conscript at least 2 recruits each month, and each army company must recruit at least one person.²⁵¹

BOMB BLASTS

The SPDC blames the KNU for the 16 May bomb blast at a cinema in Pyu Town, Pegu Division, which killed one person and injured 47 others.²⁵² Local residents believe that the bomb was set by USDA members who, angered by the cinema owners' refusal to hand over money, warned 'that their business would bear the cost of their refusal to donate.'²⁵³

On 21 May, SPDC trucks and oil tankers heading to Kengtung, Shan state were attacked by an armed rebel group which has not been identified.²⁵⁴

These attacks along with recent KNU attacks on natural gas pipelines (see Economy) may have prompted the SPDC's directive on 24 May putting all armed organizations on a state of emergency. (See also Black Friday) The directive also advised all military and civil department heads to work full time and avoid unnecessary travel.²⁵⁵

NAVY EXTORTION

The SPDC Navy checkpoint at Taungfu village, on the Kywegu River in Pauktaw Township, Arakan State has reportedly been extorting money from all passing boats. As the Navy control officer in Sittwe is hoarding gas rations, part of the money extorted on the Kywegu is used to pay for gas.²⁵⁶

DRUGS

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

The SPDC continues to claim success at drug eradication through limited arrests and seizures, while failing to crack down on the major drug runners - SPDC officials and United Wa State Army (UWSA) allies. According to regime statistics, between 1988 and 2002, the SPDC investigated 68,074 drug cases, arrested 91,532 drug offenders and seized several dozen tons of illegal

²⁵¹ Narinjara (18 Jun 03) Increased Conscripts in the Burmese Army

²⁵² AFP (17 May 03) One killed by bomb in Myanmar

²⁵³ Mizzima (26 May 03) Who's the real culprit behind bomb explosion in Pyu cinema?

²⁵⁴ Irrawaddy (22 May 03) Both Thai and Burmese military sources say the Shan State Army (South) are to be blamed

²⁵⁵ DVB (26 May 03) Burma War office places all armed organizations on state of emergency

²⁵⁶ Narinjara (30 Jun 03) Burmese Navy Station: just for collecting bribes

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narcotics.²⁵⁷ These figures hide the fact that most people arrested are low-level dealers or addicts, who may be more in need of rehabilitation than imprisonment. A recent UN Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention (UNODC) survey in the southern Wa region of Shan State found that 53% of opium addicts began taking the drug for “medicinal purposes,” an indication of the general lack of medical treatment in the area.²⁵⁸

Drug arrests and detentions are often arbitrary. In April, Earth Rights International interviewed 2 men who said they had been rounded up with many others in a random drug raid and given long sentences because they could not pay a bribe. One of these men, Aung Naing, noted these experiences are common, saying: “To get a promotion, police in the area have to bring 20 [drug] cases every month and if they do not have enough cases, they arrest people on the road or people who quarrel with each other.”²⁵⁹

WA

SPDC-UWSA task force: Sending Foxes to Guard the Henhouse

The SPDC has reportedly set up a special joint drug task force with the UWSA to eliminate drugs in Wa areas. On 29 April, the junta reported that recent combined task force operations had seized an estimated 555 kgs of heroin and opium and arrested 48 drug producers and traffickers.²⁶⁰ Using known drug traffickers to police other traffickers has allowed the UWSA to crack down on small-time producers and maintain dominance over the trade. On 8 April, Wa soldiers attacked a militia-run heroin refinery in Mong Ton Township, Shan State, which had been operating without Wa permission. The ensuing battle resulted in the killing of 9 people, including 4 villagers. Sources on the China-Burma border report that Wa soldiers, local SPDC Army units, and the militia often clash over control of the drug trade, but this was the first time that they had actually fought each other.²⁶¹

During a March relief mission to southeastern Shan State, Dictator Watch documented evidence of widespread SPDC army involvement in production and trafficking of heroin and amphetamines. The relief team reported that opium grown in this area is taxed yearly by the SPDC, and transported through UWSA and SPDC checkpoints to heroin refineries, which are themselves guarded and/or operated by UWSA and SPDC troops. In villages north of the Salween river, the team reported that up to a third of the male population was addicted to opium. In

²⁵⁷ Xinhua (25 Jun 03) Myanmar makes achievements in drug control

²⁵⁸ Myanmar Times (30 May 03) The Wa drug-free vision

²⁵⁹ ERI (8 Apr 03) Caught in the Wrong Place at the Wrong Time

²⁶⁰ AFP (1 May 03) Myanmar seizes 555 kilos of heroin and opium, arrests 48

²⁶¹ DVB (8 April 03) Nine Killed in Wa Clash with Militia in Shan State

this area, the SPDC army also reportedly taxes each village for its opium and directly oversees 2 heroin labs at Mong Htaw and Mong Kyawt.²⁶²

Goodbye opium, Hello Amphetamines

Diplomats in Rangoon credit increased pressure from China for forcing Kokang leaders to severely curtail opium production in Shan State. UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC, formerly UNDCP) chief in Rangoon Jean-Luc Lemahieu applauded the SPDC's "spectacular" 24% reduction in opium in 2002, but said: "It's going down a bit too fast. And now we have issues which we have to tackle to make the reduction sustainable as well as address the issues of human rights."²⁶³

Referring to pledges to free the Wa region of opium by 2005, UNODC project coordinator Xavier Bouan warned: "The going is likely to be extremely tough for the rural poor, especially without increased international assistance...as half of the region's income is derived from poppy cultivation."²⁶⁴

Wa leaders, despite obvious evidence to the contrary, continue to deny UWSA involvement in amphetamine production, and claim to have arrested 50 people for drug offenses. Both the UN and Thailand have officially placed the blame for trafficking and production on Chinese 'criminal gangs' - not the Wa.²⁶⁵ Meanwhile a diplomat in Rangoon noted that: "At present yaa baa [amphetamines] seems to be the most effective crop substitution program in the Golden Triangle."²⁶⁶

US REPORT: SPDC LINK TO DRUGS

In April, the US State Department's bi-annual report on conditions inside Burma stated: "Burma remains one of the world's largest producers of opium, heroin, and amphetamine-type stimulants." The report went on to note that declines in opium and heroin production have been offset by rapidly increasing methamphetamine production, and there are reliable reports that some SPDC officials are involved in the drug trade.²⁶⁷

In June, the US added the UWSA and its leader, Wei Hsueh-Kang, to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act. The act ensures that banks, companies or

²⁶² Dictator Watch (23 Jun 03) Relief mission, mine victim and additional analysis of Burma www.dictatorwatch.org

²⁶³ AFP (26 Jun 03) Myanmar junta blasts EU boycott of annual drug-burning ceremony

²⁶⁴ AFP (23 May 03) In remotest Myanmar, reconciliation yields results

²⁶⁵ Inter Press Service (7 May 03) US to Burma: Do More to Cease Drug Production

²⁶⁶ Inter Press Service (7 May 03) US to Burma: Do More to Cease Drug Production

²⁶⁷ Conditions in Burma and U.S. Policy Toward Burma for the Period September 28, 2002 – March 27, 2003, Released by the Bureau of East Asian and Pacific Affairs (11 April 03)

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individuals who do business with Wei or the UWSA through or in the US will receive heavy fines and prison sentences.²⁶⁸

EU & JAPAN: MORE MONEY FOR DRUG AID, BOYCOTT

In May, Japan, Germany and Italy pledged over US\$ 3 million to the UNODC for drug eradication efforts in Wa areas.²⁶⁹ (See Aid)

Regime officials were outraged when, in the wake of Black Friday and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's continuing detention, a number of European diplomats boycotted the SPDC's annual drug burning ceremony on 26 June. One diplomat noted: "... I felt in the context at the moment that it was not necessary or even the right thing to go there."

SPDC spokesman Colonel Hla Min exposed the SPDC's alleged drug war as just another international PR exercise, saying: "We are fighting the war (on drugs) for them and they boycott us, this drug thing is not a big problem for us in this country and these efforts are for the benefit of the international community."²⁷⁰

REGIONAL THREAT

Burma a Weak Link in Thailand's Anti-Drug Campaign

The end of April marked the completion of Prime Minister Thaksin's 3-month anti-drug campaign, and Thaksin announced "I firmly believe the country has overcome drug-related problems."²⁷¹ However, the SPDC, despite paying lip-service to eradicating drug production and trafficking networks into Thailand, has continually failed to do so. As the drug campaign drew to a close, Thai drug control officials received information that traffickers had stashed large supplies of amphetamines in Burma with plans to move them quickly into Thailand.

While Narcotics Control Board Official Chidchai Vanasatidya dismissed rumors that the Thai Army would carry out attacks on Wa drug factories in Burma, Thai officials are clearly frustrated by the SPDC's lack of cooperation.²⁷² In April Thaksin assigned Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh to try to elicit more support from the junta in drug eradication. However in June, one news source cited evidence that 3 drug refineries under the patronage of SPDC officials continued to operate in Tachilek, Burma, directly opposite Thailand.²⁷³ On 13 June, Thailand's Deputy Army chief, Wattanachai Chaimuenwong, complained that there was no evidence that the regime had shut down a single drug

²⁶⁸ Xinhua (26 Jun 03) US tightens economic attack against Myanmar's drug dealers

²⁶⁹ Xinhua (30 May 03) Three countries extend aid for Myanmar's drug control project

²⁷⁰ AFP (26 Jun 03) Myanmar junta blasts EU boycott of annual drug-burning ceremony

²⁷¹ The Nation (24 April 03) PM to declare drug victory

²⁷² Nation (25 April 03) Chavalit to tackle drugs problem with Burma

²⁷³ Asia Times Online (26 Jun 03) Myanmar: Pumping out pills on demand

production factory, and the drug supply chain running along Thailand's northern border with Burma had not been disrupted.²⁷⁴

A number of recent incidents involving Burmese drug traffickers in Thailand highlight this problem.

7 April: Thai soldiers killed 2 Burmese drug traffickers who allegedly opened fire on them at the Tharua Din Dam temporary border crossing in Chiang Mai province. Soldiers later found 2 sacks of methamphetamine pills near the bodies and are now recommending the border crossing be closed.²⁷⁵

19 May: Thai Defense Minister Thamarak Isarankura claimed that a US intelligence report contained evidence that Wa drug dealers had put an 80 million baht (US\$ 1,997,262) contract out on Prime Minister Thaksin.²⁷⁶

12 June: Thai police arrested Laota Saenli, a key aide to Wa druglord Wei Hsuehkang, along with his 2 sons, at their house in Chiang Mai.²⁷⁷

27 June: Thai soldiers killed 2 Wa soldiers guarding a drug convoy during a firefight in Mai Ai District, Chiang Mai Province. Soldiers found 2 rucksacks containing 100,000 speed pills and an AK47 rifle near the bodies.²⁷⁸

Burmese Amphetamines - Not Just for Thailand Anymore

On 7 May, Sandro Calvani, head of the UNODC's regional centre for East Asia and the Pacific, reported that due to Thailand's drug crackdown, traffickers were turning to new markets and/or production locations in Laos, Cambodia, and India. "The concern is related to India and Cambodia because of seizures there, and to Laos where some tableting operations may have been moved from Myanmar," Calvani said.²⁷⁹

India gets Help to Cope with Burmese Drugs

India is now receiving US assistance to cope with a growing drug problem in northeastern states along the porous Burma border. Ephedrine is now reportedly being smuggled to Burma for conversion to amphetamines, and then returned for sale in India. In May, Indian officials arrested 5 traffickers, 3 of whom were Burmese, who were believed to be running drugs between Burma and India.²⁸⁰

²⁷⁴ Xinhua (13 Jun 03) Thai Army urges Rangoon to destroy narcotic factories

²⁷⁵ Xinhua (7 April 03) Thai soldiers kill 2 Myanmar drug smugglers

²⁷⁶ DPA (19 May 03) Thailand tightens security amid reports of assassination threat

²⁷⁷ Nation (13 Jun 03) Pre-dawn drug raid: Wa kingpin arrested

²⁷⁸ Bangkok Post (28 Jun 03) Wa fighters killed in clash

²⁷⁹ AFP (9 May 03) Traffickers pursue new markets after Thai anti-drug blitz

²⁸⁰ Mizzima (23 May 03) Burmese and Chinese drug traffickers arrested in India

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Burmese Drug Labs Moving to Laos

In June, Thai Lt-Col Manop Khaikhunthod stated that many drug production centers in Mong Yawn, Shan State had been relocated to Khwang Bo Kaew in northern Laos.²⁸¹ US intelligence sources believe that the majority of methamphetamine production is now occurring along the Burma/Laos border.²⁸²

Burmese Drugs Flood Bangladesh

Bangladesh's Department of Narcotics Control (DNC) says that the country has experienced a large increase in drug users and traffickers, notably in towns like Cox's Bazaar along the Burma border. One DNC official said, "We only have an official statistics about Injecting Drug Users (IDU), which is 3,000, but the actual number would be close to 20,000. IDUs are mostly responsible for spreading diseases like HIV/AIDS."²⁸³

China Border a Transit Point for Burmese Drugs

Sources in Kunming, China estimate that Burmese Muslims working with Chinese Muslim groups smuggle 300 to 400 kgs of heroin into Yunnan province each month, which is then moved on to other countries. One local analyst commenting about the large drug flow said, "I don't think this is an effect of the war on drugs in Thailand...Drug trafficking is usual in Yunnan."²⁸⁴

In March, acting on information from Chinese officials, the SPDC destroyed a drug factory in Shan State, 10kms from the China border.²⁸⁵

China reported that they have arrested over 100 Burmese drug traffickers since the middle of 2002.²⁸⁶ On 28 March, Chinese authorities found 300 kgs of heroin in trucks carrying fish from Burma to Kunming. Another 200 kgs of heroin was seized on the 2nd and 4th of April outside the Chinese border town of Ruili. On 27 May, a police station in Yunnan seized 25.5 kgs of smuggled opium and arrested a suspect who claimed to be Burmese.²⁸⁷

²⁸¹ Bangkok Post (23 Jun 03) Shan plants move to Laos to dodge law

²⁸² Inter Press Service (7 May 03) US to Burma: Do More to Cease Drug Production

²⁸³ Narinjara (12 May 03) Bangladesh: the new passage to Drugs from Golden Triangle

²⁸⁴ Irrawaddy (24 April 03) Heroin Seized in China

²⁸⁵ Xinhua (9 April 03) Police say joint efforts of China, Burma lead to destruction of drug

factory

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Xinhua (30 May 03) 25.5 kilograms of opium seized in S.W. province

ECONOMY

 Improving

 Stagnant

 Deteriorating

FUNNY NUMBERS

While the majority of the population slides deeper into poverty, Burma's 'official' GDP growth rate for 2002 was 9.7%, about twice that of other Asian economies.²⁸⁸ However, Rangoon-based diplomats estimate the country's annual inflation rate is now over 60%.²⁸⁹ The SPDC's Central Statistical Organization (CSO) claims that Burma has 57,000 industrial enterprises, an increase of 15,000 from 1988. Of these, the CSO says that 1,600 are state-owned, over 50,000 are privately owned, and the rest are run by cooperatives.²⁹⁰ SPDC figures do not indicate how many of these 'private' industries are in fact owned by regime officials. The CSO also reported that industrial sector production in the past year was over 10 billion kyats (\$US 11 million).²⁹¹

BANK CRISIS CONTINUES

Burma's banking crisis continued to deteriorate through June. There were rumors that the regime had failed to hand over the 25 billion kyat (\$US 2,500,000) they had promised to bail out 3 of the largest banks. Analysts are predicting that many banks will soon file for bankruptcy, with one Rangoon-based writer saying: "they [bank officials] are waiting for government permission, they have already applied."²⁹²

Expected protests by account holders have failed to materialize, with an employee at one of the private banks saying: "they [depositors] think they will lose their money if they protest."²⁹³ In May, investors began selling their frozen account balances at heavy losses to try and recoup some of their savings. The state controlled central bank has responded by continuing efforts to forcibly recall loans, and reportedly authorities are trying to intimidate anyone who hasn't paid off at least 20% of their loans. In addition, the shortage of hard currency has prevented large bank transfers, forcing businesspeople to carry their cash with them.²⁹⁴

²⁸⁸ World Bank (Apr 03) World Development Indicators Database

²⁸⁹ Wall Street Journal Online (May 5 2003) Deadlock in Burma

²⁹⁰ Xinhua (10 Apr 03) Industrial exhibition ends in Myanmar

²⁹¹ Xinhua News Agency (1 April 03) Myanmar's industrial production totals 11 mln USD

²⁹² Irrawaddy (8 April 03) Burma's Busted Banks

²⁹³ Ibid

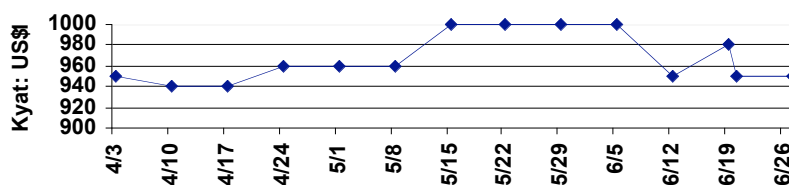
²⁹⁴ Irrawaddy (6 May 03) Bank Crisis Rolls On

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The disastrous impacts on local businesses continue. Limitations on cash withdrawals and aggressive moves by banks to obtain repayments on loans have led to closures and increasing unemployment, as well as a rise in crime.²⁹⁵ The banking crisis has also had impacts on trade, particularly at border checkpoints.

Meanwhile, the regime is likely to present the rising value of the kyat caused by the shortage of hard currency as a sign of economic growth, even as the cost of basic commodities increases.

Kyat: US\$ Market Exchange Rate



Source: Far Eastern Economic Review

SPDC ENDS RICE PROCUREMENT POLICY

The SPDC announced on 7 April that it will end its paddy procurement policy beginning with the next harvest later this year. The policy forced farmers to sell up to 10% of their harvest to the regime for as little as one sixth of the market price to distribute to civil servants, military personnel and to stockpile for export. Although Lt-Gen Soe Win promised that the state will now remain uninvolved in rice sales, skepticism is running high that this could be just another ploy to quell rising discontent in rural areas. In contrast the decision is sure to lead to increased unrest among government servants and soldiers who are dependent on subsidized rice.²⁹⁶

PETROLEUM & HYDRO – YET ANOTHER PLAN

The SPDC announced a 1% increase in power generation in 2002. In order to address the country's serious electricity shortages, the regime has drawn up yet another 5-year plan to build 9 new hydropower plants. Currently, 30% of Burma's electricity is generated from hydropower.²⁹⁷ Hydropower dam projects often result in forced relocation, forced labor, and heavy taxation for surrounding communities. (See Foreign Investment)

²⁹⁵ See Altsean Report Card Charm Offensive Jan – March 2003

²⁹⁶ AFP (7 April 03) Myanmar junta to ease its stranglehold on rice

²⁹⁷ Xinhua (14 April 03) Myanmar's power generation up slightly in 2002

CSO figures also claim a 26.2 % rise in crude oil production in 2002, but Burma still had to import US \$131.74 million worth of oil.²⁹⁸

Dams on the Salween - Who Pays, Who Profits

The Thai Government working in collaboration with the SPDC and private Thai construction companies, has revived plans to construct 3 hydropower dams on the Salween River, along the Thai/Burma border. Thailand is now trying to secure the estimated 200 billion baht (US\$ 4,945,046,030) needed to construct the Upper and Lower Salween Dams, which would be built next to Thailand's Mae Sariang District in Mae Hong Son Province. Thai construction company MDX PLC has already begun building the Ta Sang Dam in Burma's Shan state, which, after completion, will be the largest hydropower dam in Southeast Asia.

Sittiporn Rattanopas the governor of the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) says that the dams will be built along the border, because investors might have qualms about investing in projects in Burma and "the projects would be more attractive if the Thai government were a co-investor."²⁹⁹

Thai environmental groups, and Shans, Karens and Karennis in Burma have continually opposed the dams, which will flood an estimated 15,000 to 20,000 acres of land on both sides of the border, displacing thousands of Karenni villagers.³⁰⁰ It is expected the resulting displacement and human rights abuses will increase flows of refugees and migrant workers to Thailand. The EGAT plans to sell all energy generated by the dam to other countries, clearly showing that it is profit and not need, that is driving this initiative. While the project is still waiting for official approval from the junta, Mr. Sittiporn expects construction of the two dams to begin in 2007 and electricity generation to start in 2012.

Kengtung Plant Suspended

In June, SHAN reported that work on the Kengtawng (Kengtung) power plant project had stopped for unknown reasons since the last visit made by 2 Japanese engineers in February. The project had been previously abandoned in December 2001, and restarted after a visit by Vice Sr-Gen Maung Aye to the site in November 2002.³⁰¹

²⁹⁸ Xinhua (14 April 03) Myanmar produces more oil, gas in 2002

²⁹⁹ Bangkok Post (9 April 03) Salween is Home to a New Dam Row

³⁰⁰ World Rainforest Movement Bulletin #67 (February 03) Burma: Revival of the Weigyi dam"

³⁰¹ SHAN (2 Jun 03) Plant awaits power producer from Japan

FOREIGN TRADE**Trade Surplus But Volume Down**

According to the CSO, Burma had its first trade surplus in 2002. Imports declined by 22.5% from the previous year, while exports went up by 21.68%.³⁰² While the regime attributes the surplus to its efforts to encourage the use of domestic goods, grant special privileges to export companies, boost cross border trade; and restrict imports of consumer and luxury items, in fact, most of the surplus was from a US\$323 million increase in earnings from natural gas.³⁰³ The CSO also reported an increase in rice and rubber exports.³⁰⁴

However, the SPDC reported that foreign trade declined by 2.5% in 2002. Bilateral trade with ASEAN members accounted for 47.8% of Burma's total foreign trade.³⁰⁵

CSO figures on 2002 Trading Partners³⁰⁶

Country	Total value of trade(million \$US)
Thailand	1,252.04
China	840.98
Singapore	761.01
India	440.13
Malaysia	368.81
Japan	298.27
Republic of Korea	170.72

EU-ASEAN Discuss How to Boost Trade

At an informal meeting of ASEAN economic ministers in Luang Prabang on 4 April, SPDC officials held talks on trade promotion with Indonesian counterparts and attended a joint ASEAN-EU meeting.³⁰⁷ Trade ministers agreed with EU Trade Commissioner, Pascal Lamy, to boost trade between the EU and ASEAN.

³⁰² Xinhua (28 April 03) Myanmar achieves first-ever foreign trade surplus

³⁰³ Xinhua (6 May 03) Myanmar's gas export earning hits new record high & Economist Intelligence Unit (1 April 03) EIU Country Risk Service: Myanmar external trade & EIU projected estimates

³⁰⁴ Xinhua (11 April 03) Myanmar's rice export up sharply in 2002 & Xinhua (21 April 03) & Myanmar's rubber export sharply up in 2002

³⁰⁵ Xinhua (9 April 03) Myanmar's imports down sharply in 2002

³⁰⁶ Ibid

³⁰⁷ TV Myanmar (6 April 03) Minister returns from informal meeting of ASEAN ministers

ASEAN representatives also agreed to eliminate all non-tariff trade barriers before 2005 in efforts to implement the ASEAN Free Trade Area.³⁰⁸

Burma Hosts Asean-Japan Meeting

Just 9 days after Black Friday, Burma hosted the third meeting to discuss the implementation of the ASEAN-Japan Committee on Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCCEP), signed in November 2002. The meeting was attended by ASEAN representatives and high level Japanese officials.³⁰⁹

Indonesia Tax Agreement

On 16 April, the SPDC signed a tax agreement with Indonesia to boost bilateral trade. Under the agreement Burmese working in Indonesia would only have to pay income tax in one country.³¹⁰

India: Cross Border Trade Down

The bank crisis in Burma has dramatically reduced cross-border trade with India, with trade at the Indian border checkpoint of Moreh down by 25-35%. Indian trade organizations have reportedly held three rounds of talks with Burmese traders in an effort to restore trade, but to no avail.³¹¹

Since 1998, India has extended US\$25 million in credit to Burma for infrastructure to purchase Indian electrical and industrial equipment.³¹² An Indian oil and gas delegation met with the SPDC Energy Minister on 21 April.³¹³ In addition, the Andhra Pradesh State Trading Corporation has begun importing teak from Burma.³¹⁴

Bangladesh: Hopeful Plan

Relations with Bangladesh continue to warm following a coastal trade agreement. In April, Bangladesh announced plans to build a land port at Teknaf to boost cross-border trade. The port is expected to be fully operational by October 2003.³¹⁵

³⁰⁸ Xinhua (10 April 03), ASEAN agrees to further eliminate non-tariff trade barriers

³⁰⁹ New Light of Myanmar (8 June 03) Third Meeting of ASEAN-Japan Committee on Comprehensive Economic Partnership held

³¹⁰ Myanmar Times (16 April 03) Tax agreement signed with Indonesia

³¹¹ Mizzima (3 May 03) Banking crisis in Burma and NE India takes toll

³¹² Xinhua (4 Jun 03) Indian firm to hold industrial exhibition in Myanmar

³¹³ New Light of Myanmar (25 April 03) Burmese minister, Indian official discuss oil, gas cooperation

³¹⁴ Business Line (19 Apr 03) APSTC to auction Myanmar teak

³¹⁵ Narinjara (2 April 03) Teknaf land port to be operational soon trade with Burma

FOREIGN INVESTMENT FIGURES ON DECLINE

The regime's economic mismanagement, corruption and human rights divestment campaigns continued to deter new investment. According to the World Bank, in 2002, foreign direct investment declined by US\$ 46.5 million. According to the CSO, the largest investments in 2002 came from:

- Malaysia, Oil and Natural Gas, US\$ 44 million
- Switzerland, mining, US\$ 3.38 million
- Hong Kong and the Republic of Korea, manufacturing, US\$ 1.82 million

Since 1988, SPDC statistics show that 26 countries and regions invested in Burma, including 4 ASEAN members: Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia. Investments were in the sectors of manufacturing, construction, hotels and tourism, and mining. The regime further reported that since 1988, Burma has received a total of US\$ 7,447.38 million in contracted foreign investment, with ASEAN nations responsible for US\$ 3,844 million or 51.6 % of total foreign investment.³¹⁶

A major share of foreign investment in Burma is in oil and natural gas extraction, with companies from Indonesia, Bahamas, Britain, Cyprus, and China involved in Burma's 19 inland oil fields. Foreign companies are also invested in the many off-shore oil fields. Since 1988, the CSO stated that total FDI in the oil and gas sector has reached US\$2.607 billion dollars.³¹⁷

China: Increasing Interests

China continues to build up investment and trade ties with Burma. In April, Ivanhoe Mines from Canada and the Chinese Government-controlled China International Trust and Investment Corporation (CITIC) announced possible plans to expand the Monywa copper mining project in Burma.³¹⁸

At the height of the SARS outbreak in May, the SPDC allowed the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) to open a new border trade gate with China at Lai Ja, Moe Mauk, in Kachin State.³¹⁹

In May, Chinese authorities also announced that an agricultural machinery factory built by a Chinese company in Mandalay Division will be handed over to the SPDC by the end of August. The factory was built with a long-term interest

³¹⁶ Xinhua (10 April 03) Foreign investment in Myanmar declines in 2002

³¹⁷ Xinhua (14 April 03) Myanmar produces more oil, gas in 2002

³¹⁸ AAP Newsfeed (24 April 24 03) Ivanhoe Mines signs alliance with Chinese industrial giant CITIC

³¹⁹ Mizzima News (1 May 03) China opens new trade gate with Burma

free loan from the Chinese government and a total investment of approx US\$17.5 million.³²⁰

PRESSURE AND DIVESTMENT

US Boycott Succeeds in Cutting Clothing Imports

On 15 April, the 600-member American Apparel and Footwear Association called on the US to enact “an immediate and total ban” on imports from Burma.³²¹ In the past 3 years more than 40 large US retail companies have stopped sourcing clothing from Burma, and CSO statistics show a 27% decrease in US clothing imports from Burma in 2002.³²²

BAT Defends Investment in Burma

On 7 May, the Burma Campaign UK announced that the British American Tobacco Company (BAT) had released false information which exaggerated the wages paid to its factory workers in Burma by 86%. At the actual salary of 28,074 kyats (US\$28) a month, BAT employees in Burma have to work 24 hours a week overtime just to purchase enough food for their families, let alone meet other living costs. John Jackson, Director of Burma Campaign UK noted: "These salaries reveal one of the real reasons they want to stay in Burma - cheap labour. The Burma Campaign estimates that BAT has already paid the generals US\$ 16 million in taxes alone."³²³

Following the May 30th crackdown, BAT continues to report that they intend to stay in Burma until and unless the UK and/or EU decide to impose sanctions. The BAT chairman met with UK Foreign Minister Mike O'Brien to discuss the issue. The SPDC is 40% owner of BAT's Burma based subsidiary, Rothmans of Pall Mall Myanmar.³²⁴

Premier Oil Leaving

After several delays, Premier Oil PLC announced that the deal completing their withdrawal from Burma would be completed by the end of June.³²⁵

Attacks on the Pipeline

On 20 April, the Karen National Union (KNU) publicly claimed responsibility for blowing up sections of gas pipelines on three separate occasions between

³²⁰ Xinhua (23 Jun 03) Chinese-built machinery factory to be handed over to Myanmar

³²¹ Financial Times (16 April 03) US retailers back import ban on Burma

³²² AFX-GEM (25 March 03) Human rights group hails drop in US clothing imports from Myanmar as victory

³²³ SRI Media (7 May 03) BAT under attack from activists

³²⁴ AFX (26 Jun 03) BAT says will only leave Myanmar if UK govt, EU declare ban

³²⁵ AFX News (7 May 03) Premier Oil says restructuring expected to be completed in June

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February and April. KNU headquarters said: "The actions were planned and implemented as we would like to inform the Total Company and justice-loving countries of the world that the SPDC has been regularly buying fighter planes, tanks and other military hardware, with revenue from the gas pipelines, to continue killing and oppressing the Karen people and the people in general."³²⁶ Following the most recent case of sabotage on 29 March, SPDC officials said they had arrested a KNU member allegedly involved in the incident.

On 19 May, representatives from major US pension funds owning a total 1.6% of Unocal stock signed a letter urging the company to end its involvement in Burma, calling the pipeline project a financial liability and a drag on stock value. However, Charles Williamson, Unocal's chairman and CEO reported, "We have no intention of leaving Burma because we believe in what we are doing there."³²⁷

After Black Friday, Total Chairman and CEO Thierry Desmarest echoed this position, and urged ASEAN to continue a policy of constructive engagement with Burma.³²⁸

TOURISM: MIXED NEWS

The SPDC reported that tourist numbers were up 11.47 % in 2002 with a total of 310,971 visitors to the country, almost 60% of whom arrived by land. According to the regime, this is the largest number of tourists to visit Burma since 1996.³²⁹ In recent months, however, local travel agents report that hotel bookings have fallen 10-60% due to the SARS outbreak and war in Iraq.³³⁰

On 1 May, Kuoni Travel, Europe's 6th largest travel company announced that it would end all operations in Burma until democracy is restored. Rights groups are now organizing campaigns to target Austria's Lauda Airlines and the Orient Express hotel and travel firm.³³¹

On 9 June, a South Korean firm, S and S Myanmar Investment Development, signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the SPDC to build a US\$22 million cruise ship terminal and hotel complex in Rangoon. The company is also currently negotiating to lease a cruise liner to travel between Rangoon and Malaysia. If successful, S & S wants to expand tourism investment in Burma.³³²

³²⁶ Agence France Presse (20 April 03) Karen rebels admit sabotaging Myanmar gas pipelines

³²⁷ Los Angeles Times (20 May 03) Stockholders Press Unocal on Myanmar

³²⁸ AFP (16 Jun 03) French oil firm Total rejects economic sanctions on Myanmar

³²⁹ Xinhua (11 April 03) More foreign tourists visit Myanmar in 2002

³³⁰ AFP (20 April 03) Myanmar's fledgling tourist industry pummeled by SARS fears

³³¹ Friends of the Earth (1 May 03) Kuoni Travel pulls out of Burma

³³² AP (9 Jun 03) South Korean firm to build US\$22 million cruise ship complex in Myanmar

AID

Increasing Stagnant Decreasing

The SPDC has shown it is not keen to cooperate with us in matters of humanitarian aid. Until such time that dialogue takes place there will be no change in the situation. ~ Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.³³³

At a press conference on 23 April, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi reaffirmed her position that humanitarian aid should not be given unless done in consultation with democratic opposition groups. She noted that: "The SPDC has shown it is not keen to cooperate with us in matters of humanitarian aid. Until such time that dialogue takes place there will be no change in the situation."³³⁴ These words gained increased relevancy for international donors following the SPDC's brutal crackdown on the NLD and Daw Suu at the end of May. However, to date, managers of current UN and bilateral aid projects appear to have no intention of pulling out.

JAPAN: AID SUSPENDED

In the wake of Black Friday, on June 25, Japan announced that it had suspended any new bilateral economic aid to Burma. Sr-Vice Foreign Minister, Tetsuro Yano stated that the government found it extremely difficult to extend additional ODA to Myanmar under the current circumstances. Japan, Burma's largest aid donor, extended about 2.1 billion yen (US\$ 17.9 million) of grants-in-aid to Burma in 2002.³³⁵ In the following weeks, Altsean has been given to understand that the suspension of 'new' aid has also been quietly extended to aid commitments made before May 30.

Several days before Japan's decision to freeze new aid, the SPDC announced that a Japanese NGO, the Asian Maternal and Child Welfare Association (AMCWA), had agreed to provide the SPDC Ministry of Health with US\$ 200,000 annually for maternal and child health programs.³³⁶

AUSTRALIAN AMBIVALENCE

Immediately after Black Friday, Australia suspended its heavily criticized human rights training program for regime officials.³³⁷ Shortly before the SPDC

³³³ AFP (23 April 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi Complains for the First Time of Stalled Talks

³³⁴ AFP (23 April 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi Complains for the First Time of Stalled Talks

³³⁵ The Yomiuri Shimbun/Daily Yomiuri (27 Jun 03) Freeze set on ODA to Myanmar

³³⁶ Xinhua (20 Jun 03) Myanmar, Japanese NGO to cooperate in health activities

³³⁷ The Age (7 Jun 03) Riot fallout plunges Burma deeper into crisis

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crackdown, the Australian government aid agency, AusAID announced a 23.2 % increase in aid to Burma, while at the same time cutting funding to other Asian countries. AusAID promised a total of US\$5 million for humanitarian programs, in particular for HIV/AIDS programs and the human rights training program.³³⁸

In May, the SPDC health ministry and the Royal Adelaide Hospital signed a MoU to allow eye-surgeons from Burma to receive training at Australian hospitals.³³⁹

ICRC PUSHES FOR GREATER ACCESS

In April, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) announced that they want the SPDC to allow them to operate in areas of Shan and Karen States close to the Thai border. Michel Ducraux, head of the ICRC's Burma office, said he believes that ICRC has had an impact in addressing human rights abuses in Burma and that if allowed this access they will be "very careful to make sure our presence will not be cosmetic." However, when it was noted that all ICRC visits of detention camps are organized by SPDC officials, Ducraux stated "...we're not naive enough to think that we have total command of the situation."³⁴⁰

BRITAIN, SWEDEN AND NORWAY TO SUPPORT AIDS PROGRAM

On 24 April, UNAIDS announced a new 3-year joint program to support the SPDC's national strategic plan for combating HIV/AIDS. The program, which will incorporate UN agencies, SPDC departments, NGOs and INGOs, is the largest program to date aimed at addressing the country's HIV/AIDS epidemic. The funding will come through a newly created joint funding mechanism, the Fund for HIV/AIDS in Myanmar (FHAM). Out of the US\$ 51 million required over 3 years, government donors have already committed 21.3 million, with the largest donors Great Britain (US\$ 15.7 million), Sweden (\$US 4.7 million dollars), and Norway (US\$ 823,000).³⁴¹

British Ambassador to Burma, Vicky Bowman, expressed caution saying: "experience elsewhere in the world shows that funds alone are not enough to successfully combat HIV. It requires a change in attitudes from both government and wider society, and a consideration of whether legal and judicial frameworks inadvertently hinder the fight against HIV." Ms. Bowman also said that the British government would work to ensure that money was delivered in a "transparent way with effective monitoring".³⁴² In 2002, Britain provided US\$10 million for HIV/AIDS projects in Burma.

³³⁸ Irrawaddy (22 May 03) Australia to Increase Aid to Burma

³³⁹ Xinhua (30 May 03) Australia to help train Myanmar eye surgeons

³⁴⁰ AFP (7 April 03) ICRC tries to probe deeper into Myanmar

³⁴¹ AP (28 April 03) Britain gives US\$15.7 million to fight AIDS in Myanmar

³⁴² Irrawaddy (28 April 03) Britain Announces Aid Donation to Burma

UK WILDLIFE AID

The UK will give US\$280,000 for two wildlife conservation projects to be jointly implemented by Yangon University, the Wildlife Conservation Society and Britain's Harrison Institute in Karen, Kachin and Mon States.³⁴³

AID FOR UN DRUG REDUCTION PROGRAM

Despite ongoing mass forced relocation in the Wa region of Shan State, in May, Japan, Germany, and Italy pledged over US\$3 million dollars for a UN Office of Drugs and Crime (UNODC) opium-substitution program in the region. The 5-year project began in 1998 and is the largest UNODC program ever launched in Burma.³⁴⁴

UN DEVELOPMENT GAP PLAN

In June, the UN announced plans to implement a \$US 1.45 million 3-year program to help Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam narrow the development gap with other ASEAN members. The funds will also be used to implement free trade agreements between ASEAN members and other countries as part of the ASEAN integration process launched in 2000.³⁴⁵

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

(for the international response to the Black Friday Crackdown see Black Friday)

Improving Stagnant Deteriorating

As 'the dialogue that never was' remains stalled, the regime is showing its true colors to the international community. International confidence in the SPDC's commitment to reconciliation waned when Daw Aung San Suu Kyi publicly expressed doubts about the SPDC's sincerity.³⁴⁶ (See Democracy and Dialogue).

Concern grew when stalling tactics were also applied to UN Special Envoy Razali Ismail's visit to Burma. By the time Razali did travel to Burma, the agenda of his visit had been hijacked. Instead of seeking to further reconciliation, the envoy instead had to use all his energies to secure a meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi who was detained. (See Black Friday)

³⁴³ AP (9 May 03) Britain gives US\$281,600 for Myanmar environmental projects

³⁴⁴ Xinhua (30 May 03) Three countries extend aid for Myanmar's drug control project

³⁴⁵ Xinhua (24 Jun 03) Myanmar to benefit from UN-sponsored project

³⁴⁶ AFP (23 April 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi complains for first time of stalled talks

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While the EU and US threatened increased pressure if the talks remained stalled, SPDC officials have continued to tour the region in attempts to shore up support from Asian neighbors.

UNHAPPY WITH SPDC'S EMPTY PROMISES

Two months after Amnesty International's (AI) first visit to Burma, the organization has complained that the regime had not followed up on promises to release political prisoners. "During our visit, we submitted a number of lists of political prisoners, whose releases should be a first priority for the SPDC. Yet to our knowledge none of these people have been released," AI said.³⁴⁷

ASEAN

On 20 May, SPDC Transport Minister Maj-Gen Hla Myint attended the 15th ASEAN Senior Transport Officials Meeting, where he called for more regional cooperation in transportation.³⁴⁸

Malaysia Goodwill

On 21 May, a Malaysian delegation led by the Chief of the Royal Malaysian Air Force arrived in Burma for a goodwill visit.³⁴⁹

Laos: Getting Friendly

In an obvious bid for regional support, Than Shwe paid a state visit to Laos from 5-7 May and signed a cooperation agreement with Lao President Khamtay Siphandone.³⁵⁰

Cambodian Opposition Gets Tongue Lashing

On 19 May, the SPDC embassy in Phnom Penh lashed out at Cambodia's opposition party leader for calling their country a "recalcitrant narco-state." In an April visit to Washington DC, Sam Rainsy stated that the regime constitutes a threat to both its own citizens and the rest of the world, due to its drug production.³⁵¹

CHINA - FRIENDSHIP FIRST

At a ceremony in April, the Chinese Ambassador to Burma stressed common ties between the two countries and noted that recent high level visits between national

³⁴⁷ Amnesty International (1 April 03) Myanmar: Limited human rights improvements -- serious concerns persist

³⁴⁸ Xinhua (20 May 03) Myanmar stresses importance of ASEAN transport cooperation

³⁴⁹ TV Myanmar (21 May 03) Malaysian air chief arrives in Burma on goodwill visit

³⁵⁰ AFP (8 May 03) Myanmar military leader leaves Laos

³⁵¹ DPA (19 May 03) Myanmar lashes out at Cambodian opposition party leader

leaders “have pushed the cooperative ties of the Sino-Myanmar friendship toward a new stage.”³⁵²

INDIA: ENGAGEMENT FOR SECURITY

Indian Defense Minister George Fernandes will visit China at the end of April, where among other things, he plans to discuss security concerns such as the presence of Chinese listening posts and electronic surveillance installations on islands off the Burmese coast.³⁵³

Indian Insurgent Groups Operate from Burma

In a bizarre twist of logic, India has admitted to selling arms to the junta, in part to encourage the SPDC to stop the flow of arms from Burma to Indian insurgent groups. India believes that up to 12 Indian insurgent groups are operating in Burma, with bases in Kachin State and along the India/Burma border. Reportedly, some ethnic opposition groups from Burma, such as the Kuki National Army (KNA) in Sagaing Division, are now collaborating with Indian insurgents.³⁵⁴ In May, India requested that the SPDC take action against a number of known Indian militant camps in Burma, however the regime has failed to act on this request.³⁵⁵

Burmese on Trial in India

On 1 April, Burmese activists held demonstrations in New Delhi urging Indian authorities to drop the charges against Burmese activist, Soe Myint. Soe Myint hijacked a plane in Bangkok in 1991 to India. Following a hearing on 2 April, the case was adjourned until 23 June.³⁵⁶

A June hearing has been scheduled for a group of Rakhine detainees, who India claims are ‘major gunrunners.’ The 36, who have been kept in detention without trial since 1998, allege they were lured to the Andaman Islands by an Indian colonel who promised to help them set up a training base.³⁵⁷

BANGLADESH: WARMING UP

Relations between the SPDC and Bangladesh are also warming up. On April 8-9 a meeting was held in Teknaf on the Bangladesh/Burma border, between members of the 2 countries’ border security forces, the NaSaKa and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). The 2 groups discussed cross border trade and

³⁵² Xinhua (22 April 03) China presents seismographs to Myanmar

³⁵³ Times of India (1 April 03) Mellowed-Down George is China Bound

³⁵⁴ Mizzima (8 April 03) Militancy threatens Junta in Upper Burma

³⁵⁵ Mizzima (14 May 03) Indian government moves on arms trade with Burma

³⁵⁶ Irrawaddy (2 April 2 03) Soe Myint Trial Postponed

³⁵⁷ Narinjara (26 May 03) Those forgotten Rakhine Activists in Indian island of Andaman: “Release us or allow us to go elsewhere”

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smuggling, as well as Rohingya refugee repatriation to Burma. The meeting concluded with a handover of prisoners from both sides.³⁵⁸

On 20 May, border officials from Burma and Bangladesh began a 3-day high-level meeting in Dhaka to discuss smuggling, migration, and issues of piracy and fishing rights in the Bay of Bengal. At the conclusion of the talks, a Joint Record of Discussion (JRD) was signed between Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) members and SPDC Immigration officials.³⁵⁹

Shortly after the meeting, the Bangladeshi government called on armed Burmese opposition groups along the Bangladesh border to surrender their weapons to the SPDC. The opposition groups, which include the National Unity Party of Arakan, the Arakan Rohingya National Organization and the Rohingya Solidarity Organization, have no intention of laying down arms, but, reportedly, some might welcome the Bangladeshi government as a mediator.³⁶⁰

JAPAN DELICATELY PUSHING CHANGE

At the end of April, former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori led an 11-member team on a 3-day visit to Burma. Mori carried a letter from the current Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, encouraging the regime to continue the dialogue and outlining proposals for economic reform. Mori held meetings with Than Shwe, Khin Nyunt, and SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung.³⁶¹ Another high level Japanese official traveling with Mori met with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi on 1 May.³⁶²

US COMPLAINS DIALOGUE HAS 'GROUND TO A HALT'

The US State Department's bi-annual report on Burma released in April noted: "efforts to foster peaceful democratic change in Burma essentially ground to a halt over the past six months."³⁶³

Predictably, the SPDC responded defensively, claiming information in the State Department report was politically motivated and inaccurate, and urging that

³⁵⁸ Kaladan Press (9 April 03) 32 Prisoners handed over after two days of flag meeting between NaSaKa and BDR

³⁵⁹ Narinjara (23 May 03) Dhaka Rangoon Talks conclude: meeting to solve border problems

³⁶⁰ Irrawaddy (29 May 03) Bangladesh Delivers Message to Burmese Armed Groups

³⁶¹ Kyodo News Service (26 April 03) Japan envoy to ask Burma for economic reforms, democracy

³⁶² DVB (2 May 03) Japanese official met Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

³⁶³ Agence France Presse (10 April 03) Reform drive in Myanmar has "ground to a halt"

instead of sanctions, “the US to provide economic opportunities for the people of Myanmar.”³⁶⁴

A number of US Senators and Representatives spoke out in congress criticizing SPDC human rights abuses and harassment of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, and questioning the regime’s commitment to the dialogue. On 20 May, President Bush renewed for another year the National Emergencies Act on Burma, stating that: “actions and policies of the Government of Burma continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.”³⁶⁵

Unocal Lawsuit Update

On 17 June, San Francisco judges held a hearing to determine if Burmese villagers charging Unocal Corporation with complicity in human rights abuses can proceed with their federal lawsuit. Both the Bush administration and the US Justice Department have filed briefs urging dismissal of the case. The administration noted that: “While the United States unequivocally deplores and strongly condemns the anti-democratic policies and blatant human rights abuses of the Burmese government, it is the function of the political branches, not the courts...to bring about change in such situations.”

Kenneth Roth, executive director of Human Rights Watch, called the administration’s response “a craven attempt to protect human rights abusers at the expense of victims.”³⁶⁶

EUROPEAN UNION (EU): DASHED HOPES

One year ago, many of us hoped that the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi would herald the beginning of political change in Burma. But Senior General Than Shwe and the Burmese regime have failed to engage in substantive political dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other Burmese democratic leaders. For them, this has been a wasted year.

~ UK Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien³⁶⁷

Sanctions

In April, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi reiterated the NLD position on economic sanctions, saying: “We have never called for economic sanctions. But our policy with regards to sanctions remains unchanged until such time as negotiations take

³⁶⁴ AFP (9 May 03) Myanmar irked by US criticism, urges end to sanctions

³⁶⁵ White House, Office of the Press Secretary (16 May 03) Continuation of the National Emergency with Respect to Burma

³⁶⁶ Washington Post (30 May 03) White House Seeks to Curb Rights Cases From Abroad

³⁶⁷ UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (6 May 03) UK Foreign Office Minister Speech On Burma's Wasted Year

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place.”³⁶⁸ Her statement followed the EU's decision on 14 April to extend and increase sanctions against the regime for another year. Prior to the Black Friday Crackdown, the EU had planned to delay implementation of new sanctions until October. However, after the attack the sanctions were brought forward to June 16th. (See Black Friday)

The new sanctions ‘punish’ the regime by increasing the number of SPDC officials banned from the EU, freezing the generals’ overseas assets, and strengthening the arms embargo. The EU also held out the carrot of more humanitarian aid if they see progress on the dialogue. EU officials also proposed a future trip to Burma to assess the situation.

Commenting on EU sanctions, Sai Wansai, general secretary of the EU-based Shan Democratic Union (SDU), said sanctions were “crucial in projecting non-Burman ethnic nationalities' political position.” “Sanctions are definitely working,” he said, “but now we need sanctions with teeth that bite.”³⁶⁹

On 5 June, Kyaw Win, the SPDC’s ambassador to Britain said: “There is no evidence we are worried about sanctions. Not that we want them, but we are not afraid of them either because we have lived for 26 years on our own before, and we have very good neighbors around us and we can simply trade and exchange relations with our close, good neighbors.”³⁷⁰

Protester at the British Embassy

On 4 April, a man and a Buddhist monk shouted slogans and waved an NLD flag outside the British Embassy in Rangoon. When police arrived they arrested the monk, but the other man fled inside the embassy. SPDC authorities repeatedly called for embassy staff to expel the demonstrator, claiming he was a terrorist who had been sent by Thailand-based opposition groups. The demonstrator’s current whereabouts remain unknown.³⁷¹ Later it was reported that 8 students who belonged to a new political group, “Oway Front,” were also arrested in conjunction with the protest.³⁷²

UNITED NATIONS (UN): HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION

On 16 April, the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) resolution on Burma extended the mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur on Burma for another year and expressed concerns about human rights abuses and “the continued

³⁶⁸ Agence France Presse (23 April 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi complains for first time of stalled talks

³⁶⁹ Asia Times (17 April 03) Another blow for Yangon

³⁷⁰ Scoop Media (6 Jun 03) Burma Sanctions Effort Blunted By China, India

³⁷¹ AFP (25 April 03) Myanmar junta says talks ongoing over protestor in British embassy

³⁷² AFP (6 May 03) Eight students arrested over embassy protest in Myanmar, exiled group says

refusal of the Government of Myanmar to enter into a genuine political dialogue.”³⁷³

The SPDC UN representative U Mya Than called the resolution "fundamentally flawed, imbalanced and biased," and said: "It bears reiterating here that our national reconciliation process is a homegrown process in our own traditional way.”³⁷⁴

³⁷³ European Union (16 April 03) Commission on Human Rights Fifty-ninth Session (Geneva, 17 March-25 April 2002) Introduction of the draft Resolution on "Situation of human rights in Myanmar." Available at <http://burmalibrary.org/show.php?cat=953&lo=d&sl=0>

³⁷⁴ Statement by His Excellency U Mya Than (16 April 03), Permanent Representative and Leader of the Myanmar Observer Delegation to the fifty-ninth session of the Commission on Human Rights Rebuttals to the draft resolution No.E/CN.4/2003/L.36 (Agenda Item 9) Geneva, 16 April 2003

THAI - BURMA RELATIONS

(for more on Thailand's response to the Black Friday Crackdown please refer to Black Friday section)

Improving Stagnant Deteriorating

The Thaksin administration continues to dance to the junta's tune, even when this flies in the face of both national interests and international opinion. At the end of April, Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai called for leniency towards the junta, saying: "We've always advocated an open arms policy. Every party should also be sincere by showing a positive response when Myanmar acts in a way that favors reconciliation."³⁷⁵

Eleven days before the Black Friday crackdown, after a meeting with Khin Nyunt, Surakiart optimistically predicted that talks would resume soon.³⁷⁶ At the end of June, in the wake of the Black Friday attack, Surakiart proposed limiting the number of Burmese refugees in Thailand, saying that the situation had changed "because there is reconciliation now inside Myanmar."³⁷⁷

ECONOMIC LINKS

On 30 April, Prime Minister Thaksin announced a proposal to create an economic quadrangle with Cambodia, Laos, and Burma in order to decrease migration flows into Thailand.³⁷⁸ The proposal would boost border trade, establish special economic zones, and develop tourism-related networks. Thai National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) deputy secretary-general Pornchai Rujiprapa said Thailand was prepared to provide technical assistance and up to 6.7 billion baht (US\$ 165,626,533) of funding over 5 years for infrastructures to increase investment and trade.³⁷⁹

Special Economic Zones

On 12 May, the Joint Economic Quadrangle Committee agreed to step up plans to develop the Thai border town of Mae Sot as a special economic zone.³⁸⁰ The project is part of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) East-West Development Corridor Program to link Thailand with Vietnam, Laos, and Burma. The Thai Government reportedly plans to push about 400,000 migrant workers back to Burma once these zones are set up. (See Displacement)

³⁷⁵ AP (28 April 03) Thailand urges support for Myanmar reconciliation process

³⁷⁶ Bangkok Post (21 May 03) Junta plans to resume talks with Suu Kyi

³⁷⁷ AFP (30 Jun 03) Thai government to hold talks with UNHCR over refugee dispute

³⁷⁸ Agence France Presse (30 April 03) Thailand announces plans for economic quadrangle with neighbours

³⁷⁹ Post (5 May 03) Thailand to Unveil Hub Aim at Summit

³⁸⁰ Bangkok Post (14 May 03) Government gets the blame for slow push.

Transportation Networks

Construction on the first stretch of a highway from Kanchanaburi, Thailand, through Burma to Northeast India is due to begin in October. The first stretch will run from Myawaddy (Burmese-Thai border), to the Burmese village of Thinganyinaug, 18 km away. Thailand has pledged 300 million baht (US\$ 7414955) to construct the road, which is planned to link up to the East-West corridor route, support the Mae Sot special economic zone, and connect to another road project linking Burma, Thailand and India. As part of this latter project, India has built a road to Tamu, a border town in Sagaing division of Burma, and provided Burma with building equipment to extend the road to Rangoon.³⁸¹

The Thai government will also pay 38 million baht (US\$ 903 K) to construct a second friendship bridge between Tachilek in Burma and Mae Sai, Thailand. Construction is slated for completion by December 2003.³⁸²

On 6 May, the SPDC signed an agreement with Thailand to open more flights and new flying routes between the two countries.³⁸³

Border Trade

In May, the Thai Ministry of Commerce said it wants to open a new border checkpoint between Thailand and Burma at either Takopitthong or Ching Huaysuk in Suan Phueng District, Ratchaburi province.³⁸⁴

Meanwhile, Thai border traders have called on the Thai government to pressure the SPDC to lift restrictions on 24 Thai products banned from being traded in Burma. Thanomsak Seerivichayasawasdi, president of the Thai-Burmese culture and economic forum in Chiang Rai, blames the restrictions on SPDC lack of confidence in Thai policy towards Burmese ethnic minorities, and called on Prime Minister Thaksin to do more to end Rangoon's suspicion.³⁸⁵

The 7th annual Thailand trade exhibition was held in Rangoon from 7-10 May. SPDC statistics note that in 2002 Thailand was the Burma's largest Asian trading partner, representing 23.7 % of all Burma's foreign trade.³⁸⁶

³⁸¹ Bangkok Post (19 May 03) Survey starts for new road from Myawaddy

³⁸² AFP (19 May 03) Thailand, Myanmar ink agreement on second border bridge

³⁸³ Xinhua (7 May 03) More flights between Thailand, Myanmar to be opened

³⁸⁴ Thai Press Reports (9 May 03) Ratchaburi to be pushed into limelight as Thai-Myanmar

Trade Area

³⁸⁵ Bangkok Post (20 May 03) Burma Pledges Cooperation on anti-drug and economic issues

³⁸⁶ Xinhua News Agency (29 April 03) Thai trade exhibition to be held in Myanmar

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The Petroleum Authority of Thailand (PTT Ltd) has identified China and Burma as the country's principle export market for refined fuel products in the coming decade. Burma currently imports approximately half a million tones of petroleum products, just under half of its total domestic demand.³⁸⁷

THE BORDER: MURDER, PORN, INTRUSION

On 1 April, 5 DKBA soldiers crossed into Wansip Kayan village, Mae Sot District, Thailand, killing a Thai Karen woman and wounding one man. Villagers believe that the attack was in retaliation for residents' refusal to cooperate with the DKBA to smuggle amphetamines and stolen cars across the border.³⁸⁸

On 1 May, Thai immigration police ordered stringent checks on all monks crossing into Thailand from Burma, after some monks were found crossing from Tachilek with pornographic CDs.³⁸⁹

At the end of May, security was tightened in the Mae Hong Son border area in Thailand, after it was reported that 10 soldiers from a Burmese opposition army had entered the village of Baan Mai Sape.³⁹⁰

Problems with the Wa

After reports in May that the UWSA had placed a bounty on the head of Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra (see Drugs), on 9 and 10 June Thai troops engaged in small-scale armed clashes with UWSA soldiers near the northern Thai border town of Mae Ai.³⁹¹

Bombs

On 21 May, a number of bombs exploded in various locations in Tachilek, killing up to 10 people. One bomb planted under the bridge connecting Tachilek and Mae Sai, Thailand was defused before exploding.³⁹² The SPDC has pointed the finger at the Shan State Army-South (SSA), however, both the SSA and United Wa State Army (UWSA) have denied involvement. The blasts came 2 days after a visit to Tachilek by Gen Khin Nyunt, Foreign Minister Win Aung, and Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai. However both Thai and Burmese officials confirmed that the incident would not affect their relations, with Thaksin saying: "To my understanding it may have been caused by minority groups. I have

³⁸⁷ World Markets Analysis (18 Jun 03) Thailand Targets China and Myanmar as Fuel Export Markets

³⁸⁸ DVB (1 April 03) DKBA attacks civilians

³⁸⁹ Thai Press Reports (6 May 03) Monks being used to smuggle porn CDs across the border

³⁹⁰ Thai Press Reports (27 May 03) Armed Insurgents Infiltrate Mae Hong Son Village

³⁹¹ Xinhua (11 Jun 03) Skirmishes between Thai and ethnic Myanmar break on border

³⁹² Nation (23 May 03) Gunmen ambush convoy in Burma

ordered a clear policy that the Thai government will have nothing to do with Myanmar's internal affairs."³⁹³

On 13 June, the Thai military destroyed a bomb planted in Mae Sai, opposite Tachilek.³⁹⁴

CRACKDOWN AGAINST THAI-BASED DISSIDENTS

On 26 June, the Thai Government used the SPDC's claim that opposition groups were planning to kidnap the SPDC Ambassador in Bangkok, to rationalize a crackdown on political dissidents, refugees and migrant workers. (For information on migrant workers in Thailand see Displacement.)

Than Khe, Chairman of the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF), denied that students in Thailand were planning any action against Burmese embassy staff, and noted: "This is a unilateral act aimed at splitting pro-democracy groups and the governments of neighboring nations."³⁹⁵

'Climate of Fear' says UN Special Rep

On 27 May, UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani, said human rights defenders face a 'climate of fear' in Thailand, created "by statements publicly made at the highest level of government attacking the credibility of NGOs... [and] the use of state security apparatus to intimidate – and the judicial process to harass - human rights defenders, through false or unjust prosecution." "Many of the Burmese human rights defenders feel very insecure with regard to their freedom of movement inside Thailand," she said.³⁹⁶

Deported for Flag

On 17 June, 3 Burmese from the Campaign for Community Voice of Burma were arrested and deported after they staged a hunger strike and hung the NLD flag on their house in Mae Sot.³⁹⁷ The same day, 9 Burmese holding a hunger strike in front of the Burmese Embassy were forced to relocate to the UNHCR building.³⁹⁸

Protest Ban

On 25 June, the Thai government prohibited people from Burma from protesting outside the Burmese embassy.³⁹⁹ The next day, 11 Burmese, reportedly members of the Democratic Front of Burma, were arrested after holding a peaceful protest

³⁹³ AFP (21 May 03) Four killed as blasts rock Myanmar border town

³⁹⁴ AFP (13 Jun 03) Thai military uncovers bomb in northern border town

³⁹⁵ Irrawaddy (26 Jun 03) Plans to Raid Embassy Denied

³⁹⁶ Financial Times (27 May 03) Rebuke for Bangkok over human rights

³⁹⁷ Irrawaddy (18 Jun 03) More Hunger Strikes for Suu Kyi's Release

³⁹⁸ Irrawaddy (18 Jun 03) More Hunger Strikes for Suu Kyi's Release

³⁹⁹ AFP (25 Jun 03) Myanmar junta warns Thailand of possible dissident hostage plan

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at the Burmese embassy. While the protesters were carrying UNHCR documents identifying them as political refugees, Major General Chirasit Mahintratep said “They're not allowed to engage in political activities in Thailand. The UNHCR certificates are not the same as passports.”⁴⁰⁰

On 30 June, 100 Thai police guarded the Burmese embassy with orders from Thaksin to round up any Burmese who tried to protest. Thaksin said, “The Burmese are entitled to stage protests against their government in camps we provide...but it is not right that they come to Bangkok and protest. We do not like any situation that we cannot control.”⁴⁰¹

REFUGEES

Anyone holding a UNHCR card must stay in their camp and they are not supposed to freely roam across the country. ~ Prime Minister Thaksin, following the arrest of refugees demonstrating outside the Burmese Embassy.⁴⁰²

On 12 May, 35 families with disabled members from Karenni camp 3 were ordered to relocate to Karenni camp 1, or face repatriation back to Burma. Other residents of camp 3 had already been relocated, however, Padaung (‘long-neck’) tribes who attracted tourists were allowed to stay.⁴⁰³

On 21 May, Thai authorities announced plans to close Htam Hin refugee camp. There are 191 students in the camp, but not all will be resettled in a 3rd country.⁴⁰⁴

On 26 June, Thaksin lashed out at the UNHCR saying: “If the UN can issue a piece of paper for them [Burmese exiles] to have freedom in our country, where is our sovereignty?” Thaksin also complained that Thailand had “shouldered a lot of the burden of the refugees” for a long time. He said Burmese refugees carried diseases, and were involved in drug trafficking and other criminal activities.⁴⁰⁵

In response, UNHCR Bangkok spokeswoman Kirsten Young stated: “Obviously we only do that [grant refugee status] with the consent and cooperation of the state in which we do it. And we've been doing this in Thailand now for the past two decades.”⁴⁰⁶

⁴⁰⁰ DPA (27 Jun 03) Thailand jails 11 supporters of Myanmar democracy campaigner

⁴⁰¹ Nation (1 Jul 03) Govt wants UN to alter label policy

⁴⁰² Nation (28 Jun 03) Thaksin lashes out at UNHCR

⁴⁰³ Network Media Group (12 May 03) Disabled Refugees in Karenni Camp to be relocated

⁴⁰⁴ DVB (22 May 03) Thais to close down refugee camp

⁴⁰⁵ AFP (27 Jun 03) Thai PM lashes UN refugee agency over Myanmar exiles

⁴⁰⁶ AFP (27 Jun 03) Thai PM lashes UN refugee agency over Myanmar exiles

On 30 June, Surakiart announced that the Thai government wanted to get involved in the UNHCR approval process, and proposed limiting the number of refugees "because there is reconciliation now inside Myanmar."⁴⁰⁷

⁴⁰⁷ AFP (30 Jun 03) Thai government to hold talks with UNHCR over refugee dispute

ETHNIC RELATIONS

Improving Stagnant Deteriorating

KNU PROTESTS INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR JUNTA

On 20 April, the Karen National Union (KNU) claimed responsibility for blowing up sections of the UNOCAL gas pipelines to discourage the company from continuing operations in Burma. (See Economy) Then, on 16 May, the KNU publicly urged Russia, China, India, Singapore and Poland to stop providing military equipment to the regime. (See Military Threat)

ICG REPORT: ETHNICS NEED MORE POLITICAL INFLUENCE

On 7 May, the International Crisis Group (ICG) released a report examining the role of Burma's ethnic nationality groups in Burmese politics. (see online http://www.crisisweb.org/projects/asia/burma_myanmar/reports/A400967_07052003.pdf) Summarizing the report's conclusions, Robert Templer, ICG's Asia Program Director, said: "The most fundamental grievance of ethnic minorities in Myanmar [Burma] is their lack of influence on the political process."

Ethnic leaders praised the report for showing ethnic groups actions they should take to increase their influence, however, some complained that the report failed to address inequalities in the Burmese constitution and the SPDC's role in blocking political change.⁴⁰⁸

KNU ATTACKS SPDC TO INCITE TALKS

On 16 May, KNU 17th Battalion under Division 6 attacked Burma's Light Infantry Battalion (LIB) 583 near Dupaw village, Karen State, killing 4 SPDC soldiers. The next day, KNU Special Battalion of Division 6 attacked LIB 710 between Phalu and Kyauk Khet, Karen State, killing another 5 SPDC soldiers, including a company commander.

Padoh Mahn Nyein from the KNU Central Committee said the attacks were part of a strategy to force the regime to negotiate. "When they lose many fights, they will come to the table to talk peace," he said. "Otherwise, they will avoid talking with us."⁴⁰⁹

⁴⁰⁸ Irrawaddy (9 May 03) Report on Ethnic Politics Draws Contrasting Views

⁴⁰⁹ Irrawaddy (21 May 03) KNU Attacks to Force Talks

ETHNICS: BLACK FRIDAY WILL BRING 'CATASTROPHE'

On 7 June, 9 ethnic nationality political parties issued a joint statement on the regime's Black Friday crackdown, saying that the present political crisis would bring catastrophe to the economy, education and society as a whole.⁴¹⁰

⁴¹⁰ Narinjara (8 Jun 03) Nine Indigenous People's Political Parties speak out on the present

HUMAN RIGHTS

Improving Stagnant Deteriorating

FORCED LABOR

Between March and May, villagers from Palao and Sala in Shan State were forced to carry supplies, cut wood and construct shelters for IB 225 and IB 99 troops, who were guarding a road being constructed at the Ta Sarn (Ta Sang) Dam site.⁴¹¹ (For more about dams on the Salween see Economy)

On 20 April, the SPDC army arrested 20 villagers from Koin Daung village, Buthidaung Township, Arakan State and took them for forced labor for 4 days.⁴¹²

On 25 June, it was reported that the SPDC regularly forces villagers from 12 villages in Buthidaung Township to work on construction of an army road between Rathedaung and Maungdaw.⁴¹³

ERI Report: Systematic Forced Labor in Eastern Burma

On 13 June, Earth Rights International (ERI) released a report, "Entrenched," which documents "the ongoing highly systematic and violent nature of the labor abuse by the Burmese military" in an area in eastern Burma.⁴¹⁴ (The report is available online at <http://www.earthrights.org/pubs/burma.shtml>)

New ILO position established

After 10 months of foot dragging, the SPDC finally agreed to sign a formal agreement with the International Labor Organization (ILO) at the beginning of June. The agreement includes appointing an independent official to monitor labor conditions, a role which will be filled by Leon de Riedmatten, the Myanmar representative of the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue.⁴¹⁵

Prison Labor

Recent reports have alleged that Burmese companies are using free prison labor in a number of different industries. Prison authorities at Mandalay, Thayet, and Meik-Hti-La prisons as well as Thabra, Lenyang-daung, Kyi-gan-braung (Kyi-gan byin), and Kyaw-zan-rwa labor camps in Arakan State, are reportedly confiscating the wages given to prisoners and/or taking a cut of the profits.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹¹ Shan Herald Agency for News (1 June 03)

⁴¹² Kaladan News (7 May 03) Army arrested 20 villagers for forced labor

⁴¹³ Narinjara (25 Jun 03) Forced Labour in the Road through the Mayu Ranges

⁴¹⁴ Earthrights International (13 Jun 03) Entrenched Details Systematic Use of Forced Labor

⁴¹⁵ M2 Presswire (15 May 03) ILO and Myanmar agree on facilitator to help end forced

⁴¹⁶ Network Media Group (29 May 03) Pickled tea giants reject the use of prison labor & Narinjara (10 Jun 03) Prison labour in Western Burma

POLITICAL PRISONERS

SPDC Orders 'Investigation' of Listening Device

On 14 April, the Myanmar Times reported that the SPDC had ordered a "thorough investigation" regarding a listening device found in a room at Insein Prison where UN Special Rapporteur to Myanmar, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro was interviewing political prisoners.⁴¹⁷

AI Cites Continuing Torture, Extrajudicial Executions

On 28 May, Amnesty International (AI) stated that they continued to receive "reports of torture of political prisoners during initial interrogation by the Military Intelligence." AI noted that 3 political prisoners had died in custody during the year and that "extrajudicial executions continued to be reported in most of the seven ethnic minority states."⁴¹⁸

Death, Disease, Malnutrition at Sittwe Prison

At the end of May, it was reported that severe food shortages at Sittwe prison in Arakan State were causing dozens of prisoners to die monthly from malnutrition and related diseases.⁴¹⁹

Some Political Prisoners Released

On May 3 and 5, the SPDC released 3 political prisoners from Mandalay prison. Tin Myint, Htay Thein, and Zaw Min spent 14 years in jail for allegedly having links to the Communist party of Burma. The junta stated: "The government will continue to release (those) that will cause no harm to the community nor threaten the existing peace, stability and the unity of the nation."⁴²⁰

On 4 May, the SPDC released 18 political prisoners due to "health and humanitarian concerns," and to allegedly show their commitment to the dialogue process. The Assistance Association for Political Prisoners Burma (AAPPB) argued that the SPDC "uses the release of political prisoners as a bargaining tool for easing international pressure and delaying the national reconciliation process."⁴²¹

⁴¹⁷ Myanmar Times (14 April 03) Burmese government to investigate listening device at UN envoy's interview

⁴¹⁸ AFP (28 May 03) Torture, killings continue in Myanmar despite Suu Kyi release:

⁴¹⁹ Narinjara (29 May 03) Food Shortage in Sittwe State Prison

⁴²⁰ AP (2 May 03) Myanmar releases three prominent political prisoners

⁴²¹ Irrawaddy (5 May 03) Dr Salai Tun Than and Others Released

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Prisoners released include members of NLD, DPNS, and ABSDF. Most of those released were threatened that if they resumed their political activities they could be re-incarcerated for the rest of their sentences.⁴²²

Dr. Salai Tun Than Released after Hunger Strike

At the end of April, 75-year old professor and political prisoner Dr. Salai Tun Than launched a hunger strike to protest the continuing detention of political prisoners who have completed their sentences. Dr. Salai Tun Than, who is serving a 7 year sentence, is also protesting the regime's interrogation of prisoners who meet with UN and ICRC representatives.⁴²³ Following intense international pressure, Dr. Salai Tun Than was released on 4 May.

NEW ARRESTS

On 26 March, Nasaka (SPDC border patrol) members arrested a Rohingya man, Mostafa Kamal, in Buthidaung Township, Arakan State. The Nasaka accused him of being a Bangladeshi and released him only after he paid 70,000 kyat.⁴²⁴

On 4 April, 9 people were arrested for being involved in a protest in front of the British Embassy in Rangoon.⁴²⁵ (See International Relations)

On 4 May, the same day that the SPDC released 18 political prisoners in a 'goodwill gesture,' a man was arrested by MI agents for protesting near the NLD headquarters. Kyaw Kyaw, a 48-year old retired army sergeant, handcuffed himself to a pole, while 2 or 3 other men distributed a letter calling for political and economic reform and the release of political prisoners.⁴²⁶

On 12 June, the commander of Nasaka Area No.6 arrested 2 men in Maungdaw Township, Arakan State, and accused them of human trafficking. The Nasaka threatened to send the men to jail for 6 years unless they paid 4 million kyat (US\$ 4,000). Rohingya people in the area report that this form of extortion is very common.⁴²⁷

STUDENT FRACAS IN MON STATE

It was reported in April that a conflict between 20 university students and traffic police erupted in Moulmein, Mon State. It was sparked off when a female law student was stopped by the police and beaten unconscious after she disputed

⁴²² Irrawaddy (5 May 03) Dr Salai Tun Than and Others Released

⁴²³ Irrawaddy (28 April 03) Political Prisoner on Hunger Strike & Athens Banner Herald (29 April 03) Reform call heard from USA to Myanmar

⁴²⁴ Kaladan (21 Apr 03) Arbitrary arrest and extortion by Nasaka

⁴²⁵ AFP (6 May 03) Eight students arrested over embassy protest in Myanmar, exiled group says

⁴²⁶ Irrawaddy (9 May 03) Small Protests, Small Steps

⁴²⁷ Kaladan Press (19 Jun 03) Two men detention by Nasaka with false case

paying an unfair fine. The 20 students reportedly destroyed some government signboards.⁴²⁸

RIGHT TO FOOD

In May, the Asian Human Rights Commission (AHRC) issued a statement saying: "Empirical evidence suggests that every day millions of people there [in Burma] go hungry, hundreds of thousands are seriously malnourished, and that some are indeed starving... Torture is used to obtain rice. Fear is instilled to deprive people of basic economic rights and retard their capacity to react."

AHRC called for the SPDC's human rights committee to show what efforts it is taking to respond to the regime's role in denying people the right to food.⁴²⁹

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

SPDC Covers Up Mass Drowning

On 21 May, a ferry belonging to a military commander sank in Tavoy, drowning many of the 482 passengers on board. The authorities refused to release information about the accident and are reportedly confiscating corpses of the victims and burying them secretly without informing their families.⁴³⁰

First Internet Cafes in Burma

On 10 May, Burma's first 2 public Internet cafes opened in Rangoon. Internet users at the cafes can only access sites approved by SPDC censors and are blocked from free e-mail accounts like Hotmail and Yahoo!. One customer at the new cybercafes reported that: "Every person has to register their name, identification number and contact address."⁴³¹

⁴²⁸ DVB (2 April 03) Troubles in Moulmein

⁴²⁹ Asian Tribune (9 May 03) Hunger still rampant in Burma - Asian Human Rights Commission

⁴³⁰ DVB (11 Jun 03) Ferry Disaster in southern Burma

⁴³¹ Irrawaddy (21 May 03) First Internet Cafés Launched

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

Reconciliation does not mean surrendering our unique cultures, abandoning our traditions, or relinquishing our customs...it means being complemented and empowered by diversity. Understanding each other will help us create a strong, lasting foundation on which we can build a nation that truly represents us and of which we can be proud.

~ Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, "Burma ~ Women's Voices Together"⁴³²

RAPE

RI Report: Rape By SPDC Army is 'Systematic'

In April, Refugees International (RI) released a report, "No Safe Place: Burma's Army and the Rape of Ethnic Women," documenting 43 cases of rape or attempted rape of women from the Karen, Karenni, Mon, Tavoyan, and Shan ethnic groups. (See http://www.refugeesinternational.org/files/newsletters/no_safe_place.pdf.)

75% of women interviewed for the report said they knew someone who had been raped, however in only 2 of these cases were the rapists ever punished. One of the authors of the report, Veronika Martin notes: "Rape is widespread and committed with impunity, both by officers and lower ranking soldiers. The culture of impunity contributes to an atmosphere in which rape is permissible." The report provides evidence that rape is systematic within ethnic areas, and calls for an independent panel to investigate all rape charges against the SPDC.⁴³³

The regime responded to the RI report, calling charges of systematic rape by SPDC soldiers "too ridiculous."⁴³⁴ SPDC labor minister, U Tin Win said "Severe punishment is always handed down to any member of the armed forces who rape women, be they officers or other ranks or privates."⁴³⁵

Gang-Rapes in Arakan State

In the midst of SPDC denials, more rapes continued to be reported. On 19 April, a girl was gang-raped by police in Rathedaung Township, Arakan State. A

⁴³² Altsean-Burma (19 Jun 03) Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's foreword for the book "Burma ~ Women's Voices Together," a collection of 39 short stories and articles from women of diverse backgrounds in Burma. The book was released by Altsean-Burma to mark Women of Burma Day, and will be translated into several Burmese languages.

⁴³³ Refugees International (4 April 03) Refugees International Releases Report Documenting Rape by Burma's Army Against Ethnic Women & UN Wire (2 April 2 03) Researcher Calls For Panel To Investigate Rape By Soldiers

⁴³⁴ AFP (6 April 03) Myanmar labels latest rape accusations as "too ridiculous"

⁴³⁵ NYT (12 May 03) Burmese Women Are Reporting Systematic Rapes by Military

complaint was lodged with the local Military Intelligence officers. The accused rapists were summoned, but failed to appear. There has been no further report.⁴³⁶

On 1 June, a 25-year old Rohingya woman from San Nyin Way (Lambabil-East) village, Buthidaung Township, Arakan State, was gang-raped by 3 SPDC soldiers from Battalion No. 556. Village elders reported the incident to the battalion, but no action has yet been taken.⁴³⁷

TRAFFICKED WOMAN GRANTED ASYLUM IN AUSTRALIA

In April, a Burmese woman trafficked into the sex industry in Australia was finally granted refugee status. The woman said she was from Shan State and had been raped by the SPDC military as a child and then trafficked to Thailand and eventually Australia.⁴³⁸ (For more on trafficking, see Displacement)

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

6 MUSLIMS ARRESTED, MADRASSA DESTROYED

On 15 March, the NaSaKa arrested 3 committee members and 3 teachers from a madrassa (Muslim religious school) in Rwa Nyo Daung village, Buthidaung Township, Arakan State. The muslims were arrested for expanding the madrassa structure without permission, and on 17 March, the NaSaKa forced the villagers to demolish the madrassa completely.⁴³⁹

BURMESE MUSLIM SUPPLYING WEAPONS TO AL-QAEDA?

On 15 May, a Burmese Muslim, Abdul Mutallib, 27, was arrested in Karachi, Pakistan for allegedly supplying weapons to al-Qaeda operatives. Following his arrest, the SPDC said that they were sharing information with the US and other countries “on terrorists operating along Myanmar’s western border and within the region” with connections to al-Qaeda and the Taliban. In the past, the SPDC has used rumors of terrorist links to crack down on Muslims.⁴⁴⁰

⁴³⁶ Kaladan Press (12 May 03) A young girl raped by police

⁴³⁷ Kaladan Press (25 Jun 03) A Rohingya girl gang raped

⁴³⁸ Australian (28 April 03) Burmese sex slave granted refugee status

⁴³⁹ Kaladan (21 Apr 03) 6 madrassa committee members and teachers arrested

⁴⁴⁰ Irrawaddy (21 May 03) Burmese Muslims Await Junta Investigation

MUSLIM LEADER CALLS ON NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES TO HELP

On 17 May, a senior Burmese Islamic leader stated that Muslims were subjected to the worst forms of discrimination including mass rape, slavery, arbitrary confiscation of land, restrictions on movement and exclusion from government jobs. The Muslim leader called on Muslim-majority countries, including Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei and Bangladesh to pressure the junta to stop attacks on Muslims and restore religious freedoms.⁴⁴¹

DISPLACEMENT

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)

Shan Exodus Continues

Since March, the SPDC army has closely monitored all travelers, leaving thousands of people fleeing southern Shan State stranded in Mongton and Poongpakhem, opposite Thailand's Chiangmai province. Despite tightening security, an aid worker estimates that from March to mid-May almost 1,300 displaced Shans crossed the border in Fang, Chaiprakarn and Mae Ai. According to the aid worker "Considering the odds they are facing across the border, the number certainly is suggestive, because from January to March, before the ban was announced, the monthly figures averaged at 1,000." The aid worker further noted that villagers on islets of the Parng, a tributary of the Salween, were ordered to move out in March, leaving some 50 families homeless.⁴⁴²

In March, Dictator Watch conducted a relief mission to south eastern Shan State. (For full report see www.dictatorwatch.org). During the mission, the relief team documented cases of rape, torture, and forced labor as well as SPDC army involvement in the production and trafficking of heroin and amphetamines. (See Drugs). The team reported that in areas north of the Salween River, most Shans had been relocated to Mong Pan and Mong Ken Tong (a forced relocation site), leaving behind Lahu, Lisu, and Pa-O villagers who the SPDC forced to produce opium. The team estimated that over 15,000 Shan have been displaced from this area.⁴⁴³

⁴⁴¹ South China Morning Post (17 May 03) Muslims bear full brunt of Myanmar's oppressive rule

⁴⁴² SHAN (13 May 03) Burmese Refugee on the rise: Unfortunately Thailand does not recognise Shans as refugees

⁴⁴³ Dictator Watch (23 Jun 03) Relief mission, mine victim and additional analysis of Burma

Forced relocation in Arakan State

On 14 June, the Maungdaw Township Peace and Development Council ordered 26 families to vacate their homes.⁴⁴⁴

REFUGEES

Japan Compensates Burmese Refugee

On 9 April, a Japanese court awarded 9.5 million yen (US\$ 84,801.70) in damages to a Burmese man who spent 9 months in jail after he was denied refugee status in 1998.⁴⁴⁵

Germany deports asylum-seeker

On 6 May, Tun Kyaw was repatriated to Burma after a court in Germany rejected his application for political asylum. Last year, Germany deported 2 other Burmese asylum seekers, one of whom was reportedly arrested by MI after his return and sentenced to 10 years in prison.⁴⁴⁶

Storm Hits Thai Refugee Camp

On 8 May, a storm destroyed over 300 huts and wounded 5 people, including an infant in Mae-Khong-Khar refugee camp near Mae Sariang.⁴⁴⁷

Thai Villagers Want Refugees Pushed Back

In April, Senator Udon Tantisunthorn joined with village leaders in Tha Song District to urge that refugees should be pushed back as soon as possible. Villagers claimed the refugees spread diseases and destroy the environment. Senator Udon said that as there was rarely any fighting in the areas now from which they fled, the Thai government should use its good relations with Rangoon to solve the refugee problem.⁴⁴⁸

US Delegation: Lack of Educational Opportunities for Refugees

Following a trip to the Thai/Burma border to investigate the situation of refugee women and children, Frank Jannuzi, senior East Asia Specialist for the minority staff of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee concluded that educational opportunities need to be increased to make refugees less vulnerable to trafficking

⁴⁴⁴ Kaladan Press (26 Jun 03) TPDC Chairman ordered to vacate 26 dwelling houses at Maungdaw town

⁴⁴⁵ Kyodo News Service (9 April 03) Japan urged to redress Myanmar man on 'wrong' refugee decision

⁴⁴⁶ Mizzima (11 May 03) (No title) & Burma Bureau Germany (15 May 03) Statement on Burmese Asylum Seekers in Germany

⁴⁴⁷ Network Media Group (9 May 03) Rainstorm crashes 300 refugee huts, 5 injured in Karen Refugee Camp

⁴⁴⁸ Bangkok Post (20 April 03) Villagers Lose Patience with Burmese Refugees

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and exploitation. The delegation plans to introduce legislation to protect refugee women and children.⁴⁴⁹

Note: for more information on Thailand's recent crackdown on refugees and opposition groups see Thai-Burma Relations.

BANGLADESH: ROHINGYA REPATRIATION CONTINUES

I have only two choices: I go to jail, or I go back to Burma. Going to jail is better than going to Burma. ~ Refugee.

While UNHCR and the Bangladeshi government say that the repatriation of Rohingya refugees back to Burma is voluntary, Refugees International (RI) stated: "It is clear that camp officials to coerce refugees to return to Burma. Methods of coercion such as insufficient food supply, forced relocation within the camps to poorer housing, beatings, and, most commonly, threats of and actual jail sentences."⁴⁵⁰ One refugee told RI: "I have only two choices: I go to jail, or I go back to Burma. Going to jail is better than going to Burma."⁴⁵¹

We are like a soccer ball, kicked by Burma, kicked by Bangladesh!

The Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia) noted that as the repatriation rate has increased, so have complaints of coercion and harassment. The organization has recently released a report with refugees accounts of this situation, "We are like a soccer ball, kicked by Burma, kicked by Bangladesh!" available at www.forumasia.org.⁴⁵²

In April, 93 refugees were repatriated to Burma from Kutupalong and Nayapara refugee camps.⁴⁵³

On 7 May a refugee distributing anti-repatriation leaflets in one of the refugee camps was arrested and interrogated by Bangladeshi officials. Members of an anti-repatriation organization attacked the officials, wounding 4, in order to free him. Sources in the camp report that "in recent months the camp has gone beyond the control of law enforcement agencies, resulting in a state of despair."⁴⁵⁴

⁴⁴⁹ Irrawaddy (24 April 03) Vulnerability of Refugees Investigated

⁴⁵⁰ Xinhua (30 May 03) Bangladesh repatriates 704 Rohingya refugees to Myanmar in May & Kaladan Press (2 Jun 03) 704 Rohingyas repatriated in May

⁴⁵¹ Kaladan Press (2 Jun 03) 704 Rohingyas repatriated in May

⁴⁵² Forum-Asia (20 Jun 03) Bangladesh repatriates hundreds of Rohingya refugees to Burma

⁴⁵³ Forum-Asia (20 Jun 03) Bangladesh repatriates hundreds of Rohingya refugees to Burma

⁴⁵⁴ Narinjara (11 May 03) Anti-repatriation Leaflets in the Burmese Refugee Camps

A total of 704 refugees were sent back to Burma in May, the largest repatriation since 1997.⁴⁵⁵ Repatriation of the remaining 21, 658 refugees is scheduled to occur twice a week.⁴⁵⁶

On 18 June, 48 more Rohingyas repatriated to Burma were received by SPDC immigration at the Kayaung Chaung Reception Center in Maungdaw Township. While the refugees were given some provisions by the Bangladeshi government and the SPDC, they were forced to return to their villages at their own expense.⁴⁵⁷

In June, the French NGO, Aide Medical International (AMI) visited Maungdaw to investigate the possibility of opening a branch office.⁴⁵⁸

On 30 June, the Bangladeshi Government said that it had received a letter from UNHCR announcing that from December 2003 its staff would no longer be closely involved in repatriation of refugees.⁴⁵⁹ Bangladesh has urged the UNHCR not to cut assistance or funding, and a senior UNHCR official said: "We've no plan to shut down our programme as long as refugees are here."⁴⁶⁰

Refugee Prisoners in Bangladesh

44 Burmese refugees have spent 8 years after the expiry of their prison sentences in prison in Rangamati, Bangladesh. Bangladesh has been unable to repatriate the refugees, who were arrested for illegal immigration or illegal fishing, because the SPDC denies that they are Burmese citizens. There are an estimated 700-800 Burmese refugees in other Bangladeshi jails, so far only 11 have been repatriated.⁴⁶¹

INDIA: Burmese students expelled from Bible School

At the end of May, approximately 30 Kachin and Chin students at a Baptist Bible college in Bangalore, India, were sent back to Burma. The students were deported after police arrested 3 Burmese drug smugglers in Calcutta, one of whom had formerly attended the Bible college.⁴⁶²

Protests at UNHCR in Delhi

On 9 June, almost 150 Burmese demonstrated outside the UNHCR office in New Delhi, demanding refugee status and financial assistance. The refugees called the

⁴⁵⁵ Xinhua (30 May 03) Bangladesh repatriates 704 Rohingya refugees to Myanmar in May

⁴⁵⁶ Kaladan Press (21 May 03) Rohingya refugee repatriation starts again

⁴⁵⁷ Kaladan (19 Jun 03) 48 more refugees repatriated

⁴⁵⁸ Narinjara (17 Jun 03) Consultants of Foreign NGOs come calling at western Burma

⁴⁵⁹ BBC (30 Jun 03) Bangladesh plea to UNHCR

⁴⁶⁰ Narinjara (25 Jun 03) UNHCR rejects press report

⁴⁶¹ Narinjara (21 Jun 03) Burmese lingering in the prison of Bangladesh

⁴⁶² Network Media Group (29 May 03) Burmese nationals expelled from Bible school in India

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UNHCR a “silent killer” and accused the organization of no longer recognizing them as refugees and phasing out subsidies to asylum seekers.⁴⁶³

MIGRANT WORKERS

Thais Step Up Pressure on Migrant Workers

On 14 May, the Myanmar-Thai Joint Task Force on illegal workers in Thailand met to discuss and draft a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for the repatriation of illegal workers.⁴⁶⁴ According to SPDC statistics, 9,554 illegal workers were repatriated to Burma from Thailand between February 2002 and April 26, 2003.⁴⁶⁵

On 19 May, following a meeting with Gen Khin Nyunt, Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart announced that the SPDC had agreed to accept all illegal workers regardless of ethnicity. “We could directly send illegal Burmese workers to the border without having to send their names [to the Burmese authorities] in advance,” he said.⁴⁶⁶

Thai Labor Expert, Budit Thanachaisethawut said the plan failed to acknowledge that the SPDC doesn’t want the migrant workers back. “That is because not only do most of the migrants not have legal documents to prove they are Burmese citizens but a large number belong to ethnic minorities that the junta wishes to obliterate,” he said.⁴⁶⁷

On 28 May, the chief of Thailand’s immigration police Pol Lt-Gen Charnwut Wacharapuk announced that migrants arrested in Mae Sot would be fingerprinted and if caught as repeat offenders, they and their employers would face harsher punishments.⁴⁶⁸

On 30 May, Deputy Prime Minister Korn Dabbaransi, chairman of the alien labor policy committee, said that employers hiring illegal workers could be charged under the anti-money laundering law, and national security measures could be used in serious cases.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶³ AP (9 Jun 03) Myanmar refugees demand refugee status from UNHCR in India

⁴⁶⁴ Xinhua (15 May 03) Myanmar-Thai meeting on illegal workers ends in Myanmar

⁴⁶⁵ Xinhua (15 May 03) Myanmar-Thai meeting on illegal workers ends in Myanmar

⁴⁶⁶ Nation (20 May 03) Burma says yes to deal on repatriation

⁴⁶⁷ Bangkok Post (3 Jul 03) Why this abject toadying to Burma?

⁴⁶⁸ Irrawaddy (29 May 03) Burmese Migrants and their Employers Warned

⁴⁶⁹ Bangkok Post (30 May 03) Bosses target of new govt campaign

Money-laundering charges join armoury

Labor Minister Suwat Liptapanlop reported that 409,339 registered alien workers would be allowed to renew their working permits in fisheries, housework, animal farming and agricultural farming sectors.⁴⁷⁰

On 30 June, Thailand announced that migrants could extend their work permits for another year, after which the MoU on migration will go into effect. The MoU requires that workers present authorities with proof of having medical examinations in their homelands, and allows the government to deduct 1.5% of their wages to finance their eventual return.⁴⁷¹

Farm Workers at Risk from Chemical Spray

In March, a Thai Senate Committee reported that the health of farmworkers in Phop Phra District, Tak Province, was being threatened by the use of dangerous pesticides and chemical sprays. Many of these workers are Burmese migrants, who reportedly are not given any protective gear when working with these chemicals.⁴⁷²

Workers Deported Days Before Court Hearing

On 23 April, 26 workers who were in the process of suing their employer, were arrested and deported back to Myawaddy just days before their court hearing. The workers are suing the owner of the Nut Knitting factory for a total of 4.6 million baht (US\$107,000) in unpaid wages and compensation.⁴⁷³

Workers Protest Wages

On 7 May, 600 Burmese textile workers at the Rian Thong Apparel factory in Mae Sot held an angry 3 hour protest after their employer refused to increase their wages and slapped 2 female workers with shoes.⁴⁷⁴

Striking Workers Deported

On 23 June, over 300 Burmese workers were arrested and deported after holding a 7 day strike to demand a 20 baht daily (US\$0.49) wage increase.⁴⁷⁵

6 Workers Murdered

The burnt remains of 6 Burmese construction workers, who disappeared on 14 May, were found days later near Huay Kalok village, Tak Province. The 6 were last seen in the custody of uniformed Thai officials, and police have linked the

⁴⁷⁰ Bangkok Post (29 May 03) Aliens' work permits to be renewed for another year

⁴⁷¹ Bangkok Post (30 Jun 03) Extension of permits urged

⁴⁷² Irrawaddy (1 April 03) Burmese Workers Face Chemical Danger

⁴⁷³ Irrawaddy (28 April 03) Burmese Workers Sue for Unpaid Wages

⁴⁷⁴ AFP (7 May 03) Thai factory unrest erupts as 600 Myanmar labourers protest wages

⁴⁷⁵ Xinhua (24 Jun 03) Over 300 Myanmar workers deported from Thailand after wage dispute

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murders to 'local influential figures.'⁴⁷⁶ While police say they plan to seek arrest warrants in about 2 weeks, Forum-Asia Secretary-General Somchai Homlaor warned that "any delay and cover-up in investigating these heinous crimes would only hurt Thai-Burmese relations."⁴⁷⁷

TRAFFICKING

On 3 May, police in Chiang Mai arrested 29 Burmese women without work permits, who they believed had been tricked into working in the sex industry.⁴⁷⁸

On 25 June, Thai authorities arrested 88 illegal Burmese migrants and 2 traffickers who were en route to Kamphengphet Province.⁴⁷⁹

In May, it was reported that due to heightened police security, traffickers have doubled their fees to 10,000 baht (US\$ 247). In April and May, police arrested and deported almost 20,000 migrants.⁴⁸⁰

EDUCATION

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

SOUTH KOREA TO COOPERATE IN MARITIME TRAINING

On 11 May, a Korean maritime training vessel docked in Rangoon as part of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in February between the Korean Maritime University and its SPDC counterpart to cooperate in maritime training.⁴⁸¹

ABSFU RELEASES EDUCATION REPORT

On 13 May, the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (ABSFU) released a report on the current state of education in Burma. The report shows how Burma's education system has deteriorated under military rule and describes how the regime abuses student rights and academic and institutional freedoms. Dr Thein Lwin from the Teacher Training for Burmese Teachers Program said, "The

⁴⁷⁶ Bangkok Post (28 May 03) Killing seen as warning to others

⁴⁷⁷ Bangkok Post (28 May 03) Inquest delay threat to ties with Burma

⁴⁷⁸ Nation (4 May 03) 29 alien sex workers arrested in police raid

⁴⁷⁹ Irrawaddy (25 Jun 03) Migrants and Traffickers Arrested in Jungle

⁴⁸⁰ Bangkok Post (28 May 03) Killing seen as warning to others

⁴⁸¹ Xinhua (12 May 03) South Korean maritime vessel visits Myanmar

junta's neglect of the sector has made the country's education system worse than it ever was. They never spend enough money on education."⁴⁸²

HEALTH

Improving Stagnant Deteriorating

REPRESSION & DISEASE

During the regional epidemic of Sudden Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS), the SPDC claimed that Burma was "a zero-transmission" country. Despite government assurances and some limited measures to screen passengers arriving from affected countries, rumors spread that there were some SARS cases in Rangoon. On 29 April, the SPDC confirmed that 26 people with SARS symptoms were quarantined in a Rangoon hospital, however claimed that none had developed the virus.⁴⁸³

The World Health Organization (WHO) stated that government repression and a lack of honesty about infection rates also encourages the spread of AIDS. The WHO criticized the SPDC for failing to provide prevention programs for prostitutes and their clients, because its official policy is that men are faithful to their wives.⁴⁸⁴

ENVIRONMENT

Improving Stagnant Deteriorating

NEW CONSTRUCTION IN PAGAN

The SPDC plans to build a 198-foot high tower in Pagan (Bagan), an important archaeological site. Richard Engelhardt, UNESCO's advisor for culture in Asia and the Pacific, expressed concern with the plan, saying: "We are definitely concerned about any plans to develop any kinds of new infrastructure within a protected area... a big tower, even if not inside the site, would impact on the site visually."⁴⁸⁵

⁴⁸² Irrawaddy (14 May 03) Junta Blamed for Education Woes

⁴⁸³ AP (29 April 29 03) 26 people quarantined with SARS-like symptoms in Myanmar

⁴⁸⁴ New York Times (17 April 03) Dictatorships and Disease

⁴⁸⁵ AFP (9 May 03) UN body fears for Myanmar's plans for ancient Pagan

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LOGGING

In May, it was reported that members of DKBA Battalion 906 and a local Buddhist leader were illegally logging large amounts of teak in the 3 Pagoda Pass area in Mon State on the Thai Border.⁴⁸⁶

In June, the Shan Herald Agency for News (SHAN) reported that 3 logging companies were currently working in the area west of the Kunhing-Toonhoong-Mongpan road. One Kengtawng (Kengtung) native estimated that: "Since the logging started in 2001, about 50% of our forested areas have gone."⁴⁸⁷ (See Aid section for information on environment aid projects)

⁴⁸⁶ Independent Mon News Agency (23 May 03) DKBA involves in illegal logging but SPDC keeps silence

⁴⁸⁷ SHAN (2 Jun 03) Plant awaits power producer from Japan

CHRONOLOGY: 1 APR ~30 JUN 2003

Includes events taking place before April but reported later, & events after June but relevant to the special Black Friday section.

January SPDC sets up basic military training school at Wiang-Kao, west of Tongoong, Shan State. *SHAN, 2 Jun*

15 Mar NaSaKa arrest 6 members of a madrassa (Muslim religious school) in Rwa Nyo Daung village, Buthidaung Township, Arakan State. Villagers forced to destroy the madrassa on 17 March. *Kaladan, 21 Apr*

17 Mar-25 Apr 59th Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) adopts resolution on "Situation of Human Rights in Myanmar," extends mandate of the UN Special Rapporteur. *European Union, 16 Apr*

1 Apr 5 DKBA soldiers cross into Wansip Kayan village, Mae Sot District, Thailand, killing one Thai Karen woman and wounding one man. *DVB, 1 Apr*

1 Apr Thai Senate Committee reports that the health of farmworkers threatened by pesticides. *Irrawaddy, 1 Apr*

1 Apr Amnesty International complains about SPDC failure to release political prisoners. *Amnesty International, 1 Apr*

1-21 Apr SPDC reports increase in rice and rubber exports. *Xinhua, 11 Apr; Xinhua, 21 Apr*

2 Apr Indian court hearing on case of student activist Soe Myint. *Irrawaddy, 2 Apr*

2 Apr Conflict between 20 university students and traffic police in Moulmein, Mon State after police beat a female student. *DVB, 2 Apr*

2 Apr Bangladesh announces plans to build land port at Teknaf. *Narinjara 2 Apr 03*

3 Apr Local authorities and USDA circulate Anti-NLD pamphlets at Gangaw, Magwe Division, the NLD team's first stop. *Irrawaddy, 3 Apr*

3 Apr DASSK and NLD team depart for 12-day trip to western Chin State and Sagaing Division. *Irrawaddy, 3 Apr*

4 Apr 9 people arrested in conjunction with protest in front of British Embassy. *AFP, 6 May*

4 Apr Refugees International (RI) releases report, "No Safe Place: Burma's Army and the Rape of Ethnic Women."

4 Apr SPDC representatives attend informal meeting of ASEAN economic ministers. *TV Myanmar, 6 Apr*

4 Apr Reported that local SPDC army commanders ordered people in Mongton, Kengtawng (Kengtung), Mongpan, and Mongnai, Shan state to fashion home-made weapons. *SHAN, 4 Apr*

5-7 Apr Than Shwe visits Laos. *AFP, 8 May*

7 Apr SPDC announces plan to end paddy procurement policy. *AFP, 7 Apr*

7 Apr Thai soldiers kill 2 Burmese drug traffickers at the Tharua Din Dam temporary border crossing in Chiang Mai province. *Xinhua, 7 Apr*

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- 7 Apr ICRC announces they want the SPDC to allow them access to border areas in Shan and Karen State. *AFP, 7 Apr*
- 8 Apr Wa soldiers attack militia-run heroin refinery in Mong Ton Township, Shan State. 9 people are killed, including 4 villagers. *DVB, 8 Apr*
- 8 Apr Daw Suu and NLD team hold mass rally in Kale Sagaing Division, MI videotapes attendees and demands names of people providing security for Daw Suu. *DVB, 8 Apr*
- 8-9 Apr Meeting on the Bangladesh/Burma border, between NaSaKa and Bangladesh Rifles (BDR). *Kaladan Press, 9 Apr*
- 9 Apr SPDC reports foreign trade declined by 2.5% in 2002. *Xinhua, 9 Apr 03*
- 9 Apr Reported that Thai Government has revived plans to construct 3 hydropower dams on the Salween River. *Bangkok Post, 9 Apr*
- 9 Apr Reported that acting on information from Chinese officials, SPDC destroys drug factory in Shan State. *Xinhua, 9 Apr*
- 9 Apr Japanese court awards 9.5 million yen to Burmese man refused refugee status in 1998. *Kyodo News Service, 9 Apr*
- 10 Apr SPDC claims Burma has 57,000 industrial enterprises, an increase of 15,000 from 1988. *Xinhua, 10 Apr*
- 10 Apr State Department's biannual report on Burma notes: "efforts to foster peaceful democratic change in Burma essentially ground to a halt over the past six months." *AFP, 10 Apr*
- 10 Apr Authorities in Haka, Tunzan and Mindat, Chin state and Salin, Magwe Division pass out documents personally attacking DASSK. *DVB, 15 Apr*
- 11 Apr US State Department releases biannual report on conditions inside Burma. *US State Department, 11 Apr*
- 11 Apr SPDC reports tourist numbers up 11.47 % in 2002. *Xinhua, 11 Apr*
- 14 Apr SPDC announces 1% increase in power generation in 2002. *Xinhua, 14 Apr*
- 14 Apr EU Decides to extend and increase sanctions for another year.
- 14 Apr SPDC orders "thorough investigation" regarding a listening device at Insein Prison. *Myanmar Times, 14 Apr*
- 14 Apr SPDC denies govt-sponsored harassment on NLD trip, accuses Daw Suu's bodyguards of grabbing a cameraman. *AFP, 14 Apr.*
- 15 Apr SPDC releases statement of 'complete trust' in DASSK. *AFP, 15 Apr*
- 15 Apr American Apparel and Footwear Association calls for "an immediate and total ban" on imports from Burma. *Financial Times, 16 Apr.*
- 16 Apr SPDC signs tax agreement with Indonesia. *Myanmar Times, 16 Apr*
- 19 Apr Girl gang-raped by police in Rathedaung Township, Arakan State. *Kaladan Press, 12 May*
- 20 Apr Senator Udon Tantisunthorn and village leaders in Tha Song District urge refugees be pushed back to Burma. *Bangkok Post, 20 Apr*
- 20 Apr Reported that in Apr, 93 refugees repatriated from Kutupalong and Nayapara camps in Bangladesh. *Forum Asia, 20 Jun*

- 20 Apr SPDC army arrests 20 villagers from Koin Daung village, Buthidaung Township, Arakan State for forced labor. *Kaladan News, 7 May 03*
- 20 Apr the Karen National Union (KNU) publicly claims responsibility for blowing up sections of UNOCAL gas pipelines. *AFP, 20 Apr*
- 20 Apr Burmese travel agents report hotel bookings have fallen 10-60% in recent months. *AFP, 20 Apr*
- 21 Apr Razali expresses concern at being denied access to Burma, says "It's going to the point where it's negative." *Reuters, 21 Apr*
- 23 Apr DASSK expresses doubts about the regime's commitment to the dialogue. *AFP, 23 Apr*
- 23 Apr Daw Aung San Suu Kyi for first time publicly expresses doubts about the regime's commitment to the dialogue. *AFP, 23 Apr*
- 23 Apr 26 workers suing their employer in Mae Sot, are arrested and deported back to Myawaddy. *Irrawaddy, 28 Apr*
- 23 Apr Daw Aung San Suu Kyi reiterates that NLD position on sanctions remains the same until negotiations take place. *AFP, 23 Apr*
- 24 Apr Sources in Kunming, China estimate that Burmese Muslims working with Chinese Muslim groups smuggle 300 to 400 kgs of heroin into Yunnan province each month. *Irrawaddy, 24 Apr*
- 24 Apr UNAIDS announces new 3-year joint program for combating HIV/AIDS. *AP, 28 Apr*
- 26 Apr Former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro leads delegation to Burma, and holds meetings with Than Shwe and Khin Nyunt. *Kyodo News Service, 26 Apr*
- 28 Apr SPDC reports first ever trade surplus. *Xinhua, 28 Apr*
- 28 Apr Reported that Dr. Salai Tun Than launched hunger strike. *Irrawaddy, 28 Apr*
- 28 Apr Thai Foreign Minister calls for leniency towards the junta and support for SPDC moves towards reform. *AP, 28 Apr.*
- 29 Apr SPDC confirms 26 people with SARS symptoms quarantined in Rangoon hospital, however claims none have developed the virus. *AP, 29 Apr*
- 29 Apr SPDC reports that recent combined task force operations (Wa and SPDC) seized an estimated 555 kgs of heroin and opium and arrested 48 drug producers and traffickers. *AFP, 1 May*
- 30 Apr Prime Minister Thaksin announces proposal to create economic quadrangle with Cambodia, Laos, and Burma. *AFP, 30 Apr.*
- May A total of 704 refugees in Bangladesh sent back to Burma in May, the largest repatriation since 1997. *Xinhua, 30 May*
- 1 May Reported that the SPDC allowed the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) to open new border trade gate with China at Lai Ja, Moe Mauk, in Kachin State. *Mizzima, 1 May*
- 1 May High-level Japanese official traveling with former Japanese Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori meets with Daw Suu. *DVB, 2 May*

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- 1 May Thailand orders stringent checks on all monks crossing from Burma, after some found crossing from Tachilek with pornographic CDs. *Thai Press Reports, 6 May.*
- 1 May Kuoni Travel announces it will end all operations in Burma until democracy is restored. *Friends of the Earth, 1 May*
- 3 May Reported that the bank crisis in Burma has dramatically reduced cross-border trade with India. *Mizzima 3 May*
- 3 & 5 May SPDC releases 3 political prisoners from Mandalay prison. *AP, 2 May*
- 4 May SPDC releases 18 political prisoners, including Dr. Salai Tun Than, due to "health and humanitarian concerns." *Irrawaddy, 5 May*
- 4 May Protester arrested by MI after handcuffing himself to a pole near NLD headquarters, while 2 or 3 other men distribute letter. *Irrawaddy, 9 May*
- 6 May DASSK, U Tin Oo and NLD team leave for tour of Kachin State. *AFP, 6 May*
- 6 May The SPDC signs agreement with Thailand to open more flights and new flying routes. *Xinhua, 7 May*
- 6 May Reported that Burmese investors are selling their frozen account balances to try and recoup savings. State bank continues trying to forcibly recall loans. *Irrawaddy, 6 May*
- 7 May Sandro Calvani, head of the UNODC's regional centre for East Asia and the Pacific, reports that Thailand's drug crackdown has caused traffickers to turn to new markets and/or production locations in Laos, Cambodia, and India. *AFP, 9 May*
- 7 May Reported that US intelligence sources believe the majority of methamphetamine production is now occurring along the Burma/Laos border. *Inter Press Service, 7 May*
- 7 May International Crisis Group (ICG) releases report examining the role of Burma's ethnic nationality groups in Burmese politics.
- 7 May 600 Burmese textile workers in Mae Sot hold angry protest after their employer refused to increase their wages and slapped 2 female workers. *AFP, 7 May*
- 7-10 May 7th annual Thailand trade exhibition held in Rangoon. *Xinhua, 29 Apr.*
- 7 May A refugee distributing anti-repatriation leaflets in one of the refugee camps is arrested and interrogated by Bangladeshi officials. Members of an anti-repatriation organization attack the officials, wounding 4, in order to free him. *Narinjara, 11 May*
- 8 May Storm destroys over 300 huts and wounds 5 people in Mae-Khong-Khar refugee camp. *Network Media Group, 9 May*
- 9 May Reported that the Thai Ministry of Commerce wants to open a new border checkpoint with Burma in Ratchaburi province. *Thai Press Reports, 9 May*
- 9 May Reported that SPDC plans to build a 198-foot high tower in Pagan. *AFP, 9 May*
- 10 May Burma's first 2 public Internet cafes open in Rangoon. *Irrawaddy, 21 May*
- 12 May Reported that India has openly acknowledged selling weapons to the SPDC. *Pak Tribune, 12 May*

- 12 May Joint Economic Quadrangle Committee plans to develop Mae Sot as special economic zone. *Bangkok Post*, 14 May
- 12 May 35 disabled refugee families from Karenni camp 3 are ordered to relocate to Karenni camp 1. *Network Media Group*, 12 May
- 13 May SHAN reported SPDC authorities ordered village elders in Mongton and Monghsat Townships, Shan State to provide 450 new recruits. *SHAN*, 13 May
- 13 May Aid worker estimates since March almost 1,300 displaced Shans crossed the border in Fang, Chaiprakarn and Mae Ai. *SHAN*, 13 May
- 13 May Aid worker reports that villagers on islets of the Parng, were ordered to move out in March, leaving some 50 families homeless. *SHAN* 13 May
- 13 May ABSFU releases report on the current state of education in Burma. *Irrawaddy*, 14 May
- 14 May Reported that India has openly acknowledged selling arms to the SPDC. *Mizzima*, 14 May
- 14 May Myanmar-Thai Joint Task Force on illegal workers in Thailand drafts MoU for the repatriation of illegal workers. *Xinhua*, 15 May
- 14 May 6 migrant workers disappear after arrest by uniformed Thai officials. Their burnt bodies are later found. *Bangkok Post*, 28 May
- 15 May Burmese Muslim arrested in Karachi, Pakistan for allegedly supplying weapons to al-Qaida operatives. SPDC says that they were sharing information with the US and other countries "on terrorists operating along Myanmar's western border and within the region." *Irrawaddy*, 21 May
- 15 May SPDC agrees to sign a formal agreement with the International Labor Organization (ILO), including appointing an independent official to monitor labor conditions. *M2 Presswire*, 15 May
- 16 May Bomb in Pyu Town, Pegu Division kills one person and injures 47. *Mizzima*, 26 May.
- 16 May KNU Gen-Sec Padoh Mahn Sha calls on Russia, China, India, Singapore, and Poland to stop selling arms to the SPDC. *Irrawaddy*, 16 May.
- 16 May President Bush renews the National Emergencies Act on Burma. White House, Office of the Press Secretary, 16 May
- 19 May Thai Defense Minister Thamarak Isarankura cites a US intelligence information that Wa drug dealers had put an 80 million baht contract out on Prime Minister Thaksin. *DPA*, 19 May
- 19 May Representatives from major US pension funds sign letter urging the company to end its involvement in Burma. *Los Angeles Times*, 20 May
- 19 May After meeting with Khin Nyunt, Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart announces that the SPDC had agreed to accept all illegal workers regardless of ethnicity. *Nation*, 20 May
- 20 May Border officials from Burma and Bangladesh hold 3-day high-level meeting in Dhaka. *Narinjara*, 23 May
- 21 May Thai authorities announce plans to close Htam Hin refugee camp. *DVB*, 22 May.

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- 21 May Malaysian delegation arrives in Burma for a goodwill visit. *TV Myanmar, 21 May*
- 21 May SPDC trucks and oil tankers heading to Kengtung, Shan state bombed by a group that Thai and Burmese military sources claim to be the Shan State Army (South). *Irrawaddy, 22 May.*
- 21 May After meeting with Khin Nyunt, Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai says talks will resume soon. *Bangkok Post, 21 May.*
- 21 May Bombs explode in Tachilek, killing up to 10 people. *AFP, 21 May.*
- 21 May Authorities confiscate bodies of hundreds of victims of a ferry accident in Tavoy. *DVB, 11 Jun*
- 22 May Australia announces a 23.2 % increase in aid to Burma. *Irrawaddy, 22 May*
- 23 May Reported that DKBA Battalion 906 and a local Buddhist leader are illegally logging teak in the 3 Pagoda Pass Area. *Independent Mon News Agency, 23 May*
- 24 May SPDC War Office issues directive putting all armed organization on a state of emergency. *DVB, 26 May*
- 25 May People waiting to see NLD team in Kyidauk Pauk village, Kachin State threatened by armed USDA members, brick thrown at Daw Suu's car, and 1 NLD member injured. *AP, 26 May*
- 25 May SPDC collects Mandalay Prison inmates to assist in attacks on NLD. *DVB, 4 Jun*
- 26 May Local authorities gather 3,000 or more criminal recruits at SPDC army headquarters and bribe them to join anti-NLD protests. *Kao Wao News 30 May-10 Jun*
- 27 May Security tightened in Mae Hong Son after 10 soldiers from a Burmese opposition army entered the village of Baan Mai Sape. *Thai Press Reports, 27 May*
- 27 May UN Special Representative on Human Rights Defenders, Hina Jilani, says HRDs face a 'climate of fear' in Thailand due to government harassment and intimidation. *Financial Time, 27 May*
- 28 May Reported that due to heightened police security, traffickers have doubled their fees to 10,000 baht. *Bangkok Post, 28 May*
- 29 May Gen Soe Win holds meeting with USDA director Saw Htun, Chief Police Inspector Khin Ye, Minister for Home Affairs Colonel Tin Hlaing, and commander of the Northwest Regional Command Brigadier-Gen Soe Naing. *Irrawaddy, 9 Jun*
- 29 May Reported that Burmese companies are using free prison labor in Mandalay, Thayet and Meik-Hti-La prisons as well as prison camps in Arakan State. *Network Media Group, 29 May; Narinjara, 10 Jun*
- 29 May Reported that severe food shortages at Sittwe prison, Arakan State were causing dozens of prisoners to die monthly from malnutrition and related diseases. *Narinjara, 29 May*
- 29 May Reported that Bangladeshi government called on armed Burmese opposition groups along the Bangladesh border to surrender their weapons to the SPDC. *Irrawaddy, 29 May*

- 29 May India plans to deport 30 Kachin and Chin students at a Baptist Bible college back to Burma, after police arrested 3 Burmese drug smugglers in Calcutta, one of whom had formerly attended the Bible college. *Network Media Group, 29 May.*
- 29 May Labor Minister Suwat Liptapanlop reports that 409,339 registered alien workers would be allowed to renew their working permits. *Bangkok Post, 29 May*
- 30 May 3 miles past Depayin Township, up to 1000 USDA members, police, soldiers and other SPDC recruits attack hundreds of unarmed NLD supporters. Reported that U Tin Oo is beaten up, and windows of Daw Suu's car are broken. *Irrawaddy, 6 Jun;*
- 30 May onwards SPDC arrests at least 44 other democracy advocates following the Depayin attack. *Irrawaddy, 5 Jun*
- 30 May Reported that Japan, Germany and Italy pledged over US\$ 3 million to the UNODC for drug eradication in Wa areas. *Xinhua, 30 May*
- 31 May Local authorities take away wounded and dead bodies and clean up site of attack. *DVB, 14 Jun*
- 31 May 60 NLD supporters return to site of the attack and most are arrested by soldiers, police, and local officials. *Irrawaddy, 6 Jun*
- 31 May 65 bodies secretly cremated in the Northwest Military Command Compound. *NCGUB News Desk, 1 Jun*
- 31 May Citizens from Monywa go to USDA office and are brutally beaten by army, USDA, police and other authorities. Reverend U Panna Thiri is killed along with 2 other students. Authorities take away the bodies of the students. *NCGUB News Desk, 1 Jun*
- June SPDC begins 45-day military exercise in the Coastal Regional Command with assistance of Russian and Chinese military experts. *DVB, 6 May*
- 1 Jun A Rohingya woman from San Nyin Way (Lambabil-East) village, Buthidaung Township, Arakan State is gang raped by 3 SPDC soldiers from Battalion No. 556. *Kaladan Press, 25 Jun*
- 1 Jun NCGUB estimates up to 70 people killed and 200 injured in Black Friday attack. *NCGUB News Desk, 1 Jun*
- 2 Jun SHAN reports that work on the Kengtawng (Kengtung) power plant project had stopped for unknown reasons. *SHAN, 2 Jun*
- 2 Jun SHAN reports that 3 logging companies are currently working in the area west of the Kunhing-Toonhoong-Mongpan road. *SHAN, 2 Jun*
- 2 Jun Reported that the SPDC has shut down most NLD offices throughout the country. *LA Times, 2 Jun*
- 2 Jun SHAN reports build up of troops in Kengtawng (Kengtung) Shan State. *SHAN, 2 Jun*
- 2-5 Jun US Embassy conducts investigation at the scene of Black Friday attack where they find evidence of 'great violence,' and conclude the attack was premeditated. *AP, 5 Jun*
- 3 Jun Reported that SPDC will delay opening of schools and universities following the Black Friday Crackdown. *Bangkok Post, 3 Jun.*

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- 3-6 Jun Reported that SPDC has cut communication and transportation links in Monywa and Depayin to maintain a blackout on information about the attack. *RFA, 3 Jun; Irrawaddy, 6 Jun; and DVB 17 Jun.*
- 3-4 Jun Reported that at least 17 NLD members remain in detention at Khamti Prison and are being subjected to torture. *Network for Democracy and Development, 4 Jun; AAPPB, 3 Jun; NCGUB, 13 Jun.*
- 4 Jun Reported that Northwest Military Command claims 32 prisoners died 'carrying out their duty.' *DVB, 4 Jun*
- 5 Jun Reported that Northern Command have arrested most of the NLD officials in *Myitkyina, Kachin State. Irrawaddy, 5 Jun.*
- 5 Jun Reported that Bangladeshi Foreign Minister M. Morshed Khan said that Bangladesh will not intervene in Burma's 'internal affairs.' *Narinjara News, 5 Jun.*
- 6-10 Jun SPDC allows Razali to visit Rangoon and have a brief meeting with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. *Washington Post, 14 Jun*
- 7 Jun Reported that Australia has suspended heavily criticized human rights training program in Burma. *The Age, 7 Jun*
- 7 Jun ASEAN Sec-Gen Keng Yong reiterates that ASEAN should stay out of internal affairs of member countries, but is concerned how developments in Burma will affect ASEAN's image. *Reuters, 7 Jun.*
- 7 Jun 9 ethnic nationality political parties issue a joint statement on the regime's Black Friday crackdown. *Narinjara 8 Jun*
- 8 Jun Reported that SPDC has dramatically increased military presence in Rangoon. *AFP, 8 Jun.*
- 8 Jun Burma hosts the third meeting to discuss the implementation of the ASEAN-Japan Committee on Comprehensive Economic Partnership (AJCCEP). *New Light of Myanmar 8 Jun, 03*
- 9 Jun Reported that Indian spokesman for the Ministry of External Affairs said that India believes external pressure [regarding the situation in Burma] would be 'counter-productive.' *Washington Post Foreign Service, 9 Jun.*
- 9 -10 Jun Thai troops engage in small-scale armed clashes with UWSA soldiers near the northern Thai border town of Mae Ai. *Xinhua, 11 Jun*
- 9 Jun Almost 150 Burmese demonstrate outside the UNHCR office in New Delhi, demanding refugee status and financial assistance. *AP, 9 Jun*
- 10 Jun Reported that SPDC has said that Daw Suu and at least 18 other NLD members taken into 'protective custody.' Sr-Gen Than Shwe puts off Jun 1 quarterly SPDC meeting and orders regional commands to remain on high alert. *Kao Wao News 30 May-10 Jun*
- 10 Jun or prior Daw Suu transferred to 2-room hut in Insein Prison prior to her meeting with Razali. *AFP, 30 Jun.*
- 11 Jun The US Senate passes sanctions bill to ban imports from Burma, Freeze assets and put a visa ban on high-level SPDC and USDA Officials. *Wall Street Journal, 12 Jun*

- 11 Jun Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and President Bush make joint statement calling for 'immediate substantive political dialogue' in Burma. *RFA, 13 Jun*
- 12 Jun Thai police arrest Laota Saenli, key aide to Wa druglord Wei Hsuehkang, in Chiang Mai. *Nation, 13 Jun*
- 13 Jun Thai military destroys a bomb planted in Mae Sai. *AFP, 13 Jun*
- 13 Jun Earth Rights International (ERI) releases a report, "Entrenched," documenting forced labor in Eastern Burma.
- 13 Jun Thailand's Deputy Army chief, Wattanachai Chaimuenwong, complains that SPDC has failed to crack down on drug production. *Xinhua, 13 Jun*
- 13 Jun 6 policemen in Kathaung (Kawthaung) Tenasserim Division, arrested and sentenced to one year in prison with hard labor for publicly discussing the Black Friday attack. *DVB, 13 Aug*
- 14 Jun Maungdaw Township Peace and Development Council, Arakan State, orders 26 families to vacate their homes. *Kaladan Press, 26 Jun*
- 14 Jun Reported that many victims of Depeyin attack remain in detention at Northwest Military Command at Monywa. Those injured reportedly sent to Insein Prison. *DVB, 14 Jun.*
- 16 Jun SPDC releases 46 people they claim were detained during May 30 attack. *AP, 16 Jun*
- 16 Jun EU enacts new sanctions that widen the visa ban. *Irrawaddy, 17 Jun*
- 16-18 Jun ASEAN Ministerial Meeting (AMM) & ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). ASEAN members receive strong pressure from US and UN to take a strong stance on Burma. The Philippines and Singapore openly demand the release of ASSK, and most other members reportedly mention it in 'private communication' with SPDC representatives.

ASEAN responds to SPDC calls for assistance by proposing sending a delegation to help the regime hasten democratic reforms. *AP, 17 Jun.*

SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung says the regime has no intention to harm Daw Suu and that she will be released when the situation returns to 'normal.' *DPA, 19 Jun.*

Final Joint Communique released by the AMM on Burma is weaker than many had hoped, urges SPDC to resume efforts towards dialogue and reconciliation but fails to condemn the attack.
- 17 Jun 9 Burmese holding a hunger strike in front of the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok are forced to relocate to the UNHCR building. *Irrawaddy, 18 Jun*
- 17 Jun 3 Burmese are arrested and deported after staging a hunger strike and hanging the NLD flag on their house in Mae Sot. *Irrawaddy, 18 Jun*
- 17 Jun San Francisco judges hold hearing to determine if Burmese villagers charging Unocal Corporation with complicity in human rights abuses can proceed with their federal lawsuit. *Washington Post, 30 May*
- 18 Jun 184 UK lawmakers sign motion calling for targeted investment sanctions against the SPDC. *Bloomberg.com, 18 Jun.*
- 18 Jun Reported that SPDC has stepped up conscription in Arakan state. *Narinjara, 18 Jun.*

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- 19 Jun People in 15 countries hold demonstrations in solidarity with the victims of the Black Friday attack.
- 19 Jun US Council on Foreign Relations-sponsored Task Force on Burma releases a report with recommendations for US policy on Burma.
- 19 Jun Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday, Women of Burma Day.
- 21 Jun Reported that former political prisoners are being summoned and threatened by military intelligence. *DVB, 21 Jun*
- 22 Jun SPDC allows ICRC to meet with some of those newly detained, including U Tin Oo. *HI Pakistan, 23 Jun*
- 23 Jun Reported that Thai Lt-Col Manop Khaikhunthod had stated that many drug production centers in Mong Yawn, Shan State had been relocated to Khwang Bo Kaew in northern Laos. *Bangkok Post, 23 Jun*
- 24 Jun Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad speaks out about the SPDC attack, concerned with how it will affect his own and ASEAN's reputation. *AP, 24 Jun.*
- 24 Jun AAPPB verifies at least 8 deaths in Black Friday attack, by the end of Jun an estimated 150 NLD members and supporters still missing. *Reuters, 24 Jun*
- 24 Jun UN announces plans to implement a \$US 1.45 million 3-year program to help Burma, Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam narrow the development gap with other ASEAN members. *Xinhua, 24 Jun*
- 25 Jun UK prime minister tells British companies that trade with Burma is 'not appropriate' given the current situation. *Financial Times, 25 Jun*
- 25 Jun Reported that the French Embassy has invited Daw Suu to a Bastille Day reception 14 Jul. *Financial Time, 25 Jun.*
- 25 Jun Japan freezes all new bilateral aid to Burma. *AFP, 30 Jun*
- 25 Jun Thai government prohibits people from Burma from protesting outside the Burmese embassy. *AFP, 25 Jun*
- 26 Jun Reported that China has says DASSK's detention is an 'internal affair' and they will not try to intervene. *AFP, 26 Jun.*
- 26 Jun 11 Burmese are arrested after holding a peaceful protest at the Burmese embassy. *DPA, 27 Jun*
- 26 Jun Thaksin complains that UNHCR is undermining Thailand's sovereignty by issuing refugee permits without approval from Thai Government. A UNHCR spokeswoman responds that all refugee status has been given with the 'consent and cooperation' of the Thai government." *AFP, 27 Jun*
- 26 Jun UNODC chief in Rangoon applauds the SPDC's "spectacular" 24% reduction in opium in 2002, but expresses concerns about human rights issues and sustainability of the reduction. *AFP, 26 Jun*
- 26 Jun Reported that the US added the UWSA and its leader, Wei Hsueh-Kang, to the Foreign Narcotics Kingpin Designation Act. *Xinhua, 26 Jun*
- 26 Jun European diplomats boycott SPDC drug-burning ceremony in the wake of Black Friday. *AFP, 26 Jun*

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- 26 Jun British American Tobacco Company reports they intend to stay in Burma until and unless the UK and/or EU decided to impose sanctions. *AFX, 26 Jun*
- 26 Jun Reported that 3 drug refineries run by SPDC officials continue to operate in Tachilek. *Asia Times Online, 26 Jun*
- 27 Jun Thai soldiers kill 2 Wa soldiers guarding a drug convoy in Mai Ai District, Chiang Mai Province. *Bangkok Post, 28 Jun*
- 29 Jun Soe Win, an elected MP arrested on 5 Jun is released after he attempted to commit suicide. Reportedly he suffered a stroke while in prison and has become almost blind as a result of eye injuries caused by his torture during interrogation. *Irrawaddy, 7 Jul*
- 30 Jun Thai FM Surakiart proposes limiting the number of refugees "because there is reconciliation now inside Myanmar." *AFP, 30 Jun*
- 30 Jun Bangladeshi Government says they received a letter from UNHCR announcing that from December 2003 its staff would no longer be closely involved in repatriation of refugees. UNHCR says they have no plans to pull out as long as the refugees remain in Bangladesh. *BBC, 30 Jun; Narinjara, 25 Jun*
- 30 Jun Thailand announces that migrants could extend their work permits for another year, after which the MoU on migration will go into effect. *Bangkok Post, 30 Jun*
- July Than Swe sends his 2 foreign ministers on a regional 'goodwill tour' to convince ASEAN and other Asian neighbors that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD were to blame for Black Friday. The SPDC deputy foreign minister makes a whirlwind tour of Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, while the foreign minister visits China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and India. *BBC, 14 Jul*
- The state-run New Light of Myanmar publishes a series of articles, allegedly written by a former NLD member, which personally attacked Daw Suu. *Irrawaddy, 11 Jul*
- 3 Jul ICRC representatives announce that they have been able to register and meet with 30 political prisoners arrested in conjunction with Black Friday. *AP, 3 Jul*
- 4 Jul It was reported that in Ye Township, Mon State, the SPDC is forcing every man between the ages of 18 and 40 to attend military training. *IMNA & Kao Wao, 4 Jul*
- 4 Jul NLD members & Black Friday witnesses Wunna Maung and Khin Zaw flee to Thailand and submit an affidavit with their testimony to the Thai Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs. The Thai government refuses to allow them to speak and threatens to deport them. Finally they are granted permission to stay in Thailand if they don't speak publicly about the Black Friday incident. *AFP, 4 Jul*
- 5 Jul SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung travels to Bangladesh for an official visit. *DPA, 7 Jul*
- 5 Jul A recently-released detainee reported that on 30 May, 140 people had been taken to Shwebo prison. According to the detainee, 50 people remained in Shwebo prison at the time of his release. *DVB, 5 Jul*

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- 8 Jul Win Aung visits Pakistan, agrees to support Pakistan's bid to join the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). *AFP, 8 Jul*
- 8 Jul SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung arrives in India for official visit. *The Hindu, 11 Jul*
- 14 Jul India and the SPDC sign memorandum of understanding (MoU) to boost bilateral trade. *Xinhua, 15 Jul*
- 17 Jul Reported the SPDC has been reportedly conducting new rounds of forced conscription in various townships. LIB 538 has been forcibly recruiting people in and around Rathedaung Township, Arakan State. *Narinjara, 14 Jul*
- 18 Jul It was reported that the SPDC Soldier Collection group had ordered villagers in Mon and Karen State to vote for 5 people from each village to become soldiers. *NCGUB, 20 Sept*
- 20 Jul Reported that Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad suggests that as a last resort Asean may consider expelling the regime. *AFP, 20 Jul*
- 21 Jul The SPDC orders all states and divisions to conduct basic military trainings 'to defend the nation from foreign enemies.' *Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union, Jul 03*
- 21 Jul The Coastal Region Military Command instructs all the districts, townships administrations council to recruit and send 20-30 'hard core persons' and 40-60 people as reserves from each village under their control. *Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union, Jul 03*
- 22 Jul The EU releases statement saying it is "deeply concerned" about the situation in Burma, and warning that the issue could impede "relations with the region as a whole." *AP, 22 Jul*
- 22 Jul The regime faxes a message to foreign diplomats in Rangoon announcing that 91 people had been released from prison, at least 29 of whom were NLD members. *Washington Post, 25 Jul*
- 22 Jul The SPDC releases 4 NLD members from Yenangyaung Township who had been arrested earlier in the month. *DVB, 22 Jul*
- 23 Jul Thaksin says that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi "is in no danger whatsoever." *The Age, 23 Jul*
- 23 Jul ASEM Meeting in Bali, ASEAN rejects EU proposal to hold a special session on Burma. *The Nation, 23 Jul.*
- 25 Jul US Senators criticize Thailand's crackdown on refugees and political activists and their failure to join with Malaysia and other Asean members to take a strong stance against the SPDC. *Nation, 25 Jul*
- 28 Jul The SPDC finally allows an ICRC team to meet with Daw Suu. The team reported that she appeared to be healthy and uninjured. *AP, 28 Jul*
- 29 Jul An SPDC spokesman announces that Daw Suu is being held in a government guesthouse in Rangoon. *Irrawaddy, 3 Sep*
- 30 Jul It was reported that in Shwebo (Shwe-Bo) District, Sagaing Division, up to 900 people were attending basic military training. *NMG, 30 Jul*
- 30 Jul Indonesian foreign Minister Hasan Wirayuda announces the SPDC had assured them that Aung San Suu Kyi would be released before the October Asean summit *AP, 30 Jul*

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- 4 Aug It was reported that 800 civil servants, both men and women, from Mudon Township, Mon State, are being forced to buy uniforms and attend a month-long State Defense Force training. Trainees are taught how to use small arms, how to defend against an American Invasion and to (identify) destructive elements. *Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union, Jul 03*
- 6 Aug Thaksin lashes out against US criticism saying: "We are doing our best. What do you want us to do? Give them big mansions to live in?...As we are an ally, not a subordinate, he (McCain) should advise, rather than order." *AFP, 6 Aug*
- 6 Aug The Democratic Voice of Burma Radio Service (DVB) reported that 6 people arrested at Depayin remained at the Monywa military hospital where they were being treated for injuries sustained during the attack. *DVB, 6 Aug*
- 6 Aug It was reported that in Chin State, State Authority Chairman Colonel Tin Hla ordered civil servants and civilians to attend 'anti-foreign aggression' defensive military trainings, given by IB-266. *DVB, 6 Aug*
- 8 Aug Thailand's 3rd army commander, Lt-Gen Picharnmet Muangmanee tells the Bangkok Post he had a 'good signal' from the regime that Aung San Suu Kyi will be released by Aug 22-24. Later Picharnmet denied the report. *Bangkok Post, 8 Aug*
- 14 Aug It was reported that in 5 Townships in Mandalay Division, USDA members and battalions from the Central Military Headquarters organized military trainings. *NCGUB, 20 Sep*
- 16 Aug Local battalions are giving month-long military trainings in many villages in Pa'an Township, Karen State. Reportedly, at least one person from each household was ordered to attend the trainings, which the local battalions said was so people could help protect the country against foreign enemies. *NCGUB, 20 Sept*
- 17 Aug Deputy Sr-Gen Maung Aye led 35 SPDC officials on a high-level mission to China to beg for financial assistance to offset the crunch of US sanctions. *Irrawaddy, 18 Aug*
- 20 Aug Thaksin threatens to send troops to destroy drug factories across the border in Burma unless the SPDC takes action. *The nation, 21 Aug*
- 22 Aug The SPDC warns that Thaksin's comments "were discordant and detrimental to the existing friendship between the two neighbouring countries." *AFP, 22 Aug*
- 25 Aug Sr. Gen Than Shwe reshuffles senior leadership positions, promoting hardliners to top positions. General Khin Nyunt is transferred from Secretary 1 to Prime Minister. *AFP, 25 Aug*
- 28 Aug Reported that Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Blas Ople responded cautiously to the SPDC's Aug reshuffle, noting that the developments "remain unclear and deserve close watching." *AFP, 28 Aug*
- 30 Aug Thaksin expresses "praise and welcome" for the junta's roadmap, predicting that reconciliation and democratic progress "will happen quickly if everybody sits together and helps." *The Nation, 1 Sep*
- 30 Aug Newly appointed Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt unveils the SPDC's 7-point 'road map' to democracy. *AFP, 9 Sep*

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- 31 Aug The US steps up the pressure on the regime by announcing they have credible evidence that Daw Suu is on a hunger strike. SPDC Ambassador to London, Kyaw Win, retorted: "How could anybody know that she's on hunger strike when you don't even know where she is?" *Irrawaddy*, 3 Sept
- 31 Aug Reported that Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister, Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, predicted that Daw Suu would be freed within four or five months and 'offered an important role in a new government.' *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 Aug
- 3 Sep Head of the Indian Navy visits Burma to discuss increased naval cooperation. *Xinhua*, 5 Sept
- 5 Sep Thaksin is quoted in Thai-language newspaper Matichon saying 'the [Myanmar] regime [has] clearly shown its sincerity and opening itself [and] should be given time and support'...' if Suu Kyi was still stubborn, it would be helpless for her". *Asia Times Online*, 5 Sep
- 6 Sep The ICRC obtains a second visit with Daw Suu and states that she's not on a hunger strike. *DVB*, 10 Sept
- 6 Sep 7 political prisoners in Bassein Prison began a hunger strike calling for the release of Daw Suu and all other political prisoners. *DVB*, 10 Sept
- 8 Sep Razali announces that the SPDC has scrapped plans for him to visit Burma that month. *AFP*, 8 Sep
- 9 Sep Reported that the regime has named 4 senior military officials and a judge to oversee the drafting of a new constitution. *Financial Times*, 9 Sept
- 17 Sep Indonesian President Megawati Soekarnoputri appoints Former Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister, Ali Alatas, as a special envoy to Burma and submits request to the SPDC to allow him to visit the country. *Xinhua*, 17 Sep
- 19 Sep Daw Suu undergoes an operation related to a gynecological condition. *AFP*, 19 Sept

APPENDIX I: RECOMMENDATIONS & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: “NO SAFE PLACE”

(http://www.refugeesinternational.org/files/reports/no_safe_place.pdf)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

According to Burma's ruling military regime, the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), Burma's army "safeguards national solidarity and peace." According to women from Burma's ethnic minority groups, particularly those living in the ethnic States along Burma's eastern borders, the army does the opposite. Rather than look to the army for protection, ethnic women flee in fear at the sight of a soldier. A recent investigation by *Refugees International* documents the widespread use of rape by Burma's soldiers to brutalize women from five different ethnic nationalities. Although rape by soldiers in Burma has been a well-known, well-documented problem for at least a decade, a recent report by the Shan Women's Action Network (SWAN) and Shan Human Rights Foundation (SHRF), *License to Rape*, inspired an unprecedented level of international interest and outrage. Finally, the tragedy of rape against Shan women in Burma is receiving the attention it deserves. It is, however, but one aspect of the problem.

Burma's military (known as the *Tatmadaw*) frequently rapes women from other ethnic minority groups as well. *RI* conducted interviews with individuals and focus groups of people living in refugee camps and in villages in Thailand, as well as people still living inside Burma. *RI* interviewed women, men, indigenous nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and local leaders about sexual violence committed by Burma's armed forces against women from the Karen, Karenni, Mon and Tavoyan ethnicities (in addition to the Shan). In the course of 26 individual interviews with women and men and two focus groups composed of 45 women, *RI* learned about numerous instances of rape against ethnic women: specifically, 43 cases of rape or attempted rape against women from five different ethnic groups, with 23 of those confirmed through eyewitness testimony or physical evidence. In seven of the confirmed cases, the abuser raped the woman or women on military property, and in eight confirmed cases, he was an officer in Burma's army.

The specific rapes documented in this report are but a fraction of those perpetrated by Burma's army. Every one of the 45 ethnic women who participated in the *RI* focus groups said she had heard about rapes occurring in her area of origin, and a vast majority said they knew someone who had been raped. It is clear that rape and increased militarization go hand-in-hand; when more soldiers are sent to an area, typically more rape occurs. Rape sometimes occurs on military property, which is significant because even in those cases where the officer wasn't the one to commit the rape, he knew or should have known about it. Rape typically occurs in conjunction with other human rights abuses, such as forced labor, forced relocation, forced portering, torture, and extrajudicial executions. Furthermore, there is a direct connection between rape and migration. Many women flee Burma either because they have been raped, or because they fear being raped. In addition, rape sometimes occurs while women are in flight.

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Widespread rape is committed with impunity, both by officers and lower ranking soldiers. Officers committed the majority of rapes documented here in which the rank of the perpetrator was known. The culture of impunity contributes to the military atmosphere in which rape is permissible. It also leads to the conclusion that the system for protecting civilians is faulty, which in turn suggests the rape is systematic. Due to the well-known impunity for rape, survivors and families are extremely reluctant to complain about rape. In the rare cases where victims or their families actually do complain to military officials, army personnel often respond with violence.

On November 19, 2002, the United Nations General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution on the human rights situation in Burma, "express[ing] grave concern at... rapes and other forms of sexual violence carried out by members of the armed forces" and the "disproportionate suffering of members of ethnic minorities, women and children from such violations." It is clear these abuses are directly linked to the internal war the SPDC is waging upon its own citizens. Until the violence ceases, and until the SPDC establishes and enforces adequate laws prohibiting rape and ends the culture of impunity for these horrific crimes, freedom from rape for ethnic women from Burma is impossible.

REFUGEES INTERNATIONAL RECOMMENDS THAT:

The United Nations

- The UN Commission on Human Rights condemn rape and other forms of sexual violence against ethnic women and girls by Burma's military in its annual resolution on the situation of human rights in Burma.
- The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ensure that any investigation of rape and other forms of sexual violence inside Burma conducted by UN officials is done by experts on sexual violence, with guarantees of full access, complete and ongoing security for all witnesses and victims, and a follow up mechanism to verify compliance.
- UNHCR assist the Royal Thai Government in providing a safe environment for Burmese fleeing human rights abuses with a special emphasis on women and children.
- The UNHCR insist that women and girls fleeing rape and other forms of sexual violence in Burma qualify for protection and assistance in Thailand.
- The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women request a special periodic report from the State Peace and Development Council focusing on the constitutional, legal, administrative, military, and practical measures taken to eliminate rape and other forms of violence against women. The Committee should convene a special session to engage in dialogue with the SPDC about this special periodic report.

The Royal Thai Government (RTG)

- The RTG recognize women and girls fleeing rape in Burma who seek refuge in Thailand as legitimate refugees who have a right to protection and assistance, and not as "illegal migrants."

- The RTG ensure that Burmese survivors of rape and other forms of sexual violence in Thailand, whether in camps or working as “migrants,” receive critical physical and mental health services, especially focused on gender-based abuses.
- The RTG cease the practice of repatriating or deporting asylum seekers without prior screening to ascertain whether they have valid claims for asylum.
- The RTG adhere to the definition of “refugee” according to the 1951 Convention on the Status relating to Refugees and the 1967 protocol—a definition that has attained the level of customary international law—and should not create a new standard for determining when those seeking refuge are entitled to enter its borders.

The State Peace and Development Council

- The SPDC stop all military buildup and begin demilitarizing the ethnic areas promptly.
- The SPDC fulfill its obligations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), which it ratified in 1998. This includes ceasing all practices and policies which discriminate against women, including violence against women.
- The SPDC ratify the Optional Protocol to CEDAW.
- The SPDC fulfill its obligations under the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which it ratified in 1991, which prohibits gender-based violence against children.

Governments

- Governments demand that the SPDC demilitarize ethnic areas.
- Governments maintain economic sanctions and withhold overseas development and loan or debt assistance until significant improvements in the human rights situation, including a decrease in violence against women, is independently verified.
- Governments continue to pressure the SPDC to engage in meaningful, substantive discussions with the National League for Democracy and representatives of ethnic nationalities.

NGOs and International Organizations

- Organizations lend support to the international campaign to stop rape and other forms of sexual violence by the Burmese military through public statements and advocacy.
- International organizations conducting research on rape, other forms of sexual violence and other human rights abuses coordinate with grassroots, indigenous organizations to ensure the comprehensive and safe collection of information.
- Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs) seek to build the capacity of indigenous groups to document abuses perpetrated against their own communities.
- Organizations increase efforts to reach and assist displaced populations with critical needs.

APPENDIX II: AUNG SAN SUU KYI'S TRAVELS BEYOND RANGOON

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's travels out of Rangoon in the period she was 'released' from house arrest May 6, 2002 until the Black Friday attack, May 30, 2003.

Trip # 1: Jun 14, 2002

Karen State. Aung San Suu Kyi makes her first visit outside of Rangoon since being released from house arrest to Mon to meet with a highly revered monk, the Abbott of Thamanya.

Trip #2: Jun 23-30, 2002

Mandalay. Daw Suu and NLD team make a political trip to Mandalay and nearby towns Sagaing Division. Her car is mobbed by well-wishers and thousands attended her speeches.

Trip # 3: Jul 20-23, 2002

Mon State. In addition to political rallies and meetings, Daw Suu also visited the Win Phanone Dam.

Trip # 4: Oct 14-17, 2002

Pegu Division. In addition to meetings with NLD members, Daw Suu also greeted supporters in Prome, Minhla, Paukkang and Letpadan.

Trip # 5: Nov 13-27, 2002

Shan State. Daw Suu was subjected to constant, excessive surveillance and video taping by the military intelligence and restrictions were placed on civilian movement. Anti-NLD and vulgar comments about Daw Suu were distributed. Despite this, thousands turned out to see her.

Trip # 6: Dec 16-24, 2002

Arakan State. On Dec 18, police, fire brigades and USDA members used batons and powerful fire engine hoses to disperse about 20,000 NLD supporters. Anti-NLD and vulgar comments about Daw Suu were distributed.

Trip # 7: Apr 3-13, 2003

Chin State. 35,000 to 40,000 people welcomed them. Anti-NLD and vulgar comments about Daw Suu were distributed. Pamphlets also surfaced in Sagaing and Tenasserim division.

Trip # 8: May 6, 2003

Daw Suu left for her 8th trip around the country to **Kachin State, Mandalay and Sagaing Division.** Weeks of massive rallies and enthusiastic welcomes were matched by increasing harassment. Harassment included poorly-attended orchestrated protests that hurled abuses at Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's motorcade, power black-outs in places she was visiting, and intrusive surveillance.

RESOURCES FROM ALTSEAN-BURMA

- 2000 Apr SPECIAL BRIEFING: Women's Report Card on Burma 2000. 36pp. \$5
- 2000 May REPORT CARD: Consequences of Violence. A5, 40pp. Gratis
- 2000 Jun BOOK: Burma ~ More Women's Voices. 108pp. US\$10
- 2000 Sep REPORT CARD: Stand Off!. A5, 40pp
- 2001 Mar REPORT CARD: Tentative Steps. A5, 80pp. Price \$5 each
- 2001 Jun SPECIAL BRIEFING: Women's Report Card on Burma 2001. 36pp. US\$5
- 2001 Jun POSTER: What Women of Burma Want! A2. Price \$5 for 5
- 2001 Jun T-SHIRT: "Burma: Asean's Shame" US\$15/40 for US\$400
- 2001 Sep REPORT CARD: Still Waiting. A5, 66pp. Price \$5 each
- 2001 Oct REPORT CARD: Burma's Plea. A5, 80pp. Price \$5 each
- 2001 Dec T-SHIRT (Multilingual): "Free Aung San Suu Kyi" US\$15/40 for US\$400
- 2002 Jan POSTER: ALTSEAN-BURMA ACTIVISTS' CALENDAR 2002. A2. Gratis.
- 2002 Mar REPORT CARD: Labor Pains. A5, 64pp. Price \$5 each
- 2002 Apr SPECIAL REPORT: Some Talk, Little Action, Burma's Secret Talks. A5, 60pp. Price \$5
- 2002 Apr POSTER: Burma – Prison State! A2. Gratis.
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To ignore the result of the 1990 elections is to have total disrespect for the people and is also an insult to the people... During my travels I have seen what the people have suffered because of the lack of democracy... We are prepared to speedily set in motion a meaningful political dialogue.

~ Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, on the 13th anniversary of the elections
- 3 days before Black Friday.

... I have been informed that within only the next few weeks, there will be another political dialogue between the leadership of the SPDC and Aung San Suu Kyi.

~ Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart, after meeting Khin Nyunt, 19 May
- 11 days before Black Friday.

One year ago, many of us hoped that the release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi would herald the beginning of political change in Burma. But Senior General Than Shwe and the Burmese regime have failed to engage in substantive political dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and other Burmese democratic leaders. For them, this has been a wasted year.

~ UK Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien, 6 May
- 24 days before Black Friday.

ISBN 974 - 91747 - 9 - 8

Printed in Bangkok, November 2003

COVER:

BACK IN DETENTION - AUNG SAN SUU KYI AT ARAKAN RALLY, DEC 2002

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