

CONTENTS

4 UNDER PRESSURE

5 DEMOCRACY AND DIALOGUE

- * No Justice For Black Friday Victims
- * Depayin Victims Missing / Detained
- * U Tin Oo & Other NLD Leaders
- * Daw Aung San Suu Kyi
- * ICRC Visits
- * More Eyewitness Accounts
- * Ethnic Groups Warned Not To Speak Out About Black Friday
- * The Big Picture - Nationwide Crackdown & 'Clean Up'
- * Ongoing Arrests, Sentencing, And Harassment Of Opposition Members
- * NLD MPs Flee To Thailand
- * Authorities Shoot Hunger Strike Prisoners
- * Activist Dies After Depayin Attack
- * Releases
- * SPDC Propaganda Offensive
- * Bomb Blasts - SPDC Points Finger At Opposition Groups
- * Anti-SPDC Leaflets
- * Asean Interventions-Little Attempted, Little Gained
- * Thai 'Road Map'
- * Indonesian Envoy
- * Razali's Visit - No High Hopes
- * Regime Roadmap-Another 'Road To Nowhere'
- * The Perfect Stalling Tactic
- * National Convention Background
- * What's Missing From 'Road Map'
- * What The Convention Does Offer
- * Play By Our Rules Or Stay Out
- * Who's On Board
- * SPDC Rallies And Prayers To Support Road Map And Ward Off Sanctions
- * Reactions To The Roadmap
- * Ethnic & Political Groups' Rejection
- * Ceasefire Groups' Conditional Support
- * International Community: Wait & See

25 MILITARY THREAT

- * SPDC Reshuffle Rise Of The Hardliners
- * General Khin Nyunt-Promoted Or Demoted?
- * Forced Conscription
- * New Bases, Battalions & Tanks
- * Military Border Buildup
- * ABSDF Forced Out Of KIO Territory
- * Tatmadaw Goes International
- * China - Military Visit
- * Thailand - More Naval Cooperation
- * India - Quid Pro Quo
- * Bangladesh - Shopping For Arms & Intelligence
- * Bombs
- * Attack On SPDC Warship
- * Students Clash With Police
- * MI Sergeant Arrested For Corruption

33 DRUGS

- * Thaksin Gets Tough
- * Wa
- * Goodbye Opium, Hello Amphetamines
- * Newer, Stronger Yaba Pill
- * Burma Destroys Poppy Crops
- * France Funds Drug Monitoring Project
- * Militia Leader Top Drug Producer
- * US Burma 'Failed Demonstrably'
- * Regional Meetings
- * Regional Threat

ISBN 974 – 91922 – 3 – 0

Printed in Bangkok

January 2004

2 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

38 ECONOMY

- * Sanctions Begin To Bite
- * Eating Lobster In Rangoon
- * More Cash, Less Credit
- * Fecs On The Way Out?
- * Changing To Euros
- * Effects On Border Trade
- * Job Losses
- * Wobbly Kyat
- * Bank Crisis Continues To Bite
- * Root Cause
- * Arakan State - Govt Control & Private Monopolies
- * New Agriculture Policies Amid Shortages
- * New Agricultural Census
- * IT Workshop
- * Regional Economic Integration
- * GMS, Regnl Routes = \$\$ For Junta
- * Foreign Trade & Investment
- * Regional Imports Up, Exports Down
- * Australia, Bangladesh, China, India, South Korea, Thailand, Vietnam
- * Pressure & Divestment
- * More Companies Jump Ship
- * Premier's Long Goodbye
- * ITF Calls For Boycott
- * BAT - Fishy Business
- * Unocal Trial Moves Forward
- * SPDC Launches New Airline
- * Tourism - Still Bringing In \$\$ For The Junta
- * Britain Tells Travel Companies To Pull Out

52 AID

- * China funds power projects
- * Australia funds ICRC in Burma
- * Backdoor funding via ADB & GMS
- * ERI's Needs Assessment On Aid
- * UN FAO

54 INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

- * Actions Speak Louder Than Words
- * Junk Salesman
- * United Nations
- * United States Applies Sanctions

- * Sanctions "Bad"
- * Sanctions "Good"
- * Effects of Sanctions
- * Canada
- * Asean – What Would You Like To Hear?
- * No Parliament, MPs Not Welcome
- * Malaysia – Hard & Soft
- * Indonesia – Patience Thins
- * Philippines Maintains Position
- * Singapore: No Comment
- * Vietnam Silent
- * Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM)
- * India, China, Bangladesh – Courting the SPDC
- * India – SPDC's New Best Friend
- * China – Maung Aye Sent to Grovel
- * Bangladesh - Buying Friends
- * Japan Takes A Stand
- * South Korea At Odds
- * Pakistan Warming
- * Australia's Mixed Message
- * European Union – Big Bark, No Bite

70 THAI-BURMA RELATIONS

- * Thai Roadmap
- * Thaksin's Response To Black Friday
- * Thai – US Relations
- * Sanctions
- * Economic Links
- * Crackdown On Refugees
- * Migrant Workers
- * Thai-Based Dissidents
- * Arrested For Murder And Released
- * Military Relations

79 ETHNIC RELATIONS

- * Junta Tells Ceasefire Groups To Keep Quiet
- * Ethnic Welcome US Sanctions
- * Arakanese Tell ASEM: More Pressure Needed
- * Wa Want Political Recognition
- * ALD Leader Dies
- * KNLA: 66 Battles In 64 Days
- * Naga Rebel Base Destroyed
- * Ceasefire Groups Invited To China

81 HUMAN RIGHTS

- * ICRC Visits Shan State
- * Human Trafficking – Failure To Comply
- * KHRG Report Exposes Military Violations
- * Political Prisoners
- * Violence Against IDPs In Eastern Shan State
- * Forced Labor
- * Forced Fire Safety Training
- * Extortion
- * Freedom Of Information
- * Freedom Of Movement
- * Human Rights Training For Youth In Bangladesh

86 WOMEN AND CHILDREN

- * More Women Leaders
- * Sanctions = Sex Slavery?
- * SPDC Pays Parents For Child Soldiers

88 RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

- * Forced Religious Conversion
- * USDA's Anti-Muslim Pamphlets
- * Anti-Muslim Riot In Mandalay
- * Authorities Ban Muslim Prayers
- * Mosque Demolished - PM Loses Face
- * Forced Mantra Chanting
- * Revered Monk Dies Suddenly
- * Buddhist Monks Warned To Stay Away From Politics

90 DISPLACEMENT

- * INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPs)
- * REFUGEES
- * Thailand Tightens Up
- * India: Thousands Of Chin Refugees Expelled
- * Bangladesh Repatriation Continues
- * Malaysia Gets Hostile
- * Japan Reprieve
- * MIGRANT WORKERS
- * Thai Authorities Fail To Protect Workers In Mae Sot
- * Japan: SPDC Denies Passports To Burmese

97 LANDMINES

98 EDUCATION

- * SPDC Claims
- * Reality For Mandalay Students

99 HEALTH

- * Still Waiting For Water
- * "Condom" Word Used For First Time

100 ENVIRONMENT

- * Tigers Face Extinction

101 CHRONOLOGY: 1 JUL ~ 30 SEP 2003

114 APPENDIX I: RECOMMENDATIONS: "SHAN REFUGEES: DISPELLING THE MYTHS"

116 APPENDIX II: INTERVIEWS ON FORCED MILITARY CONSCRIPTION

UNDER PRESSURE

Pressure is building up against the Burmese junta in the wake of the murderous May 30 attack.

During July – September 2003, the regime known as the SPDC (State Peace and Development Council) continued to detain the leaders of the NLD (National League for Democracy) as well as scores more pro-democracy activists. At the time of writing (January 2004), most of the leaders have been ‘released’ but are still subject to scrutiny and harassment by the military intelligence. The top 4 – U Aung Shwe, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, U Tin Oo and U Lwin – continue to be detained, with U Tin Oo incarcerated in Kale prison, near the India border.

The tensions between those that apply pressure on the SPDC and those that seek to buffer or counteract that pressure will continue beyond the period reported here. The most significant development has been the US government’s sanctions that banned Burmese imports and the provision of financial services to Burma. The tensions within the SPDC that have quietly built up during the banking crisis, continue as a consequence of Sr-Gen Than Shwe’s internal coup a.k.a. ‘the reshuffle’ and the sanctions’ impact on personal business interests.

Barely a month after the US sanctions were declared, a reshuffle took place within the SPDC, ‘promoting’ Gen. Khin Nyunt, considered a moderate, to Prime Minister, to serve as the public relations face of the regime. Two days later, he introduced a 7-point roadmap – essentially a reformatting of excuses previously deployed to justify failure to convene parliament – to placate the international community. This, and subsequent actions aimed at staving off international pressure through the delivery of ‘good news stories’, will occupy the regime’s energies in the months ahead.

While the SPDC is working hard to ease pressure and obtain more aid while getting away with the continued obstruction of dialogue and genuine reforms, they continue to pressure the democracy movement and ethnic nationality movements through harassment, arbitrary detention, and in some cases, the use of lethal force.

Meanwhile, the internal pressure caused by a lack of consensus on Burma amongst Asean members is more apparent, with some members running hot and cold on Burma. Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and his government, while claiming to promote a solution in Burma, have intensified pressure on Thai-based activists and refugees. At this stage, we are under pressure to decipher the mystery : How attempts to neutralize exiled pro-democracy activists and round up refugees will actually help to democratize Burma.

Pressure against the regime is working, despite the efforts of those that try to buffer it, and the hesitance of those that do not want to be labeled ‘baddies’. Without continued and expanded pressure, the SPDC will not be sufficiently motivated to transform the promises of democratization that they have made to the international community into reality for the peoples of Burma.

DEMOCRACY & DIALOGUE

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

[The Black Friday attack and subsequent crackdown] "constituted a potentially terminal setback on the political front. It could be argued that all the progress that had been achieved since the process of dialogue began in 2000 had been undone in one stroke." Special Rapporteur on Burma Paulo Sergio Pinheiro in his 11 September report to the UNGA¹

"..what needs to be done to effect a smooth transition to democracy is first and foremost to have the political will...Let me assure you that we have the political will." SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung, UNGA Ministerial Meeting²

The period covered in this report saw a continuation of detentions and arrests of pro-democracy supporters and NLD members, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and U Tin Oo.

The SPDC tried to salvage its image by launching a propaganda offensive and fabricating a series of bomb blasts to divert attention away from the aftermath of Black Friday.

In an effort to ease criticism by the international community, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin proposed a road map to democracy in Burma, only to have it rejected by the junta, which came up with its own 7-point road map to reconvene the National Convention and draft a Constitution. The road map, however, is just another stalling tactic, as it offers no time frame, or role for the NLD and ethnic opposition groups.

NO JUSTICE FOR BLACK FRIDAY VICTIMS

Ignoring both domestic and international calls for an investigation into Black Friday, the junta continues to work to cover-up their role in orchestrating the attack. In July, it was reported that villagers living in the Depayin area were being relocated, and some had been arrested and interrogated.³ In contrast, the headman of Kyi-Ywar village near Depayin was rewarded with a cell phone and motorcycle for his participation in the attack.⁴

In the wake of Black Friday, the Burma Lawyers' Council (BLC) and the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB) established the Ad Hoc Commission on the Depayin Massacre to collect evidence and establish whether the incident constituted a crime against humanity. On 30 August, the Commission reported that

1 AFP (11 Sept 03) Attack on Suu Kyi convoy could mark "terminal setback" in Myanmar: UN

2 AP (29 Sept 03) Myanmar foreign minister says international sanctions unfair

3 Irrawaddy (3 July 03) Suu Kyi's Whereabouts Still Unknown & DVB (15 July 03) Villagers arrested near Depayin

4 Network Media Group (9 Sept 03) SPDC honors Depayin village head

6 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

new evidence obtained from eyewitnesses confirmed that the attack was indeed premeditated and organized “under the control of the authorities.” The Commission further stated, “A genuine national reconciliation between the ruling junta and the NLD cannot be dreamed of so long as the truth on Depayin massacre is covered up and the denial of accountability continues to take place.”

The Ad hoc Committee as well as the UN Secretary General and several US senators have called for the UN Security Council to set up an independent tribunal to investigate the attack.⁵ [See Int’l Relations] Other groups including Amnesty International have also made more general calls for an impartial, independent investigation into the incident.⁶

Depayin Victims Missing Or In Detention

In his 11 September report to the UNGA, UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar, Paulo Sergio Pinheiro stated that: "More than 100 NLD members and supporters ... were arrested, killed, wounded and missing" since the Black Friday attack.⁷ In addition, many of the people who were attacked at Depayin reportedly remain in detention. On 5 July, a recently released detainee reported that 140 people arrested during Black Friday had been taken to Shwebo prison, Sagaing Division. Forty of these individuals were critically wounded, all with head injuries. The detainee reported that the all the prisoners were interrogated, with the NLD members receiving the heaviest interrogations. Afterwards, the witness reported that while some people were released in small batches, a number of NLD youths were sent to Khamti and Kale Prisons, Sagaing Division. According to the detainee, 50 people remained in Shwebo prison at the time of his release.⁸

In July, NLD divisional leader U Ko Ko Gyi reported that only 8 of the people from Mandalay who had accompanied Daw Suu to Depayin had returned home.⁹

On 6 August, the Democratic Voice of Burma Radio Service (DVB) reported that 6 people arrested at Depayin remained at the Monywa military hospital, Sagaing Division where they were being treated for injuries sustained during the attack. These people were not being allowed visits by family members or the ICRC.¹⁰

5 Asian Tribune (4 Aug 03) Ad Hoc Commission into Burma massacre adds to pressure on Security Council & The Ad hoc Commission On Depayin Massacre (Burma) (30 Aug 03)
Appeal to the International Community and People inside and outside Burma with Regard to Depayin Massacre

6 AP (30 Jul 03) Amnesty International calls for probe into May 30 attack on Suu Kyi party

7 AFP (11 Sept 03) Attack on Suu Kyi convoy could mark "terminal setback" in Myanmar: UN

8 DVB (5 July 03) Depayin victims latest

9 DVB (10 Jul 03) Missing people from Mandalay

10 DVB (6 Aug 03) Conditions of the political prisoners in Monywa military hospital

U Tin Oo & Other NLD Leaders

During the period covered by this report, all the senior-most leaders of the NLD and their families remain under strict house arrest in Rangoon. U Tin Oo remains incarcerated at Kale [Kalay] Prison in Sagaing division near the India border. A military guard has been stationed at his home to prevent visitors from seeing his family.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi

Since 30 May, the SPDC has held Daw Aung San Suu Kyi in 'protective custody' under section 10(a) of Burma's draconian 1975 State Protection Act.¹¹ Jailing Daw Suu is a move designed to deflect international attention from democratic reform in Burma, forcing them instead to focus on freeing Aung San Suu Kyi.¹²

After UN Special Envoy Razali Ismail met with Daw Suu in June, the regime responded to increased international pressure and on 29 June, transferred her from Insein Prison to another location.¹³ 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.¹⁴ 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 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?"¹⁵ On 6 September, after a 2nd visit with Daw Suu, the ICRC stated that she was not on a hunger strike.

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.¹⁶ While she was in the hospital, hundreds of people gathered outside to pray for her recovery.¹⁷ The junta used Daw Suu's medical condition as a face saving way to ease international pressure, and on 26 September, allowed her to return to her home. However, Daw Suu's personal physician announced that she "will still be effectively under house arrest," and anyone wanting to visit her must apply for military permission.¹⁸ A day later, the US State

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

12 BBC (20 Jun 03) Inside Burma's Insein jail

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

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

15 The Irrawaddy (3 Sept 03) Hungry for Answers

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

17 Irrawaddy (23 Sept 03) Crowds Gather to Support Suu Kyi

18 BBC (26 Sept 03) Suu Kyi Back Home – Under Arrest

8 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Department reported that US and European diplomats were turned away by authorities when they attempted to visit her.¹⁹

The regime has given various excuses for Aung San Suu Kyi's ongoing detention and offered empty promises that she will be released soon. In July, during an Asia-Africa conference in Indonesia, Foreign Minister Win Aung reportedly said the regime would release Daw Aung San Suu Kyi before the October ASEAN summit in Bali.²⁰ However, 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."²¹

At the 29 September UNGA meeting, Win Aung, referring to Daw Suu's status said "we don't call this house arrest....We are helping her to overcome the health problems."²²

International leaders from both western and ASEAN countries have openly urged the junta to release Daw Suu and others detained during the May 30th Crackdown. [See Int'l Relations] Razali Ismail stated that the SPDC is "fully aware of my expectations over her release," and during a June meeting with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, promised to do his "utmost to influence the leadership (of Burma) to release Suu Kyi."²³

On 7 September, protesters around Asia marked Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 100th day in detention by fasting, and holding protests to demand her release.²⁴

ICRC Visits

While the regime refuses to release the number or names of those arrested in the crackdown, 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.²⁵ On 7 July, ICRC conducted their first visit of Insein prison since May 30th. An ICRC representative stressed that this was a 'routine' visit, but said they expected to meet with prisoners arrested during the crackdown.²⁶ From 29 July to 2 August, the ICRC visited Shwebo prison, Sagaing Division.²⁷ On 31 July, the ICRC reported

19 Reuters (27 Sept 03) Myanmar's Suu Kyi Returns Home, Security Tight

20 Xinhua (12 Sept 03) Indonesia to send envoy to Myanmar for release of Suu Kyi

21 AP (10 Sept 03) Suu Kyi to Stay in Jail for Time Being

22 CNN (30 Sept 03) Myanmar: Sanctions should end

23 Malaysiakini.com (2 Jul 03) Razali steps up pressure for Suu Kyi's release &

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

24 Associated Press Worldstream (7 Sept 03) Protesters across Asia demand release of Myanmar's Suu Kyi as she spends 100th day in detention

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

26 AFP (7 Jul 03) ICRC begins first visit to Myanmar's Insein prison since start of crackdown

27 AP (5 Aug 03) Red Cross team visits pro-democracy detainees in Myanmar prison

that they had met with another 28 political prisoners arrested in conjunction with the Black Friday attack.²⁸

MORE EYEWITNESS ACCOUNTS

On 4 July, 2 eyewitnesses to the Black Friday attack, 50 year-old U Khin Zaw and 26 year-old Ko Wunna Maung arrived in Bangkok.²⁹ When the 2 men attempted to testify at the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, officials threatened to arrest them unless they remained silent about what they had witnessed.³⁰ [See Thai-Burma Relations]

Other eyewitness accounts further corroborated that the incident was a violent, premeditated attack on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her convoy.³¹ On 5 September, Radio Free Asia (RFA) reported testimony from a former USDA member who said he had been recruited to participate in the attack. The witness said he and others were given training and instructed to "beat anyone who came within our reach." He also reported that many women who were detained on the night of the attack were raped. To cover up the attack, the witness said that local SPDC officials hired men to dig holes at an abandoned government compound then "they brought the bodies, maybe 100 there, including people who were alive with serious injuries." The witness also reported that local authorities forced villagers to sign affidavits saying that only 4 people had been killed. After Black Friday, he said, "There were a lot of missing persons around our area. We, the whole town, knew that it was a premeditated attack. But the authorities are trying to cover it up by arresting and killing those who witnessed it."³²

ETHNIC GROUPS WARNED NOT TO SPEAK OUT ABOUT BLACK FRIDAY

Two weeks after the attack, SPDC officials visited Wa leaders in Panghsang, Shan State and reportedly warned them not to contact the NLD or other political groups, or to speak out about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's imprisonment. The authorities also informed the Wa leaders that they had no intention of handing over power to the opposition.³³

In August, it was reported that Lt-Gen Thura Shwe Mann had met with other ceasefire group leaders in Kachin State; including U Za Khom Thain Yain, the chairman of New Democratic Army – Kachin (NDAK) in Panwa and, U Lamung Tu Jai, the chairman of Kachin Independent Organisation (KIO) in Loinza. Political

28 DVB (6 Aug 03) Conditions of the political prisoners in Monywa military hospital

29 DVB (4 Jul 03) Black Friday Eyewitnesses escape to Thailand

30 Irrawaddy (8 Jul 03) Witness Reports Shed Light on Ambush

31 See also DVB (15 Jul 03) Villagers arrested near Depayin

32 Radio Free Asia (5 Sept 03) Killings, Rapes in Well-Planned Attack by Burmese Junta - As many as 100 killed in May operation targeting Aung San Suu Kyi

33 Irrawaddy (9 Jul 03) Junta Tells Wa to Keep Quiet

10 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

analysts believe that during these meetings Lt-Gen Thura Shwe Mann told the ethnic leaders not to make statements about Black Friday.³⁴

THE BIG PICTURE - NATIONWIDE CRACKDOWN & 'CLEAN UP'

Black Friday was not an isolated incident, but the start of a crackdown intended to eliminate the democracy movement, including the NLD. Since the attack, the SPDC has stepped up arrests and harassment of political groups, increased forced military conscription and put more pressure on armed opposition groups. [See Military] In July, a senior NLD member commented, "With our leadership effectively under wraps and our offices sealed, there is very little we can do...the NLD is undergoing another period of intimidation and harassment as the military continues with its mopping-up operation."³⁵

ONGOING ARRESTS, SENTENCING, AND HARASSMENT OF OPPOSITION MEMBERS

[For arrests not directly related to Black Friday see Human Rights]

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. On 2 September, Amnesty International (AI) stated, "at least 75 additional people have been arrested since events on May 30, in many instances on account of their calls for an investigation into the attack and release of those detained on May 30." AI further cited reports that those detained on May 30th have been ill-treated and many are suffering from illnesses exacerbated by their poor treatment.³⁶

In **June**, authorities ordered the dismantling of 4,000 shops in Mandalay. This action is seen as an attempt to undermine the businesses of NLD supporters who own a number of the shops.³⁷

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.³⁸

On **1 July**, it was reported that 8 NLD youth members arrested in June were tried at Botathaung Court in Rangoon.³⁹

34 DVB (5 Aug 03) Top SPDC military commander visits Kachin State to secure support from the ethnic groups

35 AFP (17 Jul 03) Myanmar opposition paralysed after arrest of Aung San Suu Kyi

36 Inter Press Service (5 Sept 03) ASEAN inaction irks Myanmar exiles
IPS, Sept 5

37 DVB (4 Jul 03) NLD supporters' businesses undermined

38 DVB (13 Aug 03) Six Policemen Dismissed for Discussing 30 May Incident

39 DVB (1 Jul 03) NLD supporters tried

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 11

On **3 July**, 2 NLD members, U Than Tun and U Kyaw Kyaw (alias Ko Than Gyaung) were arrested in Kawthaung, Tenasserim Division, and charged with distributing leaflets and engaging in other political activities.⁴⁰

On **6 July**, the SPDC arrested NLD youth members Ko Than Aung and Ko Aung Thein Myint from Yenangyaung and Natmauk, Magwe Division. On **8 July**, 2 more NLD members were arrested: U Khin Win chairman of Yenangyaung Township NLD and secretary U Maung Maung. The 4 men were charged with attempting to organize MPs to write to Sr. Gen Than Shwe and urge him to investigate the Depayin attack. They were released on 21 and 22 July.⁴¹

On **7 July**, U Win Htut (not his real name) a Mandalay shopkeeper, was arrested after he refused a police order to remove a photo of General Aung San and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi that was hanging in his shop. Authorities threatened that if he didn't remove the photo they would close down his shop and detain him. U Win Htut was released later that day but ordered to check in monthly with the authorities. It was also reported that officials had forbidden schools in Mandalay from displaying pictures of General Aung San, and threatened to fire teachers who disobeyed the order.⁴²

On **10 July**, 3 NLD members in Rangoon were arrested after they sent a letter to Sr. Gen Than Shwe on behalf of the NLD women. The letter called for the release of everyone arrested on Black Friday, permission for NLD offices to reopen, and for an independent inquiry into the Depayin incident. The 3 women included the MP of No.1, Mogok Constituency, Daw May Hnin Kyi, as well as Daw Myint Myint Sein and Daw Leh Leh.⁴³

On **15 July**, authorities raided a restaurant owned by Ko Thant Shin, an NLD organiser from Indaw Township, Sagaing Division. 2 days later he was sentenced to a year in prison, allegedly for selling illegal alcohol.⁴⁴

On **18 July**, the same day that the SPDC claimed to have released 91 prisoners, vice chairman U Saw Htee and Secretary U Kan Htun of Mandalay Division NLD were arrested. On 23 July, Mandalay Division NLD financier U Ko Gyi, father of Kyaw Soe Lin who drove Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's car during the Depayin trip was also arrested. The 3 NLD members were put on trial at Chanaye Thazan Township court, Mandalay Division.⁴⁵

On **18 July**, it was reported that NLD members Ko Myo Aung and U Tin Myint from Khin U Township, Sagaing Division, were sentenced to 2 and 3 years

40 DVB (22 Jul 03) Burma frees 91 detainees, makes new arrests

41 DVB (22 Jul 03) SPDC releases NLD officials in Yenangyaung

42 Human Rights Documentation Unit, NCGUB (Sept 03)

43 DVB (11 Jul 03) NLD women detained for writing to General Than Shwe

44 DVB (31 Jul 03) Indaw Township-NLD member arrested

45 Network for Democracy and Development (28 Jul 03) Four township NLD members imprisoned for 2 years Three from Mandalay on trial

12 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

imprisonment respectively in Shwe Bo (Shwebo) Prison. The sentencing occurred a week after they were arrested. Ko Myo Aung was arrested after a one-dollar banknote was found in his shirt, and U Tin Myint after political documents were found in his house.⁴⁶

On **19 July**, Mandalay Division NLD vice-chairman U Saw Htay and secretary U Hla Tun were arrested. On the same day, 6 other people from Madaya, Mandalay Division were arrested for giving Aung San Suu Kyi protection during her Mogok to Mandalay journey. One of the 6 arrested is a monk, and the 5 others are not NLD members. All were sentenced to over 3 years imprisonment.⁴⁷

On **20 July**, 4 NLD members from Sintku township, Mandalay Division, including chairman U Sein Htun, secretary U San, and members U Hla Shwe and Ko Thet Naing were sentenced to 2 years in jail.⁴⁸

On **22 July**, it was reported that Military Intelligence personnel and local police raided Thwe Say Kan and Popa Yone monasteries in Rangoon and detained Mon monks they claimed were involved in political activities. It was also reported that authorities arrested 3 members of Mon National Democratic Front and raided the Moulmein house of New Mon State Party member, Nai Yet Kha, seizing all the documents.⁴⁹

In **August**, the Ministry of Home Affairs warned monks in Moulmein, Mon State not to engage in politics and to stay in their temples whenever there was a 'people strike.'⁵⁰

On **5 August**, it was reported that 6 former NLD members charged with involvement in political activities were arrested and sent to 9-mile Prison in Kawthaung, Tenasserim Division. Those arrested include: U Soe Win, 41, U Than Lwin, 46, U Khin Aung, 51, U Minn Maung, 50, U Myint Aung, 53, and U Kyaw Aye, 55.⁵¹

On **14 August**, Rev. U Wimala from Kyi-Ywar village monastery near Depayin was sentenced to 9 years and 3 months imprisonment for helping the NLD during Aung San Suu Kyi's trip. Three other Kyi-Ywa residents were also sentenced to 3 years and 3 months imprisonment for burning a USDA car.⁵²

46 Mizzima (18 Jul 03) Khin U Township NLD members sent to jail

47 DVB (29 Jul 03) SPDC continues detention of opposition members in Mandalay Division

48 Network for Democracy and Development (28 Jul 03) Four township NLD members imprisoned for 2 years Three from Mandalay on trial

49 DVB (22 Jul 03) Burma frees 91 detainees, makes new arrests

50 Kao Wao News Group (14 Aug 03) Buddhist Monks: Stay Away from Politics

51 DVB (5 Aug 03) More political activists were arrested in Kawthaung

52 Network Media Group (9 Sept 03) SPDC honors Depayin village head

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 13

On **23 August**, it was reported that NLD youth members from Kemmendine Township were arrested after distributing leaflets calling for the CRPP (Committee Representing People's Parliament) to convene parliament.⁵³

On **28 August**, U Tin Maung Naing, NLD Vice-Chairman of Taungdwingyi Township, Magwe Division, and NLD member U Aung Ko were summoned by the ward chairman and told to submit their biographies.⁵⁴

On **5 September**, NLD youth leader Ko Thein Naing Oo and youth member Ma Tin Tin Nyo from Dala Township, Rangoon Division were each sentenced to 7 years in prison for attempting to distribute leaflets on the Depayin incident in Dala Township. NLD members Ko Maung Lay of Kyimyintaing Township, Ko Myint Htay of Tamwe Township and Ko Ne Win of South Dagon Township, all in Rangoon Division, are also being charged with distributing leaflets and are scheduled to be tried by Tamwe Township Court.⁵⁵

On **9 September**, a NLD member in Thaton Township, Mon State reported that local authorities were trying to persuade NLD members to stop supporting the NLD and promised that if they joined with the regime they would have many advantages. The NLD member also said that the SPDC has ruined his business and prevented his children from attending University.⁵⁶

On **13 September**, it was reported that SPDC authorities were arresting NLD members in Tenasserim and Magwe Division and forcing others to resign.⁵⁷

On **17 September**, the SPDC sentenced head NLD youth member from Yankin Township, Rangoon Division, Ko Myo Khin, who was detained on 3 June, to 3 years imprisonment. Ko Myo Khin and 3 other NLD youth members wrote a letter the day after Black Friday urging the regime to reopen the NLD Headquarters.⁵⁸

NLD MPs Flee to Thailand

Du Wa Maran Zau Aung, age 71, an elected NLD MP from Wai Maw Township, Kachin State, fled from his home shortly after the start of the Black Friday Crackdown.⁵⁹

In August, it was reported that a female MP, Daw San San, 73 had also been forced to flee the country. "After the Depayin incident, a few of us who remain free

53 DVB, Oslo, in Burmese (23 Aug 03) (translated by BBC World Monitoring Service)

Burmese Youths Arrested for Distributing Leaflets on May Clashes

54 DVB (13 Sept 03) Military Planning Mass Rallies to Gain Support for "Road Map"

55 DVB (16 Sept 03) NLD youth sentenced

56 Human Rights Documentation Unit, NCGUB (Sept 03)

57 DVB (13 Sept 03) Military Planning Mass Rallies to Gain Support for "Road Map"

58 DVB (26 Sept 03) Democracy party youth leader sentenced to three years in jail

59 Irrawaddy (16 Jul 03) Elected MP Flees

14 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

organized 70 members of Parliament to send a signed letter to the top military leader listing our demands [for resolving] the Depayin incident," she said.⁶⁰

Authorities Shoot Hunger Strike Prisoners

On 6 September, 7 political prisoners in Bassein Prison, Irrawaddy Division began a hunger strike calling for the release of Daw Suu and all other political prisoners. The next day, the prison authorities stopped giving water to the protestors.⁶¹ On 8 September, non-political prisoners reportedly joined the protest. On 16 September, it was reported that security forces had fired upon the prisoners, killing at least 4 and injuring others. It was also reported that 150 prisoners were loaded onto trucks and taken to an unknown destination.⁶²

Activist Dies After Depayin Attack

On 10 September, it was reported that U Tun Aung Kyaw, a well-known political activist from Mandalay, had died from wounds sustained during the May 30th attack.⁶³

Releases

On 29 June, Soe Win, an elected NLD MP arrested on 5 June, was released after he attempted to commit suicide. He suffered a stroke while in prison and has become almost blind as a result of eye injuries reportedly caused by his torture during interrogation.⁶⁴

In an apparent bid to ease international pressure before the ASEAN-EU meeting in Bali, on 22 July, the regime faxed statements to foreign embassies claiming that they had recently released 91 people from prison. The SPDC said that at least 29 of those released were NLD members, and 31 were "assisting police." However, they failed to specify how many of these people were arrested in conjunction with the May 30th attack.⁶⁵ It was also reported that those released were given strict orders not to speak about Black Friday.⁶⁶

Believed to be among the alleged 91 released were 17 Mandalay NLD members detained during the May 30th crackdown. The NLD members who were released on 18 July were reportedly forced to sign agreements not to 'exaggerate' about the May 30 events, and ordered to report to authorities before leaving Mandalay.⁶⁷

60 Irrawaddy (4 Aug 03) Opposition MP Flees

61 DVB (10 Sept 03) Prisoners stage hunger strikes in Bassein Prison

62 DVB (16 Sept 03) Prisoners shot dead in Bassein prison

63 DVB (10 Sept 03) U Tun Aung Kyaw died from fatal wounds received at Depayin incident

64 Irrawaddy (7 Jul 03) MP Released after Suicide Attempt & Irrawaddy (25 Aug 03) MP Blinded by Torture

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

66 Irrawaddy (24 Jul 03) Released Prisoners Given a Silence Order

67 Network Media Group (21 Jul 03) Junta release 17 Detainees of Depayin Crisis

SPDC PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE

While continuing to blame the NLD for the Black Friday attack, in July, the state-run New Light of Myanmar also 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."⁶⁸

In July, SPDC Foreign Minister and Deputy Foreign Minister embarked on a regional tour to convince Asian leaders to back their version of the May 30th events. The officials carried a 7-page letter from Sr.Gen Than Shwe accusing the opposition of planning an uprising that would plunge the country into anarchy.⁶⁹ [See Int'l Relations] On 26 July, the SPDC further claimed that it had uncovered a plan by dissident groups supporting the NLD to assassinate SPDC leaders and incite civil unrest. The regime vowed never to give up power saying: "The true programme for democracy is...accepting the existing Tatmadaw (military) government as an ally and joining hands with it."⁷⁰

Bomb Blasts - SPDC Points Finger At Opposition Groups

On 26 July, the SPDC announced it had arrested 12 people linked to opposition groups who were allegedly planting bombs and planning to assassinate regime leaders. The junta claimed the attacks were scheduled for 19 July, and said 4 bombs had already exploded in Rangoon, killing 2 people and injuring others.⁷¹

On 4 August, there were 3 mine explosions in Monywa, Sagaing Division. The SPDC was quick to claim the bombs were a joint effort between the All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) and the Communist Party of Burma (CPB). Since Black Friday, the regime has continually tried to link the 2 organizations, hoping that domestic and international support for the ABSDF will be diminished if they are seen as pro-communist. Both ABSDF and CPD deny any involvement in the explosions.⁷²

On 27 June, authorities found 2 explosive devices in Taungoo, Pegu Division, one at the entrance of the USDA office. The regime blamed the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) for the bombs, as well as a bomb at a 26 July press conference and another bomb found in Karen State in May.⁷³ In August, the KNLA officially refuted the accusation and denied that the alleged perpetrator of the blasts, Saw Mra

68 Irrawaddy (11 Jul 03) Photo Diplomacy Backfires

69 BBC (14 Jul 03) Burma defends Suu Kyi custody

70 Straits Times (28 Jul 03) Junta accuses Suu Kyi of plotting coup

71 Reuters (26 Jul 03) Burmese Officers Arrest 12 in Bomb Plots

72 Irrawaddy (7 Aug 03) Opposition-Communist Link Denied

73 DVB (1 Jul 03) Bombs exploded in Taungoo, Pegu Division &

New Light of Myanmar (1 Jul 03) Bombs exploded in Toungoo

16 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Sein, was working with KNLA Brigade II. "The Burmese junta has been sponsoring such acts of terrorism in a number of townships only to discredit KNLA and increase oppressive acts against the people and political parties," the statement said.⁷⁴

Anti-SPDC Leaflets

On 13 July, it was reported that leaflets distributed by the People's Oway Front had been distributed in major cities such as Rangoon and Mandalay and pasted on the walls of Pegu University. The leaflets urged people to join together to overthrow the SPDC, and said the People's Oway Front will be engaging in guerilla attacks against the junta in order to bring about democracy.⁷⁵

ASEAN INTERVENTIONS - LITTLE ATTEMPTED, LITTLE GAINED

Thai 'Road Map'

In July, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin proposed a vaguely defined 'road map,' for political transition in Burma.⁷⁶ While Razali Ismail and a number of other countries supported the proposal, Win Aung informed Thaksin that the SPDC 'would rather solve its own problems from within.'⁷⁷ [See Thai-Burma Relations]

Indonesian Envoy

Responding to heavy ASEAN pressure, the regime agreed to allow Indonesian envoy Ali Alatas to visit the country from 21-23 September. Alatas clarified the purpose of his visit saying: "We are not demanding the government release Suu Kyi, we are just offering to help ... the Myanmar government in the political situation it faces now."⁷⁸

Alatas, who carried a letter from Indonesian President Megawati Sukarnoputri further noted "I can confirm that in the letter we did express the hope that we would like to see the early lifting of the restrictions placed on Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her early release."⁷⁹

The Indonesian envoy met with Sr. Gen Than Shwe, Vice Sr. Gen Maung Aye, Prime Minister Khin Nyunt, Lt. Gen Soe Win and other top military leaders. However, the junta refused to allow him to meet with Daw Suu due to "circumstances concerning her health." Daw Suu's personal physician stated that she was in good condition to meet guests but had not received any request for a meeting

74 Narinjara News (7 Aug 03) KNLA on SPDC allegations for bomb blasts

75 DVB (13 Jul 03) Anti-junta leaflets emerge in major cities

76 Nation (18 Jul 03) Rangoon weighs Thai 'road map' & Xinhua News Agency (30 Jul 03) Thailand's "road map plan" just advice to help Myanmar: spokesman & Radio Thailand (21 Jul 03) Thai Premier says Burma's Suu Kyi "Is in no danger whatsoever"

77 AFP (27 Jul 03) Malaysia warns Myanmar over Suu Kyi

78 AFP (23 Sept 03) Indonesian envoy Alatas holds talks with Myanmar's leader

79 AFP (24 Sept 03) Indonesian envoy leaves Myanmar with no timeframe for Suu Kyi release

with Alatas.⁸⁰ The Indonesian Envoy left Burma with no commitments from the junta beyond a promise to 'consider' the problem.⁸¹

RAZALI'S VISIT - NO HIGH HOPES

On 30 September, UN Special Envoy Razali Ismail embarked on his 11th trip to Burma where he is scheduled to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as well as Sr. Gen Than Shwe and Gen Khin Nyunt. Razali continues to call for the release of Daw Suu and in July urged the UN and ASEAN to coordinate efforts to obtain her release and promote reconciliation.⁸² A UN spokesman stated that UN Secretary General Kofi Annan expects Razali to "find out her condition and work with government officials toward her immediate and unconditional release."⁸³

At the same time, Razali has praised the regime's roadmap and vowed "If we can play a role to facilitate understanding of this proposal to all sides including Aung San Suu Kyi, we will do it."⁸⁴ Razali has also rejected placing a timeframe for Daw Suu's release.⁸⁵

In August, new information was released about Razali's other 'business' in Burma. Razali currently serves as chairman to 4 Malaysian companies with business interests in the country. These include: Iris Technologies, which the SPDC has contracted to introduce E-passports; Wah Seong, an engineering group which owns a trading company involved in property development in Rangoon; Leader Universal Holdings, a cable, fiber-optics and telecom-equipment firm actively seeking to invest in Burma; and Salcon Engineering, a water treatment group which has exhibited at a Rangoon trade show.⁸⁶

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.⁸⁷ The road map is the perfect stalling tactic for the regime; a plan to

80 Associated Press Worldstream (24 Sept 03) Indonesian envoy says Suu Kyi detention "counterproductive" & AFP (24 Sept 03) Indonesian envoy leaves Myanmar with no timeframe for Suu Kyi release

81 VOA (26 Sept 03) Aung San Suu Kyi Detention Could Derail ASEAN Summit Agenda

82 DVB (2 Oct 03) Razali departs from Rangoon without apparent success

83 Reuters (22 Sept 03) Annan Sending Envoy to See Suu Kyi in Myanmar

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

85 Bernama (23 Jul 03) UN's Burma envoy sees need for regional "standard of behaviour"

86 Fortune (11 Aug 03) Diplomatic Score; The UN's man in Myanmar has business interests there too

87 AFP (9 Sept 03) Myanmar says "too early" to come up with democracy roadmap timetable

18 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

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.⁸⁸

National Convention background

The SPDC first instituted the National Convention in 1990 when Gen Khin Nyunt signed Order 1/90, which barred elected representatives from taking office, in the wake of the NLD's landslide victory. Instead, election victors were to hold a National Convention, which was tasked with drawing up a new constitution. The National Convention wasn't convened until January 1993. In order to ensure a voting majority, The SPDC appointed 505 out of the 702 delegates. Among the delegates appointed by the regime were leaders of ceasefire groups who were known drug traffickers.⁸⁹ The NLD, which won over 80% of the seats in the 1990 election, constituted only 12% of the national convention.⁹⁰

The regime instituted a strict 6-point framework for the convention and elected leaders who spoke out in opposition to it faced arrest and imprisonment. After being continually denied permission to address the convention, NLD leaders finally walked out on 29 November, 1995, and called an emergency meeting to resolve the situation.⁹¹ The SPDC claimed that the NLD had forfeited the right to attend the convention and promptly expelled them. The National Convention was suspended soon after.⁹² It has not met since then.

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
- Any commitment to releasing Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, people detained during the Black Friday crackdown, and other political prisoners.
- Any commitment to declare a nationwide ceasefire and cease hostilities against ethnic nationality groups.

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

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

90 Irrawaddy (3 Sept 03) Revisiting the National Convention

91 Mizzima (3 Sept 03) Burma: The SPDC's Road Map is Nothing More Than Political Trickery

92 Irrawaddy (3 Sept 03) Revisiting the National Convention

What the convention does offer

- Protection to ensure "the leading role of Burma's armed forces in the future affairs of the State."⁹³
- Protection⁹⁴ of the military's right to declare a "state of emergency" whenever necessary.
- Requirement that presidential candidates be "well-versed in military affairs" effectively limiting qualification to serving or retired members of the armed forces.⁹⁵
- Requirement that the military appoint 25% of the seats in both the upper and lower houses.⁹⁶
- Requirement that at least one of the 3 people holding offices of president and vice presidents be from the military.⁹⁷

PLAY BY OUR RULES OR STAY OUT

NLD

By ensuring that the mandate of the convention will be unacceptable to the NLD and most other democratic opposition groups, the SPDC is hoping to forestall their participation. In his speech announcing the road map, Gen. Khin Nyunt made only one reference to Daw Aung San Suu Kyi - to blame her and the NLD for the failure of the convention.⁹⁸ The next day, Khin Nyunt went on to say that the NLD boycott of the convention "is the reason why a parliamentary democracy government has still not emerged 13 years after the election was held."⁹⁹

On 9 September, Labour Minister and SPDC spokesman Tin Win noted that convention regulations stated that any group that 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. Tin Win also stated that the SPDC had yet to come up with any timeframe for the convention.¹⁰⁰

Chillingly, on 4 September, the SPDC embassy in London released a statement that "What the Myanmar politicians, regardless of their foreign affiliations, must now

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

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

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

96 The Irrawaddy (2 Sept 03) New Approach to Combat the Rhetoric

97 The Irrawaddy (2 Sept 03) New Approach to Combat the Rhetoric

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

99 Reuters (31 Aug 03) Myanmar blames opposition for democracy delay

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

20 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

realize is that the National Convention may be the last great opportunity they may have in a long time” [to draft a constitution].¹⁰¹

Though some diplomats in Rangoon have reported that SPDC leaders have already met at least once with Aung San Suu Kyi, these reports have not been confirmed.¹⁰²

Ethnic Opposition Groups

No mention was made of participation by ethnic nationality groups in the national convention or subsequent stages of the ‘road map.’ In his first address as Prime Minister, Khin Nyunt claimed that the underdevelopment of ethnic nationality areas was due to lack of infrastructure and communication, with no mention of the ongoing civil war being waged by the SPDC army. One Burmese political analyst noted that Khin Nyunt’s speech “confirms that ethnic issues are off the agenda and the road to reconciliation through political dialogue has been closed.”¹⁰³

Who’s On Board

On 7 September, Sr.Gen Than Shwe named 4 senior military officials and a judge to the committee overseeing the drafting of a new constitution.¹⁰⁴ Lt. Gen Thein Sein was appointed as the new chairman, and Chief Justice Aung Toe and Minister of Electric Power, Major General Tin Htut was named as joint vice-chairmen.¹⁰⁵

On 23 September, Than Shwe appointed U Myint Thein, Director General, Pyithu Hluttaw Office as Joint Secretary 2 of the committee. He also appointed the following committee members:

1. U Aye Maung , Attorney-General
2. Maj Gen Lun Maung, Auditor-General
3. U Thaug Nyunt, Law Adviser
4. Brig-Gen Soe Maung, Inspector-General of Defence Services
5. Maj-Gen Kyaw Win, Ministry of Defence
6. U Thein Sein, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Information
7. U Thein Soe, Deputy Chief Justice
8. Dr Tun Shin, Deputy Attorney-General
9. Dr Tin Aung Aye, Chief Justice, Supreme Court
10. Brig Gen Than Tun, Ministry of Defence
11. Brig Gen Nyan Win, Office of Strategic Studies
12. Lt-Col Ko Ko Hlaing, Research Division, Ministry of Defence¹⁰⁶

¹⁰¹ Myanmar Times (8 –14 Sept 03) Call to Western powers on National Convention

¹⁰² Inter Press Service (10 Sept 03)Hints of change in Myanmar

¹⁰³ Irrawaddy (6 Sept 03) Aung Naing Oo is a political analyst based in Thailand.

¹⁰⁴ Financial Times (9 Sept 03)Burma begins to draft constitution

¹⁰⁵ AFP (7 Sept 03) Myanmar junta names new members of constitutional body

¹⁰⁶ TV Myanmar (23 Sept 03) Burmese leader assigns duties to National Convention Commission members

SPDC RALLIES AND PRAYERS TO SUPPORT ROAD MAP & WARD OFF SANCTIONS

In Mandalay Division, it was reported that members of the junta-controlled National Unity Party (NUP) were organizing people in Patheingyi Township to support the roadmap, and lobbying for NUP votes in future elections. In Pa-an Township, Karen State, mass rallies to support the roadmap are being planned for 23 September.¹⁰⁷

On 20 September, the New Light of Myanmar claimed that over 15,000 Rangoon residents attended a USDA-organized rally to support the roadmap in Thingankyun Township. "Students and staff from some schools and government offices around Rangoon were ordered to attend the rally," said one resident.¹⁰⁸

On 23 August, the SPDC also reportedly sent a directive proposing that anti-US Sanctions rallies be staged in every township beginning in September.¹⁰⁹

On 24 September, the USDA organized another rally in Myitkyina, Kachin State, which was reportedly attended by 10,000 people.¹¹⁰

On 29 August, the SPDC began forcing people at temples in Pegu Division to recite mantras believed to protect the regime from US Sanctions.¹¹¹

REACTIONS TO THE ROADMAP

Ethnic and Political Opposition Groups' Rejection

On 5 September, the Ethnic Nationalities Solidarity and Cooperation Committee (ENSCC) introduced their own 2 stage road map.¹¹² In the first stage, the ENSCC called for the SPDC to convene a "Congress for National Unity" with attendees equally divided between military, elected leaders and ethnic groups. The Congress for National Unity would draft a National Accord and then proceed to form a Government of National Unity. In the second stage, the ENSCC plan calls for sanctions to be lifted and a referendum to be followed by national elections. The ENSCC estimates that implementation of the roadmap will take 6 years, with ENSCC advisor Harn Yawngwe stating that the plan is an improvement of the SPDC roadmap, not a rejection of it.¹¹³

107 DVB (13 Sept 03) Military Planning Mass Rallies to Gain Support for "Road Map"

108 Irrawaddy (22 Sept 03) Forced Backing for Road Map

109 DVB, Oslo, in Burmese (24 Aug 03) (translated by BBC Monitoring Service) Authorities Staging Campaign to Denounce US Sanctions

110 Irrawaddy (24 Sept 03) Ceasefire Groups Attend Road Map Rally

111 DVB (29 Aug 03) Anti-sanction mantra recited in Burma today

112 The ENSCC was established by the Karenni National Progressive Party, the National Democratic Front and the United Nationalities League for Democracy (Liberated Area) in 2001.

113 Irrawaddy (5 Sept 03) Ethnic Groups Map Their Own Solution

22 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

On 16 September, the Committee for Representing People's Parliament (CRPP) released a statement rejecting the SPDC roadmap. "Not only will this policy fail to solve the current problems, it is a continuous policy of failure to implement the 1990 elections and disregard of the will of the nationalities and the citizens. It is a declaration by the SPDC of its determination to shape the country's future according to its own will and wishes," the CRPP reported.

Instead, the Committee called on the SPDC to unconditionally release all political prisoners including Daw Suu; allow all NLD offices to reopen; allow all political parties to rally freely; allow all people to participate freely in politics; and to meet and consult with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and ethnic national leaders to work towards solidarity and national reconciliation.¹¹⁴

The National Coalition Government Union of Burma (NCGUB) has stated that the Regime's roadmap is only a 'political ploy' to ease international pressure, and accepting it would "be tantamount to wholesale legitimization of military oppression, massacre, and brutality in the country."

Prime Minister Dr Sein Win reiterated NCGUB policy saying, "We cannot accept any political process which excludes the role of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the NLD. A common course of action has to be sought through a tripartite dialogue."¹¹⁵

Aung Moe Zaw, Gen. Sec of the National Council of the Union of Burma (NCUB), stated: "The National Convention must be based on a nationwide consensus and on the outcome of the national reconciliation process. The first step, however, is to release Suu Kyi and re-ignite dialogue with stakeholders....this is not a road map; it is a roundabout in a time warp."¹¹⁶

Sai Wansai, Gen. Sec of the Shan Democratic Union, said: "As policy, the junta has declared it is taking the lead and will set the political agenda to its own liking and space. Those who agree with the plan are welcome; objectors will be left out of the process altogether...This speech is, in fact, a manifesto that the military regime is determined to cling to power at all costs."¹¹⁷

U Khun Tun Oo, chairman of the Shan National League for Democracy (SNLD), commenting on the roadmap noted: "Nothing will work out without the NLD's involvement whether they [SPDC] say it clearly or not....The NLD has to be there. All the ethnic nationals must be involved... If we attend the convention without them changing the way they choose the attendants for the National Convention, the

114 DVB (17 Sept 03) CRPP and SPDC's road map & Democracy for Burma (16 Sept 03) Unofficial translation, Statement of the Committee Representing the People's Parliament In relation to the Prime Minister's road map for Burma's future

115 NCGUB (31 Aug 03) NCGUB Says Military's 'Democracy' Plan 'Nothing More Than Political Ploy'

116 Irrawaddy (3 Sept 03) Revisiting the National Convention

117 Irrawaddy (20 Sept 03) New Approach to Combat the Rhetoric

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 23

people who elected us will blame us. If they don't change, we won't be able to attend.”¹¹⁸

The Karen National Union (KNU), in a statement, called Khin Nyunt's speech regarding the roadmap the “lost road to nowhere.” KNU Gen. Sec Padoh Mahn Sha reportedly was surprised that Khin Nyunt made no mention of the release of political prisoners and the continuing confusion surrounding the Black Friday Ambush.¹¹⁹

On 31 August, the Arakan League For Democracy (ALD) issued a statement “strongly opposing” the SPDC's Road Map.¹²⁰

In a joint statement, the All Burma Federation of Student Unions (Foreign Affairs Committee), All Burma Students' Democratic Front, Democratic Party for a New Society, and Network for Democracy and Development declared Khin Nyunt's roadmap merely a revival of the 1993 national convention, which the UN had never recognized. The groups further stated that the roadmap ignored the will of the people and was only aimed at prolonging military rule.¹²¹

On 7 August, 20 former NLD MPs who had been dismissed from the party sent an open letter urging Sr-Gen Than Shwe to form an interim government. The letter noted that such a government should be composed of military representatives, representatives from the CRPP, and leaders of ceasefire groups. The former MPs also called for the inclusion of all political parties in the CRPP as well as participation by non-ceasefire ethnic nationality groups. The letter proposed that the interim government release all political prisoners, grant the SPDC amnesty for all atrocities committed in the past 15 years, and convene a people's assembly based on the outcome of the 1990 elections.¹²²

Ceasefire Groups' Conditional Support

The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) informed the junta that it would support the National Convention provided that it would be different from the 1993 Convention. Specifically, the KIO stated that it would participate only if all ethnic nationalities and political parties, as well as the military were represented.¹²³

¹¹⁸ DVB (9 Sept 03) SPDC's political road map : The roles of the NLD and ethnic nationalities

¹¹⁹ Irrawaddy (6 Sept 03) Aung Naing Oo is a political analyst based in Thailand.

¹²⁰ ALD (31 Aug 03) ALD strongly opposed the SPDC's Road Map to Democracy

¹²¹ Narinjara (31 Aug 03) Burmese Opposition denounce junta's proposed roadmap

¹²² DVB (19 Aug 03) Ex-NLD MPs sent an open letter to General Than Shwe

¹²³ The Kachin Post (11 Sept 03) KIO Welcomes National Convention & Irrawaddy (24 Sept 03) Ceasefire Groups Attend Road Map Rally

24 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

New Democratic Army-Kachin (NDA-K) liaison officer Mukyin Dau Hawng said the NDA-K supported the proposed National Convention. "A constitution has to be drafted, otherwise, we will never reach the answer," he stated. On 24 September, both the KIO and the NDA-K sent 20 representatives to a USDA rally in Myitkyina in support of the road map. One KIO officer reported that KIO members attended the rally only as observers.¹²⁴

Nai Banya Mon, spokesperson of Foreign Affairs Committee of the New Mon State Party, has expressed support for the convention, but said that it could only solve Burma's problems if it were attended by real representatives of the people. "If the SPDC goes back to the National Convention of 1993, it will be fundamentally opposed to our aspirations," he said.¹²⁵

International Community: Wait and See

The international community appears to have adopted a 'wait and see' attitude about the roadmap. However, Thailand is predictably supportive, with Foreign Minister Surakiart soliciting support for the road map during a September visit to Germany.¹²⁶ [See Int'l Relations]

In contrast to the response of many opposition leaders, UN Special Envoy Razali Ismail has called the regime's plan to reconvene the constitutional convention a "good idea" and the "right thing to do." Razali also urged the international community to "Give Khin Nyunt a chance to try to get it done. I'm sure what we've got is just a bare skeleton, the bare bones."¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Irrawaddy (24 Sept 03) Ceasefire Groups Attend Road Map Rally

¹²⁵ Irrawaddy (18 Sept 03) Burma's National Convention: New Resolve, Same Hurdles

¹²⁶ Nation (20 Sept 03) Germany Urged to Join Thailand in Offering Help to Burma

¹²⁷ AFP (8 Sept 03) UN envoy's Myanmar trip delayed, says give junta plan a chance

MILITARY THREAT

Increasing

Stagnant

Decreasing

The reshuffle shows Burmese rulers have become more international, and the move will be welcomed. ~ Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra¹²⁸

The Senior General does not intend to step down at any time in the foreseeable future and so he needs someone to offset growing international pressure being brought to bear on him. ~ 'Source close to the junta'¹²⁹

SPDC RESHUFFLE - RISE OF THE HARDLINERS

On 25 August, Sr. Gen Than Shwe carried out a reshuffle of senior leadership, 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.¹³⁰ 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 Lt-Gen Soe Win, who engineered the attack that effectively ended it.

The reshuffle, bringing in younger officers with unquestioning loyalty to Than Shwe, indicates a consolidation of power, not a prospect for real change. The regime has reshuffled its cabinet 14 times since Nov 15, 1997.¹³¹ Ludu U Sein Win, a Burmese political observer notes: "In essence it is nothing—it is old wine in a new bottle."¹³²

General Khin Nyunt - Promoted Or Demoted?

The most significant move in the reshuffle was the transfer of Gen. Khin Nyunt from Secretary One to the largely ceremonial role of Prime Minister. Apologists for the regime, such as Thai Prime Minister Thaksin, have praised this as the first step towards a division between the military and an administrative branch of government headed by Khin Nyunt.¹³³ Some also believe that Gen. Khin Nyunt, the so-called 'moderate' in the regime will be given authority to restart the dialogue and address the country's massive economic problems.¹³⁴ Realists, however, say the move is only

¹²⁸ The Nation (27 Aug 03) Guarded welcome for Burmese change

¹²⁹ AFP (27 Aug 03) Myanmar leader to use new PM as shield against international flack: source

¹³⁰ AFP (25 Aug 03) Myanmar's ruler ousts influential number-three general Khin Nyunt

¹³¹ Bangkok Post (29 Aug 03) Burmese reshuffle keeps world guessing

¹³² The Irrawaddy (26 Aug 03) New Emperor or New Scapegoat? & Irrawaddy (12 Sept 03) Hollow Promises

¹³³ The Nation (27 Aug 03) Guarded welcome for Burmese change

¹³⁴ Bangkok Post (29 Aug 03) Burmese reshuffle keeps world guessing & AFP (27 Aug 03) Myanmar leader to use new PM as shield against international flack: source

26 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

a ploy by Than Shwe to ward off growing international pressure by making a 'moderate' figure the public relations face of the SPDC.

The Black Friday attack ended any debate regarding Than Shwe's commitment to democratic reform. The only real question is how much power Khin Nyunt will wield in the new government, as the move sidelines him from control over the military and the decision-making power of the SPDC Council. Analysts are now watching to see how much longer he retains his position as Military Intelligence Chief.¹³⁵ However Khin Nyunt's role develops, pinning hopes for Burma's future on the so-called "prince of evil" who allegedly masterminded the 1988 violence is likely to be another 'road to nowhere'.¹³⁶

- **Lt-Gen Soe Win** - takes over as Secretary One. The Secretary-1 position may be a reward for Soe Win, believed to have been the mastermind behind the Black Friday attack.¹³⁷ On 21 January, Soe Win said: "The SPDC not only won't talk to the NLD [National League for Democracy] but will also never hand over power to the NLD."¹³⁸ Days later he was rewarded with a promotion to Secretary 2.¹³⁹

- **Lt-Gen Thein Sein** - appointed Secretary 2 of the SPDC. A former Commander of MOC-4 (Phugyi) and the Triangle Military Region, he is believed to hold negative views on Thailand.¹⁴⁰

- **U Ko Lay** - appointed Minister of the Prime Minister's Office. Former Mayor of Rangoon during the bloody crackdown of the 1988 uprising, notoriously corrupt.¹⁴¹

- **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.¹⁴²

- **U Aye Maung** replaces recently deceased U Tha Tun as attorney general. U Aye Maung has been the director-general of the Central Election Commission Office since 1974 and is a member of the SPDC's 1992 National Convention Convening Commission.¹⁴³

¹³⁵ The Irrawaddy (26 Aug 03) Who's Who In the Junta's Line-up & The Irrawaddy (26 Aug 03) New Emperor or New Scapegoat?

¹³⁶ Irrawaddy (29 Aug 03) Will The "Prince of Evil" Bring Hope to Burma?

¹³⁷ The Irrawaddy (26 Aug 03) Who's Who In the Junta's Line-up

¹³⁸ DVB (28 Jan 03) No plan to talk to NLD and we are not afraid of USA-SPDC

¹³⁹ AP (3 Feb 03) Myanmar reshuffles cabinet

¹⁴⁰ The Irrawaddy (26 Aug 03) Who's Who In the Junta's Line-up

¹⁴¹ The Irrawaddy (26 Aug 03) Who's Who In the Junta's Line-up

¹⁴² The Irrawaddy (26 Aug 03) Who's Who In the Junta's Line-up

¹⁴³ Myanmar Times (16 Jul 03) Myanmar Appoints New Attorney General

FORCED CONSCRIPTION

Since Black Friday, the regime's military buildup has intensified, including widespread forced recruitment of villagers for military training. Recruitment of child soldiers continues and civilians are also being forced to join the SPDC army, as well as civilian militia groups such as the newly created Pyithu Seik (People's Army).¹⁴⁴ [For more on child soldiers see Woman & Children]

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.¹⁴⁵ In September, it was reported that authorities were preparing a 2nd round of military trainings for civilians in rural areas.¹⁴⁶ Once again the junta hopes that scare tactics about 'external enemies' will distract people from the ongoing crackdown and economic crisis.

Rangoon Division- On 4 September, it was reported that civil servants and their family members in Rangoon were being forced to attend a month and a half long military training.¹⁴⁷

Shan State-Newly arrived refugees from central Shan State reported that since June, the SPDC has forced each village tract to provide 1,000 male recruits between the ages of 16 and 50 for up to 2 months of military training. The recruits are forced to join militia groups and accompany SPDC troops on patrol and wear uniforms. In some villages so many men have been conscripted that families have no male members to attend to their paddy fields and have lost their crops.¹⁴⁸

On 1 August, it was reported that 200 civilians in Namkham and 100 in Mongwi were being given basic military training by IB 45.¹⁴⁹

Karen State-On 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.¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁴ Mizzima (19 Jul 03) India raises troops in fight against Northeast militancy and drug trafficking

¹⁴⁵ Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union (Jul 03) Monthly Human Rights Situation Report, Tenasserim Division

¹⁴⁶ Irrawaddy (4 Sept 03) Military Prepares Civilians for Battle

¹⁴⁷ Irrawaddy (4 Sept 03) Military Prepares Civilians for Battle

¹⁴⁸ CCSDPT (10 Sept 03) Summary CCSDPT open session

¹⁴⁹ Mizzima, posted on SHAN-EU Group Weekly Digest, No. 55 (1 - 7 Aug 2003)

¹⁵⁰ NCGUB (20 Sept 03) Human Rights Documentation Unit

28 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

On 16 August, it was reported that local battalions are giving month-long military trainings in many villages in Pa'an Township. 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.¹⁵¹

Mandalay Division - On 3 July, USDA members and battalions from the Central Military Headquarters organized military trainings in Chan Aye Tha Zan, Aung Myae Tha Zan, Ma Ha Aung Myae, Pyi Kyi Tha Kon and Pa Thein Kyi Townships. Authorities also held some trainings in high schools which students were forced to attend.¹⁵²

Arakan State - on 17 July, it was reported that the SPDC has been conducting new rounds of forced conscription in various townships. LIB 538 has been forcibly recruiting people in and around Rathedaung Township.¹⁵³

On 11 June, SPDC army battalions began conducting large scale special military trainings in Minbra Township. One village headman reported that each village tract in the state has been ordered to recruit at least 30 Pyithu-seik ('People's Army,' civilian milita group) members for 'an imminent war.' In Buthidaung Township, some members of ethnic nationality groups including Khami, Mro and Daingnet have also reportedly received military training, arms and ammunitions.¹⁵⁴

Chin State - On 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.¹⁵⁵

Tenasserim Division- After 21 July, The Coastal Region Military Command instructed all the districts and townships administrations councils to recruit and send 20-30 'hard core persons' and 40-60 other people as reserves from each village under their control.¹⁵⁶

On 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.'¹⁵⁷

¹⁵¹ Ibid

¹⁵² NCGUB (20 Sept 03) Human Rights Documentation Unit

¹⁵³ Narinjara (17 Jul 03) Forced Conscription in Western Burma

¹⁵⁴ Narinjara (23 Jul 03) Burmese Junta's attempt to divert people's attention from the Depeyin Massacre

¹⁵⁵ DVB News (6 Aug 03)

¹⁵⁶ Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union (July 03) Monthly Human Rights Situation Report, Tenasserim Division

¹⁵⁷ Network Media Group (30 Jul 03) Youth in Burma given militia training

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 29

Mon State- On 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.¹⁵⁸

On 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'.¹⁵⁹

On 21 August, it was reported that SPDC army strategic commands will supervise civil servants and villagers who have recently completed forced military training. The trainees will be forced to volunteer on a rotational basis to assist military operations, including launching military offensives.¹⁶⁰

In September, it was reported that since Black Friday the SPDC has been recruiting members of the Red Cross of Myanmar and Fire Brigade Unit, specifically USDA members, for "tha-baik-hlan-a-hpwewh (Anti-Strike Organizations) throughout the state. The SPDC is reportedly using the anti-strike forces and other paramilitary groups to quell any unrest.¹⁶¹

In Paung Township, everyone working for the government was forced to attend month-long military trainings beginning on 19 September.¹⁶² [See also Appendix 2]

Sagaing Division- On 30 July, it was reported that in Shwebo (Shwe-Bo) District up to 900 people were attending basic military training.¹⁶³

Pegu Division-In September, male civil servants, teachers, and health workers in Pyu Township were forced to attend month-long military trainings. Each household in the township must pay 500 kyat for the trainings.¹⁶⁴ [See also Appendix 2]

NEW BASES, BATTALIONS & TANKS

On 3 September, the Coastal Region Military Commander in Tenasserim Division was ordered to set up a tank and cavalry battalion headquarters. The SPDC army reportedly plans to set up such battalions in each military division.¹⁶⁵

¹⁵⁸ Independent Mon News Agency and Kao-Wao (4 Jul 03) Life in Mon State

¹⁵⁹ Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union (Jul 03) Monthly Human Rights Situation Report, Tenasserim Division

¹⁶⁰ Independent Mon News Agency (21 Aug 03) Forced Volunteers for Burma Army

¹⁶¹ IMNA (6 Sept 03) Anti-democracy death squads

¹⁶² Human Rights Documentation Unit, NCGUB (15 Nov 03)

¹⁶³ Network Media Group (30 Jul 03) Youth in Burma given militia training

¹⁶⁴ Human Rights Documentation Unit, NCGUB (13 Oct 03)

¹⁶⁵ Mergui-Tavoy District Information Department, Karen National Union (Sept 03) Monthly human rights situation report Tenasserim Division

30 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

In July, it was reported that the SPDC army had begun to construct an artillery base On West Farunga Island, Arakan State. The base is one of a total of 5 the army plans to construct on islands to protect offshore gas interests. Chin villagers have reportedly been forced to labor on construction for the bases.¹⁶⁶

In late July, 50 Ukrainian tanks were shipped to the Ba Htoo Army facility in Mandalay. Armored personnel from 7 regiments are scheduled to attend a month long tank training session in August.¹⁶⁷

MILITARY BORDER BUILD-UP

India

In July, Mizzima News Service reported that the regime has deployed Pyithu-Sitt groups in border towns to contain Indian insurgent groups. Troops in Paletwa Township, Chin State, have also been put on high alert. “It is of paramount importance that our North East frontier should be properly guarded to foil any attempts by the anti-social elements,” said a Home Ministry source.

India is also increasing security along the border, with a decision to raise 8 more battalions of the Assam Rifles.¹⁶⁸ [See Int’l Relations]

China

China has been beefing up its military presence along the Burma border since July, in response to perceived instability following Black Friday.¹⁶⁹ [See Int’l Relations]. The SPDC has responded by sending heavy artillery and personnel reinforcements to SPDC bases near China. In mid-July 12 heavy artillery and 5 artillery tow trucks were delivered to an artillery bases in Laukkai, and Kunlong, Kokang Region, Shan State.¹⁷⁰

ABSDF FORCED OUT OF KIO TERRITORY

To increase pressure on the armed opposition, in September, the SPDC told the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) to ‘clean up’ remaining All Burma Students’ Democratic Front (ABSDF) troops in Kachin State. The KIO was first ordered to force out ABSDF members in 1994 when they signed a ceasefire agreement with the regime. Lower-level KIO officers reportedly want ABSDF units

¹⁶⁶ Narinjara (29 Jul 03) New Artillery Installation to guard Rakhine Gas Fields

¹⁶⁷ DVB (29 July 03) 50 tanks arrive from Ukraine

¹⁶⁸ Mizzima (19 Jul 03) India raises troops in fight against Northeast militancy and drug trafficking & DVB (29 Jul 03) 50 tanks that the SPDC bought from Ukraine arrive in Burma

¹⁶⁹ SHAN (10 Aug 03) Chinese there to prevent coup

¹⁷⁰ DVB (6 Aug 03) Burma reportedly sends heavy artillery, personnel to bases near Chinese border

to remain, however ABSDF Chairman Than Khe noted “We will never do anything to hurt the interests of the KIO.”¹⁷¹

TATMADAW GOES INTERNATIONAL

The junta continues to exploit regional rivalries to obtain military equipment and technology from all sides. As India, China, Bangladesh, and Thailand all play for favor, the SPDC has also reportedly turned to North Korea for missiles and other arms. Instead of creating a ‘balance-of power,’ Burma’s instability threatens to become increasingly disruptive to the region.¹⁷²

China - Military Visit

On 15 August, Deputy Sr. Gen Maung Aye led a military delegation on a 6 day official visit to China.¹⁷³ [See Int’l Relations]

Thailand - More Naval Cooperation

During a joint regional border committee meeting on 25 August, Thailand and Burma agreed to exchange naval ship visits. Two Thai ships are scheduled to arrive in Rangoon in December. The two countries also agreed on a common international conduct code for sea patrols. However, the regime refused a Thai proposal to conduct joint sea patrols to combat drug trafficking.¹⁷⁴

India - Quid Pro Quo

India is also pushing for increased naval cooperation. High-level defense exchanges between India and the SPDC began with SPDC Air Force Chief Maj. Gen Myat Hein traveling to India on 1 September. The SPDC is looking for assistance to build up its air force, create an Aviation University in Burma and establish training and servicing facilities for their Russian-built MiG-29 warplanes. India agreed to raise the number of Burmese Naval cadets in Indian training institutions. Maj. Gen Myat Hein met with high-level the heads of the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force and reportedly visited air force bases in Jamnagar, Pune, Hyderabad and Agra.¹⁷⁵

Indian Naval Chief Admiral Madhvendera Singh, the first Indian Naval officer to visit Burma in 30 years, arrived in Rangoon on 4 September.¹⁷⁶ Singh’s visit reflects

¹⁷¹ Irrawaddy (26 Sept 03) ABSDF Members Pressured to Leave

¹⁷² New York Newday (30 Sept 03) Myanmar's Tyranny Spreads Like a Disease

¹⁷³ AP (14 Aug 03) Myanmar's deputy leader to lead military delegation to China

¹⁷⁴ AFP (25 Aug 03) Thailand, Myanmar to trade war ship visits

¹⁷⁵ Press Trust of India (29 Aug 03) India, Myanmar to hold high-level defence talks & United Press International (19 Sept 03) Insider notes from United Press International for Sept. 19

¹⁷⁶ Islamic Republic News Agency (2 Sept 03) Myanmar seeks Indian help to build up its Air Force, Asia Times (20 Sept 03) Speaking freely: India courts Junta, Associated Press Worldstream (4 Sept 03) Indian delegation arrives in Myanmar on goodwill visit & Press Trust of India (29 Aug 03) India, Myanmar to hold high-level defence talks

32 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

India's concern over perceived warming SPDC-Pakistan relations. Currently Pakistani ships are allowed to dock at Burmese ports, and the Indian Navy is requesting the same access.¹⁷⁷ Specifically this includes a new port in Sittwe, Arakan State, where there is a Chinese naval base. The Indian Naval Chief visited major navy bases and training institutions, and met Sr-Gen Than Shwe, Deputy Sr-Gen Maung Aye, PM Khin Nyunt and FM Win Aung. Sources also believe that the Indian officer may have been invited to visit Coco Island, where India has long voiced concern over Chinese Navy presence.¹⁷⁸

The day after Singh's visit, 2 Indian Navy ships arrived in Rangoon for 4 days of joint maneuvers with SPDC Naval ships. India has also agreed to increase the number of Burmese Naval Cadets given training in India.¹⁷⁹

Bangladesh - Shopping For Arms And Intelligence

A Burmese military delegation arrived in Bangladesh on 19 September to discuss military intelligence sharing to curb sea piracy, arms smuggling and attacks by opposition armies. Bangladesh also plans to purchase a significant amount of Burmese defense hardware including machine guns, assault and automatic rifles, landmines and a rocket launcher.¹⁸⁰

BOMBS

In June, the SPDC blamed the KNU for 2 bombs found in Taungoo, Pegu Division, and in August blamed the ABSDF for 4 bombs in Monywa, Sagaing Division.¹⁸¹ [See Democracy & Dialogue]. On 24 August, a bomb exploded in Myawaddy, Karen State on the Thai border.¹⁸² No casualties were reported in any of the bomb blasts.

ATTACK ON SPDC WARSHIP

On 21 August, a Burmese military warship docked at a jetty in west Rangoon was hit by a rocket launcher. The attack was not covered by state media and it is unknown who is responsible.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁷ Xinhua (5 Sept 03) Indian naval chief visits Myanmar

¹⁷⁸ Islamic Republic News Agency (2 Sept 03) Myanmar seeks Indian help to build up its Air Force, Asia Times (20 Sept 03) Speaking freely: India courts Junta Xinhua (21 Jul 03) Myanmar-Indian trade to double by 2006: minister & Press Trust of India (29 Aug 03) India, Myanmar to hold high-level defence talks

¹⁷⁹ Xinhua (10 Sept 03) India ships in Myanmar for joint navy maneuvers

¹⁸⁰ Narinjara (24 Sept 03) Burmese military delegation visit a hilly town in Bangladesh & Xinhua (21 Sept 03) Bangladesh, Myanmar to discuss military cooperation

¹⁸¹ DVB (1 Jul 03) Bombs exploded in Taungoo, Pegu Division, New Light of Myanmar (1 Jul 03) Bombs exploded in Taungoo & AFP (8 Aug 03) Myanmar uncovers fourth bomb

¹⁸² DVB, Oslo, in Burmese (24 Aug 03) (translated by BBC World Monitoring Service) Marketplace bomb blast, no known casualties

¹⁸³ Irrawaddy (23 Aug 03) Military warship fired upon

STUDENTS CLASH WITH POLICE

On 8 September, over 100 students in Myitkyina, Kachin State clashed with traffic police after police confiscated several unlicensed motorbikes. The students threw stones at a police station house. Two policemen and 3 students were seriously injured.¹⁸⁴

MI SERGEANT ARRESTED FOR CORRUPTION

In early July, Sergeant Myo Khin, head of Kyauktaw Township [Arakan State] Military Intelligence, Battalion 10, was arrested for 'possessing unexplainable quantity of properties' including 1,000 acres of land, 12 cars and buses, and 15 million kyat in outstanding forced loans to local farmers. Area residents report the sergeant was also involved in drug selling and illegal logging. Myo Khin was arrested only after a retired Army sergeant brought a charge against him.¹⁸⁵

DRUGS

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

Front, window-dressing, cosmetics, you name it. ~ A source commenting on Rangoon's war on drugs.¹⁸⁶

THAKSIN GETS TOUGH

In August, Thai forces launched a string of sting operations to suppress drug trafficking from Burma. On August 20, Thai anti-narcotics police killed nine alleged UWSA drug traffickers and injured eleven others in a sting operation to buy methamphetamines on the Burma border in the province of Chiang Mai. The clash netted a million yaba pills.¹⁸⁷

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra threatened to raid drug factories in Burma if Rangoon has no plans to sort out its drug problem, saying "we will go there and do it ourselves"¹⁸⁸ In response, Pol-Col Hkam Awng, head of Burma's Drug Enforcement Department, said Thaksin's threat was "an affront to the country's sovereignty,"¹⁸⁹ while the official New Light of Myanmar said the threats were "discordant and detrimental to the existing friendship between the two neighboring

¹⁸⁴ Irrawaddy (10 Sept 03) Students Clash with Police

¹⁸⁵ Narinjara (29 Jul 03) Millionaire Military Intelligence agent arrested

¹⁸⁶ SHAN (19 Aug 03) Top militia chief is top drug producer

¹⁸⁷ Agence France Presse (20 Aug 03) Thai forces kill nine drug smugglers in Myanmar border clash

¹⁸⁸ The Nation (21 Aug 03) Thaksin threatens to raid Burma drug sites

¹⁸⁹ Irrawaddy (21 Aug 03) Thai Threat Flouts Burma's Sovereignty

34 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

countries.”¹⁹⁰ Thaksin replied, “a neighbor which lets its domestic drugs production ruin the future of its neighbor is not a good friendly country.” He added “from now on if their trafficking caravans enter our soil, we won’t waste our time arresting them, but we will simply kill them.”¹⁹¹

On August 24, Thai police killed another three men believed to be UWSA members after they refused to stop at a police checkpoint in Chiang Mai province. Police seized 500,000 yaba pills, weapons, and army uniforms.¹⁹² Thai Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh called for an investigation into these deaths.¹⁹³

The SPDC vowed to cooperate with Thailand in its drug suppression efforts, yet refused to blame the UWSA for recent drug trafficking attempts, stating instead that a Chinese businessman, who was now turned over to Myanmar authorities, was behind the smuggling caravan. ‘Ethnic leaders,’ according to the junta, however, confirmed that nine drug traffickers from “some Wa militias” were killed on August 20.¹⁹⁴

WA

On July 7, at a meeting in Panghsang, the United WA State Army (UWSA) decided to postpone its drug free year from 2005 to 2007 due to the current political and economic circumstances. It was reported on July 3 that “\$1 million for the UN supervised Wa Alternative Development Program .. for 2003-2004 fiscal year had just been withdrawn by the United States following (the) 30 May debacle.”¹⁹⁵ In light of increased pressure on Burma’s junta for political reform by the international community, the SPDC attempted to divert attention by focusing on the Wa army. It was reported that the junta was mobilizing 30,000 troops for a “possible attack.” The UWSA called for an emergency meeting upon hearing that Rangoon was considering ending their cease-fire agreement.¹⁹⁶

Dictator Watch posted the Free Burma Rangers’ June mission report, which includes information on the “expropriation and sale of village houses and land near the Thai border, for USD 2 million, by Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt to the Wa, to facilitate the

¹⁹⁰ AFP (22 Aug 03) Myanmar hits out at Thailand's salvo over drugs trade

¹⁹¹ The Nation (23 Aug 03) Thaksin Slams Burma: 'Not a good neighbour' Rangoon summons Thai envoy over threat of cross-border raids; general says millions of pills ready for shipment

¹⁹² Irrawaddy (25 Aug 03) Getting Tough on Drugs

¹⁹³ The Nation (27 Aug 03) Probe Wa deaths, says Chavalit

¹⁹⁴ AFP (25 Aug 03) Myanmar vows anti-drug cooperation with Thailand but doubts reports

¹⁹⁵ SHAN (14 Jul 03) Wa extend drug free deadline

¹⁹⁶ The Nation (13 Aug 03) BURMA: Rangoon plays up Wa drug threat

latter's drug operations; and the names and village addresses of involved Wa drug kingpins."¹⁹⁷ [see Human Rights chapter for more on the report]

On July 13, Thailand's Office of Narcotics Control Board reported that 171st division UWSA commander Wei Hsueh Kang was under house arrest in Lashio.¹⁹⁸ Brig Gen Kyaw Thein of the Office of the Chief of Military Intelligence in the Burmese Ministry of Defence later denied the report, saying "are you sure that Wei Hsueh-kang is really in our country?"¹⁹⁹ After 12 Wa were killed by Thai forces in August, Bao Youliang was dispatched to Rangoon to discuss Khin Nyunt's proposal "for a military alliance in exchange for its continued defense of the latter over drug charges."²⁰⁰

It was reported in September that Wei Hsueh Kang moved some of his drug factories deeper into Burma. Among these was one that was transferred from "Wanhong (in Monghsat township, opposite Chiang Mai's Mae Ai district) to Tangyan (in northern Shan State)."²⁰¹ Wei Hsueh Kang moved his headquarters to Mongjawd, where preparations were underway in August for the upcoming opium season. It was reported that "last year's output in the area of some 30 villages was estimated as 9-18 tons. The upcoming season's yield is expected to exceed last year's."²⁰² On September 8, a man believed to be Yutachai Sae-sim, nephew of Wei Hsueh kang was killed in a sting operation in Mae Sai. The Thai army claims that he imported chemicals used in amphetamine and heroin production.²⁰³

GOODBYE OPIUM, HELLO AMPHETAMINES

Newer, Stronger Yaba Pill

While the junta continues to deny UWSA involvement in the production of amphetamines, it was reported that in September, a new yaba pill "at least five times as 'high' as the original" entered the drug market. The pills have been manufactured since July at a refinery under the protection of the UWSA at the foothills of Hpahompook mountain range. "With the old yaba, you may need 5-6 pills each day to 'stay alive,' with the new one, half a pill each day will keep you in shape," said a native of Mongton. The retail price of the new pill is 200 baht.²⁰⁴

¹⁹⁷ Dictator Watch (11 Jul 03) Burma relief mission, and analysis of prime Minister Thaksin of Thailand

¹⁹⁸ AFP (14 Jul 03) Myanmar drugs lord under house arrest: Thai report

¹⁹⁹ Nation (25 Jul 03) Wei arrest report denied

²⁰⁰ SHAN (3 Sept 03) Rangoon bargains with Wa: military cooperation for drug exoneration

²⁰¹ SHAN (9 Sept 03) More labs move deep, scores still around

²⁰² Shan Herald Agency for News (25 Aug 03) Corn making way for pop

²⁰³ Nation (9 Sept 03) Drug lord's kin killed in sting

²⁰⁴ SHAN (24 Sept 03) Speed II comes to town

36 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Burma Destroys Poppy Crops

The junta continues to claim success at drug eradication, yet only mentions opium. According to official statistics, Burmese officials claim to have destroyed 623 hectares, including 183 hectares in southern Shan State, of illegally grown opium poppy crops during the 2002-03 cultivation season which ended in late August.²⁰⁵

FRANCE FUNDS DRUG MONITORING PROJECT

Thailand's narcotics control board and French satellite company Spot Image plan to initiate a "remote sensing and training center" in Chiang Mai to monitor illicit poppy plantations in the Golden Triangle region. The French government will fund a 1-year project to train anti-drug authorities from Thailand, Laos, Vietnam, Cambodia and Myanmar on how to use it.²⁰⁶ Meanwhile, the crackdown on dissidents and ethnic groups by Thai officials is resulting in the weakening of drug monitoring. Lt-Col Nerdah Mya of the Karen National Liberation Army said "in the past, we were able to keep all the drug activities along the border under surveillance and keep the Thai authorities informed. Now that the relations have been downgraded, we are getting less and less access to our sources of information."²⁰⁷

MILITIA LEADER TOP DRUG PRODUCER

It was reported that Ja Seu-bo, Rangoon's "head of militia forces in eastern Shan State" is also one of the region's top drug producers. A native of Mongyang, he has a refinery in Nampang Tract near the village of Kainao and Nga-herh. His militia force is the 150-strong Special Mobile Force of Nampang, and he "has recently been named chief representative of the militia forces in the Triangle Region."²⁰⁸

US: BURMA 'FAILED DEMONSTRABLY'

On September 15, President Bush stated that Burma has "failed demonstrably" to "meet their international obligations to fight drug trafficking", subjecting Burma to US aid penalties. Paul Simons, Acting Assistant Secretary of State for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement, said "in the case of Burma, we have a situation in which you have a major drug-producing country- not just a drug-transiting country- that is the second-largest producer of opium in the world. It's one of the largest methamphetamine producers, and in which we really don't see very much indication that the government is active in beginning to shut down the very core of the trade which is the production side."²⁰⁹ In response, the SPDC asked the US to join its drug eradication efforts, warning that if it didn't that the "underworld elements will

²⁰⁵ Xinhua (30 Aug 03) Myanmar destroys over 600 hectares of poppy plantations

²⁰⁶ AP (1 Jul 03) Thai-French satellite project to monitor illegal poppy crops

²⁰⁷ SHAN (21 Aug 03) Drugs Rebel commander: Thai curbs on friends weaken curbs on drugs

²⁰⁸ SHAN (19 Aug 03) Top militia chief is top drug producer

²⁰⁹ VOA (16 Sept 03) Bush Criticizes Burma, Haiti on Drug Trafficking

gain the advantage.”²¹⁰ The US was also accused of turning a blind eye to Burma’s anti-narcotics efforts.²¹¹ However, on July 24, Myanmar gave mixed messages on sanctions and the drug fight. While Kyaw Thein, of Myanmar’s State Central Committee for Drug Abuse, maintained that “if they really want to impoverish our country, then it will hurt because we are using our own limited resources to counter this (drug) problem,” Home Minister Tin Hlaing said “these (anti-drug measures) are a different issue, so this cannot be directly affected by the political sanctions.”²¹²

REGIONAL MEETINGS

A series of regional meetings have highlighted the drug trade as a regional threat. On July 10, anti-drug officials from the Mekong river subregion, Thailand, China, Myanmar and Laos, met in Chiang Rai to strengthen cooperation in the illegal drugs trade. A network covering ports along the Mekong river in the four countries was formed to coordinate mutual efforts against drug production and trafficking.²¹³

A second meeting was held in Chiang Rai on July 23, which for the first time included India, and focused on the smuggling of chemicals used to produce heroin and amphetamines. The five countries agreed to meet regularly and to “promote market access for products from alternative development... and invite the international community to facilitate alternative development efforts.”²¹⁴ China’s Narcotic Control Bureau deputy secretary general Wang Qian-rong expressed concern that “the ‘balloon effect’ had resulted in more drugs entering China’s Yunnan province.”²¹⁵

A 2-day seminar organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held in Hanoi in September resulted in the adoption of the ‘Hanoi Resolution’ by six countries in the Mekong sub-region, Cambodia, China, Laos, Burma, Thailand, and Vietnam. Under the resolution, the countries called for “further strengthened joint, policy-level efforts and result-oriented collaboration” for the production, trafficking, and consumption of illicit substances in East Asia. A \$216,000 USD three-year strategy was put in place to combat the drug trade, with half the funding coming from the UNODC, and the other half from the countries involved. Director of UNODC’s Division Operations Sumru Noyan said “about

²¹⁰ Xinhua (17 Sept 03) Myanmar urges US to join fully in fighting drugs

²¹¹ Xinhua (19 Sept 03) Myanmar dismisses US charge for failure in anti-drug cooperation

²¹² AP (24 Jul 03) Myanmar Sends Mixed Signals On Sanctions And Drug Fight

²¹³ Xinhua (10 Jul 03) 4 nations agree to strengthen cooperation to suppress drug in Mekong river subregion

²¹⁴ AP (24 Jul 03) China, India, 3 others agree on cross-border cooperation to fight drugs

²¹⁵ Nation (24 Jul 03) Chiang Rai Drug Forum: War on drugs set to escalate

38 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

half the world's population abusing ATS (amphetamine type stimulants) are in East and Southeast Asia."²¹⁶

REGIONAL THREAT

India

New drug trafficking strategies have been reported on the Burma-India border, whereby "buffalos are fed plastic bags containing heroin and amphetamine tablets," which are later collected from the buffalo dung. Heroin is trafficked to Moreh and Champhai (Mizoram) from the Thai-Burma border.²¹⁷

Malaysia

It was reported on July 11 that two Burmese nationals were arrested for trafficking heroin in the state of Pahang in Malaysia.²¹⁸

China

Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh, on an official visit to China in September, met with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and Chinese military leaders to discuss issues relating to Burma and drug suppression.²¹⁹

ECONOMY

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

On 29 July, the US enacted new economic sanctions against Burma [See also Int'l Relations]. The sanctions placed an immediate freeze on assets of high-level SPDC and USDA officials in the US, banned Burmese imports to the US and more significantly banned the provision of financial services to Burma.

The formal sector, which is dominated by the regime and its associates, has been hard hit by the financial services ban. This is because it inhibits the transfer of US dollars to Burmese banks. As international trade is mostly conducted in US dollars, it is no surprise that regional trade is markedly down.

The ban on Burmese imports to the US has also affected investor confidence, which had already dramatically waned in recent months.

²¹⁶ AFP (25 Sept 03) Mekong-region countries warn of rapid spread of new-generation drugs

²¹⁷ Mizzima (20 Sept 03) Inventive new drug trafficking strategies on Indo-Burma border

²¹⁸ AFP (11 Jul 03) Two Myanmar nationals detained in Malaysia for suspected drug trafficking

²¹⁹ Bangkok Post (2 Sept 03) Official Visit: Chavalit to brief China on Burma – Talks to include drug suppression

The effects on the general population are more difficult to calculate, since they have long suffered the effects of the regime's economic mismanagement and rampant corruption, exacerbated by the banking crisis that began 6 months before the sanctions.

SANCTIONS BEGIN TO BITE

There was inevitably complete chaos initially because there had been no preparations for the sanctions. ~ Western diplomat²²⁰

In August, General Khin Nyunt reportedly told Razali that Burma wasn't afraid of US sanctions because its neighbours would compensate for losses in trade, aid and investment.²²¹ Yet just 2 weeks after the sanctions were enacted, businesses in Rangoon already appeared to be feeling the impact. One wealthy businessman reported: "We have no idea how to continue doing businesses since the sanctions started. Import and export businesses are almost stalled, causing turmoil in the price of some exports. The price of exports of such as shrimp and beans have dropped by nearly half."²²²

Eating Lobster in Rangoon

The drop of prices in produce normally reserved for export has led to an unexpected windfall to civilians in urban centers. Fresh seafood such as lobster, tiger prawns and giant sea perch have reappeared in local markets for the first time in 7 years. The price of potato and shrimp has dropped. This has been attributed to the dumping of goods meant for export, as it becomes increasingly difficult to conduct formal trade, due to the sanctions. It is unclear if this is a temporary anomaly.²²³

More Cash, Less Credit

Another businessman reported soaring dollar prices as a result of foreign financial institutions refusing Letters of Credit (LCs) from Burmese banks. In August, Singapore banks including branches of Standard Chartered Bank and HSBC began refusing Burmese LCs, and other banks such as the Overseas Union and DBS bank are expected to follow suit. Because Singapore is one of Burma's largest trading partners, this has significantly impacted businesses which rely on LCs to transfer money to and from Burma. US sanctions have also forced Singapore to downgrade the SPDC's credit rating, which may hinder their arms purchases from the city-state.²²⁴

²²⁰ AFP (21 Sept 03) US sanctions ravage Myanmar garment industry, but economic chaos subsiding

²²¹ SCMP (5 Aug 03) Persuade, not pressure, Myanmar

²²² Irrawaddy (13 Aug 03) Swift Impact of Sanctions

²²³ Personal communication (22 Sep 03) Eating Lobster in Rangoon

²²⁴ Irrawaddy (7 Aug 03) Foreign Banks Refuse Letter of Credit & Irrawaddy (23 Sept 03) Sanctions are the First Step. Note: A letter of credit, also called an L/C or documentary

40 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Meanwhile, crime syndicates and corrupt border officials have rushed in to address the currency deficiency, smuggling up to US\$ half a million each week via the Bangladeshi border. In September, Bangladesh's National Smuggling Prevention Committee was forced to call an emergency meeting to address the rampant money laundering and currency smuggling along the border.²²⁵ Formal trade between Burma and Bangladesh is also on the line, as a bilateral account trade system set up in March 2003 may have to be discontinued as a result of US sanctions. A senior official at the Bangladesh Ministry of Commerce said that the account trade had now become 'uncertain,' because Burma may be unable to settle its accounts due to the dollar crisis.²²⁶

FECs On The Way Out?

Businesses are also concerned about the effect of sanctions on Foreign Exchange Certificates (FEC) which are tied to the US dollar.²²⁷ In September, Ross Dunkley, the head of Myanmar Times reported: "The generals are hurting because the generals and their wives, who are hoarding away hundreds of thousands or millions of dollars of FEC, Foreign Exchange Certificates - which is so-called equivalent to \$1 [each] - has plunged to 40 percent or 50 percent of its value. They are in deep trouble. The business community is on the point of collapse. They are unable to export anymore. And the government has put in rules and regulations that you cannot import goods anymore. This is dragging the government down even further to the point where something will crack."²²⁸

The new sanctions may also deny the SPDC aid through the regional development schemes like the Greater Mekong Sub-region and the Regional Growth Quadrangle.²²⁹ [See Aid]

Changing To Euros

In August, it was reported that the SPDC had instructed all government agencies and private businesses to begin using euros for international transactions. Analysts predict the transition from US dollars to euros will be rocky, and say most foreign banks will charge a 5-7% fee to convert accounts. Burmese economist, Dr Khin Maung Kyi, also anticipates problems, noting that "As conversion charges become

credit, is issued by a bank on behalf of an importer. It guarantees an exporter payment for goods or services, provided the terms of the L/C are met.

²²⁵ Narinjara News (5 Sept 03) Why is Dollar increasingly smuggled into Burma?

²²⁶ Kaladan (28 Aug 03) Account Trade between Burma and Bangladesh Hangs in The Balance

²²⁷ BBC (15 Aug 03) Burma favours euros over dollars & Irrawaddy (29 Aug 03) Burma Switches to Euros

²²⁸ Asia Times Online (24 Sept 03) Myanmar and stonewalled democracy

²²⁹ Irrawaddy (5 Aug 03) Mapping the Road to Reconciliation: An Interview with Kobsak Chutikul

an additional cost, the price of imports will rise and the income from exports will decrease."²³⁰

Effects On Border Trade

There have been some predictions that sanctions will lead to a shift towards border trade. However, large businesses would still face increasing difficulties with logistics and be forced to pay greater overheads including payoffs to officials to get their goods to Rangoon.²³¹ In September, Dr. Khin Shwe, a businessman with close ties to the generals, led a delegation of trade officials to Tak on the Thai-Burma border, and announced plans to double border trade to counter the effects of sanctions.²³² In reality, however, traders on the border have been badly hit by the sanctions. The Mae Sot Customs Office reported Thai exports through the Mae Sot border point in July were down by almost a fourth and imports had decreased by over 60%.²³³

Job Losses

The workers also realized what was going on. They knew and attributed the consequences to the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. If Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is released today, the problems will be over tomorrow. ~ Thakhin Thein Pe from Rangoon, CRPP (Committee Representing People's Parliament) member²³⁴

Critics of sanctions have been quick to highlight the impact on workers, primarily in the garment industry which relied heavily on US exports. The SPDC and other sources have made wildly varying claims as to the number of jobs lost due to sanctions-ranging from 140,000 to 350,000.²³⁵ A comparison with the Cambodian garment industry however indicates that the actual figure is closer to 76,000, not including jobs lost as a result of the banking crisis which began in January.²³⁶

The SPDC has blamed US sanctions for forcing former factory workers into the sex industry, eager to deflect attention from their own economic failures. [See Women] In truth, factories began closing months before sanctions were enacted. Soon after the Black Friday attack, a Taiwanese employer shut down her factories in Rangoon

²³⁰ BBC (15 Aug 03) Burma favours euros over dollars; Irrawaddy (29 Aug 03) Burma Switches to Euros

²³¹ AFP (21 Sept 03) US sanctions ravage Myanmar garment industry, but economic chaos subsiding

²³² Irrawaddy (5 Sept 03) Sanctioned Burma Hopes to Double Border Trade

²³³ Irrawaddy (14 Aug 03) Politics and Sanctions Strike Border Trade

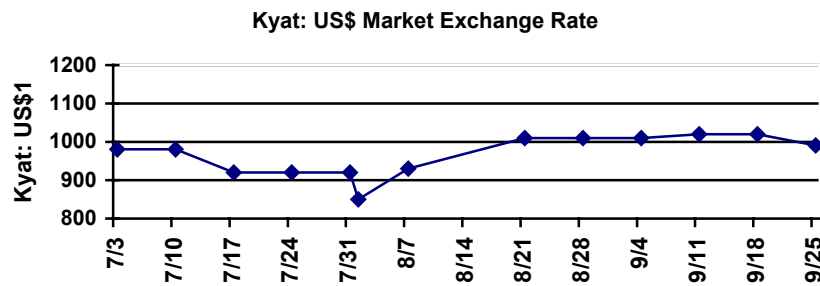
²³⁴ DVB (20 Jul 03) Discussion on effects of US, EU sanctions against SPDC

²³⁵ The Nation (11 Aug 03) Unocal says project in Burma will go ahead & AFP (21 Sept 03) US sanctions ravage Myanmar garment industry, but economic chaos subsiding

²³⁶ For more details, please read Altsean-Burma's special report: Ready, Aim, Sanction! Available in paperback or as pdf at www.altsean.org.

42 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

and relocated to Cambodia.²³⁷ While sanctions will undoubtedly lead to lost jobs, the investment climate in Rangoon had already turned rancid as a result of political instability, corruption, and economic uncertainty. By law, factories in Burma are required to give laid off workers 3 months' severance pay. If the junta is truly concerned about the impact of sanctions on workers then they should do more to ensure that this law is enforced.²³⁸



Source: Far Eastern Economic Review

WOBBLY KYAT

The kyat took a dip immediately after the US sanctions were announced but recovered the following month. The “strengthening” of the kyat has taken place by default. The value of FECs fell, and uncertainty reigned over whether there would be a move to totally replace the dollar with the Euro, which has still not gained any popularity with the local population. The dollar also lost some value when it became clear that its mobility through the Burmese banking system was affected by the US ban on financial services.

BANK CRISIS CONTINUES TO BITE

US Sanctions are only the latest blow to Burma’s rapidly deteriorating economy. In July, it was reported that the banking crisis, which began last January, had forced a number of private bank branches in Arakan State to the brink of closure. As a result of the restrictions on account withdrawals, investors and businesses have stopped using the banking system. One bank official noted: “The private banks are now sitting idle, sometimes even without one transaction in an entire day.” The official also stated that all business and trade in Sittwe had slowed as a result of the crisis, and the regime’s restrictions on transport of goods.²³⁹ (See below)

²³⁷ DVB (30 Jul 03) Reactions to US sanctions in accord with Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act & Irrawaddy (23 Sept 03) Sanctions are the First Step

²³⁸ DVB (20 Jul 03) Discussion on effects of US, EU sanctions against SPDC

²³⁹ Narinjara (31 Jul 03) Banks in distress

Even SPDC propaganda is feeling the pinch. Two state-run newspapers, the Myanmar Alin and The Mirror have reportedly cut their circulation by up to 30% due to lack of paper supplies.²⁴⁰

ROOT CAUSE

The root cause of the ongoing economic crisis is not hard to locate. In July, the Cato Institute and over 50 other libertarian think tanks released their annual 'Economic Freedom of the World' report. The report, which ranked 123 nations according to size of government, legal framework and property rights, access to stable currency, freedom to conduct international trade, and government control of business, credit and labor markets, placed Burma at the bottom of the list for economic freedom.²⁴¹

ARAKAN STATE - GOVT CONTROL & PRIVATE MONOPOLIES

The devastating effects of this state control are evident in Arakan State, where the SPDC has granted a monopoly to the Kyauktaung Transport Company to control all shipments of goods between Sittwe and Taungup. This has reportedly led to a 30-120% increase in the price of basic foodstuffs and fuel. A local professor said: "The granting of licenses and leases to one sole company for running the entire transport of the state is not only unethical, but also raises a number of questions to the policy of the much trumpeted 'Free market economy'...what kind of free market economy is it if there is no private enterprises to compete with and there is a policy of state sponsored extortion to go on and on."²⁴³

In July, it was also reported that the regime had formed an Electricity Committee in Sittwe run by local military and government officials. The Committee has fixed the monthly electricity rate at between 3,000-4,000 kyat per household, equivalent to the average monthly salary of a state employee.²⁴⁴

NEW AGRICULTURE POLICIES AMID SHORTAGES

In September, a business journal noted that following the regime's move to ease restrictions on rice sales, Burma had received export orders for 450,000 tons of rice.²⁴⁵ In the same month, however, Narinjara News reported that a famine in

²⁴⁰ Network Media Group (22 Aug 03) Burma cuts circulation of two Burmese Language dailies

²⁴¹ IPS (8 Jul 03) Hong Kong, Singapore, U.S. Top "Economic Freedom" Index

²⁴² IPS (8 Jul 03) Hong Kong, Singapore, U.S. Top "Economic Freedom" Index

²⁴³ Narinjara (21 Jul 03) Monopoly on transport sends essential prices up in Burma, raises ethical questions

²⁴⁴ Narinjara (24 Jul 03) Burmese Junta's development: sans electricity!

²⁴⁵ Bangkok Post (16 Sept 03) Orders up for Burma's rice

44 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

western Arakan State had driven up the price of rice by a third. The news agency also reported that rice had disappeared from the open market in August.²⁴⁶

The SPDC has announced plans to implement its new paddy policy at the beginning of 2004. (See Apr/Jun Report Card) According to the new policy, export of rice will only be allowed when there is a domestic surplus and rice exporters will be forced to pay a 10% tax of which 5% will go to the government.²⁴⁷

While the SPDC claims that its new paddy policy will see less government control of agriculture, in October, the state Myanmar Sugar Cane Enterprise (MSE) announced plans to purchase farmers' entire harvest of sugar cane. The MSE also said it will give sugar cane growers more technical and material aid. In September, the Myanmar Times reported that the MSE had operated at only a third of capacity in 2002 due to a shortage of sugar cane.²⁴⁸

NEW AGRICULTURAL CENSUS

In September, the junta will begin its 3rd agricultural census, which government officials claim will be the 'largest and most comprehensive' census to date. The US\$ 870,000 census is being funded by the UN Development Program (UNDP) and will be conducted in cooperation with the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO). Information from previous agricultural censuses has been tightly restricted by the SPDC, which will undoubtedly use this new research to exert further control over farmers and production methods.²⁴⁹

IT WORKSHOP

In August, amid reports of rice shortages and potential famine, the SPDC announced plans to open its 2nd IT park in Mandalay, at a cost of US\$ 2 million.²⁵⁰ In the same month, the regime held a national workshop on the development of enabling policies for trade and investment in the IT sector. The workshop was organized in conjunction with the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UN ESCAP).²⁵¹

REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION

ASEAN

The annual ASEAN finance ministers meeting in Manila on August 6-7 produced an agreement to create a single market in the region by 2020, dubbed the "ASEAN

²⁴⁶ Narinjara News (5 Sept 03) Why is Dollar increasingly smuggled into Burma?

²⁴⁷ Xinhua (29 Jul 03) Myanmar adjusts paddy purchase policy in 40 years

²⁴⁸ Xinhua (3 Sept 03) Sugar mills in Myanmar face raw material shortage

²⁴⁹ Xinhua (8 Sept 03) Myanmar to conduct agricultural census & Myanmar Times (8-14 Sept 03) Work begins on farm sector study

²⁵⁰ Bangkok Post (6 Aug 03) Burma's 2nd ICT Park to Open Next Week

²⁵¹ Xinhua (8 Aug 03) Myanmar holds IT workshop

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 45

economic community."²⁵² Members adopted the 'Harmonized Tariff Nomenclature' a uniform set of tariff codes for more efficient trade.²⁵³

On September 2 in Phnom Penh, ASEAN economic ministers approved a draft of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between ASEAN and India. The FTA is expected to be signed at the ASEAN-India Summit in Indonesia on October 7-8.²⁵⁴

ASEAN and Chinese Trade Ministers also met on September 3 and discussed the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement and the "early harvest" of some items prior to the realization date in 2010. Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam are given until 2015 for full implementation of the agreement.²⁵⁵

GMS

On 17-19 December, Ministers from Cambodia, China (Yunnan Province), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Burma, Thailand and Viet Nam met in Dali, China for the 12th Ministerial Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Cooperation Program. Key agenda items were plans to open up borders to facilitate the GMS transborder road projects, discussion of GMS tourist visas, and creation of special economic zones.²⁵⁶ During the meeting, Burma was the last country to sign a cross-border trade agreement to reduce barriers to the movement of people and goods in the region. The agreement is expected to be fully implemented by 2007.²⁵⁷

Regional Routes = \$\$ For Junta

As a geographic link between ASEAN, China and India, the SPDC is poised to reap rewards from India's attempts to forge closer economic ties with ASEAN and China.²⁵⁸ (See Asean Integration) In July, the Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) called for more trade routes through Burma and Bangladesh to South-Eastern China under the 'Initiative for India China Cooperation.' ICC president, Vikram Thapar stated that these new routes could then be linked up with the proposed Asian Highway connecting Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam and the rest of South East Asia.²⁵⁹

²⁵² AFX-Asia (7 Aug 03) ASEAN ministers agree on regional financial integration by 2020

²⁵³ Xinhua (7 Aug 03) ASEAN signs uniform tariff protocol

²⁵⁴ Xinhua (15 Sept 03) Myanmar to benefit from ASEAN-India economic ties: official

²⁵⁵ AFP (3 Sept 03) Southeast Asian trade ministers hammer out free-trade plan with China

²⁵⁶ Asian Development Bank (ADB) web site (14 Aug 03) Ministers of Mekong River Countries to Discuss New Cooperation Initiatives & ADB (15 Sept 03) Mekong Countries to Take Major Step in Further Opening Up Borders

²⁵⁷ Asian Development Bank (19 Sept 03) Myanmar Signs Agreement to Further Open Up Borders of Mekong Countries

²⁵⁸ Xinhua (15 Sept 03) Myanmar to benefit from ASEAN-India economic ties: official

²⁵⁹ Asia Pulse (15 Jul 03) India's ICC wants more trade routes opened to China

46 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

In September, China's Yunan (Yunnan) Province proposed building a passage through Burma to link its capital, Kunming with India's Kolkota (Calcutta).²⁶⁰ Meanwhile, work continues on a highway linking India, Thailand and Burma.²⁶¹

FOREIGN TRADE & INVESTEMENT

Regional Imports Up, Exports Down

While Thailand remains Burma's largest export market, in June, exports had dropped 56% compared to the same month in 2002. This news was reported by a quasi-state controlled magazine, Business Tank, which attributed the drop to a decline in gas sales. In the same month, Business Tank reported that Burma increased imports from Singapore, their largest source of imports, by 50% over last year.²⁶²

Australia

In August, Australia announced a decision to allow the world's least developed countries free access to its markets. Australian officials said that Burma would benefit little from the decision, because of the relatively low level of bilateral trade.²⁶³

Bangladesh

On 1 September, border trade through the Bangladesh's Teknaf came to a halt as traders went on strike to protest 'extortion and harassment' by police and border security forces. The strike ended 6 days later following negotiations between traders and Bangladeshi authorities.²⁶⁴ Meanwhile, Bangladeshi officials and trade bodies have called on the country's ministry of Home Affairs to form a high-powered task force to address the high volume of fish, spices, textiles and drugs smuggled into the country from Burma.²⁶⁵

In September, Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Morshed Khan announced that construction on a road linking Teknaf with Sittwe, Arakan State would start this year and hopefully be completed in 2004.²⁶⁶

However, plans for a gas pipeline from Burma to India via Bangladesh have been scrapped after the Bangladeshi government failed to give its approval.²⁶⁷

²⁶⁰ The Economic Times (India) (24 Sept 03) From Kunming to Kolkata

²⁶¹ PTI News Agency, New Delhi (4 Sept 03) India considering rail link between New Delhi, Hanoi

²⁶² AP Worldstream (12 Aug 03) Thailand is biggest importer of Myanmar goods: report

²⁶³ MT (11 Aug 03) Australia grants Myanmar free access to its markets

²⁶⁴ Kaladan (2 Sept 03) Border trade with Burma halts on trader strike & Narinjara (7 Sept 03) Bangladesh-Burma border trade resumes today

²⁶⁵ Xinhua (24 Sept 03) Smuggling challenges border trade between Bangladesh, Myanmar

²⁶⁶ AFP (17 Sept 03) Work on Bangladesh-Myanmar road link to start this year: FM

China

Despite international criticism, Big Brother China continues to bankroll the generals. In August, a Chinese company agreed to build the US\$150 million Shweli hydroelectric dam. The 400-megawatt dam will be built in Namkhan, Shan State.²⁶⁸

The Kunming Export Commodities Fair was held between August 26-30. Several cease-fire groups, including the United Wa State Army (UWSA) and the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), were invited to attend.²⁶⁹ During the Fair, SPDC Minister of Commerce Pyi Sone said trade with China reached US\$800 million in 2002, and China is now Burma's second largest trade partner. Notably, he did not indicate the balance of trade.²⁷⁰

In September, China's XJ Group Corporation signed a contract with SPDC Industrial authorities to build a US\$112 million multi-purpose diesel engine plant.²⁷¹ Business sources in Beijing have also reported that China's state-run China International Trust and Investment Corp (CITIC) is negotiating purchase of Burmese copper mines from Canada's Ivanhoe Mines.²⁷² In the same month, China reportedly sent delegations to Burma for discussions on cooperation in agriculture, fisheries and biotechnology.²⁷³

India

On 14 July, Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Arun Jaitley arrived in Burma to sign a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to set up a joint trade committee. During his visit, Jaitley discussed with SPDC officials plans to boost border trade, banking services, import and export goods, agricultural sector cooperation and exchange of trade delegations.²⁷⁴ Following his visit, Jaitley

said that India wants to more than double bilateral trade with Burma to over US\$1 billion by 2006.²⁷⁵

Much of this increase will focus in the sectors of oil and gas and communications and technology. India has already expressed interest in deepening investment in Myanmar Oil and Gas Enterprise (MOGE) projects, and in August, the 2 countries

²⁶⁷ Xinhua (26 Sept 03) Myanmar-India gas transmission through Bangladesh turned down

²⁶⁸ AP (11 Aug 03) Burma to get power station

²⁶⁹ Irrawaddy (22 Aug 03) Kunming Trade Fair Welcomes Ceasefire Leaders

²⁷⁰ Xinhua (28 Aug 03) Myanmar commerce minister urges further cooperation with China

²⁷¹ Xinhua (19 Sept 03) China, Myanmar sign contract on building diesel engine plant

²⁷² Xinhua Financial News - China Focus (23 Sept 03) China's CITIC Seeks to Extend Reach in Mining, Oil

²⁷³ China Daily (15 Sept 03) Prospects Rosy for Agriculture

²⁷⁴ Xinhua (15 Jul 03) Myanmar, India sign MOU on setting up joint trade committee &

Xinhua (16 Jul 03) Myanmar, India hold joint trade committee meeting

²⁷⁵ Xinhua (21 Jul 03) Myanmar-Indian trade to double by 2006: minister

48 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

signed another MoU on to cooperate in information and communication technology.²⁷⁶ In February 2004, India is scheduled to hold an industrial exhibition in Rangoon.²⁷⁷

South Korea

South Korea continues to increase its business dealings with Burma. In early September, the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) organized a meeting of 40 companies from Burma and 7 companies from South Korea representing a "diverse variety of products."²⁷⁸

Thailand

Thailand continues to push for greater regional integration to boost business and curb the flow of migrant workers from neighboring countries. At the Bimst-Ec (Bangladesh, India, Burma, Sri Lanka and Thailand-Economic Cooperation) summit scheduled for February 2004, Thai officials are planning to call for a free trade-area framework.²⁷⁹ On 31 July-1 August, Thailand also hosted a ministerial meeting with counterparts from Burma, Laos, and Cambodia to develop an integrated development strategy.²⁸⁰ [See Thai-Burma Relations]

Vietnam

Economic links with Vietnam continue to develop. In October, Vietnam held its first trade fair in Rangoon; a 4-day event organized by the Vietnam Trade Promotion Agency.²⁸¹

PRESSURE & DIVESTMENT

[UK Prime Minister Tony Blair has] "made clear that we do not believe that trade or investment in Burma is appropriate when the regime continues to suppress the basic human rights of its people." ~ Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien's²⁸²

More Companies Jump Ship

Growing international censure and a hostile business climate have hastened the exodus of companies from Burma. Canada's Ivanhoe Mines is reportedly attempting to sell its 50% stake in Burmese copper mines to a Chinese company. Ivanhoe's

²⁷⁶ World Markets Analysis (21 Jul 03) ONGC of India Spies Opening in Myanmar & Xinhua (27 Aug 03) Myanmar, India sign MoU on ICT cooperation

²⁷⁷ Xinhua (15 Sept 03) Myanmar to benefit from ASEAN-India economic ties: official

²⁷⁸ Kaladan (7 Sept 03) S. Korea and Burma Businessmen Meet

²⁷⁹ Bangkok Post (20 Sept 03) Asian Framework Sought

²⁸⁰ Nation (31 Jul 03) Regional development talks begin here today

²⁸¹ Xinhua (30 Sept 03) Vietnam to stage trade fair in Myanmar

²⁸² AFX (2 Jul 03) BAT mulling withdrawal of investment from Burma on UK govt's request

deputy director R. Edward Flood noted that, "Any sale of Myanmar [holdings] lifts a big political cloud from over the company."²⁸³ [See section on China in this chapter]

In August, Advertising giant WPP withdrew their interests in Rangoon subsidiary, Bates Myanmar after appearing on the UK Burma Campaign's "Dirty List" of companies with investments in Burma. Italian sportswear company Lotto, Swiss retailer Migros, and Britain's JJB Sports PLC have also announced they would stop sourcing clothes from Burma. In addition, Australia's Intrepid travel suspended trips to Burma in response to the May 30th ambush on NLD members.²⁸⁴ In a clear indication of the effectiveness of the UK Burma Campaign, the SPDC condemned the organization's "Dirty List" as "politically motivated and without foundation of proof."²⁸⁵

Premier's Long Goodbye

In September, it was reported that Malaysia's Petronas had taken over much of Premier's share in the Yetagun gas projects, increasing their stake in the project from 30% to 40.9%. In addition, both Japan's Nippon Oil and Thailand's PTT Exploration and Production Plc have upped their shares by 5%.²⁸⁶

The UK Burma Campaign has urged Premier not to give funds from the Yetagun buyout back to shareholders. "This is blood money that Premier should hold in trust for the people of Burma," said a spokesman from the organization.²⁸⁷

Despite Premier's exit, Holland's IHC Caland NV says it cannot break an 11-year contract originally made with Premier to construct a floating storage system for the Yetagun project.²⁸⁸

ITF Calls For Boycott

In July, The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) began a campaign to urge shipping companies, cruise operators and airlines to cease their business with

²⁸³ CBS MarketWatch - Thom Calandra's Stockwatch (10 Sept 03) Gargantuan bullion claims may herald next boom

²⁸⁴ Burma Campaign UK (8 Aug 03) Lotto Sportswear Pull Out of Burma Swiss Info; Irr (22 Aug 03) WPP, Intrepid Leave Burma & (25 Aug 03) Myanmar products: Migros stops imports due to working conditions & AFX (26 Sept 03) JJB admits oversight on sourcing after Burma-made goods found in London store

²⁸⁵ Myanmar Information Committee (25 Aug 03) Burmese Government Criticizes "Dirty List" Produced by Burma Campaign UK

²⁸⁶ AFX - Asia (12 Sept 03) Malaysia's Petronas completes swap exercise with Premier Oil & World Markets Analysis (23 Sept 03) Nippon Increases Myanmar Gas Stake

²⁸⁷ The Guardian (London) (19 Sept 03) Activist anger at Burma oil payout

²⁸⁸ AFX (2 Jul 03) IHC Caland says presence in Burma to last until 2015 due to ongoing contracts & AFX - Asia (12 Sept 03) Thai PTT Exploration Production raises stake in Myanmar project to 19.3178 pct

50 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Burma. Peter Lahy, the Federation's Canada Coordinator, says that due to ITF's prominent role in the shipping industry he is confident the campaign will have a significant effect on Burma's economy.²⁸⁹

BAT - Fishy business

Recent reports suggest British American Tobacco may be considering selling its shares in Rothmans of Pall Mall Myanmar. In July, UK Foreign Office minister Mike O'Brien held a meeting with BAT chairman Martin Broughton and urged him to end operations in Burma. Broughton said he is considering the request but is "frustrated" that the decision was being placed on private companies and not the government.²⁹⁰

Meanwhile, BAT has joined with local exporters in an apparent attempt to obtain foreign currency for its business in Burma. The US Food and Drug Administration website reported that a shipment of rotting shrimps stamped with the name "BAT subsidiary Rothmans of Pall Mall" was refused entry into the country. BAT denies any involvement with the shipment.²⁹¹

UNOCAL TRIAL MOVES FORWARD

On 31 July, Los Angeles Superior Court judge Victoria Chaney rejected Unocal's bid for alleged human rights violations to be judged by Burmese, not US law. Judge Chaney stated that since 1988 there had been "no effective rule of law" in Burma, thus rendering any court proceedings "radically indeterminate." The judge also appeared to support the plaintiffs' contention that Unocal had knowledge of abuses before beginning the Yadana project. Prior to its involvement ... Unocal had specific knowledge that the use of forced labour was likely, and nevertheless chose to proceed." Judge Chaney ordered Unocal to stand trial on 22 September.³¹⁰

On 2 September, financial officers of the New York and California state pension funds said they would consider divesting their stock in Unocal if the company fails to justify its involvement in Burma. Following a meeting with Unocal's chief financial officer, Phil Angelides, California's top investment official criticized the company's failure to "come to grips with the implications-economic, reputational

²⁸⁹ Irrawaddy (7 Jul 03) Transport Companies Targeted

²⁹⁰ AFX (3 Jul 03) BAT expected to withdraw from Myanmar on Britain's request - lobbyists expect;

AFX (8 Jul 03) BAT says still reviewing Myanmar ops; to decide in 'next few wks' & Guardian (30 Jul 03) BAT is irked by minister's call to quit Burma: Cigarette maker says it is being saddled with human rights decision that should fall to government

²⁹¹ The Guardian (3 Sept 03) Stinking shrimp story follows BAT from Burma to bin

³¹⁰ The Independent (2 Aug 03) US oil firm on trial over Burma abuses

and moral” of their involvement in Burma. Despite the pressure, Unocal spokesman Barry Lane maintains “We are not leaving Myanmar.”³¹¹

SPDC LAUNCHES NEW AIRLINE

In September, state-run Myanma Airways launched Burma’s second international carrier, the United Myanmar Airline (UMA), in a joint venture with Hong Kong-based Sunshine Strategic Investments Company. UMA plans to fly to Bangkok, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Penang, Hong Kong, and Mandalay. With a start up investment of US\$15 million, UMA plans to increase investment to US\$100 million.³¹²

TOURISM - STILL BRINGING IN \$\$ FOR THE JUNTA

In July, the Myanmar Times reported that Burma has 537 hotels with 37 more under construction, and 540 travel companies.³¹³ Tourists provide the regime with an estimated 25 million Pounds (US\$ 45,855,000) in foreign currency from entry charges alone.³¹⁴ Burma is planning a travel show in Singapore from 5-14 September. Burmese travel companies will also participate in a travel exhibition in Thailand later in the month.³¹⁵

In October, a private Thai airline, PB Air will launch 3 flights a week from Bangkok to Bagan.³¹⁶

Britain Tells Travel Companies To Pull Out

On 4 July, Britain’s Foreign Office Minister Mike O’Brien announced he would urge the approximately 30 British travel companies involved in Burma to pull out. “The military regime derives both direct economic benefits and political legitimacy from Burmese tourism. Foreign visitors remain a source of hard currency for the regime, much of which increasingly ends up in the private bank accounts of the Generals and their associates,” the Foreign Office Minister stated. Following the government statement, at least 3 travel companies have reportedly cancelled or downgraded operations in Burma.³¹⁷

³¹¹ L.A. Times (2 Sept 03) State Officials to Press Unocal California and New York finance chiefs will urge the firm to exit its Myanmar project & Dow Jones Business News (2 Sept 03) CA, NY Pension Aides: May Sell UNOCAL Shares Over Myanmar

³¹² Xinhua (10 Sept 03) Myanmar-HK joint venture airline sets up head office in Yangon

³¹³ Xinhua (28 Jul 03) More hotels in operation in Myanmar

³¹⁴ The Guardian (4 Aug 03) Pressure on Burma Tours

³¹⁵ Xinhua (3 Jul 03) Myanmar to hold travel show in Singapore

³¹⁶ AFP (9 Sept 03) Private Thai airline to launch flights to Myanmar’s ancient Bagan

³¹⁷ Burma Campaign UK (4 Jul 03) Government to tell travel firms to end Burma tourism; South China Morning Post (7 Jul 03) British travel firms face pressure over Myanmar trips; Foreign & Commonwealth Office (14 Jul 03) Foreign Office calls for Burma travel boycott &

AID Increasing Stagnant Decreasing**CHINA FUNDS POWER PROJECTS**

China continues to remain heavily involved in funding the regime's development schemes. On 8 August, a Chinese company, Yunnan Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation, was contracted to build the 400-megawatt Shweli power station in Namkhan, Shan State.³¹⁸ On 15 August, China loaned the regime US\$200 million loan to purchase equipment for the 790-megawatt Ye-Ywa hydroelectric power project near Mandalay.³¹⁹

AUSTRALIA FUNDS ICRC IN BURMA

In September, Australia donated AUD500,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Burma. The move occurred after widespread criticism over the country's ill-advised human rights training program for SPDC officials. Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Alexander Downer says that the funding highlights the importance of ICRC having access to all political prisoners, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.³²⁰

BACKDOOR FUNDING THROUGH ADB AND GMS³²¹

While Burma is not currently eligible for direct funding from the Asian Development Bank (ADB), Burma is a member of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS), which ADB supports and funds. One of the GMS 'flagship initiatives' is the "East-West Economic Corridor" (EWAC) to establish a land route connecting the Andaman and South China Seas. The EWAC proposal, which has been identified by the ADB includes a project to build a deep sea port in Moulmein. In August, the SPDC said they had submitted a proposal to do a feasibility study for the port, as well as 2 other EWAC-related projects. The regime claims that the projects were unanimously recommended at a meeting of a 'well-established working group,' the West-East Corridor Working Group.³²²

Burma Campaign UK (22 Jul 03) The Royal Society for Asian Affairs calls off tourist trip to Burma.

³¹⁸ AP (11 Aug 03) Burma to get power station

³¹⁹ AP (16 Aug 03) China to lend Myanmar \$200 million for hydel project

³²⁰ Radio Australia (17 Sept 03) Australia announces funding for Red Cross in Burma

³²¹ For more information see Altsean's September report "Ready, Aim, Sanction." Available at <http://www.altsean.org>

³²² Bank Information Center (15 Jul 03) Burma's status in the multilateral development banks & Myanmar Times (25-31 Aug 03) Proposed regional road network recommended

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 53

In addition to the possibility of receiving indirect aid through the ADB, there are also concerns that in the future the Bank could resume direct funding. In September, former ADB director Frank Black criticized the fund for, “pushing too actively and too hard for re-engagement with Burma.”³²³

Another ‘flagship initiative’ of the ADB's Greater Mekong Subregion program is a massive regional power grid. Just weeks after Black Friday, the ADB unveiled plans for the US\$4.6 billion electricity scheme which would include the proposed Tasang Dam in Shan State. In addition to funneling more money to the generals, the dam would also cause mass dislocation and environmental degradation.³²⁴

The Tasang Dam is one of several dams along the Salween River that have been proposed by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT). The dams would flood an estimated 55,000 rai (8800 hectares) of land on both sides of the border, affecting 1,000 people, 5 SPDC army bases and 2 KNU bases. In August, Thai troops began a feasibility study of the impact of the dam on local communities. Lt-Col Ji Gor of the KNU has spoken out strongly against the projects, saying: “The KNU won't allow dam construction on the Salween River.”³²⁵

ERI'S NEEDS ASSESSMENT ON AID

In July, EarthRights International (ERI) released a needs assessment, “Border Visions: Burmese Exiles on Humanitarian Assistance, Development Aid, and International Financial Institutions.” The goal of the assessment was to promote debate between multiple stakeholders, including affected local communities, political activists and INGOs about the role of International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in providing increased aid to Burma.

ERI found that many Burmese in exile are concerned about the intent of IFIs, and the potential negative impact of development assistance on the poor and the environment. Participants in the assessment were also skeptical of the ability of INGOs to work inside Burma without aiding the SPDC, and instead supported an increase in cross-border assistance. ERI also identified a need to provide more information about IFIs and aid to decision-makers, civil society, and the general population in Burma.³²⁶

³²³ Financial Times (17 Sept 03) Ex-director lashes out at ADB's 'lack of direction': Leaked paper says structure hampers delivery of funds

³²⁴ World Rivers Review (Aug 03) Swimming Against the Tide

Asian Development Bank Considers Supporting Burmese Dam Despite Unrest

³²⁵ BKK Post (6 Aug 03) Troops survey dam impacts, for more information on Salween dam projects see Altsean Report Card 1 Apr~30 Jun, available <http://www.altsean.org>

³²⁶ EarthRights International (July 03) Border Visions: Burmese Exiles on Humanitarian Assistance, Development Aid, and International Financial Institutions (A Needs Assessment)

54 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

UN FAO

On 12 September, representatives from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation signed an agreement on technical cooperation to increase production of edible oil.³²⁷ The UN FAO is also working with SPDC officials to undertake a large-scale agricultural census. [See Economy]

INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

It reeks of weakness not strength. This whole march around Asia shows they are feeling the pressure. ~ Diplomat³²⁸

Given the mendacity and ruthlessness of the Burmese regime Suu Kyi's survival cannot be taken for granted. If nothing happens soon, the world will drift into accepting her disappearance from the scene. And that is what Burma's leaders expect. ~ Morton Abramowitz³²⁹

How can it be that we want to put them on the edge and see them falling off? That is not our intention ...Myanmar is very far from the 'cliff'. We just want them to get back on track, that's all. ~ Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid commenting on international pressure on the junta to release Daw Suu from detention³³⁰

[Daw Suu] is fit as a fiddle. ~ Brig Gen Than Tun.³³¹

ACTIONS SPEAK LOUDER THAN WORDS

In the continuing aftermath of Black Friday, the international response has been damning, but with the exclusion of the US, the actions of individual states has not matched, or in some cases contradicted the condemnatory statements.

The period saw the imposition of US sanctions against Burma with the signing of the "Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act 2003" and the Executive Order 13310. The sanctions include banning all imports from Burma, which amounted to US\$356 million last year, freezing property holdings and financial assets held by members of the junta in US banks, halting foreign remittances, and a visa ban. The new sanctions

³²⁷ Xinhua (13 Sept 03) FAO, Myanmar sign agreement on edible oil

³²⁸ Financial Times (11 Jul 03) Junta says Suu Kyi planned uprising BURMA

³²⁹ Washington Post (21 Jul 03) Don't Let Burma Slide

³³⁰ New Straits Times (28 Jul 03) Ministers: We're not pressuring Yangon

³³¹ Irrawaddy (28 Jul 03) Junta Shows No Sign of Compromise

forced the regime, ASEAN, other countries, NGOs and international bodies to respond with a variety of reactions, ranging from accusations that sanctions deprive people of work, health care, education, and force women into sex work, to praise that the sanctions give the people hope for the restoration of democracy in Burma.

Dozens of democracy organizations called on the international community to increase pressure on the regime, implement sanctions, or assist in bringing Burma to the United Nations Security Council. On July 7, the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma and the National Council of the Union of Burma released a statement saying, "Political Intervention of the International Community is critical."³³² Nobel Peace Prize Laureate Jose Ramos-Horta called for ASEAN, China, and India to use their relationship with the regime to facilitate genuine progress towards democratization in Burma.³³³

In response to criticisms on international pressure, veteran diplomat and senior fellow at the Century Foundation Morton Abramowitz said, "One cannot be sanguine about whether all of this will be done or whether it will do the trick. But a stronger international effort on Suu Kyi's behalf remains the only vehicle for securing her release. Her freedom keeps alive the possibility of political change in Burma, but there is a long way to go to achieve it."³³⁴

JUNK SALESMAN

Sr-Gen Than Shwe was clearly alarmed by the swift and intense international pressure that followed the SPDC-sponsored May 30th attack. Than Shwe created a 7-page letter essentially admitting the orchestration of Black Friday by the SPDC by claiming that the SPDC acted in the interest of national security because NLD factions "were conspiring to create an anarchic situation...with a view to attaining power" by June 19 (Aung San Suu Kyi's birthday). He claimed that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi was "attempting to lure armed groups...to join in the planned uprising" and that he was "compelled to take firm measures to prevent the country from sliding down the road to anarchy and disintegration."³³⁵

He sent Foreign Minister Win Aung and Deputy Foreign Minister Khin Maung Win as his Special Envoys on a regional public relations tour to deliver the letter and show photos of a healthy Daw Suu to try and intercede on the growing regional pressure on the SPDC. Khin Maung Win went to Thailand, Japan, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore, while Win Aung visited China, Bangladesh, Pakistan and

³³² NCGUB & NCUB (7 Jul 03) Joint statement of the National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma and the National Council of the Union of Burma on present political situation in Burma

³³³ Malaysiakini (6 Jul 03) Suu Kyi must be released

³³⁴ Washington Post (21 Jul 03) Don't Let Burma Slide

³³⁵ Financial Times (11 Jul 03) Junta says Suu Kyi planned uprising BURMA

56 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

India.³³⁶ A western diplomat commented that, “They were showing these photos to signal that they were indeed sincere” but cautioned that it could backfire because “No one wants to be cheated again and again.”³³⁷ Although their story was a fabrication, it appeared that many regional states were eager to be persuaded by the regime’s excuses.

UNITED NATIONS

Once again, in an ambiguous move, on July 8, the UN elected an official of the murderous regime, current UN Ambassador Kyaw Tint Swe, to be one of its 21 vice presidents for the General Assembly.³³⁸

In July, UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said, “that the only way to build durable peace in Myanmar is to release the detainees, ensure their political freedoms, and begin substantive dialogue with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi immediately.”³³⁹ As the drive to take Burma to the Security Council (UNSC) intensified after a briefing by UN Special Envoy Razali, Annan said action by the UNSC is not “excluded” and he thinks “all things are going to be on the table very soon.”³⁴⁰

At the July 16 meeting of the UNSC chaired by Spain, the issue of Burma was raised after the official business under “other matters” by the U.S., UK and France, although it was not indicated in what capacity the countries thought the UNSC should intervene. It was noted that the Chinese representative did not take the floor during the session in attempt to protect the SPDC.³⁴¹

On September 29 at the UN General Assembly, SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung responded to criticism that the SPDC was not committed to democratization and reconciliation by assuring that they “have the political will” and attempted to reduce pressure about the situation of Daw Suu saying, “We don’t call this house arrest.” [See Democracy & Dialogue] Telling of how the regime is feeling the bite of sanctions, Win Aung complained that sanctions are “unfair.”³⁴²

³³⁶ BBC (14 Jul 03) Burma defends Suu Kyi custody

³³⁷ Irrawaddy (11 Jul 03) Photo Diplomacy Backfires

³³⁸ Myanmar Times (8 Jul 03) Myanmar gets VP position at UN General Assembly

³³⁹ AP (17 Jul 03) U.N.: Release Myanmar Opposition Head

³⁴⁰ AP (16 Jul 03) U.N. chief expresses concern at imprisonment of Myanmar opposition leader, doesn't rule out possibility of U.N. sanctions & AP (17 Jul 03) U.N.: Release Myanmar Opposition Head

³⁴¹ National Coalition Government of the Union of Burma (18 Jul 03) Burma's case raised before UN Security Council

³⁴² AP (29 Sept 03) Myanmar foreign minister says international sanctions unfair & CNN (30 Sept 03) Myanmar: Sanctions should end

UNITED STATES APPLIES SANCTIONS

Echoing general sentiment in the US, Priscilla Clapp, the former US Charge D'affaires from 1999 to 2002 said, "...time is running out" for the SPDC and "The United States government places the blame for the lack of progress to date squarely where it belongs, with the oppressive and shortsighted military junta."³⁴³

On July 28, President George Bush signed an Executive Order and the "Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act 2003,"³⁴⁴ imposing far-reaching sanctions on Burma. One of the main advocates of the legislation, Senator Mitch McConnell said that engagement was a 'total failure' and that the new law is to "lead the rest of the work in moving in a different direction."³⁴⁵

The law includes:³⁴⁶

- ◆ An import ban on goods from Burma
- ◆ An expanded visa ban to USDA high level officials and an updated list of SPDC officials
- ◆ A reiteration of the opposition to bilateral assistance and new assistance from International Financial Institutions

President Bush also signed an Executive Order to:³⁴⁷

- ◆ Freeze the assets of SPDC and USDA high-level officials in the U.S.
- ◆ Ban the provision of financial services to Burma

The legislation also said that Thailand and China must "...stop their economic and political patronage of the Burmese dictatorship." There was an outcry from US Congressmen/women calling for more international pressure on the regime, its allies that protect them, and a move to put Burma on the UN Security Council's (UNSC) agenda. Statements came from Senator Mitch McConnell, Sen. John McCain, Sen. Patrick Leahy, Sen. Sam Brownback, Sen. Dianne Feinstein, Rep. Tom Lantos and Rep. Jim Leach.³⁴⁸ After a meeting with Razali, Senator McConnell said, "Dialogue

³⁴³ Bangkok Post (26 Jun 03) Asean shines a ray of light on Rangoon

³⁴⁴ Press Release of Senator McConnell (28 Jul 03) President Bush Signs McConnell Legislation Imposing Sanctions On Burma

³⁴⁵ Washington Post (17 Jul 03) Hill Passes Measure to Punish Burma With Trade Sanctions

³⁴⁶ Voting against the bill were Republican Reps. Ron Paul of Texas and Jeff Flake of Arizona.

AP (15 Jul 03) House OKs Trade Sanctions Against Myanmar

³⁴⁷ US Office of Foreign Assets Control (29 Jul 03) Executive Order

³⁴⁸ AFP (16 Jul 03) Myanmar junta condemns US sanctions as "weapons of mass destruction" & BurmaNet News (16 Jul 03) Senate Leaders Demand UN Security Council "Take Up" Burma & Washington Post (17 Jul 03) Hill Passes Measure to Punish Burma With Trade Sanctions & US Senate (4 Sept 03) Senator Feinstein Expresses Concern over News that Imprisoned Burmese Leader is on a Hunger Strike

58 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

is as dead as those the SPDC murdered on Black Friday. This fact cannot be ignored or denied by the United Nations or the international community.”³⁴⁹ He called for action by the UNSC, “I don’t care if China vetoes [a resolution. This issue] needs to be discussed by the Security Council.”³⁵⁰

The U.S. Congress also sponsored an Independent Task Force of international business, law, media, academic, public health, human rights advocacy officials and others, which published recommendations for ways in which the U.S. can support democratic reforms in Burma.³⁵¹

In September, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said, “...we will not relent in the pressure that we have been putting on the Burmese government.”³⁵²

Sanctions “Bad”

The SPDC lashed out at the U.S. calling the sanctions “weapons of mass destruction” and holding mass rallies opposing the sanctions and those that supported them, but covered themselves by saying the SPDC holds “no ill will” towards to U.S.³⁵³ Not surprisingly, Bill Reinsch, President of the US National Foreign Trade Council and co-chairman of USA Engage, joined the SPDC’s viewpoint in opposing the sanctions.³⁵⁴

Thailand also publicly disagreed with sanctions saying they will hurt the poor and create more illegal migrants in Thailand.³⁵⁵

Sanctions “Good”

An outpouring of support and praise for the US action came from pro-democracy groups, including resistance and ethnic nationality organizations and solidarity groups in Western and Asian countries.³⁵⁶

³⁴⁹ Press Release of Senator McConnell (10 Jul 03) Senator Mitch McConnell Meets With U.N. Special Envoy Razali On Burma

³⁵⁰ BurmaNet News (16 Jul 03) Senate Leaders Demand UN Security Council “Take Up” Burma

³⁵¹ U.S. Council on Foreign Relations Independent Task Force (2003) Burma: A Time For Change http://www.cfr.org/pdf/Burma_TF.pdf

³⁵² AFP (3 Sept 03) US defends information on Aung San Suu Kyi hunger strike

³⁵³ Xinhua (8 Sept 03) Myanmar denies report on May 30 incident & DVB, Oslo, in Burmese (24 Aug 03) (translated by BBC Monitoring Service) Authorities Staging Campaign to Denounce US Sanctions

³⁵⁴ AP (8 Jul 03) Myanmar economy a slippery target for sanctions by West

³⁵⁵ Reuters (17 Jul 03) Thais propose “road map” for democracy in Myanmar

³⁵⁶ AP (16 Jul 03) Myanmar dissidents welcome U.S. sanctions; Thailand says it'll maintain dialogue with junta & Nation (17 Jul 03) PM: Prepare for refugees & Narijara (18 Jul 03) Arakanese Political parties welcome US sanctions on Burma

Effects of Sanctions

While it is still too early to determine what level of impact the sanctions will have, speculation and accusations about the economic impact are running wild. The Embassy in Rangoon denied a visa to Ma Mya Myintzu, daughter of Director of Ordnance Col Sein Lin who was studying in the United States and had only returned to Rangoon for a short time, and whose mother lives in the U.S.³⁵⁷

The ban on financial services makes it illegal for any bank in the US to provide services to Burma, as the US dollar remittances to Burma cannot be officially conducted, as most businesses use US dollars as the currency for international trade [see Economy].

CANADA

On July 10, as a “signal of condemnation” of the May 30th attack, Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham announced restrictions on the travel of SPDC diplomats in Canada and reiterated the government’s recommendation against new business investments in Burma and the policy to deny visas to past and present senior SPDC officials.³⁵⁸

ASEAN – WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO HEAR?

Some critics speculate that ASEAN has become “disillusioned with the results of their attempts at constructive engagement” or was “losing patience” with the regime.³⁵⁹ However, Dr Amitav Acharya, the Deputy Director of Singapore's Institute of Defense and Strategic Studies said, “I don't think what ASEAN has done so far would make a big difference...It may lead to the release of Aung San Suu Kyi, but that's addressing the symptom, not the cause - and even that happening cannot be taken for granted.”³⁶⁰

In July, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad threatened to kick Burma out of ASEAN for SPDC’s continued disregard international concerns saying that their actions ‘embarrass’ ASEAN and affect its credibility. He later qualified that every option should be examined first.³⁶¹ Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai softened the blow by saying that Mahathir’s comments were his own and that

³⁵⁷ DVB (31 Jul 03) Rangoon US embassy said puts Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act into action

³⁵⁸ AP (11 Jul 03) Canada takes steps against Myanmar's military regime over Suu Kyi imprisonment

³⁵⁹ Bangkok Post (26 Jun 03) Asean shines a ray of light on Rangoon & AFP (29 Sept 03) UN envoy visits Myanmar to see Suu Kyi, revive reform dialogue

³⁶⁰ South China Morning Post (4 Aug 03) Criticism of Myanmar's Junta Lacks Any Real Force of Change

³⁶¹ AFP (20 Jul 03) Myanmar might have to be expelled from ASEAN: Mahathir

60 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

ASEAN “does not have a position” on Burma’s membership.³⁶² Thailand said ASEAN must “tackle” the deadlock in Burma, but then contradicted this by calling on the international community to give the regime more time to solve its problems.³⁶³ Thailand’s sincerity is questionable due to recent efforts to buffer the regime from international pressure. [see Thai-Burma]

On July 30, after a meeting on the sidelines of an Asian and African ministerial meeting in Indonesia, Indonesian Foreign Minister and ASEAN Chairman Hasan Wirayuda said, “We have an assurance from Myanmar that the Suu Kyi case will be finished before the ASEAN summit (in October).”³⁶⁴ Wirayuda accepted the SPDC’s line that they needed a “cooling down period” and promised that “ASEAN would continuously engage Myanmar,” with Indonesian President Megawati saying, “ASEAN’s policy is clear. We don’t believe that isolating Myanmar or applying economic sanctions is either correct or effective.”³⁶⁵ Later, In a rare instance of pushing for a specific time schedule, Indonesian Foreign Minister Hassan Wirayuda and ASEAN Chair said, “If the Myanmar government does not set free Aung San Suu Kyi, then it is feared that the [October ASEAN] summit agenda would instead focus on her release.”³⁶⁶

Malaysian Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar was contradictory saying, “Myanmar need not be isolated, but it all depends on them, because Asean’s bottom line remains that Suu Kyi should be released and the reconciliation process should recommence.”³⁶⁷

No Parliament, MPs Not Welcome

On September 11, Burma was allowed to attend the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) General Assembly only as a special observer as Burma does not have a parliament.³⁶⁸ However, Burma’s elected members of parliament were not invited to attend.

³⁶² AFP (22 Jul 03) UN envoy backs Malaysian PM’s warning on Myanmar

³⁶³ AFP (25 Jul 03) ASEAN must tackle Myanmar issue to strengthen bloc: Thaksin & AFP (22 Jul 03) UN envoy backs Malaysian PM’s warning on Myanmar

³⁶⁴ AP (30 Jul 03) Myanmar’s Aung San Suu Kyi to be released by October, Indonesian minister says

³⁶⁵ Channel News Asia (28 Jul 03) Myanmar rejects Indonesian appeal to allow ASEAN to mediate in political standoff

³⁶⁶ AFP (8 Sept 03) Indonesia urges Myanmar to free Aung San Suu Kyi before ASEAN summit

³⁶⁷ New Straits Times (28 Jul 03) Ministers: We’re not pressuring Yangon

³⁶⁸ Xinhua (11 Sept 03) ASEAN lawmakers demand acceleration of free trade area

MALAYSIA – HARD & SOFT

On July 7, SPDC Deputy Foreign Minister Khin Maung Win met with Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who reportedly told Khin Maung Win that he was “very disappointed with the turn of events.”³⁶⁹

On July 20, Mahathir took a surprisingly hard public stance on Burma when he talked of expelling Burma from ASEAN, which he said should be viewed as a “reminder from a good friend.”³⁷⁰ [see ASEAN]

To avoid external intervention from other countries or the UN, Foreign Minister Syed Hamid Albar said, “It is wiser for Myanmar to listen now” if they do not want to be isolated, they should listen to the international community, including ASEAN.³⁷¹ He called for a definite date of release of Daw Suu.³⁷²

Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Mahathir met on July 26-27 to discuss the situation in Burma and ways to address it.³⁷³ Afterwards, Malaysia started to toe the line similar to Thailand and said the SPDC should be given the time to solve its problems to guarantee security and political stability before releasing Aung San Suu Kyi.³⁷⁴

INDONESIA – PATIENCE THINS

Indonesia appears to have lost patience with the regime and its stalling tactics.

On July 21, Foreign Ministry spokesman Marty Natalegawa criticized the continued detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi saying it would be a setback to reconciliation as well as to ASEAN indirectly.³⁷⁵ In September, the Foreign Minister reiterated saying Daw Suu’s release “cannot be postponed again” and President Megawati Sukarnoputri showed she was not content with Daw Suu’s house arrest by asking when she would be released.³⁷⁶

When Indonesia proposed sending a mediator, SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung said, “In internal matters which are very complicated the homegrown process is

³⁶⁹ AFP (20 Jul 03) Myanmar might have to be expelled from ASEAN: Mahathir

³⁷⁰ Bernama (22 Jul 03) Malaysian Foreign Minister on Singapore Water Dispute, Burma, North Korea

³⁷¹ Straits Times (28 Jul 03) Junta accuses Suu Kyi of plotting coup

³⁷² Kyodo (22 Jul 03) ASEAN consensus needed on Myanmar, Malaysia says

³⁷³ AFP (23 Jul 03) Thai, Malaysian leaders to hold talks on Myanmar crisis

³⁷⁴ Xinhua (1 Aug 03) Myanmar should be given time to resolve domestic problems: FM

³⁷⁵ Nation (22 Jul 03) Asean Membership: Give Rangoon time: Surakiart

³⁷⁶ AFP (29 Sept 03) UN envoy visits Myanmar to see Suu Kyi, revive reform dialogue & Financial Times (London) (10 Sept 03) Jakarta seeks release of Suu Kyi before Asean summit

62 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

best...I think it's better not to complicate matters.”³⁷⁷ However, former Foreign Minister Ali Alatas said that he was optimistic about visiting Burma as the president’s special envoy before the ASEAN Summit in October. His goal is to convey the position of Indonesia and ASEAN to enhance reconciliation and democratization in Burma.³⁷⁸

PHILIPPINES MAINTAINS POSITION

Deputy Foreign Minister Khin Maung Win went to the Philippines on July 29-30 as part of the regional PR tour. Foreign Minister Blas Ople maintained his position that Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and NLD members be released and their political freedoms upheld.³⁷⁹

Khin Nyunt’s appointment to Prime Minister was cautiously noted. Blas Ople called him the “most outward-looking figure in the government” but said the implications “remain unclear and deserve close watching.”³⁸⁰

The Philippines was a strong proponent of the ASEAN troika and Indonesian Envoy proposals urging the SPDC to “partake of all the advantages of membership in ASEAN.”³⁸¹ After the troika was rejected, Ople warned the SPDC that if they blocked the Indonesian Envoy’s visit, it would be taken as a “provocation.”³⁸²

SINGAPORE: NO COMMENT

Singapore has all but refused to comment publicly on Burma. Foreign Minister S. Jayakumar reportedly threw his support behind the Thai roadmap but encouraged Thailand to seek more consultation in a regional forum.³⁸³

VIETNAM SILENT

Vietnam has remained utterly silent on the political situation in Burma, but continues to develop its economic dealings with Burma with trade fairs, exports, and intercontinental roadways. [see Economics]

³⁷⁷ Reuters (29 Jul 03) Red Cross Meets Suu Kyi; Myanmar Slams Sanctions

³⁷⁸ Xinhua (17 Sept 03) Indonesia’s envoy optimistic about visiting Myanmar soon

³⁷⁹ Xinhua (30 Jul 03) Philippines asks Myanmar to free Suu Kyi

³⁸⁰ Irrawaddy (29 Aug 03) Will The "Prince of Evil" Bring Hope to Burma?

³⁸¹ Xinhua (30 Jul 03) Philippines asks Myanmar to free Suu Kyi

³⁸² Associated Press Worldstream (18 Sept 03) Philippines warns Myanmar against refusing envoy for talks on democracy leader’s release

³⁸³ The Nation (13 Aug 03) Singapore backs map

ASIA-EUROPE MEETING (ASEM)³⁸⁴

The ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting was held in Bali, Indonesia on July 23-24.³⁸⁵ On the sidelines an ad-hoc meeting was held on Burma. Although Burma, Laos and Cambodia are not ASEM members, they were invited to attend, but only Laos expressed interest in attending.³⁸⁶ The foreign ministers called on the SPDC to immediately release Aung San Suu Kyi and other NLD members, ensure their political freedoms and to resume efforts toward national reconciliation and democracy.³⁸⁷ Italian Foreign Minister and EU President Franco Frattini said ASEM's statement was the first time the group had criticized Burma noting that "It was not easy before this meeting."³⁸⁸

The October 2004 ASEM Summit in Hanoi will consider new members to the grouping. ASEAN, China, Japan and South Korea want to include Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia in ASEM as "a priority and in one package."³⁸⁹ The EU wants to include the 10 new EU members.

INDIA, CHINA, BANGLADESH – COURTING THE SPDC

China, India and Bangladesh are big obstacles whose short-term domestic interests are protecting and prolonging the brutal rule of the SPDC. China and India are like divorced parents trying to undermine each other in a contest over Burma. Burma is like a manipulative child, playing one against the other for its own gain. India and China claimed to have opened a 'new chapter' of relations in June when the Indian Prime Minister visited China for the first time in 10 years. However, the hope that this would defuse the competition over Burma, and hence lessen the regime's leverage, have been undermined by the reality that India-China disagreements and suspicions are deeply embedded and not expected to be reconciled in the near future.³⁹⁰

China, India and Bangladesh are working on cooperative efforts with the SPDC to develop trade and tourism routes throughout Burma. Senior government officials

³⁸⁴ ASEM members: The 15 EU member states, ASEAN members plus China, Japan and South Korea minus Burma, Cambodia, and Laos.

³⁸⁵ AP (22 Jul 03) EU warns that Myanmar's detention of Suu Kyi hurts relations with Asia; Yangon says it releases 91 dissidents

³⁸⁶ Nation (23 Jul 03) Asean calls meeting on Burma

³⁸⁷ 5th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) (July 2003) A Special Press Summary – Executive Summary

³⁸⁸ AFP (25 Jul 03) Defiant Myanmar a thorn in Asia-Europe ties

³⁸⁹ AFP (22 Jul 03) Asia pushes for Myanmar's inclusion in ASEM despite European objections

³⁹⁰ Daily Star (9 Jul 03) Has Vajpayee's visit opened a new chapter in Indo-China relations?

64 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

from the four countries will meet in November in Rangoon to develop further plans.³⁹¹

India – SPDC’s New Best Friend

Less than 6 weeks after the SPDC’s brutal attack on the NLD and democracy movement, India participated in a host of high-level visits and economic and defense cooperation agreements.

High-Level Visits

July 8-9 - Foreign Minister Win Aung visited India. Discussions reportedly included the situation of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, border disputes and northeast insurgency groups. He was scheduled to meet senior ministers of the National Democratic Alliance government. His visit was met with protests from Burmese activists who also submitted a memorandum to India’s Prime Minister registering their concerns.³⁹²

July 11 – Than Shwe’s “Special Envoy” and SPDC Foreign Minister Win Aung met with Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and External Affairs Minister Yashwant Sinha.³⁹³

High-Level Defense Exchanges³⁹⁴

Sept 2 - SPDC Air Force Chief Major General Myat Hein visited India. The SPDC is trying to get assistance to build up its air-force and create an Aviation University in Burma in addition to looking for training and servicing facilities for their Russian-built MiG-29 warplanes. India agreed to raise the number of Burmese Naval cadets in Indian training institutions. Myat Hein met with Air Chief Marshal S.Krishnaswamy and likely met with Army Chief N.C.Vij and Naval Chief Madhvendra Singh. Myat Hein reportedly visited air force bases in Jamnagar, Pune, Hyderabad and Agra.

Sept 3-8 - Indian Naval Chief Admiral Madhvendra Singh was the first Naval Chief to visit Burma in nearly 30 years. [See Military]

Sept 10 – India and the SPDC began a 4-day joint naval exercise with two Indian Khukri-class naval corvettes arriving in Rangoon’s harbor for the first time in nearly 20 years.

³⁹¹ The Economic Times (India) (24 Sept 03) From Kunming to Kolkata

³⁹² Mizzima (7 Jul 03) Burma FM visit to India & Mizzima (7 Jul 03) Burmese activist stage protest in New Delhi condemning Win Aung's visit to India

³⁹³ The Hindu (11 Jul 03) Myanmarese Foreign Minister Meets Vajpayee

³⁹⁴ Press Trust of India (29 Aug 03) India, Myanmar to hold high-level defence talks & Islamic Republic News Agency (2 Sept 03) Myanmar seeks Indian help to build up its Air Force & Asia Times (20 Sept 03) Speaking Freely: India courts a junta & Xinhua (10 Sept 03) India ships in Myanmar for joint navy maneuvers & United Press International (19 Sept 03) Insider notes from United Press International for Sept. 19

Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Arun Jaitley said India is looking forward to doubling its bilateral trade with Myanmar to 1 billion US dollars by the year 2006.³⁹⁵ India is working on ‘fast track’ measures for economic cooperation and trade promotion, including free trade agreements. The overseas arm of India’s state-owned oil company is vying for lucrative contracts in Arakan State.³⁹⁶ [see Economy]

In Rangoon on July 14, SPDC Minister of Commerce Brigadier-General Pyi Sone and Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Arun Jaitley signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on a Joint Trade Committee (JTC).³⁹⁷ The JTC met on July 15 to discuss border trade, exports and imports, banking services, cooperation in agriculture and trade delegation exchanges.³⁹⁸ On August 26, an MoU on cooperation in information and communication technology (ICT) was signed in Rangoon by SPDC Minister of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Brigadier-General Thein Zaw and Indian Minister of Communication and Information Technology Arun Shourie.³⁹⁹

Politically Motivated

In early July, India sealed off the border to Sagaing Division after SPDC troops overran the headquarters of the Khaplang, a breakaway faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN).⁴⁰⁰ [see Ethnic Relations] In order to “foil any attempts by the anti-social elements,” the Indian Home Ministry is phasing in a major increase of the Assam Rifles, India-Burma border security forces, to be completed “probably by 2007,” and the SPDC is reported to have created a new border force, the People’s Army (Pyithu-Sitt).⁴⁰¹

The seemingly politically motivated resurrection of Soe Myint’s 1990 criminal case (see Altsean Apr-Jun 2003 Report Card) ended on July 2 when Judge C.K. Lahiri dropped the hijacking charges, reportedly for lack of evidence.⁴⁰² Soe Myint said, “I am today a free man. But 50 million Burmese still are prisoners in Burma under the military regime.”⁴⁰³

³⁹⁵ Xinhua (21 Jul 03) Myanmar-Indian trade to double by 2006: minister

³⁹⁶ World Markets Analysis (21 Jul 03) ONGC of India Spies Opening in Myanmar

³⁹⁷ Xinhua (15 Jul 03) Myanmar, India sign MOU on setting up joint trade committee

³⁹⁸ Xinhua (16 Jul 03) Myanmar, India hold joint trade committee meeting

³⁹⁹ Xinhua (27 Aug 03) Myanmar, India sign MoU on ICT cooperation

⁴⁰⁰ BBC (8 Jul 03) India closes Burma border

⁴⁰¹ Mizzima (19 Jul 03) India raises troops in fight against Northeast militancy and drug trafficking

⁴⁰² AFP (2 Jul 03) Indian court acquits Myanmar national in Thai Airways hijack case

⁴⁰³ Irrawaddy (3 Jul 03) Court Acquits Soe Myint

66 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

China – Maung Aye Sent to Grovel

Under threat of new sanctions, Deputy Sr-Gen Maung Aye ran to China where he met with the Vice-Chairman of the Chinese Central Military Commission Guo Boxiong for an official visit during August 17-22.⁴⁰⁴ During his visit Chinese State Councillor and former Foreign Minister Tang Jaixuan said, “The current domestic situation in Myanmar is the country’s internal affairs, and China will not agree to foreign interference or to sanctions and isolation.”⁴⁰⁵

On August 21, International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) issued a statement denouncing China’s stance on Burma and urged international communities, governments and business companies to step up pressure on the SPDC. The secretary of ICFTU, Guy Ryder alleged China that “China stance on Burma is immoral and reflects its regional power game. It is just denying universal norms of human rights with repeated words of ‘do not interfere in internal matters’.”⁴⁰⁶

In early July, it was reported that for the first time since 1992 China replaced border patrol agents along the border of southwest Yunnan Province with soldiers from its People’s Liberation Army (PLA). Rumors spread that China was concerned about political instability in Burma, a possible coup against Khin Nyunt and his followers , or U.S. action against Burma. Alternative theories were that the action was taken to curtail drug trafficking and corruption or was unrelated to events in Burma. Shan Herald Agency for News (SHAN) reported 6,000 troops opposite northern Shan State and 10,000 troops opposite eastern Shan State.⁴⁰⁷

Trade and aid continued with trade fairs, a US\$200 million loan, and big business deals were signed. [see Aid and Economics]

Bangladesh - Buying Friends

Relations continue to deepen between Bangladesh and the SPDC on all fronts – diplomatic, trade and defense. [see Military and Economics] Burma Foreign Minister Win Aung visited Bangladesh on July 5-7 and met with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia, delivered the PR letter from Sr-Gen Than Shwe and discussed bilateral matters.⁴⁰⁸ Prime Minister Zia congratulated Khin Nyunt on his posting to Prime

⁴⁰⁴ AP (14 Aug 03) Myanmar's deputy leader to lead military delegation to China & Xinhua (18 Aug 03) Chinese military leader Guo Boxiong holds talks with Burma's Maung Aye

⁴⁰⁵ AFP (20 Aug 03) China denounces sanctions against Myanmar

⁴⁰⁶ Network Media Group (22 Aug 03) ICFTU denounces China on Burma

⁴⁰⁷ SHAN (10 Aug 03) Chinese there to prevent coup & Irrawaddy (2 Jul 03) Chinese Troops on Burma's Border & AP Online (15 Sept 03) China Assigns Army to Guard Korean Border

⁴⁰⁸ Narinjara (3 Jul 03) Burma FM arrives in Dhaka on Saturday

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 67

Minister and said she hoped “cooperation between Bangladesh and Burma will be further consolidated and strengthened.”⁴⁰⁹

On July 6-7, Burma’s border patrol forces Na Sa Ka and Bangladesh border police Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) held a flag meeting on the border near Maungdaw, Arakan State. Na Sa Ka Commander-in-Chief of Arakan State, Brigadier Aung Ngwe led an 11-member delegation and the Chief of the Chittagong area BDR Brigadier Sheikh Muhammad Mahmudur Islam led an 8-member delegation. Discussions reportedly centered around ending the operation of anti-SPDC forces inside Bangladesh, smuggling of goods from Burma to Bangladesh, and continual flow of “Bengali-speaking” Burmese nationals into Bangladesh.⁴¹⁰

A 12-member SPDC military delegation headed by Defense Ministry Lt-Gen Aung Htwe paid a goodwill visit to Bangladesh on September 19-24.⁴¹¹ [see Military]

JAPAN TAKES A STAND

In early July, Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi said that she was deeply disappointed with the SPDC’s response to the concerns Japan has raised about Aung San Suu Kyi. She said that Than Shwe’s explanation letter was “completely unacceptable” and “We cannot continue as if nothing has happened...Under the current situation, we have no choice but to put off new aid.”⁴¹² The Prime Minister was quoted as saying, “In order to create an environment that would enable us to provide such assistance, Burma needs to listen to the opinions of the United States, Europe, and the international community.”⁴¹³

Japan has also taken on a more active position in urging ASEAN to take more action by sending a mission to Burma.⁴¹⁴ On August 7, Japan and Laos made a joint statement calling for the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and political freedom for the NLD.⁴¹⁵

⁴⁰⁹ Narinjara News (28 Aug 03) Bangladesh PM greets Burma counterpart

⁴¹⁰ Narinjara (16 Jul 03) Burma and Bangladesh held Flag Meeting

⁴¹¹ Xinhua (21 Sept 03) Bangladesh, Myanmar to discuss military cooperation

⁴¹² Reuters (4 Jul 03) Japan Dissatisfied with Myanmar Suu Kyi Response

⁴¹³ AFP (10 Jul 03) Koizumi, Abdullah agree to pressure Burma

⁴¹⁴ Kyodo (17 Jul 03) Japanese Foreign Minister Calls for Dispatch of ASEAN Mission to Burma

⁴¹⁵ Xinhua (7 Aug 03) Japan, Laos express concern at Suu Kyi’s prolonged detention

68 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

SOUTH KOREA AT ODDS

30 lawmakers led by Rep. Kim Seong-ho submitted a resolution to the National Assembly on July 3 calling for the end of the political oppression of Aung San Suu Kyi.⁴¹⁶

South Korea continues to increase its business dealings with Burma. In early September, the Korea Trade-Investment Promotion Agency (KOTRA) organized a meeting of 40 companies from Burma and 7 companies from South Korea representing a “diverse variety of products.”⁴¹⁷

PAKISTAN WARMING

The SPDC’s relations with Pakistan have been warming although generally unnoticed by the media. On July 8, Foreign Minister Win Aung went to Pakistan and met with Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri as part of the regional PR tour.⁴¹⁸ To the disapproval of India, the SPDC said it will support Pakistan’s request to join the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).⁴¹⁹ The SPDC is once again using its position to exploit the conflict between two rivals, India and Pakistan, by playing both sides of the issue.

AUSTRALIA’S MIXED MESSAGE

Australian diplomatic voices have been largely absent from political commentary on Burma. However, at a time when the SPDC has become a taboo partner for many, Australia is reportedly drafting a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Burma on human trafficking.⁴²⁰ As of July 1, Burma was granted a waiver on tariffs and quotas on goods to Australian markets under a decision to grant all least developed countries free access to its markets.⁴²¹ [see Economy]

EUROPEAN UNION – BIG BARK, NO BITE

Germany and France – SPDC’s shields.

On July 21, Germany refused to consider economic sanctions, thus blocking the EU from taking decisive action against the SPDC. John Jackson, Director of the Burma Campaign UK said, “Than Shwe, the dictator of Burma, will be thanking Germany today...Than Shwe now knows that he can get away with massacring his own people and imprisoning Aung San Suu Kyi. Germany will protect him from any EU

⁴¹⁶ Yonhap News Agency (3 Jul 03) South Korean Lawmakers Call for Release of Burmese Opposition Leader

⁴¹⁷ Kaladan (7 Sept 03) S. Korea and Burma Businessmen Meet

⁴¹⁸ AFP (7 Jul 03) Myanmar foreign minister to visit Pakistan

⁴¹⁹ AFP (8 Jul 03) Myanmar offers support for Pakistan’s bid to join ASEAN security forum

⁴²⁰ Xinhua (31 Jul 03) Myanmar arrests near 400 human traffickers in a year

⁴²¹ MT (11 Aug 03) Australia grants Myanmar free access to its markets

action.”⁴²² The Burma Campaign UK called on Britain to take action independent of the EU citing that “235 MPs have signed Early Day Motion 1311 calling for Britain to impose investment sanctions unilaterally if the EU failed to act.”⁴²³

French President Jacques Chirac, another EU heavyweight, made a statement in July backing Malaysia’s style of ‘constructive diplomacy’ with the SPDC.⁴²⁴ In September, Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart, during his official visit to Germany, solicited Germany’s support for the SPDC roadmap and encouraged them to offer incentives of economic assistance to the regime to implement their 7-point roadmap.⁴²⁵ Germany said joining in on Thailand’s approach is a “possible path for Germany, despite being a member of the EU.”⁴²⁶

On September 4, the EU Parliament adopted a joint resolution calling for the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and for the SPDC to honor the 1990 election. They called for the Council to introduce tough measures against the SPDC, its members and their interests.⁴²⁷ Noble Laureate Jodi Williams said that on behalf of several Nobel laureates, she has sent letters requesting new sanctions to European commissioners as well as to German’s foreign minister.⁴²⁸ While addressing the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs on September 18, Prime Minister in Exile Dr. Sein Win called for stronger action backed up by the threat of sanctions. He said, “Ireland is going into the presidency of the EU and it is very important for us that Ireland initiates something at this time.”⁴²⁹

United Kingdom

The UK remained a vocal critic of the continued detention of Daw Suu calling it “simply not acceptable” and that “the British government holds the Burmese authorities responsible for Aung San Suu Kyi’s health and welfare.”⁴³⁰ The UK government dismissed the ‘progress’ of moving Daw Suu to house arrest saying that won’t help achieve democratization.⁴³¹

⁴²² Burma Campaign UK (21 Jul 03) Germany Blocks EU Sanctions on Burma. Britain Must Impose Sanctions Unilaterally

⁴²³ Burma Campaign UK (21 Jul 03) Germany Blocks EU Sanctions on Burma. Britain Must Impose Sanctions Unilaterally

⁴²⁴ Reuters (22 Jul 03) Chirac backs Mahathir’s efforts to free Suu Kyi

⁴²⁵ Nation (19 Sept 03) Burma tops first day of talks in Germany

⁴²⁶ Nation (20 Sept 03) Germany Urged to Join Thailand in Offering Help to Burma

⁴²⁷ European Union (4 Sept 03) Burma: Joint motion for a resolution on Burma

⁴²⁸ VOA (17 Sept 03) Nobel Laureates Appeal for Release of Burmese Opposition Leader

⁴²⁹ Irish Times (18 Sept 03) Exiled PM urges EU sanctions against Burma

⁴³⁰ AFP (29 JUL 03) Aung San Suu Kyi’s detention “simply not acceptable”: Britain & UK Foreign and Commonwealth Office (1 Sept 03) Mike O’Brien’s Statement on Reports that Aung San Suu Kyi May be on Hunger Strike

⁴³¹ PA News (26 Sept 03) Britain Demands Release of Suu Kyi

70 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Although refusing to outlaw tourism investment and operations with Burma, on July 14, the Foreign Office urged British tour companies to stop organizing tourism to Burma. Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien said the SPDC gets "direct economic benefits and political legitimacy from tourism. Foreign visitors remain a source of hard currency for the regime, much of which increasingly ends up in the private bank accounts of the Generals and their associates."⁴³² [see Economy]

Shadow Foreign Secretary Michael Ancram said that the government "has promised a lot" and should deliver; "If European ministers refuse to impose stronger measures against the Burmese government, Britain must back up its tough rhetoric by either imposing unilateral sanctions, or pushing for sanctions against Burma at the United Nations Security Council. Such positive steps will help, not hurt, the people of Burma."⁴³³

MACEDONIA

On July 9, the Republic of Macedonia established diplomatic relations with Burma.⁴³⁴

ISRAEL

In September, Israel accepted the largest intake of 150 agricultural professionals from Burma. They will be provided with on the job training at the Arava International Center for Agriculture Training.⁴³⁵

THAI-BURMA RELATIONS

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

THAI ROADMAP

In July, Thai Prime Minister Thaksin proposed an ambiguous 'road map' to national reconciliation in Burma as a means to curtail the threat of sanctions looming over the ruling junta. Thaksin managed to bring the UN Special Envoy Razali Ismail on board, as well as Japan, Australia, Austria, China, India, Indonesia, Malaysia and the UK.⁴³⁶ After hearing the junta insist that it would solve its own problems,⁴³⁷ Thailand was adamant it was not pressuring Rangoon, but merely offering friendly

⁴³² Foreign & Commonwealth Office (14 Jul 03) Foreign Office calls for Burma travel boycott

⁴³³ Scotsman.com (21 Jul 03) Ancram Demands Sanctions Against Burma

⁴³⁴ New Light of Myanmar (9 Jul 03) Burma, Macedonia Establish Diplomatic Ties 9 July

⁴³⁵ Xinhua General News Service (25 Aug 03) Israel trains out large number of Myanmar experts

⁴³⁶ Nation (1 Aug 03) Japan backs push for road map on Burma

⁴³⁷ Irrawaddy (28 Jul 03) Junta Shows No Sign of Compromise

advice. The road map was termed “a dummy of a road map” by Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathiratha and “an idea for ‘road map’” By Thai Foreign Ministry spokesman Sihasak Phuanketkeow.⁴³⁸ The only outcome of the Thai road map was that it managed to deflect media attention away from the detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her colleagues.

On August 26, General Khin Nyunt was appointed as Prime Minister of Burma. Thaksin embraced the change, saying “the reshuffle shows Burmese rulers have become more international, and the move will be welcomed.”⁴³⁹ On August 28, Thai Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh responded to the reshuffle optimistically with a prediction that Daw Suu would be released from detention in 4-5 months.⁴⁴⁰ [See Military] In his first policy speech on August 30, Khin Nyunt presented the junta’s version of the Thai-proposed ‘road map to democracy,’ in which producing a new constitution was a top priority. He gave no time frame, however, and only mentioned Daw Suu when criticizing the NLD.⁴⁴¹ [See Democracy and Dialogue]

Thaksin’s response to the road map? “As they have their own [road map], our duty is merely to support them. Thailand will encourage any moves that are useful for Burma,” Thaksin said.⁴⁴² Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai, however, urged the involvement of ‘minority’ groups and the NLD in the process of reconciliation.⁴⁴³ Minister Surakiart went to Rangoon on September 25 to meet with Sr Gen Than Shwe and Lt Gen Khin Nyunt to discuss ways to “go about restoring democracy.” He urged the international community to join Thailand in recognizing the junta’s road map.⁴⁴⁴

THAKSIN'S RESPONSE TO BLACK FRIDAY

Instead of taking a stand to secure Daw Suu’s release from detention, Thaksin downplayed her arrest, stating “she is not in prison but in a safe house,”⁴⁴⁵ and “she is in no danger whatsoever.”⁴⁴⁶ On September 2, in response to reports that Daw

⁴³⁸ Xinhua (30 Jul 03) Thailand's "road map plan" just advice to help Myanmar: spokesman

⁴³⁹ The Nation (27 Aug 03) Guarded Welcome for Burmese Change

⁴⁴⁰ Bangkok Post (28 Aug 03) Chavalit Sees Change for Better

⁴⁴¹ New Myanmar PM announces "road map" to democracy
<http://www.karen.org/news/wwwboard/messages/2024.html>

⁴⁴² Nation (1 Sept 03) Reforming Burma: PM backs junta's road map

⁴⁴³ AFP (8 Sept 03) Thailand welcomes Myanmar constitution commission but wants NLD involved

⁴⁴⁴ Japan Economic Newswire (24 Sept 03) Thai foreign minister to meet Myanmar junta figures Thurs.

⁴⁴⁵ AFP (2 Jul 03) Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi transferred from Insein prison: source

⁴⁴⁶ Radio Thailand (21 Jul 03) Thai premier says Burma's Suu Kyi "is in no danger whatsoever"

72 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Suu was on hunger strike, Thaksin said that the junta was “more open to participation of other political groups” and “if Suu Kyi was still stubborn, it would be helpless for her.”⁴⁴⁷

The Thai government continued to tiptoe around Daw Suu’s detention, and on September 16, spokesman for the Thai Foreign Ministry Sihasak Phuanketkeow said “we’ve expressed concern that she be released as soon as possible. But we have to be realistic. We are neighbors. The United States is far away.”⁴⁴⁸

THAI – US RELATIONS

On August 1, US Senator John McCain wrote a letter to Mr Thaksin expressing “deep concern” over recent actions by the Thai government to “constrict and curtail the activities of Burmese democracy activists, hamper assistance to refugees and internally displaced peoples in Burma, and intimidate ethnic groups who have not submitted to the military junta in Rangoon.” Affirming that Thailand and the US are allies, he said “In the name of our nations’ longstanding friendship, I urge you to reexamine your governments’ policies and support those who are struggling peacefully against a regime that has cost them much and is inflicting a terrible toll on Thailand and her people.”⁴⁴⁹

Some of Thailand’s critics in Congress are proposing a stipulation to Thailand’s assistance from the US in 2004 draft spending bills. If passed into law, the stipulation would “require the US Secretary of State to certify that Thailand supports democracy in Myanmar, is ‘taking action to sanction’ the regime in Yangon, is not hampering the delivery of humanitarian assistance to people in Thailand who have fled Myanmar, nor is it forcibly repatriating refugees.” US aid to Thailand in the “fiscal year 2003 spending bills, though low-level, still numbered 10.75 million dollars, mainly contained in anti-drugs aid, military training programs and development aid.”⁴⁵⁰

In response to Senator John McCain’s letter, Thaksin retorted “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.”⁴⁵¹

SANCTIONS

Thailand voiced its opposition to the sanctions on Burma imposed by the US, alleging “it will not hurt the government but the poor.”⁴⁵² House Foreign Affairs

⁴⁴⁷ Inter Press Service (5 Sept 03) ASEAN inaction irks Myanmar exiles

⁴⁴⁸ The International Herald Tribune/The New York Times (16 Sept 03) Myanmar defies U.S. demands on activist; Generals reported unlikely to release Aung San Suu Kyi

⁴⁴⁹ US Senate (1 Aug 03) Letter to the Honorable Thaksin Chinnawat from Senator John McCain

⁴⁵⁰ AFP (6 Aug 03) US Senators turn up heat on Thailand over Myanmar links

⁴⁵¹ AFP (6 Aug 03) Thai PM brushes off criticism from US senators

Committee Deputy Chairman Kobsak Chutikul said on August 3 that Thai-Burma ties would suffer if the United Nations Security Council were to impose sanctions on Burma, as Thailand would risk "flouting the UN resolution" if it continued ties with Burma.⁴⁵³

Signs of the economic consequences of US sanctions appeared early, as the Thai News Agency reported that 20 factories in Burma owned by Thais and other nationalities had been closing since June due to sanctions.⁴⁵⁴

US Sanctions against Burma has also slowed trade on the Thai-Burma border. Thailand normally exports 400 million baht worth of goods across the border, but only sent 315 million in July, according to the Mae Sot Customs Office.⁴⁵⁵ To address this, Dr Khin Shwe, a leading Rangoon businessman led a delegation of trade officials in Tak Province on September 5, said that "border trade has existed for a long time but because of the new sanctions, we plan to double our trade figures," Khin Shwe said.⁴⁵⁶

ECONOMIC LINKS

On July 31, Foreign Ministers from Laos, Burma, Cambodia and Thailand began a two-day meeting in Bangkok to lay the groundwork for cooperation in transportation, tourism and human development. Also on the agenda would be the quadrilateral economic scheme Thaksin proposed at the April Asean meeting on SARS. The proposal involves developing border areas to decrease migration flows into Thailand.⁴⁵⁷

CRACKDOWN ON REFUGEES

Thaksin's 'Harmonization' Policy

The Thai Government proposed a 'harmonizing' policy to deal with all Burmese asylum seekers in Thailand. On July 2, Thai foreign ministry spokesman Sihasak Phuangketkeow announced "All people of Myanmar nationality who have been granted 'person of concern' (POC) status, some 1,500, will be transferred to camps along the border. If they refuse to move to the camps, they will be stripped of their POC status."⁴⁵⁸ "They are not supposed to be able to engage in political activities that would affect relations with other countries," Mr. Sihasak said. "They are here as

⁴⁵² Reuters (17 Jul 03) Thais propose "road map" for democracy in Myanmar

⁴⁵³ Bangkok Post (3 Aug 03) UN sanctions against Burma 'could put Thailand in a fix'

⁴⁵⁴ Xinhua (30 Jul 03) Thai businesses shut down in Myanmar to flee US sanction

⁴⁵⁵ Irrawaddy (14 Aug 03) Politics and Sanctions Strike Border Trade

⁴⁵⁶ Irrawaddy (5 Sept 03) Sanctioned Burma Hopes to Double Border Trade

⁴⁵⁷ The Nation (31 Jul 03) Regional development talks begin here today

⁴⁵⁸ AFP (2 Jul 03) Thai border camps to take in 1,500 Myanmar refugees

74 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

guests."⁴⁵⁹ Thaksin's policy stems from his desire to 'control' the refugees, particularly the political activities of some exiles that criticize the ruling junta. The decision was reached during talks with the UNHCR following Thaksin's complaint that he had "no details of the identities and whereabouts of POCs."⁴⁶⁰ The UNHCR countered Thaksin's claim, saying it shared information with the National Security Council, Interior Ministry and Immigration Department each month,⁴⁶¹ yet it still agreed to finance the relocations.⁴⁶² Thaksin also wants to issue POCs special identity cards with dates of issue and expiry indicated.⁴⁶³

On July 10, Burmese exiles expressed their opposition to the Thai Government's decision to relocate Burmese dissidents to border camps. "It is not safe for political dissidents to live in border camps. We could be attacked, kidnapped and killed by Burmese soldiers stationed along the border," said Aung Naing Htwe, secretary general of Joint Action Committee for Democracy in Burma said. He suggested that the Thai government provide a place in Bangkok for individuals with POC status.⁴⁶⁴

In July, the Burma Border Consortium (BBC) announced that it would cut rations given to opposition offices in Mae Sot. About 10 offices face a lack of food, since they depend on the ration of rice, salt, chili, beans, fish sauce, and cooking oil provided by BBC. A BBC official said that the organization's mandate is to support only people inside the refugee camps. Opposition members in Mae Sot believe the decision to slash the rations is due to pressure by the central Thai government.⁴⁶⁵

In September, it was reported that the Thai and Burmese governments agreed to repatriate 400 Burmese nationals to Burma from Thailand every month.⁴⁶⁶ [For more on refugees in Thailand please see Displacement]

MIGRANT WORKERS

If there is anyone in Burma who is a national security threat to Thailand, it is not the Burmese who want democracy for their country or the exploited Burmese migrants who ask for help; it is the junta's generals, Mr Thaksin's good friends. ~ Sanitsuda Ekachai, Asst. Editor Bangkok Post⁴⁶⁷

⁴⁵⁹ Financial Times (3 Jul 03) Exiles from Burma face clampdown in Thailand

⁴⁶⁰ AFP (2 Jul 03) Thai border camps to take in 1,500 Myanmar refugees

⁴⁶¹ Bangkok Post (2 Jul 03) UN Agency denies acting on its own

⁴⁶² CCSDPT (6 Aug 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session

⁴⁶³ Xinhua (1 Jul 03) Thailand urges UNHCR to share information on Myanmar refugees

⁴⁶⁴ The Nation (10 Jul 03) Exiles oppose relocation

⁴⁶⁵ Irrawaddy (15 Aug 03) Opposition Rations Slashed

⁴⁶⁶ Kaladan (3 Sept 03) BRC and UNHCR Don't take responsibility if political refugees of Burma sent to Mae Sot

⁴⁶⁷ Bangkok Post (3 Jul 03) Why this Abject Toadying to Burma?

Policy Shifts

The Thai Government continues efforts to restrict Burmese migrant workers in the country and formalize the labor import process with the SPDC. A June Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the 2 countries will require Burmese workers wanting to apply for a legal work permits to have passports and visas. This ignores the reality that most workers cannot afford the 50,000 baht (US\$1,220) for a passport; will not want to return to Burma to get citizenship verification; and/or will be members of ethnic or religious minorities denied citizenship by the SPDC.⁴⁶⁸ While there remain concerns about the regime's refusal to accept all repatriated workers, as of 18 August, the SPDC reported that 10,000 people had been repatriated through their reception camp in Myawaddy on the Thai border.⁴⁶⁹

Thailand is allowing migrants who are currently registered to extend their permits for another year, but newly arrived workers cannot register. A Cabinet resolution issued on 27 August also prohibits migrants from registering outside of the province they are currently working in, and cancels renewal of permits for certain job categories including restaurants, hotels, beauty parlors, and street vending. In September, Thai Labor Minister Suwat Liptapanlop said the Labor Ministry would "no longer provide work permits for immigrants on a yearly basis except for jobs which Thais refused to do."⁴⁷⁰ These new restrictions will prohibit 12,161 currently registered workers from renewing their work permits.⁴⁷¹

On 17 September, the Thai labor industry informed workers in newly restricted occupations in Bangkok and Chiang Mai that they could extend their permits if they changed jobs. Workers in the border town of Mae Sot, however, were only informed of this change 2 days before their permits expired. Workers were reportedly required to pay 455 baht to change jobs in addition to the 3,000 baht registration fee.⁴⁷²

On 29 September, concern was raised that new restrictions on job categories for migrants would affect Burmese medical workers at the Mae Tao clinic in Mae Sot. The clinic provides free medical care for thousands of refugees and migrant workers in the area.⁴⁷³

⁴⁶⁸ Bangkok Post (20 Aug 03) New Policy on Alien Workers Problematic

⁴⁶⁹ Bangkok Post (3 Jul 03) Why this Abject Toadying to Burma? & Xinhua (8 Sept 03) Myanmar arrests over 400 human traffickers in a year

⁴⁷⁰ Migrant Watch (31 Jul 03) No Work Permits for New Migrants & Irrawaddy (25 Sept 03) Alien Workers Given Reprieve

⁴⁷¹ Forum-Asia (1 Oct 03) Thai-Burmese Border Situation/Mae Sot

⁴⁷² Irrawaddy (25 Sept 03) Alien Workers Given Reprieve

⁴⁷³ Forum-Asia (1 Oct 03) Thai-Burmese Border Situation/Mae Sot

76 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Crackdown On Undocumented Monks

In August, the Thai Labor Ministry ordered the arrest and deportation of monks from Burma 'who had come to work in Thailand in disguise.' Police announced plans to search 189 temples in nine provinces.⁴⁷⁴ On 26 August, 30 Mon Buddhist monks from Wat Bang Yar and Wat Sudhamvatee in west Bangkok were arrested, disrobed, and deported by Thai police.⁴⁷⁵ Two days later, 57 ethnic Shan and Mon monks and novices at Wat Nongkham in Bangkok were arrested, disrobed, and deported by authorities.⁴⁷⁶ On 11 September, police raided the San Papao Temple in Chiang Mai and detained undocumented Burmese monks and novices. These individuals were later released after a respected abbot intervened.⁴⁷⁷ By 24 September, it was reported that 103 monks from 4 temples in Bangkok had been arrested and deported. Some monks reported being verbally abused and/or having their belongings confiscated by Thai police during deportation.⁴⁷⁸ [For more on migrant workers in Thailand please see Displacement]

THAI-BASED DISSIDENTS

The Thai Government has created a climate of fear and uncertainty which in effect stops democracy groups taking any action to work for freeing Aung San Suu Kyi. ~ Sunai Phasuk, Forum Asia spokesperson⁴⁷⁹

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. ~ Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra⁴⁸⁰

Protests Cut Short

On August 8, on the anniversary of the 1988 crackdown, 20 Burmese democracy activists protested in front of the Burmese Embassy in Bangkok for only 20 minutes, due to fears of the Thai police's reaction.⁴⁸¹ On September 18, 15 Burmese activists were arrested outside the Burmese Embassy while demonstrating on the 15th anniversary of the coup d'état of the Burmese junta. All those arrested had PoC status, yet were sent to the Special Detention Center.⁴⁸² Following these arrests, Brad Adams, Director of the Asia Division of Human Rights Watch called for their

⁴⁷⁴ Kao Wao (1 Sept 03) Buddhist Monks Disrobed and Deported

⁴⁷⁵ Kao Wao (26 Aug 03) Illegal Migrant Buddhist Monks Deported to Burma

⁴⁷⁶ Shan-EU (7-13 Sept 03) Weekly Digest No. 60 quoting a report from www.shan-tai.org

⁴⁷⁷ Shan-EU (7-13 Sept 03) Weekly Digest No. 60 quoting a report from Shan Herald Agency for News

⁴⁷⁸ Kao Wao (24 Sept 03) Monks Ill-Treated During Crackdown

⁴⁷⁹ AFP (9 Jul 03) Thai Government Struggles with Myanmar Policy after Suu Kyi Detention

⁴⁸⁰ Nation (1 Jul 03) Govt wants UN to alter label policy

⁴⁸¹ Muslim Agency for News (8 Aug 03) Fear of Crackdown Hampers 8/8/88 Demonstration

⁴⁸² Irrawaddy (18 Sept 03) Activists Arrested on Coup Anniversary

immediate release, saying “Thai police arrested these demonstrators solely for attempting to express their political opinions. Free speech is a universal human right not reserved only for citizens.”⁴⁸³

Black Friday Witnesses

On July 4, NLD members and Black Friday witnesses Wunna Maung and Khin Zaw were granted refugee status with the UNHCR “with the attached condition of not speaking to the press.” The men delivered a statement at the Thai Parliament building, spurring Thai authorities to cancel their planned press conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand.⁴⁸⁴

Crackdown in Mae Sariang

On July 18, members of Burmese opposition and ethnic groups in Mae Sariang without legal documents were ordered by Thai authorities to leave town or face arrest. Many organizations and activists are being forced to resettle in the Mae Khong Khar Refugee Camp as a result. New regulations were implemented in the camp on August 7, including mandatory permits for cars wishing to enter the camp and registering of vehicles of NGOs.⁴⁸⁵

On July 29, six Karen women were arrested at the office of the Karen Women’s Organization in Mae Sariang. The women were held and released, but instructed to report to Thai authorities the next morning.⁴⁸⁶ On July 31, Thai authorities in Mae Sariang declared that Burmese visitors would no longer be allowed to stay overnight. Thai villagers were warned not to transport Burmese on their boats along the Salween river. No reason was given for this order.⁴⁸⁷ In Mae Sot, a different tactic was used, as officials ordered that dissidents can live in the town, but cannot travel.⁴⁸⁸

NCCM Raided

On August 19, the National Catholic Commission on Migration (NCCM), which provides assistance to Burmese migrants in Bangkok, was raided by Thai police. A Burmese woman, Nyo Nyo Lwin, 21, who approached the NCCM for survival needs, was arrested and deported to Myawaddy.⁴⁸⁹

483 Human Rights Watch (24 Sept 03) Thailand: Burmese Protesters Should Be Released

484 Irrawaddy (8 Jul 03) Witness Reports Shed Light on Ambush

485 Network Media Group (11 Aug 03) Refugee Camp under tight securities

⁴⁸⁶ Irrawaddy (29 Jul 03) Dissidents Targeted in Mae Sariang

⁴⁸⁷ Network Media Group (31 Jul 03) Thai says no more Burmese visitors at border village

⁴⁸⁸ Irrawaddy (22 Jul 03) Burmese Opposition Checked

⁴⁸⁹ Mizzima News (21 Aug 03) Thai police raid NGOs

78 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

APEC Crackdown

On August 27, Deputy Director for International Security Operations Command General Panlop Pinmanee announced that during the APEC meeting held in Bangkok in October, Burmese refugees will be confined in 9 detention centers throughout Thailand.⁴⁹⁰

Activists Blacklisted

On September 16, Prime Minister Thaksin pledged to blacklist rebels from neighboring countries: “we do not want to create mistrust among our neighboring countries,” the PM said. A list of rebels would be compiled with the Immigration Department, National Security Council and Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁴⁹¹

ARRESTED FOR MURDER AND RELEASED

On July 4, Somnik Jasunan, an official from Mae Pa village, and village protection unit member Boonchawei Sawasdi were arrested in connection with the May 14 murder of six Burmese migrant workers in Mae Sot. They were released the following day on 500,000 baht bail.⁴⁹²

MILITARY RELATIONS

On August 9, Thai Third Army chief Lt Gen Pichernmet Muangmanee inquired with the Burmese military over two Thai soldiers, Sgt Sawaeng Romchai and Sgt Dao Warinteh, thought to be held captive by the SPDC . Pichernmet “expected good news” about the two soldiers at the Regional Border Committee meeting August 22-24.⁴⁹³

Thailand and Burma agreed to orchestrate their first exchange of naval ship visits, but Rangoon has yet to agree to Thailand’s proposal for joint sea patrols to combat drug trafficking. [See Military]

ETHNIC RELATIONS

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

You don’t have two girlfriends at the same time. ~ Senior Intelligence Officer Brig- Gen Kyaw Thein, warning the KIO not to side with the NLD.⁴⁹⁴

⁴⁹⁰ AFP (27 Aug 03) Thailand to confine refugees to camps during APEC

⁴⁹¹ AFP (16 Sept 03) Thai PM vows to bar "hard-core" rebels from kingdom

⁴⁹² Irrawaddy (7 Jul 03) Two More Arrests over Mae Sot Massacre

⁴⁹³ Bangkok Post (9 Aug 03) Burma Queried Over Soldiers

⁴⁹⁴ Irrawaddy (4 Aug 03) SPDC Members Call on Kachin Leaders

The period saw efforts taken by the regime to suppress the wave of concern and disapproval that grew amongst both ceasefire and non-ceasefire groups in the wake of the May 30 attack that saw scores killed and NLD leaders detained. Despite the existence of ceasefires, the reactions on various groups also reminded the regime and the world that ethnic nationality groups ultimately wanted their political concerns to be addressed.

JUNTA TELLS CEASEFIRE GROUPS TO KEEP QUIET

On July 1, 7 ethnic groups who have signed ceasefire agreements with SPDC, including the Kachin Independence Organization, New Mon State Party, Kayan New Land Party, Karenni National People's Liberation Front, Shan State Nationalities People's Liberation Organization, Palaung State Liberation Organization and Shan State Peace Council signed a letter to Sr-Gen Than Shwe concerning the Depayin incident.⁴⁹⁵ In their statement, the groups expressed regret for those killed in the May 30 clash, and called for immediate tripartite dialogue with the SPDC, NLD and ethnic groups.⁴⁹⁶ On August 18, the junta met separately with leaders of 9 groups, including the 7 who signed the statement, to urge them to keep quiet about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's arrest and detention.⁴⁹⁷ [See Democracy and Dialogue]

ETHNICS WELCOME US SANCTIONS

The Shan State Army, Karen National Union, and Rohingya and Arakanese political parties are among those who expressed support for the US sanctions against Burma. SSA leader Yawd Serk stated that the sanctions were a long time coming and that the SSA "was prepared to throw its support behind Suu Kyi and the NLD." Pado Mahn Sha, secretary general of the KNU expressed that his group "support(s) this move very much because the junta will not move forward unless it is pressured to do so."⁴⁹⁸ A Rohingya leader said the US moves were "tremendous for the whole people of the country."⁴⁹⁹ Arakanese political parties in exile released a statement saying "If actions against the SPDC junta are not taken by the world, incidences of gruesome massacre more horrific than that of 30th May would soon follow."⁵⁰⁰ [For Reactions to the junta's road map see Democracy and Dialogue]

ARAKANES TELL ASEM: MORE PRESSURE NEEDED

In a statement made at the ASEM (Asia-Europe meeting) meeting on July 23-24 in Bali, Indonesia, the Arakan Independence Alliance (AIO) urged ASEAN and other

⁴⁹⁵ DVB (19 Aug 03) Gen Khin Nyunt meets ceasefire groups' leaders

⁴⁹⁶ Irrawaddy (4 Aug 03) SPDC Members Call on Kachin Leaders

⁴⁹⁷ DVB (19 Aug 03) Gen Khin Nyunt meets ceasefire groups' leaders

⁴⁹⁸ Nation (17 Jul 03) PM: Prepare for refugees

⁴⁹⁹ Kaladan Press (17 July 03) Rohingya Welcomes US Approved Sanctions On Burma

⁵⁰⁰ Narinjara (18 Jul 03) Arakanese Political parties welcome US sanctions on Burma

80 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

countries in attendance to review their policies on SPDC, pressure for the release of Daw Suu and other political prisoners, and help implement national reconciliation and tripartite dialogue.⁵⁰¹

WA WANT POLITICAL RECOGNITION

At a meeting of Wa leaders in Panghsang in August, it was decided that the junta would be asked to recognize the United Wa State Party, the political wing of the United Wa State Army, as a political organization. The Wa officials also condemned the Depayin massacre, and said “neither the government nor the NLD is considered an enemy,” indicating that the Wa are distancing themselves from Rangoon.⁵⁰²

ALD LEADER DIES

General Secretary of the Arakan League for Democracy Khaing Myo Khaing passed away on July 18 in Chiang Mai. He had held the position of general secretary of ALD (exile) since 2001.⁵⁰³

KNLA: 66 BATTLES IN 64 DAYS

The Karen National Liberation Army issued a report on August 19 that records its encounters with the SPDC and Democratic Karen Buddhist Army in the period between 2 June and 4 August. Their “7 brigades and General Headquarters units had, during the 64 day period, fought 66 clashes, killing 43 enemy troops wounding 73 and capturing 2 while sustaining 4 casualties on its part.” The KNLA also fought against the DKBA 10 times. A Thai intelligence officer said “The report is helpful in several ways. It confirms our own reports that all is not well inside, despite outward peace along Thailand's western border. It also confirms how the Karens are proving a headache to the Burma Army.”⁵⁰⁴

NAGA REBEL BASE DESTROYED

It was reported that the headquarters of the Khaplang faction of rebel group National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in Burma was destroyed following an attack by Burmese troops in July. The offensive caused the rebels to retreat into the jungle.⁵⁰⁵ In response to the attack, Indian officials closed the border with Burma's Sagaing region. The NSCN Khaplang faction has been “entrenched in the remote Patkai mountains in western Sagaing for well over a decade,” has signed a

⁵⁰¹ Arakan Independence Alliance (AIA) (23 Jul 03) Statement of AIA on the ASEM Meeting

⁵⁰² Irrawaddy (5 Sept 03) Wa Making "Wise Moves"

⁵⁰³ Narinjara (18 Jul 03) ALD (Exile) General Secretary Passed away

⁵⁰⁴ SHAN (28 Sept 03) Karen rebels release battle news

⁵⁰⁵ BBC (7 Jul 03) Burmese army destroys Naga rebel base

ceasefire agreement with Indian troops, but has yet to be invited to the negotiation table.⁵⁰⁶

CEASEFIRE GROUPS INVITED TO CHINA

7 armed ethnic groups that have signed ceasefire agreements with the SPDC have been invited to attend China's eleventh Kunming Export Commodities Fair to be held August 26-30 in Kunming.⁵⁰⁷

HUMAN RIGHTS

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

ICRC VISITS SHAN STATE

The International Committee of Red Cross visited Shan State twice in September. Their 4th visit to the state started on September 8 and their 5th on September 22. Villages north and east of Laikha were warned by military authorities not to welcome the "World Red Cross, [and] villagers known to be approachable were told to go 'on leave' from their homes."⁵⁰⁸ The 12-member team "reportedly complained about heavy presence of Burma Army troops in the villages where they had been conducting their survey, the upshot of which was the villagers' extreme reluctance to cooperate with the ICRC's fact finders." However, in a statement, the ICRC expressed that "the mere fact of being present in conflict affected areas and repeating our visit to the people there can have a preventive protection effect."⁵⁰⁹

HUMAN TRAFFICKING – FAILURE TO COMPLY

Burma was one of 15 countries to be placed on Tier 3, the lowest tier of US government standards for its failure to comply with the Trafficking Victims Protection Act of 2000's minimum standards for the "elimination of trafficking, and failure to make significant efforts to do so." Consequently, the President established that this makes Burma liable to sanctions.⁵¹⁰ The SPDC continues to claim to be fighting human trafficking, saying it arrested 417 human traffickers between July 2002 and August 21, 2003. A Working Committee for Prevention Against

⁵⁰⁶ BBC (7 Jul 03) Burmese army destroys Naga rebel base

⁵⁰⁷ Irrawaddy (22 Aug 03) Kunming Trade Fair Welcomes Ceasefire Leaders

⁵⁰⁸ SHAN (9 Sept 03) Red Cross visits Shan area 4th time

⁵⁰⁹ SHAN (30 Sept 03) ICRC on fifth trip to Shan township

⁵¹⁰ U.S. Department of State Press Statement (10 Sept 03) Progress in the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons

82 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Trafficking in persons was established in July 2002, and the SPDC declared that 82,251 people have been educated about human trafficking.⁵¹¹

KHRG REPORT EXPOSES MILITARY VIOLATIONS

On August 22, the Karen Human Rights Group released a report entitled “SPDC & DKBA Orders To Villages: Set 2003-A.” The report provides translations of 783 orders given by the SPDC, as well as the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army and Karen Peace Army, to villages in Papun, Pa’an, Thaton, Nyaunglebin, Toungoo, & Doolaya Districts of Karen State, Mon State and part of eastern Pegu Division in the period between January 2002 and February 2003. The report exposes orders concerning forced labour, money, food and materials, restrictions on movements and activities of villagers, and threats to arrest village elders or destroy villages of those who fail to obey. All of the instances of forced labor took place after the SPDC claimed to have stopped the practice on November 1, 2000.⁵¹²

POLITICAL PRISONERS

[For arrests directly related to Black Friday see Democracy & Dialogue]

On August 6, Pinheiro called for progress in releasing political prisoners in Burma, saying, “If I don’t see any progress, I don’t think that my presence can be useful.” He said that Burma had “lost one year of confidence building.” Ironically, however, Pinheiro said that he was satisfied with the explanation that the March bugging of his interviews with political prisoners “was the work of junior officers.”⁵¹³

A hunger strike was begun in July in Mandalay prison by around 20 political prisoners, including 3 female prisoners who were detained in 1996 following a student demonstration, to protest a ban on “reading books and periodicals.”⁵¹⁴

On September 23, UNESCO appealed for the release and clemency of dentist and researcher Khin Zaw Win, 52, who was arrested in 1994 at the Rangoon airport on his way to Singapore for carrying documents about the NLD. He received a 15-year sentence. UNESCO said, “He is said to be suffering from several medical problems exacerbated by harsh conditions and insufficient medical care.”⁵¹⁵

New Arrests

On August 30, 120 Rohingyas were arrested by police and immigration authorities in the village of Koin Daung in Buthidaung Township. 75 were accused of not paying football tournament fees, 36 were accused of not planting seedlings along the

⁵¹¹ Xinhua (8 Sept 03) Myanmar arrests over 400 human traffickers in a year

⁵¹² <http://www.ibiblio.org/freeburma/humanrights/khrg/archive/khrg2003/khrg0301.html>

⁵¹³ UN Wire (6 Aug 03) U.N. Envoy Says Progress Needed In Myanmar

⁵¹⁴ Irrawaddy (6 Aug 03) Hunger Strike Over Reading Ban

⁵¹⁵ AFP (24 Sept 03) UNESCO appeals for release of “political prisoners” in Laos, Myanmar

roadsides, and 9 were accused of crossing the border into Bangladesh. They were released after paying bribes of between kyat 3,000 to kyat 25,000.⁵¹⁶

Five Muslim youth were arrested in Myawaddy by a combined operation cell of Military Intelligence, Nasaka and USDA members on August 8. The youth were migrant workers returning to Burma from Mae Sot. As they were being arrested, the authorities attempted to extort kyat 200,000 from each person, but the youth did not have enough money to pay the bribe. They were sent to Moulmein Jail.⁵¹⁷

Releases

Khun Myint Htun, 41, NLD elected MP of eastern Mon State in 1988 was released from prison on August 1 after 7 years of incarceration. He was charged in 1996 with “unlawful association with underground elements” and served an extra sentence for misbehavior in prison, which “usually means prisoners have made political demonstrations against their incarceration.”⁵¹⁸

Taungdwingyi Township NLD chairman U Myat Saing was released on July 17 after suffering a debilitating stroke. He was arrested on April 30, 2000 with over 30 NLD members for having a dinner party and sentenced to 7 years jail.⁵¹⁹

VIOLENCE AGAINST IDPS IN EASTERN SHAN STATE

Dictator Watch posted the Free Burma Rangers’ June mission report, which includes “five cases of rape; forced prostitution; murdered children; forced labor; [and] a new program, begun in June, to press gang 4,000 villagers to join the Wa Army.”⁵²⁰

FORCED LABOR

Arakan State

It was reported that the Military Operation Command 15 of Buthidaung Township in Arakan State ordered 5 villages to provide 60 laborers, 120 oxen, and 60 plows to work in army-controlled paddy farmlands. The laborers started working on June 13 and were expected to finish by July 15.⁵²¹ On June 12, the Commander of the Battalion No. 565 in Buthidaung Township ordered 150 Rohingya villagers from Nan Ra Gon, San Nyin Way and Ouendaung villages to construct a bridge on the Dabruchaung River. The laborers were required to “affix their signatures and thumb

⁵¹⁶ Kaladan (11 Sept 03) Policemen together with Immigration Arrested 120 Men and Extortion

⁵¹⁷ Kaladan News (11 Aug 03) Five Muslims Arrested in Myawaddi Town

⁵¹⁸ AFP (8 Aug 03) Myanmar MP released from jail

⁵¹⁹ DVB (31 Jul 03) NLD leader released due to poor health

⁵²⁰ Dictator Watch (11 Jul 03) Burma relief mission, and analysis of prime Minister Thaksin of Thailand

⁵²¹ Kaladan Press (1 Jul 03) Forced labour for growing paddy

84 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

impressions on blank paper sheets” and were warned of “serious action in case of non-compliance.”⁵²²

It was reported that on June 30, five villages were ordered by the Township Peace and Development Council Chairman of Buthidaung Township to plant seedlings. Each family must plant and buy 92 seedlings at a rate of 100 kyat from the government to be planted along the roadsides. The planting coincides with the rainy season, which is a vital time for farmers to grow paddy.⁵²³ Chin minority villagers from neighboring areas have been doing forced labor for the construction of a Burmese army artillery base in South West Farunga Island close to Sittwe in Arakan State. It was reported that plans were underway for the construction of 5 additional artillery bases for the purpose of guarding offshore gas interest.⁵²⁴

Karen State

Burmese Army battalions 701, 702, 706, and DKBA battalion 999 ordered villagers throughout Karen State to provide food and forced labor. "From August until now, the Burma army and DKBA summoned our villagers in Kaw Ka Reik Township of Karen State to construct their barracks. We also have to carry rice sacks and ammunition to their border camp. We have to go there with our own food. So we have to neglect our paddy field which is our family's ration for the whole year. We also have to provide them with rice," said Saw Le War, one of 150 villagers who sought refuge in Thailand in September.⁵²⁵

FORCED FIRE SAFETY TRAINING

Since July 21, villagers from 3 villages in Kalemmyo Township have been forced to undergo fire safety training by Burmese officials despite it being the monsoon season, the most important farming season. Villagers were forced to donate 400 kyat per household for the training, although Village Peace and Development Council members were exempted.⁵²⁶

EXTORTION

On August 9, the Buthidaung Township Peace and Development Council extorted Kyat 250,000 from 5 farmers “under the pretext of establishing a model village for Buddhist settlers.” A survey team headed to the village of Nanragoon to survey 22 acres of land to be used for the model village.⁵²⁷

⁵²² Kaladan Press (9 Jul 03) Forced Labor Still Continuing in Northern Arakan

⁵²³ Kaladan News (22 Aug 03) Does Forced Labour Exist in Arakan?

⁵²⁴ Narinjara (29 Jul 03) New Artillery Installation to guard Rakhine Gas Fields

⁵²⁵ Irrawaddy (24 Sept 03) Karens Flee Labor Conscription

⁵²⁶ Mizzima News (5 Aug 03) Villagers Forced Into Fire Safety Training: Kan Min

⁵²⁷ Kaladan News (19 Aug 03) Money Extorted From Farmers for Model Village

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION

Five staff members of First Eleven, a “weekly Burmese language sports journal,” were arrested after their office was searched on July 17 by military authorities. After two days, editor Zaw Myint, chief officer Dr Than Htut Aung and Myint Zaw were released, while Zaw Thet Htwe and Soe Pa Pa Hlaing remained in detention. It is not clear what spurred the raid, although it was suggested that it could be a result of an article that was run “asking what happened to a grant from the international community to develop football in Burma.”⁵²⁸ Reporters Sans Frontieres expressed their indignation with the arrests and demanded their release. The junta, in response, denied that the arrests were a result of an article on football, saying, “The reason for their detention is not because of what they wrote in the journal. It has nothing to do with their profession but (is) on a totally different subject,”⁵²⁹ without elaborating.

A press conference at the Foreign Correspondent’s Club of Thailand on September 25 shed light on freedom of the press in Burma. According to Ross Dunkley, CEO and editor in chief of the Myanmar Times, around 15 stories are refused each week. The content of the newspaper is screened by two top SPDC officials, Tin Win and Brig-Gen Thein Swe. Gen Khin Nyunt’s son, Sonny Swe, publishes the newspaper. Some of the newspaper’s writers are even junta officials. The Myanmar Times was launched in 2000 , and was lauded as Burma’s first ‘independent newspaper.’ Most journalists covering Burma, however, claim that The Myanmar Times ‘misinforms’ people and is ‘part of the problem in Burma, not the solution.’⁵³⁰

FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

In August, residents of Woe Township, Pegu Division reported that authorities had been checking family lists regularly since May. One man reported that local officials took photographs of all family members and posted them on the wall in front of each house. If a family member was missing when the photos were taken then the person was considered to be someone who had illegally left the country and was removed from the family list. Many families have members who are working in neighboring countries and are concerned that they will be questioned by the authorities and fined upon their return to their homes.⁵³¹

E-Visa

While a significant proportion of the civilian population has to endure restrictions on their freedom of movement, the regime has become a ‘regional leader’ in visa technology.

⁵²⁸ Irrawaddy (22 Jul 03) Journal Office Raided, Editors Arrested

⁵²⁹ AP (24 Jul 03) Myanmar government denies journalists' arrests related to their reporting

⁵³⁰ Irrawaddy (25 Sept 03) The Junta’s Colorful Apologist

⁵³¹ Human Rights Documentation Unit, NCGUB (8 Aug 03)

86 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

An electric visa (e-visa) system, scrutinized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Intelligence and Immigration, which would allow diplomats, news correspondents and business entrepreneurs to obtain a Myanmar visa in 36 hours, was due to be put in place in September. Preparations have been underway for the e-visa since 2001, and Myanmar will be the first Southeast Asian nation to implement such a system.⁵³²

HUMAN RIGHTS TRAINING FOR YOUTH IN BANGLADESH

A human rights training workshop was conducted on August 1 by the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma for youth from the Arakan Patriotic Youth Organization and Rohingya Youth Development Forum in Chittagong, Bangladesh.⁵³³

WOMEN AND CHILDREN

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

MORE WOMEN LEADERS

The number of women taking leadership roles in opposition groups appears to be increasing. In July, a woman candidate received the second highest number of votes for the role of chairperson of the Network for Democracy and Development (NDD). According to NDD at least 30% of leadership roles in the organization are filled by women. The Democratic Party for a New Society (DPNS) has also set a goal to fill at least a third of their leadership roles with women for an upcoming conference. However, there is still much work to be done before women can be said to have an equal voice in the democracy movement. Chairwoman of Burmese Women Union, Mi Sue Pwint says: "Today women are allowed to participate in politics just because of pressures from funding agencies and current international scenarios. We have to encourage and do a lot of changes in order to get more women's participation in the politics."⁵³⁴

SANCTIONS = SEX SLAVERY?

Once again the SPDC has used women as political pawns, blaming new US sanctions for forcing more women into the sex industry. Reportedly, at least 30 out of the 300 garment factories in Rangoon had been forced to close by the end of July, with more expected to close once the full impact of sanctions is felt.

⁵³² Xinhua (16 Sept 03) Myanmar to introduce e-visa system

⁵³³ Kaladan (4 Aug 03) Human Rights Workshop for Arakanese Youths in Bangladesh

⁵³⁴ Network Media Group (5 Jul 03) Recognition of women leadership increased among Burmese oppositions

The regime claims that after losing their factory jobs, female employees are often left with no option but to turn to sex work. Blaming recent sanctions ignores the reality that sexual exploitation and abuse of women in Burma is a deeply rooted, long term problem. Daw Molly, chairwoman of Women Rights and Welfare Association of Burma (WRWAB) argues that women have been struggling to earn a living and have been sold into the sex industry since the military junta took over the country in 1988.⁵³⁵

Claims that sanctions are responsible for forcing women into prostitution also ignore the direct complicity of a number of SPDC officials in the sex industry, which has grown substantially since 1988. It is the regime, and not sanctions, that is responsible for creating the poverty, oppression, and dislocation which have already driven thousands of women and children into the sex industry.⁵³⁶

SPDC PAYS PARENTS FOR CHILD SOLDIERS

On 15 July, SPDC soldiers paid the parents of 3 boys, aged 16 and 17 years old, 20,000 kyat (US\$20) each after their sons agreed to join the army. The incident occurred in Kring-chhaung Village, Buthidaung Township, Arakan State, however, this appears to be part of a larger strategy to attract new young recruits by paying parents.⁵³⁷

RELIGIOUS FREEDOM

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

FORCED RELIGIOUS CONVERSION

It was reported that hundreds of Naga people have been fleeing religious persecution in Burma. The Naga People's Movement for Human Rights stated on July 17 that "several Churches located in the border areas have been destroyed by the junta when they refused to abide by [an order to convert to Buddhism]." The report also cited incidents of Naga people being forced to convert to Buddhism, and the rape of an 18-year old girl by a Buddhist monk. The Indian government was urged to handle the problem urgently.⁵³⁸

⁵³⁵ DVB (31 Jul 03) SPDC blames American sanctions for the poor lives of Burmese women

⁵³⁶ Irrawaddy (July 1999) The military and the spread of AIDS, Belak, Brenda (Jan 2002) Gathering Strength: Women from Burma on their Rights. Images Asia, The Guardian (4 Aug 03) on Burma Tours, Irrawaddy (Feb 2001) No Sex Please – We're Burmese, Kao Wao (16-26 Mar 03) Spies Sneak Sex from Child Prostitutes, Burma Lawyers' Council (Aug 2001) Women and Law in Burma quoting Human Rights Watch Asia (1993) A Modern Form of Slavery

⁵³⁷ Narinjara (31 Jul 03) Luring villagers into Burmese Army

⁵³⁸ Mizzima (17 Jul 03) Ethnic Naga's Forced to Flee Burma

88 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

In a statement to the U.S. House of Representatives' joint subcommittee hearing on International Terrorism, Nonproliferation and Human Rights and Asia and the Pacific, the Chin Human Rights Organization (CHRO) cited instances of forced conversions from Christianity to Buddhism, destruction of churches by SPDC, censoring of sermons by Christian pastors and ministers, and burning of bibles. The statement also referred to restrictions on the use of Chin language, forced labor, suppression of Chin political parties, and forced repatriation of over 6,000 Chin refugees in India. The CHRO urged the international community to "take effective and urgent actions on Burma before the problems develop into an irreversible stage."⁵³⁹

USDA'S ANTI-MUSLIM PAMPHLETS

It was reported that United Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) members distributed anti-Muslim pamphlets on June 25, and July 5 and 7 in Ye Kyi and Myaung Mya townships, Irrawaddy division.⁵⁴⁰ When Muslim elders reported the incidents to the local police, the police responded that they could not take action against the USDA members, because the incidents were watched over by USDA central authorities.⁵⁴¹

ANTI-MUSLIM RIOT IN MANDALAY

On July 19, a riot broke out in front of a monastery in Pyinmana, Mandalay division, with 30-40 monks joining the crowd, following an argument between a shopkeeper and a customer. It is believed that the riot was orchestrated by the SPDC to divert people's attention away from any dissatisfaction with the ruling junta following the Depayin massacre. Muslims were beat up, stones were thrown at the mosque and some shops and houses of Muslims were destroyed. Police arrested Ms. Daw The Yi, a Muslim shopkeeper, but did not arrest or even question the monks involved.⁵⁴²

AUTHORITIES BAN MUSLIM PRAYERS

Since July 14, SPDC has banned Muslims from praying in Tenasserim division. Chief of Military Intelligence No. 6 Captain Saw Win and Police Intelligence Chief U Thaung Aye ordered the Muslim community to close down two Jamaat Khanas (prayer houses) in Kaw Thaung Myo, Tenasserim division.⁵⁴³ Navy Officer Major Soe Aung and Village Peace and Development Council authorities of Ye Kan Taung

⁵³⁹ see www.chro.org under Religious persecution report

⁵⁴⁰ Muslim Information Center of Burma (26 Jul 03) Anti-Muslim Pamphlets distributed in Burma

⁵⁴¹ Kaladan Press (26 Jul 03) SPDC Attempts to Divert People's Attention From Depayin Massacre

⁵⁴² Kaladan Press (26 Jul 03) SPDC Attempts to Divert People's Attention From Depayin Massacre

⁵⁴³ Muslim Information Center Burma (28 Jul 03) SPDC authorities ban Muslims from praying in Burma

Kyun Zu, Mergui township ordered Muslim elders not to make the Azan (public call to prayer) on the archipelago.⁵⁴⁴

MOSQUE DEMOLISHED - PM LOSES FACE

On July 21, Major General Maung Oo ordered local police to demolish a mosque built in front of Akyab University in Arakan State, because it was built without permission from the Religious Ministry. A riot started during its demolition, causing injury to Muslim women and police. After the demolition, a Muslim leader informed Shafi Aullar, a powerful Singaporean businessman and business partner of Khin Nyunt's son Re Naing Win, about the incident. Shafi Aullar then complained to Khin Nyunt, causing the Prime Minister embarrassment, and spurring him to immediately order the Chairman of Arakan State to rebuild the mosque.⁵⁴⁵

FORCED MANTRA CHANTING

On August 29, to protect the junta from danger and to ward off negative effects of the US sanctions on Burma, the SPDC forced people to recite 'anti-danger' mantras in famous pagodas, such as Shwe Mawdaw pagoda in Pegu. It was reported that the chanting must continue for 9 consecutive days. People unable to chant must contribute money for offerings, other worshippers are prohibited from entering the pagoda's grounds and the pagodas are under guard.⁵⁴⁶ A Buddhist ceremony conducted by the SPDC began on August 27 in the town of Maungdaw near the Bangladesh border. The ceremony will continue for "nine hours a day, nine times a month and nine months in a year." The number 9 is generally considered a magical number. Costs of building a special stage for the ceremony attended by 600 people was extorted by local townspeople.⁵⁴⁷

REVERED MONK DIES SUDDENLY

On June 26, Sayadaw U Satetara, abbot of Nyangdone Monastery, Bahan Township, member of the Young Monks Union since 1988⁵⁴⁸ and strong supporter of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi died from what "many suspect were not natural causes," wrote Jose Ramos-Horta.⁵⁴⁹

⁵⁴⁴ Muslim Information Center Burma (1 Aug 03) SPDC authorities ban Muslims' prayers in Burma

⁵⁴⁵ Narinjara News (9 Sept 03) Arakan State Peace and Development Council Chairman in deep trouble after demolition of a mosque in Arakan

⁵⁴⁶ DVB (29 Aug 03) Anti-sanction mantra recited in Burma today

⁵⁴⁷ Narinjara (2 Sept 03) Buddhist rites to prevent foreign invasion!

⁵⁴⁸ DVB (26 June 03) Sayadaw Seiddarat passed away suddenly

⁵⁴⁹ Deccan Herald (8 Jul 03) Who will bell the Burmese junta?

BUDDHIST MONKS WARNED TO STAY AWAY FROM POLITICS

In August, Buddhist monks in Moulmein, Mon State were warned by the Ministry of Home Affairs not to engage in politics, and to stay inside the temples should a “people strike” occur.⁵⁵⁰

DISPLACEMENT

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS (IDPS)

Karen State

On 14 July, SPDC soldiers arrested approximately 130 people, including political activists, who were attempting to flee to Thailand. The arrests occurred along a temporary road between Myawaddy and Vallay Kee in Karen State.⁵⁵¹

Tenasserim Division

On 18 September, Coastal Region Military Commander Brigadier Gen. Ohn Myint ordered all the military units under his command to sweep IDP hiding sites along the border. The troops were ordered to destroy all paddy fields and capture any IDPs they found.⁵⁵²

In September, it was reported that in the area south of Mergui, 1,000 Karen villagers had been displaced and were unable to tend their crops due to road construction and increased militarization in the area.⁵⁵³

Mon State

Since early July, a large build up of SPDC troops around Ye Township has reportedly caused increased displacement in southern Mon State.⁵⁵⁴ In August, the Mon Relief and Development Committee identified 75 Karen and Mon IDP families on the run near Jiang Se Ji Township.⁵⁵⁵ In September, it was reported that over 50 families from Yebyu and southern Ye Township had recently arrived at Halockhanee refugee camp inside Burma, on the Thai border. The villagers were fleeing human

⁵⁵⁰ Kao Wao News Group (14 Aug 03) Buddhist Monks: Stay Away from Politics

⁵⁵¹ Irrawaddy (17 Jul 03) 130 Arrested Near Border

⁵⁵² Mergui-Tavoy District Information Department, Karen National Union (Sept 03) Monthly Human Rights Situation Report Tenasserim Division

⁵⁵³ CCSDPT (10 Sept 03) Summary CCSDPT open session

⁵⁵⁴ CCSDPT (9 Jul 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session

⁵⁵⁵ CCSDPT (6 Aug 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 91

rights abuses by the SPDC army.⁵⁵⁶ By 2 Oct, the 3 Mon resettlement sites of Halockhancee, Bee Ree and Tavoy had a total population of 10,407.⁵⁵⁷

In September, the regime destroyed over 1,400 houses in Moulmein to make space for a new railway station. Owners of brick, wood, and thatch houses were offered varying rates of compensation, with owners of thatch houses receiving only 140 kyat (US\$0.14) per sq/ft. The SPDC says that those relocated will then be allowed to purchase land in Phetkhin and Ngante wards. Wealthier people will be resettled on the main road while the poor will be given land further out.⁵⁵⁸

On 20 September, it was reported that the Moulmein City Development Committee ordered local Ya Ya Ka (Village Peace and Development Council) offices to check each house in the city. Unless the house has 2 floors with a roof or iron sheeting, the authorities will force the owners to rebuild them. Many people believe that they will be forced to move out if they are unable to rebuild their houses.⁵⁵⁹

Shan State

Shans crossing into Thailand report that since early June, 3000 residents of 14 villages in Eastern Mung Set Township have been forced to relocate. The Shan, Palaung and Akha villagers were given 3-7 days to move, and many have since been forced to hide in the nearby jungle.⁵⁶⁰

Between May and June, 1,300 people were forcibly relocated from the Mung Lung village tract northwest of Tachilek. During the relocation, 3 villages were reportedly burned down, and there were many cases of torture and sexual assault.⁵⁶¹

REFUGEES

Thailand Tightens Up

As of 2 October, there were 110,614 officially registered refugees in camps along the border, with unregistered refugees bringing the total up to 132,118.⁵⁶² On 24 September, it was reported that 150 villagers from Kaw Ka Reik township, Karen State had arrived in Thailand. The villagers were fleeing demands by SPDC and DKBA troops for food and labor.⁵⁶³

⁵⁵⁶ Kao-Wao and IMNA (30 Sep 03) Fighting continues in southern Ye

⁵⁵⁷ CCSDPT (13 Nov 03) Summary-CCSDPT Open Session

⁵⁵⁸ IMNA (24 Sept 03) Over 1,400 families relocated for new railway station

⁵⁵⁹ Human Rights Documentation Unit, NCGUB (Sept 03) Interview with local teacher

⁵⁶⁰ CCSDPT (9 Jul 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session

⁵⁶¹ CCSDPT (10 Sept 03) Summary CCSDPT open session

⁵⁶² CCSDPT (13 Nov 03) Summary-CCSDPT Open Session

⁵⁶³ Irrawaddy (24 Sept 03) Karens Flee Labor Conscriptioin

92 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

To sweeten relations with the SPDC, Thailand is increasingly restricting the movement of refugees and NGOs assisting them. In September, US Congressman Joe Pitts raised concerns over reports that Thai soldiers were blocking refugees from entering Thailand and refusing to allow aid to be passed across the border.⁵⁶⁴ Meanwhile Thailand continues to move forward with plans to move urban refugees with UNHCR Person of Concern (PoC) status to camps along the border. [See Thai-Burma Relations]

Birth Registration

In July, it was announced that local Thai authorities plan to register all new births at Tham Hin Refugee camp, Kanchanaburi Province. The registration will not grant Thai citizenship but will confirm the child's birth in Thailand.⁵⁶⁵

Shan Influx Continues

Shan refugees continue to cross the border in large numbers to escape ongoing forced relocation, forced rice procurement and forced conscription for people's militia groups. [See Military] From June through September, 4,220 refugees from central Shan State crossed into Fang District. As this is only one border crossing, the total number of new arrivals is likely to be much greater.⁵⁶⁶

In September, The Shan Women's Action Network released a background paper to assist those advocating for Shan refugees in Thailand. The paper "Shan Refugees: Dispelling the Myths" is available at www.shanwomen.org.

Refugee killed by SPDC

On 24 September, a man from Camp #1 in Mae Hong Son Province was shot and killed by SPDC soldiers while fishing 10kms outside the camp.⁵⁶⁷

Mae Kongka Relocation

In October, the Thai Government plans to relocate the over 16,000 refugees in Ban Mae Kongka-Sala camp, Mae Sariang district to Ban La-uun in Sob Meui district. Some refugees support the move, because of previous problems with heavy flooding. However other refugees and NGOs have expressed concern about the security of the location, which is only 2 kms from the border.⁵⁶⁸

⁵⁶⁴ AFP (18 Sept 03) US concerned for Aung San Suu Kyi after operation

⁵⁶⁵ CCSDPT (9 Jul 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session

⁵⁶⁶ CCSDPT (9 Jul 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session, CCSDPT (6 Aug 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session, CCSDPT (10 Sept 03) Summary CCSDPT open session & CCSDPT (8 Oct 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session

⁵⁶⁷ CCSDPT (8 Oct 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session

⁵⁶⁸ CCSDPT (9 Jul 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session, Network Media Group (14 Jul 03) Thai security officer warns Burmese refugees, no protest against relocation, The Nation (3 Aug 03) Refugees to be relocated & CCSDPT (6 Aug 03) Summary CCSDPT Open Session

India: Thousands Of Chin Refugees Expelled⁵⁶⁹

On 17 July, the State government of Mizoram and a number of local Mizo organizations launched a widespread drive to force out thousands of Chin refugees after a young girl was reportedly raped by a Burmese man. The Young Mizo Association appealed to the police in Aizawl to arrest all Burmese people, or threatened to take 'all necessary action immediately.' On 20 July, 30 Mizos attacked 6 Burmese youths. The Young Mizo Association (YMA), Joint Action Committee (JAC), Village Council (VC) and Mizo Women Joint Groups (MHIP) have also issued an order that all 'foreigners' vacate Aizawl by 31 July. Loudspeakers in the city blared "Get out Burmese from our vicinity, go back to Burma, and vacate our house immediately."⁵⁷⁰

By 30 July, an estimated 1,320 Burmese had reached the border and were being allowed entry by the SPDC. Those without national ID cards were reportedly fined.⁵⁷¹

On 5 August, the Mizoram State Government launched its own drive to find and deport refugees. Mizoram Home Minister R. Tlanghmingthanga announced "We have formed a special Border Management Cell to carry out a village to village survey to find out if there are illegal Myanmar nationals."⁵⁷²

While the Mizoram Bar Association urged the Indian government to intervene, Zoramworld Internet News reported that by 7 August, the number of Chins repatriated had grown to 3,348. In addition to Aizawl, refugees in parts of Lunglei and Champhai have also been ordered to leave before 15 August.⁵⁷³

Bangladesh Repatriation Continues

UNHCR continues the highly controversial repatriation of Rohingya refugees. On 3 July, Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Shamsheer M Chowdhury said he was hopeful that repatriation would be completed in 'a foreseeable future.' He stated that 8, 212 refugees were currently awaiting repatriation, with 5,276 still pending clearance from

⁵⁶⁹ The Indian Government does not allow the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to operate in northeast India. Despite fleeing armed conflict and ethnic persecution, all Chins are labelled "illegal immigrants."

⁵⁷⁰ Chinland Guardian (26 Jul 03) The eviction of Burmese in Aizawl, Mizoram State of India, is escalating & Chinland Guardian (30 Jul 03) Update on the existing condition of the refugees from Burma in Mizoram State

⁵⁷¹ Mizzima (31 Jul 03) Mass Repatriation of Burmese Migrants

⁵⁷² AFP (5 Aug 03) Indian state plans drive to deport illegal Myanmar settlers

⁵⁷³ Chinland Guardian (7 Aug 03) Eviction of Chin Refugees Continues Despite

94 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

the SPDC. Bangladesh believes that the remaining 12,575 refugees will also agree to repatriate.⁵⁷⁴

While Bangladesh still claims all repatriation is voluntary, Doctors without Borders (MSF) has received 550 complaints of coercion from refugees in recent months, ranging from "incidents of intimidation to outright threats of physical abuse to push people to repatriate ...The Bangladesh government is subjecting thousands of Rohingya refugees to intimidation and harassment as part of a campaign to pressure them to return to Myanmar," MSF said.⁵⁷⁵

Complaints by MSF, Refugees International and other groups prompted UNHCR to investigate charges of involuntary repatriation and appoint additional protection officers. Jean Marie Fakhouri, head of Asia-Pacific section at UNHCR conceded "There was indeed a certain level of pressure exercised at local level..[but] not to the level of what has been reported by MSF."⁵⁷⁶

In July and August, increased UNHCR involvement had improved the situation, however, in September, it was reported that harassment, psychological pressure and threats were still being used by camp officials to 'encourage' refugees to repatriate.

As part of a plan to reduce services to refugees, MSF and CONCERN were told to end their medical assistance to the camps. On 7 August, refugee women organized a sit-in at the MSF medical centre to protest against their departure. That night police broke up the protest violently, injuring about 20 women. Medical care is now provided by the Bangladesh Ministry of Health, but refugees have complained about the services.⁵⁷⁷

Repatriated Refugees Try To Return

On 15 July, it was reported that 80 Rohingya families, most of whom were refugees repatriated from Bangladesh, had gathered at the border in an attempt re-enter the country. After being repatriated, the refugees were reportedly denied ownership of their land and properties.⁵⁷⁸ New and repatriated refugees report ongoing food problems, heavy extortion and taxation and high fees to get permission to marry in Arakan. Some repatriated refugees have already returned to Bangladesh and are taking shelter outside the camps.⁵⁷⁹

⁵⁷⁴ Narinjara (4 Jul 03) Bangladesh Govt hopes completion of repatriation of Burma refugees soon

⁵⁷⁵ AFP (18 Sept 03) Bangladesh forcing out Myanmar refugees: MSF & AFP (18 Sept 03) Bangladesh denies forcing out Myanmar refugees

⁵⁷⁶ AFP (18 Sept 03) Bangladesh Forcing Out Myanmar Refugees

⁵⁷⁷ Forum Asia (10 Sept 03) Update on the Bangladesh-Burma Border & AFP (18 Sept 03) Bangladesh forcing out Myanmar refugees

⁵⁷⁸ Kaladan Press (15 Jul 03) Burma-Bangladesh border alert

⁵⁷⁹ Forum Asia (10 Sept 03) Update on the Bangladesh-Burma Border

2 Jailed For 'Anti-Repatriation' Activities

On 16 July, 2 men from Kutupalong camp were reportedly jailed because they refused to sign a Voluntary Repatriation Form. Camp authorities claim the men were involved in anti-repatriation activities and were living outside the camp. Following the arrest, other refugees protested that the men were innocent and the UNHCR Protection Assistant Officer requested their release. The request was rejected.⁵⁸⁰

Clash in Kutupalong camp

On 21 September, a clash occurred between refugees, police, and paramilitary troops when police tried to arrest 2 refugees who were allegedly involved in criminal activities. Fifty-eight refugees in Kutupalong camp and 4 policemen were reportedly injured in the clash, and 7 women refugees were arrested.⁵⁸¹

Teknaf Residents Call For Deportation Of Rohingyas

In September, residents of Teknaf urged local their local MP to send Rohingyas in the area back to Burma 'for the cleanliness of the town.' Approximately 750 Rohingya families, who are not registered as refugees, have been living in temporary huts since local officials ordered them to leave their rented houses.⁵⁸²

Malaysia Gets Hostile

On 8 July, 7 Rohingyas from Burma climbed the fence of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Jalan Bukit Petaling to demand refugee status. Several of the protesters had applied previously and been rejected.⁵⁸³

Asylum seekers arrested outside of UNHCR

Malaysian police have begun arresting asylum seekers waiting outside the Kuala Lumpur UNHCR office. On 19 Aug, police arrested over 300 people of different nationalities, including Burmese. Prior to this, police had filmed and photographed asylum seekers outside of UNHCR.⁵⁸⁴ The next day, a police van was sent to block the office entrance, forcing UNHCR to close for the day. UNHCR refugee eligibility coordinator Evan Ruth said "We cannot operate with the police present and deterring people from approaching our office."⁵⁸⁵

On 26 August, police arrested another 50 asylum seekers, including 30 Burmese, most in the vicinity of the UNHCR office. Officials reported that the detainees were sent to Langkap detention center. UNHCR has expressed concern that these arrests

⁵⁸⁰ Kaladan (16 Jul 03) Two Refugees Arrested in Kutupalong Camp

⁵⁸¹ Narinjara (23 Sept 03) Clash with police leave several Burmese Muslim refugees hurt

⁵⁸² Narinjara (16 Sept 03) Floating Rohingyas of Teknaf

⁵⁸³ Kaladan (25 Jul 03) Seven Rohingya Muslim Seek Refugees Status

⁵⁸⁴ Suara Rakyat Malaysia (SUARAM) (19 Aug 03) Urgent alert

⁵⁸⁵ Malaysiakini (20 Aug 03) Police presence forces UNHCR to cease operations

96 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

prevent the office from fulfilling its mandate to provide protection and support to refugees.⁵⁸⁶

Japan Reprieve

On 25 September, a Nagoya District Court overturned a previous ruling to deport a Rohingya man, Khin Maung Hla back to Burma. Presiding Judge Yukio Kato noted "I can easily believe that Khin Maung Hla will face persecution by the military administration in Myanmar."⁵⁸⁷

MIGRANT WORKERS

Thai Authorities Fail To Protect Workers In Mae Sot

[For more information on migrants in Thailand see Thai-Burma Relations]

A 3 July article in the Bangkok Post described widespread abuses by authorities, employers, and human traffickers against Burmese migrants in Mae Sot. Abuses include routine extortion, attacks on labor organizers, abuse in detention centers, and murder. "We live in sheer terror," said one worker. "People know they can do anything to us because the police won't take action. That's why they dare to attack us more openly and more violently."⁵⁸⁸

On 2 September, 800 workers from the Ki Found knitting factory protested after their co-worker, 'May Oo,' age 25 was raped and killed. Workers believe May Oo was killed by the factory's security guard and say they don't believe police will follow up the case. May Oo disappeared on the night of 31 August and was reportedly last seen being taken away on the guard's motorbike. Mae Sot Police Superintendent Col Sonkran Sangkakorn promised workers: "We will take action if we find he is guilty... Under the law, all humans are equal."⁵⁸⁹

On 11 September, the owner of JP Knitting Factory refused payment of 2 months overdue wages owed to 131 workers. The Labor Ministry responded only to the appeal of the 5 Thai workers involved.⁵⁹⁰

On 23 September, 78 workers at the Siriwat Garment Factory were fired when they organized to demand legal minimum wage, access to medical care, and fair working hours. Police threatened to arrest and deport the workers if they failed to comply with the managers' demands.⁵⁹¹

⁵⁸⁶ Malaysiakini (26 Aug 03) 50 more asylum-seekers arrested in KL

⁵⁸⁷ Yomiuri (25 Sept 03) Court nixes deportation of Myanmar man at risk

⁵⁸⁸ Bangkok Post (3 Jul 03) Welcome to...horror

⁵⁸⁹ Irrawaddy (2 Sept 03) Burmese Worker Raped and Killed

⁵⁹⁰ The Irrawaddy (11 Sept 03) Thai Boss Cheats Workers

⁵⁹¹ Yaung Chi Oo Workers Association (23 Sept 03) Siriwat Garment Factory, Another Case of Slave Labor in Mae Sot

JAPAN: SPDC DENIES PASSPORTS TO BURMESE

Since Japan put a stop on new aid to Burma in June, the Burmese embassy has reportedly refused to issue passports to Burmese living in Japan, even those with serious illnesses. Of the estimated 10,000 Burmese in Japan, over half reside there illegally and thus need passports to return to Burma. On 28 July, a 39 year old Burmese man died of brain inflammation and pneumonia in Tokyo. He was taken to a hospital only 10 days before his death, after other institutions refused to accept him.⁵⁹²

LANDMINES

Increasing

Stagnant

Decreasing

In September, an International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) report named Burma as one of only 2 countries which continued to use mines on a regular basis.⁵⁹³

The SPDC army and at least 15 armed opposition groups are reportedly using landmines in 9 out of the country's 14 states and divisions. Among those groups "believed to have used mines recently," the report names the Karen National Liberation Army, Shan State Army, United Wa State Army and All Burma Students' Democratic Front. ICBL also reports that the New Mon State Party (NMSP) and its splinter group, the Hongsawatoi Restoration Group (HRG), have also recently begun using mines. However, NMSP spokesman Nai Banya Mon rejects the claim and says that the group hasn't used landmines since their 1995 ceasefire with the SPDC.⁵⁹⁴

Burma is also one of the world's 15 mine producing countries, manufacturing 3 types of antipersonnel mines. The state-run Myanmar Defense Products Industries is reportedly the largest supplier of mines for the SPDC army. The number of casualties from landmines doubled from 57 in 2001 to 114 in 2002.⁵⁹⁵

There are increasing reports of landmine victims crossing the border into Tak Province. In September, the International Committee of the Red Cross reported 11 mine cases and in Mae La refugee camp there were 4.⁵⁹⁶

⁵⁹² The Japan Times (12 Sept 03) Myanmarese dying to get out of Japan

⁵⁹³ AP (9 Sep 03) Breakaway Russian region Chechnya is deadliest for mines

⁵⁹⁴ Irrawaddy (11 Sep 03) Landmine Use in Burma Continues

⁵⁹⁵ AP (9 Sept 03) Breakaway Russian region Chechnya is deadliest for mines & Irrawaddy (11 Sept 03) Landmine Use in Burma Continues

⁵⁹⁶ CCSDPT (8 Oct 03) Summary CCSDPT open session

EDUCATION

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

SPDC CLAIMS

In a speech on 30 August, newly appointed Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt claimed that since 1988, the SPDC has opened over 6,000 new basic education schools, increased the number of teachers by 49,000 and upped the number of students attending primary school by 2.3 million. In addition, Khin Nyunt said that the regime has opened over 122 new universities and colleges and increased opportunities for technical and computer education.⁵⁹⁷

REALITY FOR MANDALAY STUDENTS

In September, Ma Htay Htay (not her real name) a tutor at Prime University in Mandalay reported that as a result of high fees for tutoring sessions and accommodations, some students who received very high scores on their high school exams cannot afford to attend university. The SPDC has relocated the Mandalay Prime University far from accommodation, making transportation expensive and female students vulnerable to sexual assault. Ma Htay Htay said that the university is guarded by soldiers, police and intelligence officials and the students are not allowed to come and go freely. Some students who are accused of being involved with revolutionaries have been taken out of school and detained. In addition, every month teachers are forced to hold meetings with the students to discuss how the SPDC is prioritizing students despite the fact that there are international sanctions.⁵⁹⁸

⁵⁹⁷ Sun, A Newspaper Published by Asian Tribune Co.,Ltd. (31 Aug 03) The following is the clarifications made by Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt concerning the policies and programmes of the State at the Pyithu Hluttaw here today

⁵⁹⁸ Human Rights Documentation Unit, NCGUB (15 Sept 03) The Miserable Conditions of Mandalay University Students

HEALTH

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

STILL WAITING FOR WATER

In July, it was reported that while international NGOs had improved access to clean water in some rural areas, approximately 15,813 villages still lack access to sufficient water.⁵⁹⁹

“CONDOM” WORD USED FOR FIRST TIME

On 13 August, Burma hosted a regional HIV/AIDS meeting coordinated by the World Health Organization and the Myanmar Ministry of Health. The meeting, which included representatives from 8 Asian countries, focused on reducing HIV/AIDS transmission among IV drug users.⁶⁰⁰ WHO spokeswoman Mangai Balasegaram praised “an amazing shift” in the SPDC’s approach to fighting AIDS, noting that 3 weeks earlier the state press had used the word ‘condom’ for the first time.⁶⁰¹

The 3rd Thai-Myanmar border health conference was held in Kengtung, Shan state from 27-28 September. Thai Public Health Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan attended the conference which is part of a 2000 agreement between the 2 countries to jointly campaign against malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS.⁶⁰²

⁵⁹⁹ Xinhua (1 Jul 03) Over 4,000 villages in Myanmar have improved water supply

⁶⁰⁰ U.N. Wire (14 Aug 03) Regional Meeting On HIV/AIDS Held In Myanmar

⁶⁰¹ AP (21 Aug 03) WHO Lauds Myanmar’s Progress In Promoting Condom Use

⁶⁰² Thai Press Reports (29 Sept 03) Thai , Myanmar Officials Hold Talks On Border

ENVIRONMENT

Improving

Stagnant

Deteriorating

TIGERS FACE EXTINCTION

In August, a major report by the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society, "A National Tiger Action Plan for the Union of Myanmar," estimated that there could be less than 150 tigers left in Burma. Tony Lynam, one of the researchers who produced the report said: "The [tiger] population has declined everywhere and in some places it's gone completely."

While the SPDC Forestry Department has promised that the society's recommendations would become part of government policy, to date they have done little to address rampant poaching and illegal wildlife trading.⁶⁰³ [For information on environmental impacts of development projects see Aid and Human Rights]

⁶⁰³ AP (28 Aug 03) Once killed as common pests, tigers in Myanmar now almost extinct

CHRONOLOGY: 1 JUL ~30 SEP 2003

- 11 Jun SPDC army battalions conduct large scale special military trainings in Minbra Township, Arakan State. *Nar.*, 23 Jul
- 13 Jun 6 policemen in Kathaung (Kawthaung) Tenasserim Division are arrested and sentenced to one year in prison with hard labor for publicly discussing the Black Friday attack. *DVB*, 13 Aug
- 18 Jun Reported that since 30 May, Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has been held in 'protective custody' by the SPDC using section 10(a) of Burma's draconian 1975 State Protection Act. *Irr.*, 18 Jun
- 26 Jun Sayadaw U Satetara, abbot of Nyangdone Monastery, Bahan Township, member of the Young Monks Union since 1988 and strong supporter of Daw Suu dies. *DVB*, 26 Jun
- 27 Jun Authorities find 2 explosive devices in Taungoo, Pegu Division, one at the entrance of the USDA office, and blame the Karen National Liberation Army (KNLA) for the bombs. *DVB*, 1 Jul
- 29 Jun Daw Suu is transferred from Insein Prison to another (secret) location. *DPA*, 1 Jul
- 29 Jun Soe Win, an elected NLD MP arrested on 5 June is released from prison after attempting to commit suicide. *Irr.*, 7 Jul
- 1 Jul 7 ethnic groups who have signed ceasefire agreements with SPDC sign a letter to Sr-Gen Than Shwe concerning the Depayin incident. *DVB*, 9 Aug
- 1 Jul Reported that while international NGOs had improved access to clean water in some rural areas, approximately 15,813 villages still lack access to sufficient water. *Xinhua*, 1 Jul
- 1 Jul Burma is granted a waiver on tariffs and quotas on goods to Australian markets under a sweep decision that applies to all least developed countries. *MT*, 11 Aug
- 1 Jul Reported that Thailand's narcotics control board and French satellite company Spot Image plan to initiate a "remote sensing and training center" in Chiang Mai to monitor illicit poppy plantations in the Golden Triangle region. *AP*, 1 Jul
- 1 Jul 8 NLD youth members arrested in June are tried at Botahtaung Court in Rangoon. *DVB*, 1 Jul
- 2 Jul Reported that Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad promised, in June, to do his "utmost to influence the leadership (of Burma) to release Suu Kyi." *Malaysiakini.com*, 2 Jul
- 2 Jul Soe Myint's 1990 criminal case ends when Judge C.K. Lahiri drops the hijacking charges reportedly for lack of evidence. *AFP*, 2 Jul
- 2 Jul For the first time since 1992, China replaces border patrol agents along the border of southwest Yunnan Province with soldiers from its People's Liberation Army (PLA). *Irr.*, 2 Jul
- 2 Jul Thai foreign ministry spokesman Sihasak Phuanketkeow announces all people of Myanmar nationality who have been granted 'person of concern' (POC) status will be transferred to camps along the border. *AFP*, 2 Jul
- 3 Jul The United States withdraws \$1 million for the UN supervised Wa Alternative Development Program for 2003-2004 fiscal year. *S.H.A.N.*, 14 Jul

102 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

- 3 Jul 30 lawmakers submit a resolution to the National Assembly of South Korea calling for the end of the political oppression of Aung San Suu Kyi. *Yonhap News Agency, 3 Jul*
- 3 Jul USDA members and battalions from the Central Military Headquarters organize military trainings 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. *HRDU, NCGUB, 20 Sep*
- 3 Jul Announced that ICRC representatives have been able to register and meet with 30 political prisoners arrested in conjunction with Black Friday. *AP, 3 Jul*
- 3 Jul 2 NLD members, U Than Tun and U Kyaw Kyaw (alias Ko Than Gyaung) are arrested in Kawthaung, Tenasserim Division, and charged with distributing leaflets and engaging in other political activities. *DVB, 22 Jul*
- 4 Jul Reported that in Ye Township, Mon State, the SPDC is forcing every man between the ages of 18 and 40 to attend military training. *Independent Mon News Agency and Kao-Wao, 4 Jul*
- 4 Jul Britain's Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brian announces he will urge the approximately 30 British travel companies involved in Burma to pull out. *Burma Campaign UK, 4 Jul*
- 4 Jul Foreign Minister Yoriko Kawaguchi says that she is deeply disappointed with the SPDC's response to the concerns Japan has raised about Aung San Suu Kyi. *Reuters, 4 Jul*
- 4 Jul 2 eyewitnesses to the Black Friday attack, 50 year-old U Khin Zaw and 26 year-old Ko Wunna Maung attempt to testify to the Thai parliament, but are threatened with arrest them unless they remained silent about what they had witnessed. *Irr., 8 Jul*
- 4 Jul Somnik Jasunan, an official from Mae Pa village, and village protection unit member Boonchawei Sawasdi are arrested in connection with the May 14 murder of six Burmese migrant workers in Mae Sot. *Irr., 7 Jul*
- 4 Jul NLD members and Black Friday witnesses Wunna Maung and Khin Zaw are granted refugee status with the UNHCR "with the attached condition of not speaking to the press." *Irr., 8 Jul*
- 4 Jul Authorities order the dismantling of 4,000 shops, mostly owned by NLD supporters, in Mandalay. *DVB, 4 Jul*
- 5-7 Jul Burma Foreign Minister Win Aung visits Bangladesh and meets with Prime Minister Begum Khaleda Zia. *Nar., 3 Jul*
- 6 Jul NLD youth members Ko Than Aung and Ko Aung Thein Myint from Yenangyaung and Natmauk, Magwe Division, are arrested by SPDC and charged with attempting to organize MPs to write to Than Shwe and urge him to investigate the Depayin attack. *DVB, 22 Jul*
- 6-7 Jul Burma's border patrol forces Na Sa Ka and Bangladesh border police Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) hold a flag meeting on the border near Maungdaw, Arakan. *Nar., 16 Jul*
- 7 Jul ICRC conducts their first visit of Insein prison since May 30th. *AFP, 7 Jul*
- 7 Jul The International Transport Workers' Federation (ITF) begins a campaign to urge shipping companies, cruise operators and airlines to cease their business with Burma. *Irr., 7 Jul*
- 7 Jul The United WA State Army (UWSA) decide to postpone its drug free year from 2005 to 2007 due to the current political and economic circumstances. *Nation, 13 Aug*

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 103

- 7 Jul The headquarters of the Khaplang faction of rebel group National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN) in Burma is destroyed following an attack by Burmese troops. *BBC, 7 Jul*
- 7 Jul A Mandalay shopkeeper is arrested after he refuses a police order to remove a photo of General Aung San and Daw Aung San Suu Kyi that was hanging in his shop. *HRDU, NCGUB, Sep 03*
- 8 Jul 7 Rohingya from Burma climb the fence of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) office in Jalan Bukit Petaling to demand refugee status. *Kaladan, 25 Jul*
- 8 Jul The UN elects an official of the regime, current UN Ambassador Kyaw Tint Swe, to be one of its 21 vice presidents for the General Assembly. *MT, 8 Jul*
- 8 Jul Foreign Minister Win Aung goes to Pakistan and meets with Foreign Minister Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri as part of the regional PR tour. *AFP, 7 Jul*
- 8 Jul The Cato Institute and over 50 other libertarian think tanks release their annual 'Economic Freedom of the World' report, which places Burma at the bottom of the list for economic freedom. *IPS, 8 Jul*
- 9 Jul SPDC officials warn Wa leaders in Panghsang, Shan State not to contact the NLD or other political groups or to speak out about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's imprisonment. *Irr., 9 Jul*
- 9 Jul Shans crossing into Thailand report that since early June, 3000 residents of 14 villages in Eastern Mung Set Township have been forced to relocate. *CCSDPT, 9 Jul*
- 9 Jul The Republic of Macedonia establishes diplomatic relations with Burma. *New Light of Myanmar, 9 Jul*
- 9 Jul Thai authorities plan to register all new births at Tham Hin Refugee camp, Kanchanaburi Province. The registration will not grant Thai citizenship but will confirm the child's birth in Thailand. *CCSDPT, 9 Jul*
- 10 Jul 3 women NLD members in Rangoon are arrested after they send a letter to Sr. Gen Than Shwe on behalf of NLD women calling for the release of everyone arrested on Black Friday, permission for NLD offices to reopen, and for an independent inquiry into the Depayin incident. *DVB, 11 Jul*
- 10 Jul Anti-drug officials from the Mekong river subregion, Thailand, China, Myanmar and Laos, meet in Chiang Rai to strengthen cooperation in the illegal drugs trade. *Xinhua, 10 Jul*
- 10 Jul Foreign Affairs Minister Bill Graham announces restrictions on the travel of SPDC diplomats in Canada and reiterates the governments recommendation against new business investments in Burma and denial of visas to past and present senior SPDC officials. *AP, 11 Jul*
- 11 Jul Two Burmese nationals are arrested for trafficking heroin in the state of Pahang in Malaysia. *AFP, 11 Jul*
- 13 Jul Reported that leaflets urging people to join together to overthrow the SPDC have been distributed by People's Oway Front in major cities such as Rangoon and Mandalay, and pasted on the walls of Pegu University. *DVB, 13 Jul*
- 14 Jul SPDC soldiers arrest approximately 130 people, including political activists, who are attempting to flee to Thailand. *Irr., 17 Jul*
- 14 Jul SPDC Minister of Commerce Brigadier-General Pyi Sone and Indian Minister of Commerce and Industry Arun Jaitley sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on a Joint Trade Committee (JTC). *Xinhua, 15 Jul*

104 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

- 14 Jul The UK Foreign Office urges British tour companies to stop organizing tourism to Burma. *Foreign & Commonwealth Office, 14 Jul*
- 15 Jul Authorities raid a restaurant owned by Ko Thant Shin, an NLD organiser from Indaw Township, Sagaing Division. *DVB, 31 Jul*
- 15 Jul 80 Rohingya families repatriate from Bangladesh, but are denied ownership of their land and properties. *Kaladan Press, 15 Jul*
- 16 Jul 2 men from Kutupalong camp are reportedly jailed because they refused to sign a Voluntary Repatriation Form. *Forum Asia, 10 Sep*
- 17 Jul 5 staff members of First Eleven, a "weekly Burmese language sports journal," are arrested after their office is searched by military authorities. *Irr., 22 Jul*
- 17 Jul U Myat Saing, chairman of Taungdwingyi Township NLD, is released from prison after suffering a stroke that prevents him from walking. *DVB, 31 Jul*
- 17 Jul The State government of Mizoram and a number of local Mizo organizations launch a widespread drive to force out thousands of Chin refugees after a young girl was reportedly raped by a Burmese man. *Chinland Guardian, 26 Jul*
- 18 Jul Thai Prime Minister Thaksin proposes a road map for political transition in Burma. *Nation, 18 Jul*
- 18 Jul SPDC orders villagers in Mon and Karen State to vote for 5 people from each village to become soldiers. *HRDU, NCGUB, 20 Sep*
- 18 Jul General Secretary of the Arakan League for Democracy Khaing Myo Khaing passes away on July 18 in Chiang Mai. *Nar., 18 Jul*
- 18 Jul Members of Burmese opposition and ethnic groups in Mae Sariang without legal documents are ordered by Thai authorities to leave town or face arrest. *Irr., 29 Jul*
- 18 Jul Vice chairman U Saw Htee and Secretary U Kan Htun of Mandalay Division NLD are arrested. *Network for Democracy and Development, 28 Jul*
- 18 Jul NLD members Ko Myo Aung and U Tin Myint from Khin U Township, Sagaing Division, are sentenced to 2 and 3 years imprisonment respectively in Shwebo Prison. *Mizzima, 18 Jul*
- 19 Jul Mandalay Division NLD vice-chairman U Saw Htay and secretary U Hla Tun are arrested. *DVB, 19 Jul*
- 19 Jul A riot breaks out in front of a monastery in Pyinmana, Mandalay division between Buddhists and Muslims. *Kaladan press, 26 Jul*
- 19 Jul 6 people from Madaya, Mandalay Division are arrested for giving Aung San Suu Kyi protection during her Mogok to Mandalay journey. *DVB, 19 Jul*
- 20 Jul 4 NLD members from Sintku township, Mandalay Division including chairman U Sein Htun, secretary U San, and members U Hla Shwe and Ko Thet Naing are sentenced to 2 years in jail. *Network for Democracy and Development, 28 Jul*
- 20 Jul Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad threatens to kick Burma out of ASEAN for SPDC's continued disregard international concerns saying that their actions 'embarrass' ASEAN and affect its credibility. *AFP, 20 Jul*
- 21 Jul Germany refuses to consider economic sanctions and thus blocks the EU from taking decisive action against the SPDC. *Burma Campaign UK, 21 Jul*

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 105

- 21 Jul 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, July 03*
- 21 Jul The Coastal Region Military Command instructs all the districts and townships administrations councils in Tenasserim Division to recruit and send 20-30 'hard core persons' and 40-60 other people as reserves from each village under their control. *Mergui-Tavoy Information Department, Karen National Union, Jul 03*
- 22 Jul Military Intelligence personnel and local police raid Thwe Say Kan and Popa Yone monasteries in Rangoon and detain Mon monks they claimed were involved in political activities. *DVB, 22 Jul*
- 22 Jul The regime faxes statements to foreign embassies claiming that they had recently released 91 people from prison. *AP, 22 Jul*
- 23 Jul Mandalay Division NLD financier U Ko Gyi, father of Kyaw Soe Lin who drove Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's car during the Depeyin trip is arrested. *Network for Democracy and Development, 28 Jul*
- 23 Jul Regional meeting on the smuggling of chemicals used to produce heroin and amphetamines is held in Chiang Rai. *Nation, 24 Jul*
- 23-24 Jul ASEM Foreign Ministers Meeting is held in Bali, Indonesia, at which the foreign ministers called on the SPDC to immediately release Aung San Suu Kyi and other NLD members. *5th Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM), July 2003*
- 26 Jul Reported that United Solidarity and Development Association (USDA) members distribute anti-Muslim pamphlets on June 25, and July 5 and 7 in Ye Kyi and Myaung Mya townships, Irrawaddy division. *Muslim Information Center of Burma, 26 Jul*
- 26-27 Jul Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra and Mahathir meet on July 26-27 to discuss the situation in Burma and ways to address it. *AFP, 23 Jul*
- 28 Jul The SPDC allows an ICRC team to meet with Daw Suu. The team reports that she appeared to be healthy and uninjured. *AP, 28 Jul*
- 28 Jul President George Bush signs the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act 2003. *Press Release of Senator McConnell, 28 Jul*
- 29 Jul- 2 Aug ICRC visits Shwebo prison, Sagaing Division. *AP, 5 Aug*
- 29 Jul 50 Ukrainian tanks are shipped to the Ba Htoo Army facility in Mandalay. *DVB, 29 Jul*
- 29 Jul Reported that Burma's government is adjusting its paddy purchase policy for the first time in 40 years. *Xinhua, 29 Jul*
- 29-30 Jul Deputy Foreign Minister Khin Maung Win goes to the Philippines as part of the regional PR tour. *Xinhua, 30 Jul*
- 30 Jul Amnesty International calls for an impartial, independent investigation into the Depayin incident. *AP, 30 Jul*
- 30 Jul By 30 July an estimated 1,320 Burmese have reached the border from Mizoram and were being allowed entry by the SPDC. *Mizzima, 31 Jul*
- 31 Jul Reported that ICRC meets with another 28 political prisoners arrested in conjunction with the Black Friday attack. *DVB, 6 Aug*
- 31 Jul Foreign Ministers from Laos, Burma, Cambodia and Thailand begin a two-day meeting in Bangkok to lay the groundwork for cooperation in transportation, tourism and human development. *Nation, 31 Jul*

106 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

- 31 Jul Reported that the banking crisis, which began last February, has forced a number of private bank branches in Arakan State to the brink of closure. *Nar., 31 Jul*
- Aug The Asian Development Bank unveils plans for the US\$4.6 billion electricity scheme which would include the proposed Tasang Dam in Shan State. *World Rivers Review, Aug 03*
- 1 Aug A human rights training workshop is conducted by the Human Rights Education Institute of Burma for youth from the Arakan Patriotic Youth Organization and Rohingya Youth Development Forum in Chittagong, Bangladesh. *Kaladan, 4 Aug*
- 1 Aug Khun Myint Htun, 41, NLD elected MP of eastern Mon State in 1988 is released from prison on August 1 after 7 years of incarceration. *AFP, 8 Aug*
- 1 Aug US Senator John McCain writes a letter to Thaksin expressing “deep concern” over recent actions by the Thai government to “constrict and curtail the activities of Burmese democracy activists, hamper assistance to refugees and internally displaced peoples in Burma, and intimidate ethnic groups who have not submitted to the military junta in Rangoon.” US Senate, 1 Aug
- 3 Aug Ministry of Home Affairs warns monks in Moulmein, Mon State not to engage in politics and to stay in their temples if there is a ‘people strike.’ *Kao Wao, 3 Aug*
- 4 Aug Reported that Burma’s first elected female MP, Daw San San, 73 has been forced to flee the country. *Irr., 4 Aug*
- 4 Aug SPDC blames 3 mine explosions in Monywa, Sagaing Division on the All Burma Students’ Democratic Front (ABSDF) and the Communist Party of Burma (CPB). *Irr., 4 Aug*
- 5 Aug Lt-Gen Thura Shwe Mann meets with ceasefire group leaders in Kachin State; including the U Za Khom Thain Yain, the chairman of New Democratic Army – Kachin (NDAK) in Panwa and, U Lamung Tu Jai, the chairman of Kachin Independent Organisation (KIO) in Loinza. *DVB, 5 Aug*
- 5 Aug 6 former NLD members charged with involvement in political activities are arrested and sent to 9-mile Prison in Kawthaung, Tenasserim Division. *DVB, 5 Aug*
- 6 Aug Pinheiro calls for progress in releasing political prisoners in Burma. *UN Wire, 6 Aug*
- 6 Aug Reported that a hunger strike was begun in July in Mandalay prison by around 20 political prisoners to protest a ban on reading books and periodicals. *Irr., 6 Aug*
- 6 Aug Reported that 6 people arrested at Depayin remain at the Monywa military hospital, Sagaing Division where they are being treated for injuries sustained during the attack. *DVB 6 Aug*
- 6 Aug Thai Government plans to relocate the over 16,000 refugees in Ban Mae Kongka-Sala camp, Mae Sariang district to Ban La-uun in Sob Meui district in October. *CCSDPT, 6 Aug*
- 6 Aug Some of Thailand’s critics in Congress propose a stipulation to Thailand’s assistance from the US in 2004 draft spending bills. *AFP, 6 Aug*
- 6 Aug The Mon Relief and Development Committee identifies 75 Karen and Mon IDP families on the run near Jiang Se Ji Township. *CCSDPT, 6 Aug*

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 107

- 6 Aug Thai troops begin a feasibility study of the impact of the Tasang Dam on the Salween River local communities. *BKK Post, 6 Aug*
- 6 Aug The SPDC announces plans to open its 2nd IT park in Mandalay, at a cost of US\$ 2 million. *BKK Post, 6 Aug*
- 6-7 Aug The annual ASEAN finance ministers meeting in Manila produces an agreement to create a single market in the region by 2020, dubbed the "ASEAN economic community.". *AFX Asia, 7 Aug*
- 7 Aug Japan and Laos make a joint statement calling for the immediate release of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and political freedom for the NLD. *Xinhua, 7 Aug*
- 7 Aug Singapore banks including branches of Standard Chartered Bank and HSBC begin refusing Burmese LCs, and other banks such as the Overseas Union and DBS bank are expected to follow suit. *Irr., 7 Aug*
- 7 Aug 20 former NLD MPs who have been dismissed from the party send an open letter urging Sr-Gen Than Shwe to form an interim government. *DVB, 19 Aug*
- 7 Aug New regulations are implemented in the Mae Khong Khar Refugee Camp, including mandatory permits for cars wishing to enter the camp and registering of vehicles of NGOs. *Network Media Group, 11 Aug*
- 7 Aug Refugee women organize a sit-in at the MSF medical center in Bangladesh to protest against their repatriation. *Forum Asia, 10 Sep*
- 8 Aug Chinese company Yunnan Machinery and Equipment Import and Export Corporation is contracted to build the 400-megawatt Shweli power station in Namkhan, Shan State. *AP, 11 Aug*
- 8 Aug Italian sportswear company Lotto, Swiss retailer Migros, and Britain's JJB Sports PLC announce they will stop sourcing clothes from Burma. *Burma Campaign UK, 8 Aug, AFX., 26 Sep*
- 8 Aug 5 Muslim youth are arrested in Myawaddy by a combined operation cell of Military Intelligence, Nasaka and USDA members. The youth are migrant workers returning to Burma from Mae Sot. *Kaladan, 11 Aug*
- 11 Aug New information is released about Razali's 'business' in Burma. Razali currently serves as chairman to 4 Malaysian companies with business interests in the country: Iris Technologies, which the SPDC has contracted to introduce E-passports; Wah Seong, an engineering group which owns a trading company involved in property development in Rangoon; Leader Universal Holdings, a cable, fiber-optics and telecom-equipment firm actively seeking to invest in Burma; and Salcon Engineering, a water treatment group which has exhibited at a Rangoon trade show. *Fortune, 11 Aug*
- 13 Aug Reported that the junta is mobilizing 30,000 troops for a possible attack on the UWSA. *Nation, 13 Aug*
- 13 Aug Burma hostes a regional HIV/AIDS meeting coordinated by the World Health Organization and the Myanmar Ministry of Health. *UN Wire, 14 Aug*
- 14 Aug Rev. U Wimala from Kyi-Ywar village monestary near Depeyin is sentenced to 9 years and 3 months imprisonment for helping the NLD during Aung San Suu Kyi's trip. *DVB, 5 Aug*
- 15 Aug Reported that the SPDC has instructed all government agencies and private businesses to begin using euros for international transactions. *BBC, 15 Aug*
- 15 Aug Deputy Sr. Gen Maung Aye leads a military delegation on a 6-day official visit to China. *AP, 14 Aug*

108 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

- 15 Aug China loans the regime US\$200 million loan to purchase equipment for the 790-megawatt Ye-Ywa hydroelectric power project near Mandalay. *AP, 16 Aug*
- 18 Aug The SPDC reports that 10,000 people have been repatriated through their reception camp in Myawaddy on the Thai border. *Xinhua, 8 Sep*
- 18 Aug The junta meets separately with leaders of 9 groups, including the 7 who signed the statement, to urge them to keep quiet about Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's arrest and detention. *DVB, 19 Aug*
- 19 Aug Reported that Ja Seu-bo, Rangoon's head of militia forces in eastern Shan State is also one of the region's top drug producers. *S.H.A.N., 19 Aug*
- 19 Aug Police in Kuala Lumpur arrest over 300 people of different nationalities including Burmese. Prior to this police had filmed and photographed asylum seekers outside of UNHCR. *SUARAM, 19 Aug*
- 19 Aug The National Catholic Commission on Migration (NCCM), which provides assistance to Burmese migrants in Bangkok, is raided by Thai police. *Mizzima, 21 Aug*
- 20 Aug Thai anti-narcotics police kill 9 alleged UWSA drug traffickers and injure 11 others in a sting operation to buy methamphetamines on the Burma border in the province of Chiang Mai. *AFP, 20 Aug*
- 21 Aug A Burmese military warship docked at a jetty in west Rangoon is hit by a rocket launcher. *Irr., 23 Aug*
- 22 Aug Reported that 2 state-run newspapers, the Myanmar Alin and The Mirror have reportedly cut their circulation up to 30% due to lack of paper supplies. *Network Media Group, 22 Aug*
- 22 Aug Advertising giant WPP, withdraws their Rangoon subsidiary, Bates Myanmar, after appearing on the UK Burma Campaign's "Dirty List" of companies with investments in Burma. *Irr., 22 Aug*
- 22 Aug The Karen Human Rights Group releases a report entitled "SPDC & DKBA Orders To Villages: Set 2003-A."
- 23 Aug NLD youth members from Kemmendine Township are arrested after distributing leaflets calling for the CRPP (Committee Representing People's Parliament) to convene parliament. *DVB, Oslo, 23 Aug*
- 24 Aug Thai police kill three men believed to be UWSA members after they refuse to stop at a police checkpoint in Chiang Mai province. *Nation, 23 Aug*
- 25 Aug In a reshuffle, Lt-Gen Soe Win-takes over as Secretary One, Lt-Gen Thein Sein is appointed Secretary 2 of the SPDC, U Ko Lay is appointed Minister of the Prime Minister's Office, Maj-Gen Thein Swe is appointed Minister of the Prime Minister's Office, U Aye Maung replaces recently deceased U Tha Tun as attorney general. *Irr., 26 Aug*
- 25 Aug Thailand and Burma agree to exchange naval ship visits, the first of which are scheduled to arrive in Rangoon in December. *AFP, 25 Aug*
- 26 Aug Police arrest 50 asylum seekers in Kuala Lumpur, including 30 Burmese, most in the vicinity of the UNHCR office. *Malaysiakini, 26 Aug*
- 26 Aug An MoU on cooperation in information and communication technology (ICT) is signed in Rangoon by SPDC Minister of Communications, Posts and Telegraphs Brigadier-General Thein Zaw and Indian Minister of Communication and Information Technology Arun Shourie. *Xinhua, 27 Aug*

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 109

- 26 Aug 30 Mon Buddhist monks from Wat Bang Yar and Wat Sudhammavatee in west Bangkok are arrested, disrobed, and deported by Thai police. *Kao Wao, 26 Aug*
- 27 Aug A Thai Cabinet Resolution prohibits migrants from registering outside of the province they are currently working in, and cancels renewal of permits for certain job categories including restaurants, hotels, beauty parlors, and street vending. *Irr., 25 Sep*
- 27 Aug Deputy Director for International Security Operations Command General Panlop Pinmanee announces that during the APEC meeting held in Bangkok in October, Burmese refugees will be confined in 9 detention centers throughout Thailand. *AFP, 27 Aug*
- 28 Aug U Tin Maung Naing, NLD Vice-Chairman of Taungdwingyi Township, Magwe Division, and NLD member U Aung Ko are summoned by the ward chairman and told to submit their biographies. *DVB, 13 Sep*
- 28 Aug A major report by the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society, "A National Tiger Action Plan for the Union of Myanmar," estimates that there could be less than 150 tigers left in Burma. *AP, 28 Aug*
- 28 Aug 57 ethnic Shan and Mon monks and novices at Wat Nongkham in Bangkok are arrested, disrobed, and deported by authorities. *Shan-Eu, 7-13 Sep*
- 28 Aug SPDC Minister of Commerce Pyi Sone says trade with China reached US\$800 million in 2002, and China is now Burma's second largest trade partner. *Xinhua, 28 Aug*
- 29 Aug The SPDC forces people at temples in Pegu Division to recite mantras believed to protect the regime from US Sanctions. *DVB, 29 Aug*
- 30 Aug New evidence obtained from eyewitnesses confirms that the Depayin attack was premeditated. *The Ad hoc Commission On Depayin Massacre, 30 Aug*
- 30 Aug 120 Rohingyas are arrested by police and immigration authorities in the village of Koin Daung in Buthidaung Township. *Kaladan, 11 Sep*
- 30 Aug Newly appointed Prime Minister General Khin Nyunt unveils 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. *AFP, 9 Sep*
- 31 Aug The US steps up pressure on the regime by announcing they have credible evidence that Daw Suu was on a hunger strike. *Irr., 3 Sep*
- 31 Aug The National Coalition Government Union of Burma (NCGUB) states that the Regime's roadmap is only a 'political ploy' to ease international pressure. *NCGUB, 31 Aug*
- 2 Sep Amnesty International reports that at least 75 additional people have been arrested since events on May 30, in many instances on account of their calls for an investigation into the attack and release of those detained on May 30. *Inter-Press Service, 5 Sep*
- 2 Sep SPDC Air Force Chief Major General Myat Hein visits India. *Islamic Republic News Agency, 2 Sep*
- 2 Sep Thai Deputy Prime Minister Chavalit Yongchaiyudh meets with Chinese President Hu Jintao, Prime Minister Wen Jiabao and Chinese military leaders to discuss issues relating to Burma and drug suppression. *Bangkok Post, 2 Sep*

110 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

- 2 Sep 800 workers from the Ki Found knitting factory in Thailand protest after their co-worker, 'May Oo,' age 25 was raped and killed. *Irr.*, 2 Sep
- 2 Sep ASEAN economic ministers approve a draft of a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between ASEAN and India. *Xinhua*, 15 Sep
- 2 Sep Los Angeles Superior Court judge Victoria Chaney rejects Unocal's bid for alleged human rights violations to be judged by Burmese, not US law, and orders Unocal to stand trial on 22 September. *The Independent*, 2 Sep
- 3 Sep ASEAN and Chinese Trade Ministers meet and discussed the ASEAN-China Free Trade Agreement and the "early harvest" of some items prior to the realization date in 2010. *AFP*, 3 Sep
- 3 Sep Thai and Burmese governments agree to repatriate 400 Burmese nationals to Burma from Thailand every month. *Kaladan*, 3 Sep
- 4 Sep Indian Naval Chief Admiral Madhvendra Singh, the first Indian Naval officer to visit Burma in 30 years, arrives in Rangoon. *AP Worldstream*, 4 Sep
- 4 Sep The EU Parliament adopts a joint resolution calling for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and for the SPDC to honor the 1990 election. *European Union*, 4 Sep
- 5 Sep Dr. Khin Shwe leads a delegation of trade officials to Tak on the Thai-Burma border, and announces plans to double border trade to counter the effects of sanctions. *Irr.*, 5 Sep
- 5 Sep Wa leaders in Panghsang decide that the junta will be asked to recognize the United Wa State Party, the political wing of the United Wa State Army, as a political organization. *Irr.*, 5 Sep
- 5 Sep NLD youth leader Ko Thein Naing Oo and youth member Ma Tin Tin Nyo from Dala Township, Rangoon Division are each sentenced to 7 years in prison for attempting to distribute leaflets on the Dipeyin incident in Dala Township. *DVB*, 16 Sep
- 5 Sep The Ethnic Nationalities Solidarity and Cooperation Committee (ENSCC) introduce their own 2 stage road map. *Irr.*, 5 Sep
- 6 Sep 7 political prisoners in Bassein Prison, Irrawaddy Division begin a hunger strike calling for the release of Daw Suu and all other political prisoners. *DVB*, 16 Sep
- 6 Sep In his first address as Prime Minister Khin Nyunt claims that the underdevelopment of ethnic nationality areas was due to lack of infrastructure and communication. *Irr.*, 6 Sep
- 6 Sep 2 Indian Navy ships arrive in Rangoon for 4 days of joint manouvres with SPDC Naval ships. *Xinhua*, 10 Sep
- 7 Sep Sr.Gen Than Shwe names 4 Senior military officials and a judge to the committee overseeing the drafting of a new constitution. *Financial Times*, 9 Sep
- 7 Sep Lt. Gen Thein Sein is appointed as the new chairman, and Chief Justice Aung Toe and Minister of Electric Power, Major General Tin Htut are named as joint vice-chairmen. *AFP*, 7 Sep
- 7 Sep Protesters around Asia mark Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's 100th day in detention by fasting, and holding protests to demand her release. *AP Worldstream*, 7 Sep
- 7 Sep Prison authorities stop giving water to the protestors in Bassein Prison, Irrawaddy Division. *DVB*, 16 Sep

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 111

- 8 Sep The junta begins its 3rd agricultural census funded by the UNDP. *Xinhua, 8 Sep*
- 8 Sep SPDC claims to have arrested 417 human traffickers between July 2002 and August 21, 2003. *Xinhua, 8 Sep*
- 8 Sep Razali praised the regime's roadmap. *AP, 8 Sep*
- 8 Sep The International Committee of Red Cross visits Shan State twice in September. Their 4th visit to the state started on September 8 and their 5th on September 22. *SHAN, 9 Sep*
- 9 Sep Labour Minister and SPDC spokesman Tin Win note that convention regulations state that any group which left the convention could be deemed to have forfeited their right to participate. *MT, 8-14 Sep*
- 9 Sep The International Campaign to Ban Landmines (ICBL) report names Burma as one of only 2 countries which continue to use mines on a regular basis. *AP, 9 Sep*
- 10 Sep Burma is one of 15 countries to be placed on Tier 3, the lowest tier of the US government for its failure to "comply with the Act's minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking, and failure to make significant efforts to do so. *US Department of State Press Statement, 10 Sep*
- 10 Sep U Tun Aung Kyaw, a well-known political activist from Mandalay dies from wounds sustained during the May 30th attack. *DVB, 10 Sep*
- 11 Sep Police raid the San Papao Temple in Chiang Mai and detain undocumented Burmese monks and novices. *Shan-Eu, 7-13 Sep*
- 11 Sep UN Special Rapporteur on Myanmar Paulo Sergio Pinheiro reports to the UNGA that more than 100 NLD members and supporters had been arrested, killed, wounded and missing since the Black Friday attack. *AFP, 11 Sep*
- 11 Sep The Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) informs the junta that it would support the National Convention provided that it would be different from the 1993 Convention, and if all ethnic nationalities and political parties, as well as the military were represented. *The Kachin Post, 11 Sep*
- 11 Sep The owner of JP Knitting Factory in Thailand refuses payment of 2 months overdue wages owed to 131 workers. *Irr., 11 Sep*
- 11 Sep Burma is allowed to attend the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Organization (AIPO) General Assembly only as a special observer as Burma does not have a parliament. *Xinhua, 11 Sep*
- 12 Sep Reported that the Burmese embassy has reportedly refused to issue passports to Burmese living in Japan. *The Japan Times, 12 Sep*
- 12 Sep Representatives from the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Myanmar Ministry of Agriculture and Irrigation sign an agreement on technical cooperation to increase production of edible oil. *Xinhua, 13 Sep*
- 15 Sep President Bush states that Burma has "failed demonstrably" to meet their international obligations to fight drug trafficking, subjecting Burma to U.S. aid penalties. *VOA, 16 Sep*
- 16 Sep Security forces fire upon the prisoners staging a protest in Bassein Prison, Irrawaddy Division, killing at least 4 and injuring others. *DVB, 16 Sep*
- 16 Sep Residents of Teknaf urge local their local MP to send Rohingyas in the area back to Burma 'for the cleanliness of the town.' *Nar., 16 Sep*
- 16 Sep The Committee for Representing People's Parliament (CRPP) release a statement rejecting the SPDC roadmap. *DVB, 17 Sep*

112 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

- 17 Sep SPDC sentences head NLD youth member from Yankin Township, Rangoon Division, Ko Myo Khin, who was detained on 3 June, to 3 years imprisonment. *DVB, 26 Sep*
- 17 Sep Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Morshed Khan announces that construction on a road linking Teknaf with Sittwe, Arakan State would start this year and hopefully be completed in 2004. *AFP, 17 Sep*
- 17 Sep Australia donates AUD 500,000 to the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Burma. *Radio Australia, 17 Sep*
- 17-19 Sep Ministers from Cambodia, PRC (Yunnan Province), Lao People's Democratic Republic, Burma, Thailand and Viet Nam meet in Dali, China for the 12th Ministerial Meeting of the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Economic Cooperation Program. *ADB, 15 Sep*
- 18 Sep Doctors without Borders (MSF) has received 550 complaints of coercion to repatriate from refugees in recent months in Bangladesh. *AFP, 18 Sep*
- 18 Sep 15 Burmese activists are arrested outside the Burmese Embassy while demonstrating on the 15th anniversary of the coup d'état of the Burmese junta. *Irr., 18 Sep*
- 19 Sep A Burmese military delegation arrives in Bangladesh to discuss military intelligence sharing to curb sea piracy, arms smuggling and attacks by opposition armies. *Nar., 24 Sep*
- 19 Sep Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart during his official visit to Germany solicits Germany's support for the SPDC roadmap and encourages them to offer incentives of economic assistance to the regime to implement their 7-point roadmap. *Nation, 19 Sep*
- 19 Sep Daw Suu undergoes an operation related to a gynecological condition. *AFP, 19 Sep*
- 19 Sep China's XJ Group Corporation signs a contract with SPDC Industrial authorities to build a US\$ 112 million multi-purpose diesel engine plant. *Xinhua, 19 Sep*
- 20 Sep The New Light of Myanmar claims that over 15,000 Rangoon residents attended a USDA-organized rally to support the roadmap in Thingankyun Township. *Irr., 22 Sep*
- 20 Sep Foreign Minister Surakiart solicits support for the road map during a visit to Germany. *Nation, 20 Sep*
- 21-23 Sep The regime agrees to allow Indonesian envoy Ali Alatas to visit the country from 21-23 September. *AFP, 23 Jul*
- 23 Sep Than Shwe appoints U Myint Thein, Director General, Pyithu Hluttaw Office as Joint Secretary 2 of the committee. *TV Myanmar, 24 Sep*
- 23 Sep 78 workers at the Siriwat Garment Factory in Thailand are fired when they organized to demand legal minimum wage, access to medical care, and fair working hours. *Yaung Chi Oo Workers Association, 23 Sep*
- 23 Sep UNESCO appeals for the release and clemency of dentist and researcher Khin Zaw Win, 52, who was arrested in 1994 at the Rangoon airport on his way to Singapore for carrying documents about the NLD. *AFP, 24 Sep*
- 24 Sep The USDA organizes a rally in Myitkyina, Kachin State which was reportedly attended by 10,000 people. *Irr., 24 Sep*
- 24 Sep 150 villagers fleeing demands by SPDC and DKBA for food and labor from Kaw Ka Reik township, Karen State arrive in Thailand. *Irr., 24 Sep*

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 113

- 24 Sep Reported that a new yaba pill five times stronger than the original has entered the market. *S.H.A.N.*, 24 Sep
- 24 Sep A man from Camp #1 in Mae Hong Son Province is shot and killed by SPDC soldiers while fishing 10kms outside the camp. *CCSDPT*, 8 Aug
- 24 Sep US Congressman Joe Pitts raises concerns over reports that Thai soldiers were blocking refugees from entering Thailand and refusing to allow aid to be passed across the border. *Irr.*, 24 Sep
- 24 Sep Reported that the regime destroys over 1,400 houses in Moulmein to make space for a new railway station. *IMNA*, 24 Sep
- 25 Sep A Nagoya District Court in Japan overturns a previous ruling to deport a Rohingya man, Khin Maung Hla back to Burma. *Yomiuri*, 25 Sep
- 25 Sep Thai Foreign Minister Surakiart Sathirathai meets with Sr Gen Than Shwe and Lt Gen Khin Nyunt in Rangoon to discuss ways to go about restoring democracy. *Japan Economic Newswire*, 26 Sep
- 25 Sep Reported that at a 2-day seminar organized by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) held in Hanoi in September results in the adoption of the 'Hanoi Resolution' by six countries in the Mekong sub-region, Cambodia, China, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. *AFP*, 25 Sep
- 26 Sep Following her recovery from surgery, the junta allows Daw Suu to return to her home, where she remains under house arrest. *BBC*, 26 Sep
- 26 Sep The SPDC tells the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO) to 'clean up' remaining All Burma Students' Democratic Front (ABSDF) troops in Kachin State. *Irr.*, 26 Sep
- 27 Sep US State department reports that US and European diplomats are turned away by authorities when they attempted to visit Daw Suu. *Reuters*, 27 Sep
- 27-28 Sep The 3rd Thai-Myanmar border health conference is held in Kengtung, Shan State. Thai Public Health Minister Sudarat Keyuraphan attend the conference which is part of a 2000 agreement between the 2 countries to jointly campaign against malaria, tuberculosis, and AIDS. *Thai Press Reports*, 29 Sep
- 29 Sep At the UNGA meeting, Win Aung says, referring to Daw Suu's status, that "we don't call this house arrest....We are helping her to overcome the health problems." *CNN*, 30 Sep
- 30 Sep UN envoy Razali Ismail embarks on his 11th trip to Burma where he is scheduled to meet with Daw Aung San Suu Kyi as well as Sr. Gen Than Shwe and Gen Khin Nyunt. *AP*, 28 Jul
- 2 Oct There are 110,614 officially registered refugees in camps along the Thai-Burma border, with unregistered refugees bringing the total up to 132,118. *CCSDPT*, 13 Nov

APPENDIX I: RECOMMENDATIONS: “SHAN REFUGEES: DISPELLING THE MYTHS”

Shan Women's Action Network September 2003, <http://www.shanwomen.org>

Recommendations

It is recommended that the international community address the reasons for the influx of Shan asylum seekers to Thailand by pressuring the Burmese military regime to:

- respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, to halt the use of weapons against the civilian population, to protect all civilians, including children, women and persons belonging to ethnic or religious minorities from violations of humanitarian law
- begin tri-partite dialogue with representatives of non-Burman ethnic nationalities and the democratic opposition to re-establish peace and democracy in Burma.

It is recommended that the Thai government meet its obligations to the Shan asylum seekers in Thailand by:

- Giving protection to Shan civilians along the Thai-Shan border by allowing them to cross the border into Thailand, provide adequate documents for Shan asylum seekers, and access to refugee camps and the UNHCR;
- Allowing Shan asylum seekers access to humanitarian aid agencies based in Thailand;
- Not deporting Shan asylum seekers, particularly women, into the hands of the Burmese military.
- Signing the 1951 refugee Convention
- Ensuring all refugee camps provide adequate health care and counseling for victims of sexual and gender based violence;
- Reviewing its security directive and stopping the crackdowns against pro-democracy and human rights groups working on Burma issues; Continuing to fully support the Thai Senate Study Committee of Foreign Affairs' Study on Ethnic Groups and Thai-Burma Border Security Issues, which has a special focus on the situation of Shan asylum seekers in Thailand and making every effort to urgently and comprehensively implement the study's recommendations in 2004.

Recommendations to UNHCR

It is recommended that the Executive Committee Meeting of the UNHCR and the international community address the reasons for the influx of Shan asylum seekers to Thailand by pressuring the Burmese military regime to:

- respect their obligations under international humanitarian law, including Article 3 of the 1949 Geneva Conventions, to halt the use of weapons against the civilian population, to protect all civilians, including children, women and persons belonging to ethnic or religious minorities from violations of humanitarian law;

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 115

- begin tri-partite dialogue with representatives of non-Burman ethnic nationalities and the Burman opposition to re-establish peace and democracy in Burma.

It is recommended that the Executive Committee Meeting of the UNHCR and the international community urge the Thai government to meet its obligations to the Shan asylum seekers in Thailand by:

- Giving protection to Shan civilians along the Thai-Shan border by allowing them to cross the border into Thailand, provide adequate documents for Shan asylum seekers, and access to refugee camps and the UNHCR;
- Allowing Shan asylum seekers access to humanitarian aid agencies based in Thailand;
- Not deporting Shan asylum seekers, particularly women, into the hands of the Burmese military;
- Ratifying the 1951 Refugee Convention;
- Ensuring all refugee camps provide adequate health care and counseling for victims of sexual and gender based violence;
- Reviewing its security directives and stopping the crackdowns against pro-democracy and human rights groups working on Burma issues;
- Continuing to fully support the Thai Senate Study Committee of Foreign Affairs' Study on Ethnic Groups and Thai-Burma Border Security Issues, which has a special focus on the situation of Shan asylum seekers in Thailand and making every effort to urgently and comprehensively implement the study's recommendations in 2004.

It is recommended that the Executive Committee Meeting of the UNHCR and the international community accept Conclusion 1 of the Niebla Declaration which states (a) States should apply the Convention definition broadly and generously; and (b) The United Nations should establish a set of principles that will protect and assist all people who feel compelled to leave the country of origin for reasons of inadequate life conditions or widespread violence.

APPENDIX II: INTERVIEWS ON FORCED MILITARY CONSCRIPTION

Source (Human Rights Documentation Unit, NCGUB)

Interview Date: 20 September 2003

Name: Ko Aung Kyaw Lwin (not real name)
Age: 35 years old
Ethnicity: Burman
Religion: Buddhism
Sex: Male
Occupation: Corporal in Burmese Army

In Rangoon, the authorities are ordering the people who work for the government and their family members to attend military trainings. This includes me and my family. The authorities indicated that the trainings are to prepare us to protect the country against foreign invasion. The police force, military forces, fire department and USDA members are the organizers of the trainings.

The trainings last for one and half months and run from lunch time until 4:00 in the afternoon. The government departments for which the attendees work provide transportation to the training site. The trainings are being held at different football (soccer) fields in Rangoon and in spaces in government department compounds.

Families of the police force and army are trained differently than the regular people who work for the government. The families of the police force and army, learn how to handle guns. This includes learning to shoot, hold, how to take apart and how to put a gun back together again. Regular government employees are only given wooden guns.

Two people from each family of a regular government employee must attend the training. For the families of the armed forces, every family member has to attend without failure. If someone does not want to attend the training, they have to pay money through the department for which they work. They have to pay 10,000 to 40,000 kyats but not every department can pay that amount of money. As a result, some bad government workers are asking money from the business owners around the city.

At the military training in Rangoon, the Burmese Prime Minister, General Khin Nyunt spoke. In his speech, he said that everyone knows that Americans are fighting a war of aggression in Iraq. Therefore, if Americans, with the help of traitors who are in America and the rebels, come and attack Burma, protection will be needed. These trainings are to create another force for the army. He indicated that we do not want any country to be involved in our country's problems. He said that we will solve our problems ourselves. Thus, every department should be alert and should listen to the leaders' orders that help develop the country.

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 117

Interview Date: 13 October 2003

Name: Kyi Zar Oo
Age: 46 years old
Sex: Female
Occupation: Farmer
Ethnicity: Burman
Religion: Buddhist
Address in Burma: Pyu Township, Bago Division

I was in Thailand visiting my family and I went back to Burma on 5 August. I found out that people who work for the government, like teachers, administrators, and health workers, must attend military trainings. Only men had to attend, not women.

The military ordered these trainings and all of the trainers are from the military. They tell people that they must attend through letters. All villagers who work for the government receive letters. These letters come down through the different levels of government before they get to the villagers. The Township sends the letters to the individual villagers.

Every house in Pyu must pay 500 kyat for the training. The headman of each village tract comes around and collects the money from each house. But, each participant must pay for their own costs during the training. I am not sure, but I think they all stay at or near the training site for the duration of the training. My nephew told me that some people are staying with friends in that area while they attend the training.

The training lasts one month and every month a new group will be trained. The authorities said that if they need to continue the training for a long time, they will. My 3 nephews had to go to the training last week. One of them is an office administrator and 2 work for the department of public works. He does things like measure areas of land before building on them. All three received letters from the Township informing them that they had to go to the training.

I heard that some people returned from the trainings with sling-shots. They were told that they had to be ready to defend the country against America or other foreign countries.

In my township, all of the people working for the government are over 21. But, I heard the government wants to organize youth training. I heard this from people who had returned from the trainings.

In Pyu, the trainings started in September. I heard that the same kinds of trainings were happening in other townships. People do not want to attend but they are afraid. They do not want to be soldiers. They have no interest in being soldiers and they do not like soldiers. Some people want to run away but they were told that if they do not attend the training, they will be fired from their jobs. They will receive their salaries while they are at the training. People are not brave enough to complain that they do not want to attend the training. They only complain when the authorities are not listening.

118 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

Educated people know that the idea of a foreign country invading is a lie. Some people have already had military training and know that it is not possible to fight the United States. These people wonder who they will fight.

Interview Date: 15 November 2003

Name: Daw Nyo Nyo

Age: 64

Sex: Female

Ethnicity: Mon

Religion: Buddhist

Address in Burma: Zin Kya village, Paung township, Mon State

Occupation: Retired school teacher/headmistress

In our area, every person who works for the government has to attend military training in their village. September 19 to October 19 was the first training. People just received a letter informing them that they had to attend a training. My son received his letter the day before he had to go to the training. He is a teacher. The principle of his school sent him his letter. The order is from the Central Government but it has worked its way down through all the different levels of government to the people. The order is nation-wide.

My son's wife also works for the government in the Department of Agriculture. She had to attend the training as well. The training they attended was the last one in our area. There were many, but now the authorities are finished in our area.

People from 18 to 45 years of age had to attend. Old people did not have to attend because the government knows that they will die. Everybody has to attend for one month. On Saturday and Sunday, there is no training. People sleep at their own houses and go training from 6:00am to 9:00am. After the training session, the attendees can go to work. At the end of every training, the attendees had to pay 300 kyat for "thank you" money.

Both men and women had to attend. Some people do not attend everyday but make sure to show up at the end of the training so that their names goes on the list of persons who completed the training. If you do not attend one, you must go to the next one. There is no way out of it. So, people want their name on the list of those finished.

The Paung township police were in charge of these trainings. They held the trainings in the Paung township playground. They teach the attendees how to use guns and how to march, just like a military training. First, the people had to buy bamboo poles and learn to carry and hold them as if they were guns. At the end of the training, they used real guns. They have to learn because if an emergency occurs, they can be emergency troops. If a foreign country invades, the people will be ready. The authorities say that one day, America will come to our country.

I like America and I want the Americans to come and help here. Some people believe what the authorities say. The people who believe are usually friends of the authorities or with Khin Nyunt. Those who only read the government newspaper

Report card: 1 July ~ 30 September 2003 119

and listen to the government radio probably believe. I listen to RFA, VOA, and BBC. I do not listen to the government radio.

The government is always saying stuff like this. They even teach these ideas in the schools.

The government does not have anything to do and that is why they are having trainings. You cannot learn to do anything in the amount of time of one training. The government just wants to lie to the world and let the world think that everyone in Burma is ready to fight. Most people do not want to go to the training but if they do not, they will lose their jobs. Most people do not want to argue with the government. The people are afraid of guns and the government has guns. Burma is in the dark and the government wants the people to follow blindly.

120 Report Card: UNDER PRESSURE

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.
- 2002 Jun BOOK: Burma ~ Women's Voices for Change. 116pp. US\$10
- 2002 Jul REPORT CARD: Rangoon Suspense. A5, 60pp. Price US\$5 each
- 2002 Sep REPORT CARD: New Page, Old Story. A5, 68pp. Price US\$5 each
- 2002 Oct SPECIAL REPORT: A Peace of Pie? Burma's Humanitarian Aid Debate. A5, 84pp. Price \$5 each
- 2002 Dec REPORT CARD: Smokescreen. A5, 72pp. Price \$5 each
- 2003 Jan POSTER & POCKET PLANNER: ALTSEAN-BURMA ACTIVISTS' CALENDAR 2003. A2. Gratis.
- 2003 Feb T-SHIRT (Multilingual): "National Reconciliation" US\$15/40 for US\$400
- 2003 Mar Women's Report Card on Burma: Abused Bargaining Chips. 40pp. US\$5
- 2003 Mar REPORT CARD: Balancing Act. A5, 84pp. Price \$5 each
- 2003 Jun SPECIAL BRIEFING: Black Friday & the Nationwide Crackdown in Burma. Gratis.
- 2003 Jun BOOK: Burma ~ Women's Voices Together. A5, 177pp. Price US\$10 each
- 2003 Jun Postcards: A set of 4 photos from Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's travels in Burma (2002-2003). A5, colour. Price US\$2
- 2003 Nov REPORT CARD: Charm Offensive. A5, 72pp. Price \$5 each
- 2003 Nov REPORT CARD: ARRESTED. A5, 100pp. Price \$5 each
- 2003 Nov SPECIAL REPORT: Ready, Aim, Sanction! NonMilitary Options to Support Burma's Democratisation. A5, 212pp. Price US\$10 each

Please fax (662 693 4939) or email <altsean@altsean.org> to order

Discounts apply to bulk orders.

Note: This is not a complete list of resources produced by Altsean-Burma.
Some resources are also available online at www.burmalibrary.org and www.altsean.org