

Griffith Asia Institute

Regional Outlook

CHINESE MILITARY BASES IN BURMA:
THE EXPLOSION OF A MYTH

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Executive Summary

For 15 years, there has been a steady stream of newspaper stories, scholarly monographs and books that have referred to the existence of Chinese military bases in Burma.

Note on Nomenclature

After the Burmese armed forces (Tatmadaw) crushed a pro-democracy uprising in September 1988, Burma's name (in English) was officially changed from its post-1974 form, the "Socialist Republic of the Union of Burma", back to the "Union of Burma", which had been adopted when Burma regained its independence from the United Kingdom in January 1948. In July 1989 the military government changed the country's name once again, this time to the "Union of Myanmar". At the same time, a number of other place names were changed to conform more closely to their original Burmese pronunciation. These new names were subsequently accepted by the United Nations and most other major international organisations. Some governments and opposition groups, however, have clung to the old forms as a protest against the military regime's continuing human rights abuses and its refusal to hand over power to the civilian government elected in 1990.

In this study the better known names, for example Burma instead of Myanmar, Rangoon instead of Yangon, and Irrawaddy instead of Ayeyarwady, have been retained for ease of recognition. Quotations and references have been cited as they were originally published.

On taking back direct political power in 1988, the Tatmadaw created the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In November 1997 the regime changed its name to the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC). In October 2005 the newly-built town of Naypyidaw, near Pyinmana, was named the capital of Burma. For most of the period covered by this study, however, the seat of government was in Rangoon.

1. Introduction

For 15 years, there has been a steady stream of newspaper stories, scholarly monographs and books that have referred to the existence of Chinese military bases in Burma. This apparent intrusion by China into the north east Indian Ocean has strongly influenced the strategic perceptions and policies of Burma's regional neighbours, notably India, and heightened concerns about China's "expansionist" designs. Repeated denials of a Chinese presence in Burma by the Rangoon and Beijing governments have been brushed aside. In mid-2005, however, the Chairman of the Indian Defence Force's Chiefs of Staff Committee, who was also India's Chief of Naval Staff (CNS), stated that reports of a major Chinese intelligence collection station on one of Burma's islands in the Andaman Sea were incorrect. At the same time, he announced that there were no Chinese naval bases in Burma. This remarkable about-face, on two issues that have preoccupied Indian defence planners for more than a decade, must throw doubt on the claims of other "Chinese bases" in Burma. It also raises a number of important questions about current analyses of

2. The Origins of a Myth

The first public reference to Chinese military bases in Burma was in August 1992, when a delegation from the Burmese Foreign Ministry visited New Delhi for discussions. At the time, the bilateral relationship between Burma and India was under considerable strain. Led at first by Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Indian government had strongly criticised the Burmese armed forces (dātmadaw) for crushing a massive pro-democracy uprising in 1988 and creating a new military government, known as the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC). In 1990 the regime had ignored the results of a reasonably free and fair general election, which resulted in a landslide victory for Burma's opposition parties. The SLORC had also placed under house arrest its leading critic, 1991 Nobel Peace Prize laureate Aung San Suu Kyi. At a strategic level, India was concerned about Burma's rapidly developing relationship with China, to which the SLORC had turned for help after being ostracised by Burma's traditional friends and supporters. China had readily undertaken to expand official cross-border trade, provide loans and technical assistance to the struggling military government, and to help protect Rangoon's interests in multilateral forums like the United Nations.

More importantly, as far as India was concerned, China had agreed to support an ambitious military expansion and modernisation program launched by the SLORC in 1988. By the time of the 1992 meeting in New Delhi, China had agreed to sell Burma arms and military equipment valued by some observers at more than US\$1.4 billion. Deals negotiated with Beijing covered fighter, ground attack and transport aircraft, tanks and armoured personnel carriers, naval vessels and a variety of towed and self-propelled artillery pieces. Trucks and a wide range of infantry equipment were also being provided. The first deliveries were made in 1990, and by the end of 1992 the SLORC had received at least one squadron of F-7 "Airguard" fighters and Han-class offshore patrol boats. While the trucks, multiple rocket launchers, radios, small arms and ammunition provided by the Chinese strengthened the regime's ability to quell civil unrest and counter the numerous insurgencies it was then facing, the other weapon systems being acquired were clearly designed for more conventional defence roles.

During the 1992 bilateral discussions in New Delhi, Indian Foreign Minister J.N. Dixit told the Burmese delegation that India supported the restoration of democracy in Burma but wished to maintain normal diplomatic relations. In an obvious reference to the SLORC's burgeoning defence relationship with Beijing and its acquisitions of Chinese arms, he said that India posed no military threat to Burma. At the same time, India reportedly "made no secret about its ... knowledge of Burma's justification in providing construction materials to China for building a naval reconnaissance facility in a sensitive area near the Indian border" [sic]. A news story about the 1992 meeting later stated that "India is claiming that China is considering the possibility of building a reconnaissance facility on an island in Burmese territorial waters." The facility was reportedly designed to give China easy access to, and help it monitor sea and air movements in, the Bay of Bengal. According to this story, the base would also allow Beijing to apply pressure against the countries of Southeast Asia and "restore" Chinese influence in the region.

In a related development, in early September 1992's *Defence Weekly* revealed that Burma had embarked on a program to upgrade its naval infrastructure. The program included construction of a new base at Hainggyi Island in the Irrawaddy River delta and

Hainggyi Island facility. It was not clear at that stage whether China was involved in the other three development projects.

This story received a major boost on 17 September, with a report filed by the Kyodo News Agency. Citing un-named (but probably Indian) diplomatic sources in Beijing, Kyodo claimed that China was helping to build a naval base on Hainggyi Island, under a secret agreement with Burma's military government. The report further stated that, in return for this help, Burma would "give China precedence in its use of the base." Indian observers cited by Kyodo "confirmed" an increase in the frequency of visits to the area by Chinese naval vessels since the beginning of the year. The Kyodo story also stated that China was building a "radar facility" on Burma's Coco islands, in the Andaman Sea. The report was picked up by the Reuters news service the next day, and repeated in the US newspaper *The Economist* the following week! References to "Chinese bases" in Burma soon began to appear in a wide range of newspapers and magazines.

At first, news reports only mentioned the bases on Hainggyi Island and Great Coco Island.

Indian defence planners had long felt secure in the knowledge that neutral Burma's poorly equipped armed forces posed no threat to its eastern flank, leaving India free to focus its attention on Pakistan in the west. Reports of Chinese naval and intelligence facilities in Burma, however, raised the spectre of an increased Chinese military presence in the Indian Ocean and the encirclement of India by Chinese client states. This was considered "an ominous development"²⁰ India was also conscious of its vulnerable land border with Burma, and viewed with concern Chinese projects aimed at improving communications between Yunnan and northern Burma. Suddenly, India seemed to be facing a much more dangerous strategic environment.

Japan, the Republic of Korea (ROK) and the members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) were also said to be "seriously concerned" about developments in the north east Indian Ocean²¹ Their suspicions of China's long term strategic aims had been heightened by Beijing's aggressive pursuit of its territorial claims in the South China Sea. In 1988, fighting broke out when Vietnam attempted to stop construction of a Chinese facility on Fiery Cross Reef in the Spratley Islands. Three Vietnamese ships were sunk in the battle. In 1990, there were indications that China had constructed a military airfield on Woody Island in the Paracel Group, also believed to be the site of a major intelligence collection station²² Stories about Chinese monitoring facilities in the Indian Ocean, and Chinese attempts to gain access to Burmese naval bases, seemed to fit the same pattern. The bases in Burma were uncomfortably close to the strategically vital Malacca Strait and to sea lines of communication (SLOC) from the Middle Eastern oil fields.

3. The Great Coco Island “Base”

From their first appearance, reports of a base on Great Coco Island were marked by inconsistency and a lack of clarity. The site was variously referred to as a “military facility”, “naval base”, “radar station” or “naval reconnaissance facility”. There was also uncertainty whether the old Burmese naval station on the island was being upgraded or a completely new base was being constructed. China’s role was either to carry out the construction work, possibly using materials provided by Burma, to help the Burmese do the building, or simply to provide “technical help” with the new equipment being installed. According to one Indian press report in May 1993, the Great Coco Island base “would require several years to become operational”, and another published in July 2003 described it as being “on the verge of completion”. Other news reports had the base “ready for use” by mid-1994.²⁵ Given its suspected role, however, it was immediately seen by India as a strategic threat. These fears were encouraged by later press reports that dramatically expanded on the size and capl0uorx10 1 Tt(7(siz)335v0)-7(le)3(at725(C)8(oc)18(o7e)4(new zSb2”(t)18(e

Indeed, so persistent were Indian claims of Chinese bases in Burma that they threatened to harm the relationship between Rangoon and New Delhi that began to gather pace in the late 1990s.

Due largely to concerns about China's growing influence, in 1993 India reversed its hard-line policy towards Burma and started making efforts to restore bilateral ties. At first, New Delhi made little progress, but the Rangoon regime came to see India as a useful counter-weight to China. Following the opening of Customs posts on their mutual border, the two governments discussed the management of Indian insurgents based in Burma. There were even a number of loosely coordinated military operations against Naga, Manipuri and Assamese groups. Defence relations improved rapidly, and there were several exchanges of senior officials. Since 2000 there have been reliable reports that

It is conceivable that a large Chinese SIGINT base was built on the island in the early 1990s, but later dismantled. It is possible too that there is a large SIGINT collection station on the island, now operated by the Burmese armed forces with occasional technical help from China. This would still permit the Indian CNS truthfully to state that there are no “Chinese” facilities there. A more likely explanation for India’s remarkable about face, however, is that most of the claims made about the facility over the past 15 years have lacked any firm foundation and there never was a large SIGINT station on Great Coco Island. This would not rule out the presence of a radar, installed with Chinese help and operated by the Burmese armed forces. In addition to its routine functions, this equipment may also perform a modest intelligence collection. The Burma Navy base on the island would doubtless also possess radio equipment to maintain contact with the Burmese mainland. It would not be surprising if this equipment was supplemented by additional sensors and used to monitor sea and air movements in the area, or to listen in to the radio traffic of neighbouring countries.

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Irrawaddy delta. The facility has, however, been described as a Chinese “radar base” or, more often, a Burmese intelligence collection station fitted out with Chinese electronic equipment.⁶⁶ It has also been included in lists of places in Burma where Chinese military personnel were said to be posted, either temporarily or on long term assignments.⁶⁷ All these explanations for the Hainggyi Island base, however, have been overshadowed by speculation about China’s wider relationship with Burma, and the potential benefits of military bases there to a rising China with expansionist tendencies. Several reports dealing with these issues have highlighted the potential value of the Hainggyi Island facility in providing refuelling and maintenance facilities for visiting Chinese warships, including

5. Other Chinese “Bases” in Burma

Since stories began to appear in the news media about the “bases” on Great Coco and Hainggyi islands, a number of other sites in Burma have been named, where Chinese facilities have reportedly been constructed or where Chinese military personnel were believed to be working. Some of these sites were described as “naval bases”, while others were identified as intelligence collection stations.

Naval Bases

In early 1993, The Economist sensibly reported that:

The port of Bassein, close to the capital Yangon (Rangoon) is being developed, probably with Chinese assistance. Myanmar is also thought to have accepted Chinese help in building naval facilities on nearby Hainggyi Island, as well as naval shelters and lighthouses on islands near the borders with Bangladesh and Thailand. The extent of Chinese involvement is not clear, but the possibility of China acquiring rights to use them is troubling other countries in the region.

The projects to upgrade Burma’s naval facilities at Sittwe and Mergui, first noted by Defence Weekly in 1992, were soon linked with China, which was also helping to develop the port of Kyaukpyu on the Arakan coast. One Thai newspaper has referred to “the town of One Pagoda Point, located near the mouth of the Irrawaddy” that was “emerging as the main logistic point for the Chinese.” As with the construction of the Hainggyi Island base, all these projects were portrayed as part of an effort by China to modernise and gain access to Burma’s naval bases, with a view to supporting future deployments by the PLA Navy (PLAN). From there it was only a short leap to describing them as Chinese naval bases.

Despite the repeated denials of the Burmese and Chinese governments, claims of Chinese “naval bases”, or “replenishment facilities” in Burma persisted. According to one report in mid-1994, “An agreement has reportedly been reached with Burma that will allow PLA naval vessels ‘facilities’ at Burmese ports.” By the late 1990s, the existence of “Chinese bases” in Burma, or at least arrangements for the Chinese navy to use Burmese ports for logistical support, was an accepted part of strategic analyses of the region. Predictably, Indian commentators and academics cited these bases as another part of China’s grand strategy to threaten India’s eastern flank. Other analysts saw the bases as part of China’s plans to dominate the Malacca Strait and protect its vital SLOCs through the northern Indian Ocean.

The latter interpretation was given some high profile support in 2005. In January that year, Bill Gertz published a story in the Washington Times describing China’s attempts to establish a series of bases along the SLOCs from the Middle East “to project its power overseas and protect its oil shipments.” Chinese-built naval bases in Burma were seen as an integral part of this “string of pearls”, which would eventually include ports in Pakistan, Bangladesh, Thailand, Cambodia and the South China Sea. The Washington Times story was said to be based on “a previously undisclosed report”, entitled “China’s Strategic Futures in Asia” prepared for United States (US) Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld by a firm of private consultants and sponsored by the Pentagon’s Office of Net Assessment. The Gertz story received a boost in 2006 with the publication of a paper by the US Army War College on the “string of pearls” strategy. It named the upgraded port at Sittwe as one of China’s “pearls”, capable of supporting deployed PLAN vessels.

These two reports, however, were contradicted by a statement from the Indian CNS in October 2005 that “to the best of our knowledge there are no Chinese bases in Myanmar”.

Questioned by reporters at the time, Admiral Prakash also said that the Chinese had “not acquired any bases recently.”⁶⁵ Even allowing for India’s wish not to offend its new friends in Burma, these observations by India’s most senior serving military officer turned on its head more than a decade of press reporting and commentary about the Chinese presence in Burma. They also undercut the widely published view that China was seeking bases in Burma in order to dominate Indian Ocean sea lanes and threaten India.

Admiral Prakash had already ruled out any Chinese intelligence base on Great Coco Island, but he seemed to allow for the possibility that there may be some smaller facilities around Burma’s coastline that were built, and possibly still maintained, with Chinese assistance.

Intelligence Collection Stations

Once again, reporting about these smaller facilities is marked by inconsistencies and a lack of verifiable information. For example, in 1993 it was claimed in an Australian newspaper that Chinese technicians had assisted with the construction of a number of “electronic surveillance stations along Burma’s Bay of Bengal coastline”, which would “allow the

and others have pointed out, by the turn of the century “the cooperative arrangements and working relationships should have matured”.

During a visit to Burma in December 1994, Chinese Premier Li Peng emphasised the close relationship between the two countries but gave his personal guarantee that no Chinese instructors were operating in Burma. Strictly speaking, this may have been true, but it would not rule out periodic visits by Chinese technicians and specialists to help the Burmese with the arms and equipment acquired from China since 1989. Indeed, it was claimed in 1998 that, since the early 1990s, there had been around 400 Chinese technical and training staff in Burma at any time. According to Bertil Lintner, Chinese technicians have been seen at the Monkey Point naval base in Rangoon, and the Kyaikkami naval facility south of Moulmein. The American Foreign Policy Council has stated that there are “Chinese operations” at “Mergui Kyunsu naval base”, Tannintharyi naval headquarters, Sittwe naval base and Irrawaddy regional naval headquarters. It is not clear, however, what these “operations” are.

To help support all these claims, observers have cited reports of bilateral military agreements between China and Burma. The most recent appears to have been negotiated

6. Analytical Issues

As news reports of Chinese bases and intelligence collection stations in Burma proliferated during the mid-1990s, they were picked up by a number of respected commentators and academics, and given fresh life in serious studies of the regional strategic environment. Each time the reports were cited in books and reputable journals they gained credibility, and the existence of Chinese bases or “listening posts” on Great Coco Island, Hainggyi Island and elsewhere in Burma became widely accepted as an established fact. Yet the statements by the Indian CNS in 2005 raise a number of questions, not only about the credibility of the original press reports but also about much of the commentary and analysis which has followed.

There was a certain logic to the initial reports about the Great Coco Island SIGINT station and other “listening posts” in Burma. China was already a major power in the Asia–Pacific region, with a booming economy, enormous political influence and expanding armed forces. China’s defence ties with Burma developed rapidly after 1988, giving Beijing new opportunities to protect its strategic interests in the south. China’s historical concerns about India, and its interest in protecting its SLOCs from the Middle East, would have argued for an intelligence collection effort in the northern Indian Ocean region, even if Beijing did not enjoy such close relations with Rangoon. Beijing was also engaged in an aggressive campaign to build facilities on small islands in the South China Sea. Viewed from this perspective, reports of a Chinese station on one of Burma’s offshore islands and other SIGINT collection sites, operated either independently or jointly with the Burmese armed forces, were not surprising.

This view was strengthened in August 1994, when the Indian Coast Guard apprehended three boats “fishing” close to the Andaman Islands, where the Indian navy had established a new Naval Command, partly in response to China’s increased influence in Burma. According to news reports at the time, the trawlers were flying Burmese flags, but the 55 crew members were Chinese. There was no fishing equipment on board the boats, only radio-communication and depth-sounding equipment. The crews were released after the intervention of the Chinese embassy in New Delhi, but the incident seemed a timely reminder of China’s strategic interests in the north east Indian Ocean, and its readiness to collect electronic intelligence in the region. India’s fears of repeated ventures of this kind increased in March 1997, when Rangoon signed a 30-year fishing agreement with Beijing, which permitted 225 Chinese fishing boats to operate freely in Burmese waters.¹⁰³

the reason could simply be that the public claims of “Chinese bases” in Burma cannot be sustained.

It is even possible that some news reports have been deliberately planted, to promote particular causes. For example, it would be in India's strategic interests to exaggerate the potential Chinese threat. By arousing fears about Beijing's influence in Burma, New Delhi could encourage regional countries to develop closer ties with India, while putting indirect pressure on the Rangoon regime not to be drawn into China's sphere of influence. Some Burmese expatriates may have drawn attention to China's apparent relationship with Burma in order to win support from conservative groups in the US. At the time of his 1998 outburst about the Chinese threat, George Fernandes was well known for his support to Burmese opposition groups in India. A series of stories emphasising China's interest in the Indian Ocean, published by *The Pioneer* newspaper in the late 1990s, was probably designed to increase domestic support for India's nuclear tests. Also, there have been suggestions that some Indian analysts writing about this subject were keen to see an increase in India's budget allocation to the navy, which has traditionally been given a lower priority for funding than the other Services.

There were also a number of practical arguments against the construction of any major installations on Great Coco Island or Haingyi Island. For example, as the Burmese government has acknowledged, in both cases access was difficult.

7. Strategic Fears



interests and that they aspire to eventual establishment of a permanent

8. Conclusion

On the scant evidence available, it would appear that claims of China's influence in

Notes



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- 27 "PRC reportedly building bases on Burmese islands".
- 28 Ibid.
- 29 See, for example, "Chinese team in Burma to set up surveillance systems", *Express* (1 July 1994).
- 30 Robert Karniol, "Chinese puzzle over Burma's SIGINT base", *Defence Week* (9 January 1994), p. 14. See also Bertil Lintner, "Myanmar's Chinese connections", *International Defense Review* (November 1994), p. 24; and Renaud Egret, *Whooping The Generals: India's new Burma policy* (New Delhi: Authors Press, 2003), p. 93.
- 31 Federation of American Scientists, "Coco Islands"; and C.S. Kuppaswamy, "Myanmar–China cooperation: Its implications for India", *Independent Media Center India* (3 February 2003). See also R.S. Ehrlich, "Burma US military", *The Free Press* (18 August 2006).
- 32 Kumar, "Sino–Myanmar ties irk Delhi".
- 33 "Desmond Ball unbound", *The Irrawaddy* (June 2004); and Vivek Raghuvanshi, "Myanmar, China build military ties", *Defense News* (4–10 July 1994).
- 34 Edmond Dantes, "An in-depth look at the Asia–Pacific air forces and future procurement", *Asian Defence Journal* (January 1993), p. 28.
- 35 Two facilities named were the Indian Defence Research and Development Laboratory in Hyderabad and the Wheeler Island missile test facility south of Chandipur, in Orissa. See, for example, Karniol, "Chinese puzzle over Burma's SIGINT base"; and "Desmond Ball unbound".
- 36 "Chinese team in Burma to set up surveillance systems". See also "Chinese 'electronic fishing' in the Andamans", *Asian Defence Journal* (December 1994), p. 92.
- 37 Lintner, "Arms for eyes", p. 26.
- 38 "Desmond Ball unbound".
- 39 See *Democratic Voice of Burma*, "Tsunami – did Burma escape the consequences?" (6 January 2005), available at: [http://www.BDC16t\("Desmond Ball unbound".am \(39\)Tj /Span<<ET EMC .tualTe](http://www.BDC16t()

- lightly?”, *The Irrawaddy* (5 January 2005); and “Burma junta still insists less people killed by the Tsunamis than claimed”, *Democratic Voice of Burma News* (1 January 2005).
- 57 Andrew Selth, “Chinese whispers: The great Coco Island mystery”, *The Irrawaddy* (January 2007).
- 58 “Myanmar”, *Asian Defence Journal* (January 1993), p. 28.
- 59 Andrew Selth, “The Burma Navy Under the SLORC”, *Journal of Contemporary Asia* vol. 29, no. 2 (1999), pp. 227–47.
- 60 The Hainggyi Island naval station appears to be commanded by a Burma Navy officer of Captain rank. The Panmawady Naval Region (which includes both Hainggyi and Great Coco islands) is commanded by a Commodore. See “Development of Coco, Hainggyi Islands coordinated”, *New Light of Myanmar* (3 February 1999); and “Senior General Than Shwe inspects development of Hainggyi Island region”, *New Light of Myanmar* (3 April 2004).
- 61 Bertil Lintner, “Return to the delta”, *Far Eastern Economic Review* (4 November 1991), p. 26; and “Burma’s rebels in advance”, *The Defence Weekly* (17 December 1991), p. 1104.
- 62 Bertil Lintner, “Tension mounts in Arakan State”, *The Defence Weekly*

- 90 Ball, *Burma's Military Secrets*, p. 220.
- 91 Bertil Lintner, "China's ambitions in Myanmar", International Institute of Strategic Studies Strategic Comments (July 2000).
- 92 Hawke and Casey, "Circle of suspicion".
- 93 These claims are canvassed in Selth, *Burma's Armed Forces*, pp. 118–9. See also Lintner, "Arms for eyes", p. 26.
- 94 "Desmond Ball unbound".
- 95 Ball, *Burma's Military Secrets*, p. 224.
- 97 Dipankar Banerjee, "Myanmar and Indian security concerns", *Strategic Analysis* (August 1996), p. 694.
- 98 Hawke and Casey, "Circle of suspicion".
- 99 When it is completed, the naval base at Kyaikkami will reportedly be the largest naval facility in Burma. See Lintner, "Perspective: China and South Asia's east"; and Maung Maung Oo, "Junta announces new naval base in the Irrawaddy" (9 July 2001).
- 100 Sittwe is the headquarters of the Danyawaddy Naval Region Command. Tanintharyi Naval Region Command has its headquarters at Mergui. The Irrawaddy (or Ayeyarwady) Naval Region headquarters is at Monkey Point in Rangoon. "Chinese naval officials, spy vessels operate from nine sites in Burma". See also Selth, *Burma's Armed Forces*, p. 191.
- 101 "Sino-Burmese Pact", *Far Eastern Economic Review* (30 January 1997), p. 12. See also Rowan Callick, "China and Burma strengthen ties with military agreement", *Australian Financial Review* (24 January 1997).
- 102 Lintner, "Perspective: China and South Asia's east". See also "Chinese 'electronic fishing' in the Andamans", p. 92.
- 103 Hawke and Casey, "Circle of suspicion".
- 104 Interviews with Indian defence officials, Canberra, July 1995.
- 105 "China has surveillance base in Myanmar, India charges", *Reuters* (3 May 1998). See also Rahul Bedi, "India trying hard to build military ties with Burma", *The Asian Age* (7 July 2000); Egreteau, *Wooing the Generals*, p. 138; and Bakshian, "China-Burma-Indian intelligence".
- 106 Lintner, "Perspective: China and South Asia's east", See also "Chinese 'electronic fishing' in the Andamans", p. 92.
- 107 William Ashton, "Chinese bases in Burma – fact or fiction?", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, vol. 7, no. 2 (February 1995), pp. 84–7. See also William Ashton, "Myanmar: Chinese naval base: many rumours, few facts", *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, vol. 19/20, no. 12/1 (June/July 1993), p. 25. "William Ashton" was a pseudonym used by the author during the period 1989–2005.
- 108 Kay Merrill, "A closer look at Sino-Burmese military links", *Jane's Intelligence Review*, vol. 9, no. 7 (July 1997), p. 323; and Kay Merrill, "Myanmar's China connection: A cause for alarm?", *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter*, vol. 24, no. 1 (January 1998), pp. 20–1.
- 109 See also Andrew Selth, *Burma's China connection and the Indian Ocean region*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Working Paper No. 377 (Canberra: Australian National University, 2003).
- 110 See, for example, "A Dragon at the gate?", p. 36.
- 111 Lintner, "Myanmar's Chinese connection", p. 23.
- 112 Bakshian, "China-Burma-India i 1767 >>BDC BT /TT831(Burma)31(-)31(f)25(ac)-22op(also 0 0 9

- 127 Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 295. The emphasis was in the original text.
- 128 Garver, *Protracted Contest*, p. 296.
- 129 See, for example, J.H. Badgley (ed.), "Reconciling Burma/Myanmar: Essays on U.S. relations with Burma" *NBR Analysis* vol. 15, no. 1 (March 2004).
- 130 See, for example, Andrew Selth, "Burma and the strategic competition between China and India", *Journal of Strategic Studies* vol. 19, no. 2 (June 1996), pp. 213–30; and Sandy Gordon, *India's Rise to Power in the Twentieth Century and Beyond* (London: St Martin's Press, 1995), in particular p. 315, n. 59.
- 131 John Hill, "Myanmar's favour in demand" *Asia's Intelligence Review* (February 2002).
- 132 William Ashton, "The arms keep coming – but who pays?" *Irrawaddy* (June 2004).
- 133 These concerns were increased by the arrest in October 2004 of Lieutenant General Khin Nyunt, the third most powerful member of the regime and probably the principle architect of Burma's relationship with China after the SLORC took power in 1988.
- 134 Ashild Lolas and Stein Tonnesson, *Burma and Its Neighbours: The geopolitics of gas* (Melbourne: Nautilus Institute, 2006). Another perspective is provided by *Supply and Command: Natural gas in western Burma set to entrench military rule* (New Delhi: Shwe Gas Movement, 2006).
- 135 Ironically, an Indian consortium recently won a contract to further upgrade the harbour facilities at Sittwe. See "Construction of Sittwe Port to start in January", *Shwe Gas Bulletin* (January 2007), p. 8.
- 136 See, for example, Andrew Selth, "Burma in a changing world: Through a glass darkly", *AQ: Journal of Contemporary Analysis* vol. 75, no. 4 (July–August 2003), pp. 15–21.
- 137 See, for example, Jurgen Haacke, *Myanmar's Foreign Policy: Domestic influences and international implications*, Adelphi Paper no. 381 (London: International Institute for Strategic Studies, 2006), p. 27.

