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CONTENTS

1. DOCUMENTARY

- (1) Speech of President Gen. Bo Mya on Karen New Year Day 1
- (2) Letter of Gen. Bo Mya to Mr. Tony Abe* on his meeting with Khun Sa 2
- (3) Letter of Mr. Brang Seng to Dr. Richard Von Weizsacker 4
- (4) Resolution on the Karen Case at UNWGOIP meeting at Geneva 5

2. FEATURE ARTICLES

- (1) Tormented Burma (Alan Whitaker) 6
- (2) The Dilemma of Economic change within Burma (H.E. Klein) 8
- (3) Burmese Ethnic rebel groups to boost foreign support 10

3. FOREIGN PRESS

- (1) Reflection on Burma's President U San Yu's visit to Germany 11
- (2) Burmese Isolation 13
- (3) BBC World Service News 14

4. BATTLE NEWS

- (1) Summary report of KNLA Military Activities from 1-6-87 to 31-1-88. 16
- (2) Special K.I.A. Battle News. 17

5. SOME WORLD STATISTICS

- (1) The cost of arming the world. 20
- (2) Duration of conflict. 21
- (3) Estimated war casualties. 22



President Gen. Bo Mya and family at his 61st Birthday Ceremony



Gen. Bo Mya blowing out the 61 candles.

**Speech of President General Bo Mya on Karen New year Day,
The 1st of Thalay Waxing Moon, 2727 Karen Era.**

Dear Karen Nationals,

Today, being the Karen New Year Day, the whole Karen nation feels joyous and celebrates the auspicious occasion with high spirit and hope. On this special occasion, I would like to extend my greetings and best wishes to all of you for health, prosperity and happiness.

We, the Karen people, have to suffer long and severely under the lash oppression of Burmese chauvinism and feudalism. At present, the Burmese neo-feudalists, the Burmese ruling class, in addition to oppressing and bullying us, are trying to usurp the land of our fore-fathers, the country of the Karen people.

To ward off the oppression and tyranny of the Burmese chauvinists who are the products of Burmese feudalism, I would like to urge you, the whole Karen nation, to be consolidated and follow the guidance of your leaders, with heart and soul.

All of us must stand firm for our national existence and national development. Being revolutionary patriots, we must stand firmly on truth and justice without any fear, and fight against all the enemies of our nation with unity, courage and endurance.

Be always alert in order not to fall into the trap of deceit and treachery of the legates of feudalism. I earnestly urge all of you to solidly unite under the banner of the Karen National Union and fight on valiantly until we regain the land we have lost to the criminals.

The country of a people is the dignity of that people. Nobody will respect a people that has lost its country. Accordingly, we, the Karen people must unitedly endeavour to regain the country we have lost. In order to be able to perform this duty, I urge all of you to cleanse yourselves of any dishonest ways and bad habits, and enter into the New Year with a new spirit and determination, and work diligently for the progress and development of our nation.

Dear fellow revolutionaries,

Let us resolutely oppose all activities that can harm the interest of our people. With the objective of the Karen National Revolution clearly in mind, let us fight on unitedly for the early over-throw of the evil chauvinism BSPP government.

For freedom and for the obliteration of our adversary, the BSPP government, I urge you to fight on with solid unity and valour under the central leadership of the Karen National Union.

**** Down with the evil Burmese chauvinism !

**** Victory for the just Karen National Revolution !



General Headquarters
Marnarplaw, Kawthoolei
January 12. 1988

Dear Mr. Tony Abe*,

Thank you for your letter of December 31, 1987 inquiring about the news of my meeting with Khun Sa. The Press, naturally, made speculations in their reports in the absence of facts which we did not divulge at the early stage.

I had carefully considered the situation and possible repercussions before meeting Khun Sa. The truth is, I had to go and see him for the following reasons:-

1. Some months previously, a person from the West, with influence in business and political circles, met me and discussed about narcotic drug problem that has been a great scourge to all mankind. He said that support could be gained if the eradication of heroin production and trade in the "Golden Triangle" could be effected. Since Khun Sa had credibility with the World, he explained, I should take the initiative to persuade Khun Sa to stop opium production and trade. If Khun Sa, on my urging, agreed and made announcement to that effect, the World would be more ready to believe it. He went on to explain that the World would accord credibility and the necessary assistance could be obtained if I, as the President of KNU, took concrete steps and point out the practicability of the eradication of opium in the "Golden Triangle."
2. We have arrived at the conclusion that, in any realistic approach to the elimination of narcotic drugs in consistent with the KNU's policy of opposition to narcotic drug production, trafficking and consumption, we inevitably have to use some constructive form of persuasion on Khun Sa.
3. The narcotic drugs of the "Golden Triangle" have caused great affliction not only in Burma but also in the world on a wide scale. It is our belief that we have to personally meet with Khun Sa and ascertain means and ways for taking necessary actions for the successful elimination of the narcotic drugs.
4. The Tai Revolutionary Council (Khun Sa's organization) is also one of the Shan revolutionary organizations fighting against the common enemy, the BSPP government. More than once, the various Shan revolutionary groups have requested me to help strengthen their unity and we decided that the time was ripe for responding to their requests.
5. In the struggle of all the revolutionary forces, politically and militarily, against the common enemy, we assume that it is important to develop understanding and closer cooperation among all the revolutionary forces in Burma to deal a greater blow to the enemy.

For the reasons given above, I met Khun Sa on December 6, 1987 and the following results were obtained.

1. Khun Sa agreed to stop the narcotic drug business.
2. For a viable programme of the eradication of narcotic drugs, financial assistance from a government or an organization is essential.
3. Khun Sa publicly declared to take steps for total eradication of the narcotic drug business in the "Golden Triangle" step by step within a period of 6 to 8 years, if the needed financial assistance was obtained.

I assure you and you can assure the others that we, the KNU, will consistently go on opposing narcotic drugs in the future as much as we have consistently opposed them in the past. We have not changed our position, by any degree, on this question.

Narcotic drug abuse is against the customs and traditions of the Karen people, the principles of the Karen revolution and the principles of our religious ethics. Accordingly, we have opposed it in the past, we are opposing it at the present and we will forever oppose it in the future.

My endeavour was aimed at bringing benefit to people of the whole world and as well as to all the revolutionary organizations in the country. My meeting with Khun Sa was intended neither to encourage opium business nor to gain some immediate advantage.

I highly appreciate the concern you have shown for us. I am very grateful to you for all that you have done for the benefit of the Karen revolution. Kindly go on helping us in the future and write to us whenever you deem it necessary.

I wish you happiness and prosperity in the new year of 1988. May success attend to whatever you do and God shower His choicest blessings upon you!

Sincerely yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Bo Mya', with a date '12/11/87' written below it.

(Lt. Gen. Bo Mya)
President

The Karen National Union

Note, Tony Abe* Substitute Name for Personal Reason

25 October 1987

Dr. Richard von Weizsacker
The President of the Federal Republic of Germany

RE: CIVIL WAR IN BURMA

Dear Mr. President:

My name is M. Brang Seng, Chairman of the Kachin Independence Organization (KIO), and an authorized spokesman for the National Democratic Front (NDF) of Burma. I write to you in this capacity.

The National Democratic Front of Burma is made up of ten major ethnic minority groups, representing over 60% of Burma's population. The aim of the NDF is to restore freedom, democracy, and the basic human rights among our pluralistic society under the federal union system.

As you are well aware, Burma has been plagued by civil war for the past forty years. This civil war is intensified since Gen. Ne Win seized the power in 1962 and established a totalitarian, centralistic and one party system government known as Burmese way to Socialist Programme Party (BSPP).

We have repeatedly called upon Gen. Ne Win's regime to solve the nation's problem politically on the conference table. But he has responded to us with his armed forces only on the battle field, demanding us an unconditional surrender.

We understand that the Federal Republic of Germany is among those European nations that gives a substantial amount of aids to Burma. We also understand that as a result of your foreign aid to Burma, you have much influence on the Burmese government.

Therefore, we, of the National Democratic Front, wish to earnestly request you, the President of the Federal Republic of Germany, to kindly help us find ways to peace negotiation between us and the Burma government. We have been, and are willing still to end this forty year long drawn civil war to an end on the conference table.

It is our firm belief that Burma's future for social, political, educational and economic progresses depend largely upon the restoration of freedom, basic human rights, political stability and the equality among peoples of Burma.

My staff and I are presently in Bonn. We have come to your great country with a high hope that you and your government will be able to persuade the Burmese government to talk peace with us. Nobody will be more pleased than the peoples of Burma if we can bring this long drawn civil war to an end so as to be able to rebuild the nation once again.

I shall be most grateful to answer any question you may have regarding our request. Kindly reach me through Mr. Hoffmann at: 030 815 6136 or 2053 245. God bless you and your nation!

Thanking you in advance for your kind considerations,

Respectfully yours,



M. Brang seng

RESOLUTION ON THE KAREN CASE AT UNWGOIP MEETING AT GENEVA

Mr. BLANCHARD (Morse) (1.56) In this grievance debate I wish to raise an issue which I consider to be one which should be of concern to this country. We are part of south east Asia and we cannot afford to ignore signs of trouble in that region. I wish to focus on the internal problems of Burma and the effect those problems have on the refugee or displaced persons problems in the world, and in particular, Thailand.

Recently, in an address to the 78th Inter Parliamentary Union Conference held in Bangkok, I made reference to one of the lesser-known minorities who are living in camps in Thailand. These are the Karens who have fled from Burma as a result of military operations against them from Burmese forces in a war which has been raging since 1949. In my address I pointed out that the Karen minority in Burma are being persecuted simply because of their nationality and that the numbers arriving in Thailand have greatly increased in the past two years. This is causing over-crowding in the camps located close to the Thai- Burma border. The Karens are of Mongolian descent and were the first settlers in Burma some 2700 years ago. Later the Burmese came and conquered the country, stripping the Karens of their land, depriving them of their culture and forcing them to flee to the mountains and the jungles.

During the Second World War the Japanese took over, with the support of the Burma Independent Army. It should be noted that the Karens fought on the side of the allies and some 2000 troops were evacuated to India with the British troops. As a result, many Karens left in Burma were arrested, tortured, raped and killed by the Burma Independent Army and the Japanese. After the war the Karens requested the British and Burmese governments to allow an independent state for the Karens to exist. This was refused and since January 1949 there has been a constant struggle between the Burmese military forces and the Karens organised in their National Liberation Army.

The Karens have formed their own state, called Kawthoolei, which lies in south-east Burma, straddling the border with Thailand, but this state is not recognised in the international scene. The Karens are, despite their history of struggle, a peaceful race and a minority are very strong and committed Christians. They do not want to take over Burma, but they do want a form of federalism in Burma in which the different ethnic races manage their own internal affairs. There has been, since 1949, this struggle on their part to maintain their independence. These ethnic minorities, besides the Karens, include the Arakanese, the Chin, the Kachin, the Karenni, the Shan, the Lahu, the Mon, the Pa-oh, the Palaung and the Wa. They have combined in forming what is now called the National Democratic Front (NDF). The main goal of the NDF is the creation of a genuine federal union with a full guarantee of liberty, equality and social justice to all the ethnic races and individuals in Burma.

Recently, I was able to meet representatives of the NDF and had a frank and full discussion with them on the issues involved. It was clear, from my discussions with them, that the people of Burma are weary of the civil war in their country. The NDF believes that since, the civil war came into existence, due to political problems there is no way of solving it but by political means.

Madam SPEAKER-Order! It being 2 p.m., in accordance with standing order 106, as amended for this session, the debate is interrupted and I put the question:

That grievances be noted.

Question resolved in the affirmative.

The Tormented Burma

The troubled country of Burma lurches from one economic crisis to another. In 1964 the autocratic government demonetised certain notes but gave the people limited time in which to exchange their suddenly worthless money for the new legal tender. Many people lost billions of kyats. In September 1987 the inflation-plagued country repeated the operation. Only this time the impoverished people of Burma were faced with even greater difficulties and millions of pounds have been lost. Only the military government of President Ne Win gained.

On the day of the announcement to demonetise again, monks and students demonstrated in Rangoon, Mandalay and other major towns. The following morning all places of education were closed down and provincial students sent home.

It is in the provinces, away from the small international community in Rangoon, and where no journalists are allowed, that the ethnic minorities are most at risk. Two examples furnished by the Kachin Independence Organisation show the gravity of that risk.

On 12 June 1987, Regiment 56 of the Burmese Army entered Pyaw Len village and captured 25-year-old Wali Awng, his 21-year-old wife Lasi, their 3-year-old son and 1-year-old daughter. All four of them were beaten and tortured to death. But the Burmese army cannot be accused of agism. On 28 May the 1st Kachin Rifle Battalion - there are no Kachins, only Burmese, in the battalion-beat and tortured to death Maru Gungai. She was 90.

Kachin state is in the far north of the country. On the Thai borders is the land of the Karen people. Their treatment at the hands of Rangoon is identical. Yet both peoples are calling not for a break-up of Burma, but for the restoration of democracy and civil and human rights.

The Karen National Union recently appealed for an end to "the civil war, return the democratic rights to the people and secure peace by establishing a genuine federal union based on democracy and social progress."

The Thai-Burmese border is an area of oppression for indigenous peoples as the following comments from the Society's joint-president, Lord Listowel, illustrate.

"As a personal friend of the founders of Burmese independence, I have since followed with interest and sympathy its development as a new nation. I have therefore read with horror and dismay recent reports of the tragic violence between Burmese and Karens, resulting in a loss of life, destruction of homeless refugees into Thailand. Such reports can only damage the reputation of Burma in the outside world. Burma is a nation enriched by the presence of several minorities. A secure and prosperous future for all its inhabitants can only be assured by mutual respect between the Burmese majority and the minorities they rule for each other's basic rights."

The Anti-Slavery Society has called on the UN High Commissioner for Refugees to investigate the plight of Karen refugees in Thailand. There, an estimated 30,000 men, women and children are living in wretched conditions.

Betrayal

The Karen people, who have been in Burma a thousand years longer than the Burmese, today number about 8,000,000 and effectively run their own, unrecognised, state of Kawthoolei. It is economically self-sufficient, levies taxes, maintains a standing army and educates its young people. Burma on the contrary, is so poor that it has applied, in the hope of gaining massive funding, to the United Nations for Least Developed Country status. The Karen and other minority peoples in Burma fear that extra money will mean extra militarisation.

During the Japanese occupation of Burma in the 1940's, the Karen people mounted the fiercest opposition and bore the brunt of reprisals. During the independence negotiations their

special status was not recognised, and since independence they in turn have never recognised the Burmese government with which they have been in more or less continuous conflict since 1949.

At the time of independence an agreement was drawn up-the 1948 Panglong Agreement - which gave the Kachin, Chin and other minority peoples their own semi-autonomous states and a right to secede from the Union of Burma after a 10-year period. No plebiscite was held in 1958, and in 1962 General Ne Win established his military dictatorship. Burma has been a closed society ever since.

Massacres and mutilations are perpetrated by the Burmese army on its Karen population almost as a matter of state policy. Lord Listowel, when Secretary of State for Burma, was instrumental in granting independence to Burma on 1 January 1948. Four decades later he is calling for an end to the abuse of human rights "in that beautiful but now troubled land".

Alan Whittaker

Tribes Uprooted

In September 1987 armed men acting on orders from the National Security Council in Bangkok, forcibly removed about 160 families from 4 villages on the Thai*Burma border and deposited them on Burmese soil. They were forced onto trucks at short notice, allowed few possessions and their houses were set on fire. The people, from the Ahka and Lisu tribes, depend on their crops, which were left in the fields. The official view that these nomadic people are illegal immigrants is open to dispute.



Presentation to Gen. Bo Mya on his 61st Birthday.

THE DILEMMA OF ECONOMIC CHANGE WITHIN BURMA

Beginning with independence, January 1948, Burma has attempted to develop her economy according to the principles of economic socialism. What has actually developed is an economy closer to Marxist-Leninist principles of state ownership and control run by the military when it appeared civilian control was ineffective.

This trend towards authoritarianism was detected in its early stages by Dr. J. Russel Andrus, 1948, when he served as 2nd Secretary of the U.S. Embassy, Rangoon. He reported two significant trends that started immediately after Independence Day celebrations, as the new government under U Nu took hold.

In the first report he noted that the government was being organized to reflect a re-organized electorate structured into four major groups: 1) Cultivator; 2) Industrial workers; 3) Women, and 4) School children and youths. Under this system support for government politics could be generated on a mass scale to reflect. 1) approval for such policies, 2) opposition to ideas deemed inappropriate and / or 3) pressure to initiate programs the leadership desired. Dr. Andrus also went on to point out this system could be used to impose a thorough going authoritarian system of governing.

Since Burma was then and still is primarily an agrarian society, the most important of these proposals related to the agricultural sector. Under these proposals land would be expropriated from large land holders and redistributed. One of the reasons alleged for this action was the excessive interest rates prior to and immediately after WW II by large land holders, frequently forcing farmers into bankruptcy or to become totally dependent on the Chettyar money men. Farmers had been forced to borrow for such paddy at times when natural disaster overtook them or when the price of unhushed rice fell too low, depriving farmers of income to buy seed rice. Farmers frequently became destitute and either went into banditry after abandoning their farms or fled to the cities to find work. Compounding the problem, the system allowed Chettyars to claim the land for unpaid debt and install tenant farmers. Interest rates of 50% ^o were not uncommon and it was rare that a farmer could contest the case in court because the costs were beyond his means.

While the system was indeed unfair and ruinous, the AFPFL answer to expropriate the land, redistribute and fix the price of rice, had its own Achilles heel. With the government in control of prices for seed paddy and rice, it could fix the price so low farmers had little chance to make a profit even though the government did. The result was contributory to the development of a flourishing black market.

A multiplier effect from fixing rice prices led to price fixing and inflation in other commodities in an effort to balance the economy. In addition the intrusion of government officials into a situation which should have been a natural bargaining climate, created a second climate for corruption via kickbacks, rakeoffs and other types of payoff between traders and producers on the one hand and government officials on the other. In 40 years one corrupted system, replaced another with little improvement and a huge increase in sub rosa activity to the point where it is endemic to Burman society.

Complicating this strategy, Burma also closed its borders so that the bulk of the world trade bypassed it. This in time led to decreasing ability to pay off her foreign debt. Two motives for closing its borders appear to be uppermost. The first was a fear of foreign competition which would bring foreign companies and influence into Burma so as to endanger Burman control over their economy. The second was a perception that foreign influence, i.e. western ideas would become a corrupting influence upon her society especially the youth.

The fear of foreign competition led Burma's leaders to reject out of hand a Karen proposal for an autonomous state east of the Sittang River. The AFPFL leadership feared that if

they acceded to the Karen demands, access to the sea would result in a non-socialist and competing economy within Burma and this would also result in the reintroduction of foreign companies and businesses. The two bogies of competition and foreign business would thus be outside of its socialist state control.

The dilemma now facing Burma is that these policies have brought her economy so low that she is classed as one of the 10 poorest nations of the world. To change these conditions Burma is forced into the position that if she wishes to correct them she will have to liberalize her policies which in turn will open Burma to the very influences from which she tried to escape by authoritarianism and reclusivity, Burma's rigid adherence to ideological purity is now having to face pragmatic necessities which, if not addressed, will tear the nation apart even more than it is now.

Already the government is faced with increasing resistance from minority ethnic groups which the government for 40 years has fruitlessly targeted for elimination and which the government created as scapegoats for her past abuses. General Ne Win's recent speech before governmental and Parliamentary leaders was an admission of failure and misrule.

However, to what extent is the government willing to go to abandon failed values and policies, in order to promote a better economy? The problem is not simply an economic one. A view limited only to economic adjustment is shortsighted and doomed to self-destruction if the underlying values are not changed. For example, if Burma is granted LLDC status by the U.N. as requested in order to receive economic relief from her pressing foreign debt problem, could that correct the artificially low price of rice, increase exports, stimulate resource development, rehabilitate the transport systems, develop new and better industries and a host of other economic ills with which Burma has saddled herself?

Economic openness implicit in the correction of these problems would inevitably bring in new ideas to Burman society. The government would then be faced with trying to control these new influences while at the same time promoting them. These contradictions of competing influences of economic glasnost may prove beneficial but these will generate glasnost in other areas as well. Is the government prepared to accept these as well?

One of the more serious of these dilemma which the government will face has already begun to surface. Since independence the government has maintained a policy of strict censorship within Burma. However, in General Ne Win's speech, honest reports and a reexamination to correct past mistakes was called for. Will the government permit a frank and open dialogue within the news media to expose the endemic corruption, black marketeering and other illegal activities, in which the same officials administering the rules for governing also participate in nefarious activity? If these officials are honest can the same be said of their military friends and relatives for the country is rife with nepotism as well. To allow such glasnost seems too much to expect. If it is not allowed then who can be sure of honest reports or of efficient administration of anything? This corruption and criminal wrongdoing against all segments of society, especially against the minorities, seems more likely to trigger increased "discipline" rather than openness.

The road to the Burmese Way to Socialism has been paved with stones of their own peculiar carving. The only way that road can be repaired is to replace the cobbles with better quality materials. This necessitates new values especially those of political ideologies, to replace those ideas which have paved the pathway to Burma's plethora of problems.

Burmese ethnic rebel groups to boost foreign support

By Keith Lorenz

MANERPLAW, Burma - Representatives of 10 ethnic rebel groups fighting Rangoon met early this month to map out plans to improve their united front's external contacts.

The National Democratic Front's so-called second Congress Emergency Presidium Meeting was aimed at improving contacts with foreign governments, international organizations and humanitarian agencies.

The meeting was held at the NDF headquarters near the confluence of the Salween and Moei rivers in eastern Burma as the Burmese civil war approached its 40th year.

A new momentum in the front's foreign relations has been achieved, following the recent visit by Brang Seng, chairman of the Kachin Independence Organization, to Japan and Europe late last year, said revolutionary spokesmen.

In Europe, Brang Seng, a member of the NDF presidium, met members of the British and West German parliaments, and officials of international humanitarian agencies including the UN Human Rights Commission and the Amnesty International.

Japanese press. BBC, Frankfurter Allemagne, and other European and Asian media interviewed him about the NDF positions on internationally-supervised negotiations with the Rangoon regime, the narcotics situation in Burma and the ongoing actions by Burmese armed forces against non-combatant ethnic minorities.

"The world is finally waking up to the atrocious situation in Burma," claimed the Kachin leader in his temporary thatched-bamboo office at the Karen headquarters of Manerplaw.

He and other Kachin officers made the long-trek from northern Burma in 1985-86 to consolidate the NDF struggle with other members.

Apart from the Kachin and the Karen, other NDF members attending the meeting included the Mon, Arakanese, Shan, Karenni, Palaung, Pa-o and Wa. Only the Lahu were absent.

Brang Seng echoed the view expressed by the Karen National Union President Bo Mya who blamed the prolonged struggle on the continued aid given by foreign governments to the Socialist Republic of Burma, referred to by ethnic minority leaders as the "Ne Win-San U regime."

The post-Ne Win era will be the same unless there are genuine peace negotiations, said Bo Mya. "The regime depends on foreign powers. In their greed to sell arms to Burma, the foreign countries are competing with each other. As long as this aid continues, there will be no negotiations."

The Karen leader last month journeyed to the Burmese Shan State to urge opium warlord Khun Sa to stop drug business in Burma and cooperate with the NDF against Rangoon, which he says, is cooperating in much of the trafficking.

"Khun Sa is willing to stop the drug business," Claimed Bo Mya. "But foreign governments and organizations will have to give necessary aid. We can be a go-between. We have already discussed a six-year eradication plan with Khun Sa."

"The only way to stop the narcotics situation in Burma," added Brang Seng, "is to stop the civil war. Whatever the US government is giving to Rangoon to stop the opium trade is no use."

"Much of the trafficking is done by Burmese army officers and transported by their own vehicles," he charged. "The US will have to acknowledge this sooner or later if it is serious. It will then stop dealing with Ne Win, and stop providing that illegal government with helicopters for suppression, and will have to talk to the minority leaders," he added.

Translation from German Newspaper
Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung

Thursday, 26 November, 1987

REFLECTION ON BURMA'S PRESIDENT U SAN YU'S VISIT TO GERMANY

Burma's President U San Yu's state visit to Federal Republic of Germany has just ended. The expatriots of Burma observed this visit with a keen interest. But not much has been mentioned by the press about it, except that San Yu paid a state visit to the Federal Republic of Germany, seeking for more aids for various projects and Burma now is applying for the Least Developed Country (LDC) status.

It is disappointing, even humiliating, to learn that Burma which was once known as "the rice bowl of Asia", should have to apply for LDC status ! Burma, which is the richest country in natural resources apparently is at the brink of economic collapse. Shortages of rice, fuel, cooking oil, electricity and water supply are national experience in Burma today. This economic downward trend began since Gen. Ne Win seized power from constitutionally elected government in 1962. Since then Burma has been ruled by one party autocratic and despotic regime known as Burmese way to Socialism Programme Party (BSPP). This Burmese way to Socialism proved to be the Burmese way to economic disaster. Thus, Burma, the richest country in natural resources and at one time the biggest exporter of rice in the world is having to apply for LDC status!

The cause for this economic disaster must be located in two major factors. First of all, it is due to long drawn civil war. Burma is a multinational state. All minority races put together amounts up to 60% of the nation's population. These minorities are mutually to the Burmans in culture, custom and language. Before Burma's independence in 1948, an agreement was reached between Burmese leader Gen. Aung San and minority groups. It was agreed that the minorities will be given autonomous rights in their own homelands if they took independence together with the Burmans. Believing in this agreement, all minority groups joined in the struggle for independence from Britain. Burma gained her independence on January 4, 1948.

When Gen. Ne Win seized power in 1962, he dissolved parliament and declared Burma a socialist state. This made the minority groups to forfeit the right to be autonomous within the union. This then drove the minorities to armed struggle for their rights as final alternatives.

As result of this armed conflict with minority groups, Ne Win's communistic socialist regime had to expand its armed forces (land, sea, air, plus police, people's militia and local security forces) up to a total strength of over 258,000 men. It is interesting to note that the present regime alots 45-50% of national budget for defence. Burma is not at war with any foreign power. But the regime is having to spend the said amount to suppress its own citizens who are resisting its totalitarian rule.

The peace talks between Ne Win's regime and resistance forces took place in 1963, 1972 and 1980. But all these talks failed because Ne Win's regime demanded an unconditional surrender without addressing the issues of the day. The resistance groups, known as the National Democratic Front of Burma (NDF), are still making proposals to Ne Win government for a meaningful political settlement on a conference table. But Ne

Win continues to suppress them with his military might persisting in his demand for a total unconditional surrender.

The second factor for Burma's economic disaster is due to the wrong political philosophy imposed on the nation by Ne Win's regime. The citizens of Burma are freedom loving people. They are extremely mindful of their personal freedom and rights. The civil war and Ne Win's totalitarianism had killed their incentive in all areas.

In view of present situation, the national reconciliation must be achieved through peaceful negotiations with resistance forces. Then establish a genuine federal republic in which the basic human rights, freedom and equality are guaranteed for all.

GS, Berlin



Mass Wedding of (43) couples at Kawmoora 5.12.87

BURMESE ISOLATION

Comments from analysts in Rangoon, show that Ne Win has quieted restive farmers and avoided food shortages in the land, once the rice bowl of Southeast Asia, he plunged into isolation in 1962.

Rangoon to position themselves for the day when a change of mood or regime will give them access to Burma's extensive timber, oil, jade, ruby and fishery resources.

The fertile country's once thriving export industries have dried up as centralisation and international isolation have shattled the economy. The rice reforms have led farmers and traders to stress local consumption, draining supplies for export of the staple, traditionally Burma's main foreign currency earner.

Foreign exchange reserves are said to be down to \$24 million, or only enough to pay for two weeks of imports, as the country services \$3.5 billion in foreign debt.

Meanwhile, Burma, an oil producer with proven reserves, suffers from a chronic fuel shortage. Its wells are in disrepair and lack spare parts, but Ne Win shuns foreign expertise for fear it would turn into exploitation of his nation's riches, analysts said.

Even aid projects, such as Japan's \$200 million international airport extension near Rangoon, are running behind schedule for lack of petrol to power tractors and trucks.

Diplomats said that while Ne Win will allow stop-gap measures to import fuel for such projects or save the rice trade, he would not move beyond this to open the economy to the outside world.

The general has failed to bring prosperity to Burma, which the United Nations classified in December as a least developed country. But Burmese point out to visitors that their country is free of Western evils like pollution.

Ne Win bowed to economic reality by carrying out first tentative reforms to privatise trade in rice after a disastrous, forced attempt to have government cooperatives run commerce.

Unrest in the normally placid countryside grew dangerously in 1987.

BBC WORLD SERVICE NEWS 1300 GMT 10-1-88

The army in Burma has launched a big offensive against rebels near the border with Thailand. 7 battalions of government troops, about 7,000 men, are said to be involved in the operation. There are few details of the fighting from either side. One account says two Burmese government battalions have been trapped in the remote mountainous area east of the Salween river and that reinforcements were being rushed in. The rebels, ethnic Karennis, say they have killed a number of troops, including a battalion commander name as Colonel Kyaw Lwin. The government offensive began about a week ago and is concentrated in several border areas. It is also reported from Burma that there has been a bomb explosion on board an Express train travelling from Mandalay to the capital Rangoon. Rangoon radio said that 8 people have been killed and more than 30 injured. The radio said the explosion was reported to be the work of Karen rebels.

BBC WORLD SERVICE "TWENTY FOUR HOURS" 1309 GMT 10-1-88
NICK WORRALL

In Burma the army has launched what seems to be a major offensive against rebel forces in their strongholds along the Thai borders. As you heard in the news the attacks began about a week ago and they involve some 7,000 men. It has also been reported that a bomb attack on a train travelling from Mandalay to the capital Rangoon has killed about 8 people and injured another 30. The official radio blamed rebels of the Karen ethnic minority for the bomb attack but the army offensive is aimed at the territorial home of the Karennis, another of several minority which have been engaged in an anti-government struggle for decades. Martin Smith, a frequent visitor to Burma and a writer on Burmese affairs, told me more about the Karenni people.

Martin smith: The Karenni are ethnic cousins of the Karen, who are the largest ethnic minority in Burma. Their territory is to the north of the Karen State and their rebel group is allied in a 10 party alliance, the National Democratic Front, of rebel groups confronting the Rangoon government at the moment.

Nick Worrall: Are they aspiring to have an independent state within Burma or in a federation?

Martin Smith: Yes, they do. They had a treaty before the British came into Burma establishing their independence and the Karenni leaders still talk about secession from Burma. But within the National Democratic Front they are also allied to a system of Federal Union. So they are at the moment allied with the goals of the other 10 ethnic groups in the NDF.

Nick Worrall: Is their struggle significant enough to warrant such a large military push against them?

Martin smith: No. From 1974 to 1986 that entire area was pretty much left alone by the Burmese army. What has happened is the National Democratic Front have now established joint forces across Burma and the Karenni State is in the central command of the National Democratic Front. And at the moment in that area there are troops of the Pao, the Wa, and of course the Karenni, but also from the north of Burma there are a lot of troops from the Kachin Independence Organization which is the largest ethnic minority force. They are very well armed, very well equipped troops and the Burmese government are trying to stop this group spreading in that area.

Nick Worrall: Is this in terms of action that the government has taken before a large offensive?

Martin Smith: Very large indeed. Yes it is about the sixth time in the last two years that they have tried this. Each attempt so far has been a hit and run offensive and failed. They have suffered quite heavy casualties on each occasion and it would seem this time the offensive is right across the state so they are now trying to cut off all these N.D.F. and Karenni troops wherever they are.

Nick Worrall: Are they likely to be successful seeing they have not had much success up to now?

Martin Smith: No. It is very difficult terrain. It's vast mountains, deep rivers, jungle and these N.D.F. troops are very experienced at slipping into the jungle and coming out to fight another day.

Nick Worrall: Do they get outside support?

Martin Smith: No, not really. This is one of the problems for the NDF. The minorities have not had much success to date in getting outside support. One of the reasons now why more and more operations are being carried out by the NDF rather than individual groups is they are trying to show to the world that there is a real resistance group in Burma with an alternative view of how things should be. They are looking for outside support. In the last year two leading members of the NDF have gone on world tours to explain the situation and try to get outside support but I think till now they have had some sympathy, but nothing meaningful in the way of arms and ammunition.

Nick Worrall: Well, the Karens, for instance, have been fighting for their independence now for some 40 years, They wanted complete autonomy at one stage, complete independence. Do you think they would settle for something less? Is it possible that some sort of accommodation would be possible?

Martin Smith: Yes. In the last 3 years they have changed their position quite considerably and this is all part of this NDF movement. They have abandoned the demand for secession. What they are talking about now is self determination and in real terms that means that they want across Burma to be the creation of new ethnic minority states in a federal Union as opposed to a separatist movement.

Nick Worrall: But now we have also had a report of this bomb on the train between Rangoon and Mandalay. A number of people, we are told 8 people, have been killed. Is it likely, do you think, that more of the struggle could be concentrated on Rangoon and that there will be more attacks of this kind in Rangoon?

Martin Smith: This has been discussed. The Burmese army is now fighting very heavy battles on the Kachin, Shan, Karen, Karenni fronts and amongst the ethnic minority leaders there is a feeling that this is being disguised from the outside world. Foreign visitors are only really allowed into central Burma and they don't see this. And there is also a feeling that the Burmese people themselves are not aware of the extent of the fighting going on and there have been threats to carry the war back to Rangoon with instances of carrying out attacks like this.

SUMMARY REPORT OF KNLA BATTLE ACTIVITIES - FROM 1-6-87 TO 31-1-88

Military Zone	No. of Ene Attacks	No. of Ene Bombs	No. of KNLA Attacks	KNLA Bombs	Ene Casualties				Ene losses in Arms/Ammos								KNLA Casualties				KNLA Losses in Arms/Ammos					REMARKS
					Killed	Wounded	Surrender	Captured	Total Small Arms	Magazines	Total Ammos	Equipments	Heavy weapons	Shells	Hand Grenades	Bombs	Killed	Wounded	Surrender	Captured	Small Arms	Magazines	Total Ammos	Heavy Weapon	Shells	
No. 1	3	1	70	30	53	104	-	19	36	42	1,653	13	-	65	-	-	4	7	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	(1) ene officer (2) council leaders kid. (1) officer wdd. (3) ene trucks (1) bridge destroyed.
No. 2	4	1	50	12	73	64	1	-	4	10	115	4	-	-	-	-	4	12	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	(1) ene officer killed (4) wounded. Killed (3) ene agents.
No. 3	1	-	66	36	87	78	-	-	2	4	1,900	9	-	2	3	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1) ene officer kid (5) wdd. (5) ene agents kid. Destroyed (1) police station, (1) lock-up, (1) rice mill. Captured (2) ene flags.
No. 4	1	-	68	16	117	119	-	-	4	29	2,281	-	-	39	1	-	16	6	2	-	9	-	-	2	16	(5) ene officer kid. (1) wdd. Captured (3) motor-launch boats
No. 5	2	1	39	13	112	126	2	-	18	40	36,682	11	2	187	1	12	5	7	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(1) ene officer kid (1) wounded. (3) military trucks destroyed.
No. 6	9	2	88	68	250	351	-	-	20	95	9,875	18	-	11	14	3	6	9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	(5) ene officers kid. (10) wounded. Destroyed (2) ene trucks.
101 Bn.	10	5	71	58	201	250	-	-	8	9	400	1	-	3	9	7	5	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	-	(2) ene officers kid. (6) wounded. Destroyed (3) ene trucks.
20 Bn.	1	-	33	9	134	128	-	-	20	85	3,707	29	-	-	-	-	3	15	2	-	4	-	-	1	-	(5) ene officers kid. (3) wounded. (7) mil. trucks and (1) Bull-dozer destroyed.
Tah Dob Wah	1	-	52	21	60	50	-	-	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	-	(1) Hino-truck destroyed.
GHQ	3	-	24	65	63	205	-	-	4	-	1,318	-	-	-	-	-	27	67	-	-	-	-	7	16	(2) ene officers kid (1) wounded.	
Total	35	10	561	328	1150	1675	3	19	120	314	57,931	85	2	302	21	27	73	128	5	-	22	-	-	12	32	(23) ene officers kid. (31) wounded. (8) ene agents kid. Destroyed (19) ene trucks (1) Bull-dozer (1) bridge (1) Police station. Captured (3) enemy motor launch boats.

Special K.I.A Battle News

Ne Win BSPP Regime had falsely announced on February 2, 1988 that they had totally annihilated the KIA. The following is the true account of events at the KIA Headquarters area.

The BSPP Regime invited foreign military attaches, journalists, religious leaders and villagers to a meeting at Nam Pot on 28-1-88. Before the appointed meeting, they had selected their (2) well-trained Battalion for their military offensive-No. 21 Infantry Bn. led by Lt. Col. Tun Aung, and No. 40 Inf. Bn. led by Lt. Col. Than-Tun with No. 18, 56 and 58 Inf. Bns and No. 120 L I Bn. as supporting troops.

Knowing of the enemy plan, KIA had prepared for the enemy offensive. On 24-1-88, the enemy troops started their military operation-advancing towards Nam Pot. The KIA troops met them on the way, and fierce battle started at 10:15 am. and continued till dark. The battle resumed on 26-1-88 from 10 am. and fierce fighting continued on 27-1-88. All enemies fled helter-skelter after suffering very heavy casualties and lack of control / command.

No. 26 Inf. Bn left 18 dead bodies including Maj. Myint Thwin and Capt. Soe Than, (80) wounded including Lt. Col. Than Tun. The enemy suffered a total of (140) casualties including (24) dead bodies left behind.

(7) KIA soldiers given up their lives for their national cause and (26) enemy porters had come over to KIA.

The following arms and ammos are captured from the enemy. (2) G-3, (1) G-4, (30) 2 in mortar bombs, (1) 3.5 launcher, (4) 81 mm shells, (1) 60 mm bombs, (6) 79 mm bombs, (16) E.Y bombs, (5) Hand-Grenades and a total of (4470) rounds assorted Ammos with (53) magazines.

The enemy had arrange a meeting at Nam Pot with entertainments, but because they were smashed at their encounter with the KIA, their plan did not materialise. More over the KIA shelled Nam Pot with 75 mm recoilless Rifle, inflicting (7) enemy officers and many villagers wounded. The enemy with their guests boarded (4) Helicopters and flew home.



Foreign Journalists at Payathonzu Karen New Year Day.

The Third World War

The Third World War has already begun. It began when new states tried to take over old nations. It began in the hills south of China and north of India and Burma. It began in 1948. Burma moved its army into the Karen and Shan nations and India started its military invasion of the Naga nation. The Third World War is now being fought on every continent except Antarctica. It has produced millions of casualties and massive forced dislocations of nation peoples who make up the majority of the world's refugees. It encompasses most of the peoples and groups who are accused of being terrorists. Each year it involves new areas, states and nations.

States and Nations

Nations are geographically bounded territories of a common people. A nation is made up of communities of people who see themselves as "one people" on the basis of common ancestry, history, society, institutions, ideology, language, territory and (often) religion. Nation peoples distinguish themselves and their countries from other adjacent and distant people and countries. The existence of nations is ancient.

Today there are between 3,000 to 5,000 nations. No directory, atlas or encyclopedia exists that lists or describes all or even most of the world's nations and nation peoples. Most individuals can't even name more than five or six nations. Some nations are very small in population and area - a few score on a few acres. Other nations are huge, with populations in the millions-such as Kawthoolei, with its 4.5-5 million Karen people, larger than 48 percent of the member states in the UN. Unlike a state, a nation does not require a central military-political bureaucracy to create nationality, nationalism or national territory.

To defend their nations from being annihilated, many peoples have taken up arms and are carrying out what are the world's longest wars. The very thing they are fighting for - the survival of their nation and nationality - is the focus of distortion and misrepresentation by invading state regimes and most journalists and academics.

Nation people are almost always misidentified as either members of the very state they are fighting against (Oromo are called "Ethiopian rebels"), or by the propaganda terms used by the invading state (General Ne Win's Rangoon government refers to the 5 million Karen as "terrorists"). Pick up a newspaper or a news magazine or turn on a television news program and try to find out the nationality of the peoples shooting at each other in Ethiopia, Sudan, Angola, Afghanistan, Indonesia, Burma, Bangladesh, Nicaragua, Guatemala or in any of the rest of the world's wars. Nation peoples are rarely identified and instead, they are referred to as "rebels," "separatists," "extremists," "dissidents," "insurgents," "terrorists," "tribals," "minorities" or "ethnic groups." These terms substitute state-related, nonpeople identification for the actual names that nation peoples call themselves and their countries.

How can a people be an ethnic group in its own nation? Are Palestinians an ethnic group in Palestine? Are Karen an ethnic group in Kawthoolei? How can the Miskitos be separatists if they never consented to joining the Nicaraguan state? How can the Sahrawi people be rebels because they resist the Moroccan invasion? When asked by a sandinista leader if the Miskito people would accept special status as a Nicaraguan ethnic group, Misurasata coordinator Brooklyn Rivera replied, "Ethnic groups run restaurants. We are people. We have an army. We want self-determination."

To explain why nation peoples shoot military weapons at military objectives, academics often search for (1) "the fatal flaw" (why are barefoot and sandaled people aggressive?), (2) "the colonial cancer" (colonial powers created cultural division) or (3) "the outside agitator"

(who gave them the guns and the idea of self-defense?). The fact that every people will defend its identity and territory from breakup and eradication seems to be lost on most academics.

In Geneva in 1985, an indigenous peoples declaration on indigenous rights included that "indigenous nations and peoples may engage in self-defense against State actions in conflict with their right to self-determination" (United Nations 1985). In other words, armed self-defense is not "terrorism," "banditry" or "rebellion." To understand the Third World War it is necessary to strip away the camouflage terms and explanations that hide peoples and their nations under the state rug.

A people is a self-defined group. A people considers itself to be distinct from other peoples who are adjacent or distant, who in turn may recognize, the difference. According to the International Commission of Jurists - which is not tied to any state government or inter-state agencies - "a people" has these characteristics:

- (1) a common history, (2) racial or ethnic ties, (3) cultural or linguistic ties, (4) religious or ideologicallyties, (5) a common territory or geographical location, (6) a common economic base, and (7) a sufficient number of people.

The State Shell Game

An unintentional result of the Second World War was the uprooting and eventual replacement of overseas European colonialism. The war shattered the seeming invincibility of colonial powers. Anticolonialist forces used the right of self-determination to justify ousting foreign rule. Within three decades the number of states more than doubled, from 72 to 156 (168 in 1987). Artificial states were formed from artificial colonial territories. Artificial 'peoples' were also formed.

A shell game was played globally. The concept of a people and a nation was fast-switched with that of an ethnic group and a state. Peoples were recategorized as ethnic groups, and ethnic groups were recast as peoples. For example, the autonomous Karens and their nation were termed a Burmese "hill tribe," whereas the Burman people - only one of a dozen nations in British-created Burma - became the ruling regime of the mythical "Burmese people." Despite the fact that no nation people has voluntarily given up its national identity and national territory, state governments, interstate agencies and state universities and newspapers carry on as if the existence of the state automatically erases the existence of nations.



Women signal and medical trainees out to the front.

THE COST OF ARMING THE WORLD

- The world spends \$1.7 million a minute on military forces and equipment.
- Military expenditures by underdeveloped nations have gone up 800 percent since 1960 (after adjusting for inflation).
- Between 1974 and 1985 third-world debt increased \$580 billion; \$250 billion of this represented arms imports from the developed world.
- Each year the world spends an estimated \$800 billion on arms. This sum is roughly equal to the debt of developing nations.
- By some estimates, less than 0.5 percent of the money the world spends on arms in one year would pay to develop agriculture so that developing nations could feed themselves by 1990.
- In 1986, the nations of the world spent about \$30,000 per soldier. They spent an average of about \$455 per child for education.
- For one half the cost of one hour's world military spending (\$102 million), the UN largely stopped a locust plague in Africa in 1986, saving enough grain to feed 1.2 million people.

Sources: UN Environment Program; report by Ruth Sivard, former economist at Arms Control and Disarmament Agency.

The Christian Science Monitor 8/24/87

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DURATION OF CONFLICT

Nation	Duration of Conflict	State
Kurdistan	62 years (1925)	Turkey Iran, Iraq Syria
Euskidi	50 years (1937)	Spain
Kawthoolei	39 years (1948)	Burma
Shan	29 years (1958)	Burma
Nagaland	32 years (1955)	India
Chakma	23 years (1964)	E. Pakistan/ Bangladesh
Ulster	26 years (1961)	Britain
Western Sahara	12 years (1975)	Morocco
Tigray	12 years (1975)	Cuba /Ethiopia
Kalinga	12 years (1975)	Philippines
Pathan	8 years (1979)	USSR/Afghanistan
Kirghiz	8 years (1979)	USSR/Afghanistan
Miskitos	6 years (1981)	Nicaragua
Multination		State
Palestine	50 years (1937)	Britain/Israel
Eritrea	26 years (1961)	Cuba/Ethiopia
West Papua	25 years (1962)	Indonesia
East Timor	12 years (1975)	Indonesia
Insurgency		State
M-19, etc.	39 years (1948)	Colombia
URNG/FAR, etc.	27 years (1960)	Guatemala
NPA	18 years (1969)	Philippines
ANS/KPNLF/ KPNLA	8 years (1979)	Vietnam/Kampuchea
FMLN	8 years (1979)	El Salvador
FDN	5 years (1982)	Nicaragua
State		State
Ethiopia	23 years (1964)	Somalia
Libya	14 years (1973)	Chad
Iran	6 years (1981)	Iraq
Israel	5 years (1982)	Syria

ESTIMATED WAR CASUALTIES

Opponents	Type of Conflict	Number Killed
Algeria (FLN) vs France	I-S	500,000
Afghan peoples vs USSR	MN-S	1,000,000
Kurds vs Iraq, Iran, Syria, Turkey	N-S	500,000
West Papua vs Indonesia	MN-S	200,000 (1/5 of pop.)
East Timor vs Indonesia	MN-S	200,000 (1/3 of pop.)
Western Sahara vs Morocco	FSO	160,000
Hutu vs Burundi	N-S	200,000
NDF nations vs Burma	N-S	250,000
Mayas vs Guatemala	MN-S	80,000
Moros vs Philippines	N-S	100,000
Eritrea vs Ethiopia	MN-S	100,000
Ulster vs Britain	N-S	2,500
Shiite, Sunni, Druze, Christian and Palestinian	N-N	125,000
Baluchis, Pathans vs Pakistan	N-S	9,000
Tamils vs Sri Lanka	N-S	4,500

A Sea of Small Boats

Published by Cultural Survival
Edited by John Cordell

This book expands traditional views of tenure systems, which focus on land or land-based resources, by exploring various communal sea tenure systems around the world. Thirteen essays describe traditional marine systems that govern access to and use of sea-based resources in Alaska, Australia, Brazil, Dominica, Japan, Mexico, Ponam Island, Torres Straits, the continental U.S. and other locales.

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Gen. Bo Mya, speaking at Kawthoolei Karen Baptist Convention



Arms and Ammos Captured by KNLA at Ker Gaw battle



President Gen. Bo Mya with winners of Karen Don Dance.



Mass Baptism of 68 Converts at Kawmoora 5. 12. 87



KIO President Brang Seng speaking before presenting Kachin Silver Sword and bag to Gen. Bo Mya



Gen. Bo Mya thanking the throng participating at his Birthday.



Mr. Brang Seng shaking hands with Gen. Bo Mya.



TRC Leaders at Gen. Bo Mya's Birthday.